

ICS.AI 'Derby City Council AI Transformation Showcase' – 25.04.24

Questions and Answers

Please find a summary of the questions that were asked during the Derby City Council AI Transformation Showcase webinar on 25th April below, along with relevant answers. If you have any questions that are not covered below, please reach out to Aneeq Star (aneeq.star@ics.ai) who will be more than happy to assist.

AI Performance and Capabilities

Q: 1m queries with a 92% success rate. What is success defined as and how does it compare to the traditional solution success rate?

A: Success is defined here as being able to answer 92% of queries first time, against the SOCITM benchmark of 85% for a human agent.

Q: Does the AI work in other languages?

A: Our live chat can work in over 90 languages. We have our Welsh language model live in a college in Wales now, the voice translation development is ongoing and while possible, we do not have a live product to showcase (yet!).

Q: Can Darcy understand dialects; the call could become difficult if not. From an organisational perspective, this is exciting. I do know though that my 89-year-old would struggle with this and hate it.

A: Yes, we have performed extensive testing with dialects and accents. For example, this system was tested in Renfrewshire, which is about as strong as accents get! With ref to your 89-year-old family member, that is who we are creating the capacity for. If the AI assistant can handle all other enquiries, it should mean that they have access to an available agent to answer their enquiry, should they choose not to use the assistant.

Q: Can you take payments via AI?

A: At the moment we are handling "knowledge enquiries" moving forward with Derby City Council we are developing "process enquiries" which will include taking payments.

Q: Does it take the information recorded and populate the relevant case management application? I take it that Darcy can respond to many calls at the same time.

A: Once integrated, the assistant can populate the relevant records in the relevant system.

Q: Do people get an automatic survey at the end of interactions to rate the automated service?

A: This is up to the individual authority; we can absolutely facilitate this and provide advice on the best ways to gather feedback.

Q: What is the customer satisfaction rate for the new service?

A: We spend a lot of time looking at customer satisfaction and we would love to be able to crack this. Unsurprisingly, those who get a quick and accurate response do not ever give feedback. People also don't differentiate between not liking the answer they get (e.g. no - you have to pay your parking fine) vs. not liking the mode of being given the answer. A lot of work has been done by Derby City Council looking into satisfactory answers that I think will be covered later.

Q: How does the AI "right-size" care packages?

A: One of the things that we have patented is how to use Generative AI in this sort of use case. If an organisation can produce high quality and detailed guidelines and policies, we are able to produce what we call "pre-assessment care packages" by which we mean an individualised care package, with justifications, is presented to a trained social worker for them to review. If the social worker, then thinks there are areas that are incorrect, through a process of supervised learning, the platform can then learn from this to improve for the next time.

Q: Does the AI recognise safeguarding issues if a caller was in distress, crying child etc., and refer to a human caller if there was an issue?

A: There is a mechanism in our platform that uses sentiment analysis which can detect these types of nonverbal stress. It is a basic service at present, but we expect it to significantly improve very quickly through the use of Generative AI.

Q: On the quick overview, would the initial answers provided by Fred have a footprint to prevent different answers being given to change a predicted outcome?

A: For instances where data will be submitted into the council, we will be providing a mechanism for authentication so we can track multiple submissions.

Q: At one point I think it was said that the Copliots have handled >100000 contacts since launch; bearing in mind the live demo resulted in the customer needing a 'human callback' can you confirm how many of this >100000 contacts were definitely resolved at the first point of contact (i.e., NO further human interaction) and how many required subsequent human response? A more detailed breakdown of the outcomes from the >100000 contacts would be really useful.

A: I think you may be referring to the stat we shared around how our Assistants have handled over 1million interactions. The success rate averages out at around 92% of all interactions are resolved at the first attempt. The live demo that we showed was just to show how the system can handle a hesitant caller discussing a sensitive topic, the full solution is designed to be able to handle over 1000 topics. Derby City Council have seen 42% of ALL calls into the council being handled by an assistant.

Q: How is the reporting on calls done?

A: Via a Microsoft PowerBi dashboard that shows all calls, all questions and answers and duration. Everything is anonymous and this data is accessible and downloadable to the council for further analysis.

Q: Are there reporting tools built into the solution that can inform on call complexity?

A: Yes, the solution includes a pre-configured Microsoft Power Bi dashboard which you can customise if required.

Q: Are all calls documented hence voice recognition transcribed?

A: Yes, all calls are logged as text in a power bi dashboard

Q: Do you measure and compare things like first point resolution for like for like contacts between Darcie and Advisors?

A: We have a detailed dashboard and rich underlying data that derby can analyse themselves as well.

Q: What is the increase in outbound calls?

A: Derby City Council's Customer Services team do not make outbound calls.

AI Customisation and Integration

Q: Notice it used Zip Code rather than Post Code - is this something that can be tailored accordingly?

A: There are several ways that the Phone solution can be tailored to your specific Authority and processes.

Q: For the Phone demonstration, why didn't the system know which ward he lived in when he gave his street address?

A: This was just a simple example. We can integrate with applications to allow the assistant to be able to interrogate databases and access this information.

Q: Where does the information come from to go into it? Is it drawn from the council website? So basically, only as good as the information you put into it?

A: We use our pre-build language model (over 1,000 topics and 16,000 variances) alongside council resources, web, and internal documents to ensure the most accurate and up to date responses. The data sources from providing responses are specified by yourselves and can come from websites and internal documents/knowledge bases. The data is indexed into the AI platforms data store.

Q: How would it work integrating into existing platforms and bolt onto existing IVR?

A: Every client has an existing IVR - so far, they have all been different - and so this would be done in a case-by-case basis.

Q: Any API integration into CRM/Case Management systems available to allow advisors to see customer contact history?

A: Yes, essentially, we can integrate with anything that has an API. This would need to be considered on a case-by-case basis, however, is possible and in development at Derby City Council.

Q: So, have you ever integrated these tools with Liquid Logic or with Mosaic?

A: Yes - we are doing this at the moment for this project and we will have a connector that we can reuse for other customers.

Q: Why two bots? Darcy and Ali - aren't they pointing at two different datasets, so just have one pointing to both?

A: That is what Dery City Council wanted as they have separate housing and general council websites, so it made sense to have an assistant on each site. Behind the scenes, it is a single instance of the solution, so Darcie can answer general enquiries and housing queries and Ali can answer housing queries as well as everything else.

Q: Can this solution integrate with Microsoft Fabric? Or is that more of a competing technology in this space?

A: Yes, we are a full stack Microsoft partner, Azure Open AI at the backend would absolutely link into Microsoft Fabric. It is a strategy we would recommend so the AI and Data strategies are linked for even further data insights.

Q: What CRM and CMS do Derby have?

A: Granicus and Terminal 4.

Q: Can you give more detail about how the system can interact and integrate with 3rd party systems including CRM and telephony?

A: CRM read records once the user is authenticated to provide information (e.g. what is my council tax balance, write records (order a new bin) Telephone is to do with the transfer into the council system of caller who need to speak to a member of staff once they have finished with the AI assistant.

Q: Can Voice Bot \ Chat Bot \ Email bot run as standalone solutions or operate within a communications \ Telephony platform as an agent that can be reported on within a unified comms platform rather than separately through your own reports?

A: It depends on your telephone platform as to the degree of integration. For example, we integrate with an 8X8 solution at one customer where we pass the chat to the 8X8 live chat service.

Q: Has consideration been given to data privacy concerns from using cloud-based LLMs (Large Language Models) as per gov.uk guidance to look at local LLMs if we can?

A: The ICS.AI solution provides that local language model that is specifically focused on council services. We call this an OLM or 'organisational language model' and we have built this over the last 5 years working in the sector. That exactly what we do, and we use LLM's to understand the question better and find the answer.

Q: Can the AI update user details on its own, or would it forward the information onto clerical staff to update?

A: We are working to integrate this into the backend systems alongside appropriate checks and balances.

Q: What channels do customers have to use - is it all online or phone?

A: We have several products that can work across a range of channels including Web, Phone, Live chat, and Email. There will be a showcase and demo session later in the webinar.

Q: Are the Co-pilots APIs integrated with external organisations such as the Police and NHS?

A: Not at this stage, although technically it is possible to do that. We do take advantage of gov.uk services already for the likes of blue badge and gov.notify service.

AI Implementation and Operation

Q: How long from a council saying they want to do this would it be until it was operational?

A: The initial solution was signed off in December of 2022 and we went live with the web assistant in March of 23 and the phone in May 23.

Q: You mentioned a "pre-build" language model; does that mean it has been pre-trained on local data sets? Would this be done for each council?

A: Yes - we would use our AI tooling to adjust the pre-built language model to your particular authority. This would then be presented back to you for review and confirmation before go-live.

Q: Would each council have to train up its AI system separately? Is it trained in benefits legislation?

A: No - We use our advanced AI tools and pre-built language model to build your language model for you. In implementation we would ask you to verify the responses.

Q: What was the overall time frame from the beginning of the Discovery Assessment to go live on the phones in June '23?

A: The initial solution was signed off in December of 2022 and we went live with the web assistant in March of 23 and the phone in May 23.

Q: On unstructured emails how will AI differ from existing contact centre solutions?

A: We can create bespoke email automated solutions using AI - we haven't done this yet for Derby City Council, but we have for some large central government clients - indeed if you look at one of our [previous webinars the CIO of the ICO](#) (the UK AI regulator) - explained how our AI email solution was saving them £2m a year since go live.

Q: I assumed the "initial solution" came after the Discovery Assessment?

A: No, so we started with the phone solution. Derby City Council felt this was a success and on the back of this we discussed further AI potential. On the back of that we then worked with them on the discovery workshops which resulted in this AI transformation partnership.

Q: How does AI support the Care Act duties that invite us to consider the aspirations of individuals in a creative personalised way? I understand AI is consistent and efficient but is it not inevitably utilitarian in the way it considers need?

A: One of the great things about this technology is that you can drive that behaviour in the way in which you write your policies, and we can "ground" the behaviour with those policies.

Q: What sort of consumption costs are Derby looking at? Some solutions we've looked at with generative AI are on the expensive side.

A: That's a really good point and it has been an ongoing issue for us. Part of what our platform is doing is what we call "metering" and working with Microsoft to provide both PTU access and the best value access for Derby City Council.

Q: Are families in distress okay to use AI?

A: Our view would be that social workers working with families in distress can use AI to help them, even if it is not suitable for some vulnerable people to use directly.

Q: How many complaints have been received regarding the change from customers? Is there a specified route for people who are unable to engage digitally?

A: The existing routes for residents are still place if digital is not their preference and the phone is the best example of that! The number of complaints is <1% of all queries. Jane Witherow covers this in her webinar Q&A, at the time of recording the total number was 39.

Q: Does Darcie conform to accessibility guidelines?

A: Yes, Darcie has a WCAG2.1 AA accessibility statement and each new release of the UI, will go through a similar testing cycle and certification.

Q: How long did the lead-in time for the initial solution take?

A: We signed contracts for the initial phase in December, started in mid-January and went live by the end of April.

Q: How many weeks / months was spent on the workshops and validation upfront of starting on the delivery?

A: For the AI transformation project, when we carried out the AI assessment, we spent one month working with Derby City Council and six weeks finalising and presenting the report.

Q: Did you invest in cleaning your data and connecting systems before using AI?

A: A universal data cleansing exercise has not been undertaken by the Council, but focused work to populate language models and grounding information for the AI co-pilots has been undertaken, specifically targeted on what was required to enable the specific project outcomes.

Q: At what point would a call be put through to an actual person if either the citizen could not get the answer they wanted, wasn't communicating properly or the conversation circled?

A: There are a number of triggers, a customer could just say they want to speak to a person, if the Assistant isn't confident enough in the answer or if the assistant needs more information.

Q: Can an exit loop be pre-defined (i.e. asked 3 times with no satisfactory response?) But what defines as the assistant not being confident? In the demo, I feel given the lack of progress in identifying what the caller wanted, the better customer service experience would have been to transfer the call to a human OR ask more specific questions around services using cleaners.

A: Absolutely. The confidence settings can be adjusted, and the process flow can be made bespoke to your organisation.

Q: Do we know how many of the approximate 40% diverted calls left due to not feeling comfortable responding to AI without the right support? How can you ensure that responses are individualised, person centred, and strengths based?'

A: The assistant will always ask the resident is happy with the response and if not will divert to an agent. Those who did not will have been satisfied with the response and the surveys reflect this. We proactively monitor this as part of our ongoing customer success programme.

Q: Do you already have any automation within Revs and Bens?

A: This has not been a priority for derby due to an existing contract with a number of years remaining, but we have potential use cases in this area that we plan to work on with other clients who are also following derby's example.

Q: Who owns responsibility to achieve the savings?

A: This is a collaborative endeavour; this is how we always want to work with clients!

Q: How have you managed the uplift in the demand this then creates within the departments to which the calls are routed?

A: by answering (somedays) over 2000 questions a day, departments have generally not had that experience.

Q: Keen to understand a bit more re the procurement routes How you have developed the knowledge base for Darcie to work from and any data quality issues you found with its Timeline from contract to mobilisation and implementation.

A: G cloud is the preferred route from a procurement perspective, and it varies but around 3-6 months to get through that process. Darcie and Ali come pre trained by ICS.AI using our local government OLM, which knows over 1000 answers that a customer might ask of a council and over 15,000 different ways in which you might ask a question to get to one of those answers. This has been built over the last five years with our customer in the sector.

Q: How is the solution priced; both the ongoing running costs and how these adjust to scale of use as well as the setup costs?

A: The ICS.AI components are licence costs, which are annually in advance and includes unlimited users so doesn't fluctuate and cloud consumption costs and finally the implementation services. The consumption for phone and web ai is estimated and varies month on month depending on how many people phone up and how long they sat on the line. We provide estimates based on current customers so we can give a clear figure to base contract's on, if you can provide an accurate number of inbound calls.

Q: Is the tech stack going to be a combination of Azure Open AI and Copilot Studio or is this all based on Azure Open AI / PTUs?

A: The tech stack is all based on a MSFT stack, mainly a number of Azure services. Copilot is not a pre-requisite to having this technology.

Q: How is AI being used in any of the governance function of councils i.e., democratic services, member services, etc.?

A: This is in subsequent phases of the Derby City Council project as the majority of cost saving use cases are elsewhere.

Q: Councils hold masses of data on multiple and varied services. What happens about data accuracy? Is a data clean up task advisable?

A: Data accuracy is always preferable and a continuous activity for all councils, regardless of if AI is using it or a person. Our solution can aid that process by finding and reporting inaccuracies in your data.

Q: What do you envisage are areas AI is not suitable for?

A: AI is suitable in most areas; it is more important to understand the depth to which the AI will go. For example, in critical areas you could use AI solely for collation and amalgamation of data, whereas in less critical environments you could have AI make recommendations on actions with human oversight. The decision on how much and how far will always come down to compliance and business case. Safe and ethical use of AI is one of the core beliefs at ICS.AI.

Q: Would be great to hear if you had any challenges with the political leadership and getting them on board?

A: My understanding is that Paul Simpson worked hand in hand with the council leader and cabinet throughout this process.

Governance and Compliance

Q: How do you ensure compliance with the AI Act?

A: As you can imagine, as an organisation that works solely with the Public Sector including the ICO, we are up to date with all AI guidance and legislation.

Q: How are you dealing with the ethics of AI technology making decisions for customers/clients particularly in the social care space?

A: We are very clear that we are not doing this. We are doing what we call "pre-assessments" that a fully trained social worker will have to review.

Q: What processes do you have to test for and mitigate against bias in the models (e.g., for certain communities) and be reassured in terms of fair outcomes and the ethical use of the technology, especially in sensitive areas like social care? Are your models transparent to allow for appropriate scrutiny/challenge?

A: To answer this sort of question we would need to understand exactly what model you are referring to. We certainly use some machine learning models using Microsoft Azure Machine Learning studio that can be interrogated with have standard statistical e.g. r2, roc, aoc etc. but we also use Large Language Models (LLMs), Organisational Language Models (OLMs), and some small language models, which can be interrogated but they need a high level of maths to understand the transformer technology behind them.

Q: Going back to the HMRC point, the guidance states that the assessment must be "carried out" by an appropriately trained person, not by AI and then checked.

A: This again is reflected in our previously described approach - we do not use AI to do social care assessments or financial assessments - we are developing it to help produce "pre-assessments" - these pre-assessments will always need reviewing / confirming / actioning by appropriately trained individuals. This is aligned with our view that ai won't replace people - but people using ai might well replace those who are not.

Q: Is there any potential inherent bias within the learning and ways in which this was mitigated?

A: We mitigate bias through supervised learning using our SMART Mesh offering and any changes are only made after review by a person. This mitigates the majority of issues, but like humans, it does, sometimes make mistakes.

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A: We mitigate bias through supervised learning using our SMART Mesh offering and any changes are only made after review by a person. This mitigates the majority of issues, but like humans, it does, sometimes make mistakes.

Q: Has any of the use of AI in any of your processes been tested in legal/insurance claims cases and been evidenced to stand up to this level of challenge?

A: Not yet we are still in the planning and design phase.

Q: Given the large interaction volume some form of targeted survey (online or otherwise) would be helpful to understand whether reductions in interactions are due to more efficient service delivery or barriers to interaction.

A: A number of validation activities are taking place with professional staff to get a baseline specifically in ASC.

Do you have 1 overarching DPIA for the program or a DPIA per onboarded service area?

A: Given the size of the transformation programme the Council was starting, and the highly sensitive data involved in a number of the use cases, the Council made the decision to commission a specialist legal firm to ensure compliance with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act.

The initial, priority tasks were to:

- Provide advice and draft appropriate data protection contract terms that supported the lawful processing of Council data to enable the Council to sign a contract with ICS.
- Draft an overarching data protection impact assessment (DPIA) covering generative AI as a technology with the intention of addressing strategic technical and contractual risks, to inform decision making and ensure that any information processing agreements needed were in place.

Now that the contract has been signed, the legal firm continue to provide advice and support to ensure each project is scoped and delivered in compliance with the Data Protection Act, where necessary preparing additional supplementary DPIAs for specific projects or making changes to any of the DPIAs throughout the programme, prior to any data processing.

Q: How are you handling data and security as a security person could I tempt data out of that call?

A: We have an ethical sub system that prevent question like this from being answered. This is an example of what we call subversion, and we have many topic areas like this in the ethical edge.

Q: Has any assessment been made to quantify any impact on Derby's Carbon Emissions footprint and how this impacts their climate change / green agenda?

A: It is something that has been coming up in conversations more. While we haven't actioned an assessment, I would anticipate the use of technology to reduce carbon footprints would be viewed favourably. Microsoft themselves are committed to be carbon neutral by 2030 and they have calculators you can use to see exactly what your footprint is. in all reality the footprint of this is just tiny.

Q: What checks are in place to check whether that legislation ingested is correct/accurate based on UK law?

A: The solution can ingest the actual act of parliament if necessary. We ingested the Draft EUAI act and was able to query the 280 pages and ask it to summarise key sections.

Q: Since the implementation of this approach has Derby been challenged by members of the public around concerns of any potential inherent bias in the learning aspect of AI? How have the potential risks associated with this been mitigated?

A: There have been no challenges in respect of inherent bias. However, in advance of the programme, the Council has been given assurances by technology suppliers in respect of safety barriers within the employed technology that both protects the Council's data and prevents it being used to inform the behaviours of any external AI infrastructure.

Throughout the programme and ongoing, an AI Ethics and Compliance Board will oversee all developments and iteration of AI, covering; Policy Development, Ethical Oversight, Human in the Loop, Data Management, Performance, Training and Development, Technology Assessment and Risk Management.

Q: Can customers make Subject Access Request on data about them on the AI systems?

A: The customer accepts the council's privacy policy before using the solution, so that will determine how you go about answering that request. The data is available to you through the dashboard provided.

Q: Feels like there is the need for an ethical impact assessment. What has been the approach to this? There must be a consideration of what we should not just to what we can?

A: This was covered in the DPIA and will be monitored monthly through the joint Derby City Council and ICS.AI compliance board.

Q: Can you share more about accessibility and info on local models vs cloud use?

A: This is best dealt with in a discussion as it's a complex topic. Please contact us via info@ics.ai to request a meeting.

User Experience and Feedback

Q: I would be saying "Can I speak to a person" what happens when I request this?

A: Depending on the process your council chooses, the resident would be transferred into the contact centre to speak to an agent.

Q: How are considerations of mental capacity built into any systems?

A: By working really closes with the Derby City Council team to make sure that we are putting the client at the heart of the solution, with appropriate governance, checks and balances etc.

Q: It would be great to get an insight into how the different components are being used if possible?

A: Sure, please provide a bit more information on which components you are referring to and then we can help?

Q: What percentage of your users (of web) are using mobile devices? I know in my area of business it is over 80% now

A: We see a very similar % usage rate.

Q: Does AI reduce the need for complex info on the web site?

A: Not necessarily but what it can do it make that complex content much more understandable.

Q: Have you seen any reduction on ambulance referrals that are not referrals being logged into Mosaic, for example.

A: Not yet we are still in the planning and design phase.

Q: How will you make sure the person having a review of their package is the resident themselves?

A: Through logic and workflows behind the collection of information.

Q: Do the stats capture how many people simply say I want to speak to a person?

A: Yes, all conversations are transcribed and stored within your Azure tenant. This is presented back to you in a fully customisable PowerBI dashboard with as much data as you need.

Q: Do you measure and compare things like first point resolution for like for like contacts between Darcie and Advisors?

A: We have a detailed dashboard and rich underlying data that derby can analyse themselves as well.

Strategic and Financial Aspects

Q: Sounds like a lot of setups required which will be costly?

A: For the initial contact centre application, not at all. ICS.AI will handle the implementation and we can have you live with both phone and web chat within 10 weeks.

Q: Were customers involved in the prioritisation of the initiatives. Were the selection criteria solely financial?

A: We work with the client to ensure their requirements are met. These are often a combination of things including financial savings, providing out of hours support, handling yearly surges etc.

Q: What is the approximate size of budget for the initial investment prior to generating savings?

A: That will depend on where you start and the number of contacts you receive as these will drive the estimates for the ICS.AI licence and cloud consumption. As you heard from Derby City Council, they were able to make in year savings of £200,000. If you would like to know more, please contact us – info@ics.ai.

Q: What are the ballpark costs to implement?

A: That will depend on where you start and the number of contacts you receive as these will drive the estimates for the ICS.AI licence and cloud consumption. As you heard from Derby City Council,

they were able to make in year savings of £200,000. If you would like to know more, please contact us – info@ics.ai.

Q: What is legal status of AI responses, e.g., compared to a letter. Are the answers saved and retrievable in disputes?

A: Yes, all conversations are logged and available to staff if needed for that purpose.

Q: Have ACTUAL savings been realised in any authority and been properly evidenced?

A: Yes, they have been verified and evidenced by Derby City Council through the relevant process.

Q: Where are those savings being looked at? Staffing numbers? Efficiency?

A: Efficiency which leads to staff time savings which for example can result in staff not being replaced or new staff hired if staff numbers aren't reduced. All of our estimate for savings in adult services assume no staff reduction, but most likely a reduction in the need for agency staff.

Q: Costs of implementation at Derby City Council net savings over how long?

A: This is described in their cabinet paper; Invest £3.2M (not exclusively ICS as other third-party items are required) for a savings of £12.25M.

Q: I'd like to understand the cost/benefit analysis and savings schedule better.

A: We have a business case calculator that we can take you through so you can see how the cost savings and benefits apply to your council specifically. Please complete the form on the website to request a review.

Q: What is the cost of implementation and procurement process?

A: Procurement is typically done through G-Cloud, but we have partners like Phoenix and Softcat who are many other frameworks if you don't want to use G-Cloud. For the costings, that will depend on where you start and the number of contacts you receive as these will drive the estimates for the ICS.AI licence and cloud consumption. As you heard from Derby City Council, they were able to make in year savings of £200,000. If you would like to know more, please contact us via info@ics.ai.

Q: Would be interesting to know have you been able to capitalise on any of the development costs? If so, and you can't give exact figures, broadly what %?

A: Not yet we are still in the planning and design phase.

Q: Will there be a social cost in terms of employment?

A: The current business case assumes no staff reductions.

Q: Could the technology be justified for a smaller district given the majority at Derby City Council is on social care?

A: Absolutely, we already work with a number of district/borough authorities including Broxbourne and Welwyn Hatfield.

Q: What is the cost of implementing AI so far and the cost of tokens for council if any?

A: That will depend on where you start and the number of contacts you receive as these will drive the estimates for the ICS.AI licence and cloud consumption, which is estimated at this stage. As you

heard from Derby City Council, they were able to make in year savings of £200,000. If you would like to know more, please contact us via info@ics.ai to request a meeting.

Q: What is the financial budget to carry this project out and the human resource capacity available to carry this out?

A: Depends on the scale of your challenge that we are addressing. If we take a Phone and web contact centre implementation, it typically takes 10-12 weeks, and we require relatively limited resources from your end. Perhaps the best way to think about it is to compare it to a CRM implementation. ICS.AI will be 2% of the cost and about 10% of the staff time needed.

Q: £200k savings so far - how long has that taken and what is the level of investment to get to that point?

A: A report for the initial project to introduce the digital assistants Darcie and Ali was taken to Derby City Council's Cabinet on 16th November 2022 - the link is here: [Item 18 - Compliance with Contract and Financial Procedure Rules.pdf](#). This outlines the original projected costs and savings.

Based on the annual cost after design and implementation, the original business case forecasted an annual saving opportunity for Derby City Council of £258,726.77

The Council incorporated a conservative saving of £200,000 in the **Medium-Term Financial Plan 2022/23 to 2024/25** with the savings profiled over 2 financial years, £100,000 to be delivered in 22/23 and a further £100,000 to be delivered in 23/24. The second year of the savings for the further £100,000 to be delivered in 23/24 were again included in the Medium-Term Financial Plan 2023/24 to 2025/26.

Technical Details and Development

Q: Is this chat solution using Copilot Studio or is it using Azure Bot Framework / Azure Open AI PTU?

A: We are a full stack Microsoft partner and use all their (excellent) tools depending on the requirement.

Q: Does the panel for free care assessment take the data and populate the case management system? i.e., LiquidLogic

A: This is the planned outcome for our implementation at Derby City Council.

Q: Is it always possible to provide a timescale, though?

A: the answer is of course dependent upon what the organisation wants.

Q: How can AI help with Access to Information requests, especially around assistance with redaction?

A: By collecting the information in a standard format every time and then comparing it with existing access requests and then processing the information using generative ai to remove certain words that fit into categories of information. For example, Generative AI knows what is meant by PII.

Q: Surely, we need to invest to save / improve - with a target ROI it's clear we can't carry on doing what we've always done?

A: This is described in their cabinet paper; Invest £3.2M (not exclusively ICS as other third-party items are required) for a savings of £12.25M.

Q: Increased use of computer power would though potentially increase carbon generation / footprint?

A: Potentially, but these services are in the Microsoft cloud, and they have committed to carbon neutral across their entire organisation by 2030. And they have deep pockets to make that a reality.

Q: How does AI help with filing and record keeping in Social Services?

A: It writes a record of the data captured and its evaluation into the liquid logic application so case workers can review it.

Q: By right sizing care packages for elderly do you mean reduce hence the cost saving?

A: Potentially. Over prescribing is rife in all councils and waste is huge so the aim is to ensure consistency of the care package in line with the needs.

Q: Of the 43% deflection rate can we see a breakdown of which call categories these fell into? E.g. Housing Benefits Council Tax.

A: Yes, this is available in near real time via our Power BI dashboard. Waste and council tax are the biggest service areas by volume of calls.

Q: Do ICS.AI have the Social Care co-pilots already available? Or is this to be developed with Derby still?

A: Not yet they will be implemented as soon as we have completed the planning and design which we are doing at present.

Q: Do you have a breakdown of projected ASC savings?

A: This information is confidential and for Derby to share. For the main project this is described in their cabinet paper; Invest £3.2M (not exclusively ICS as other third-party items are required) for a savings of £12.25M. The bulk of these savings are coming from ASC.

Q: Are Derby ASC services outsourced, or are carers in-house?

A: Social Workers and Therapist are in-house council resources. Residential Care homes and homecare carers are outsourced through approved providers and managed through an in-house brokerage service.

Q: Where do you foresee the efficiencies in IG? Will this be covered?

A: Yes, it is included and will be tackled in phase 2, and the use cases have been identified.

Q: I see a fair bit of negative views online from local press. I have been in local gov long enough to take that with a pinch of salt - but is there any underlying discontent amongst citizens? How well has it gone down?

A: No there isn't an underlying issue, but as you say there will always be people who complain. We advocate a proactive policy of communication with residents and be clear what it does and doesn't do, engage citizen user groups, etc. As part of our implementation, we include an external comms pack to help with this aspect of the project.

Q: What is ballpark initial investment sum? Any innovation grants?

A: Some of our customers have used innovation funds to part pay for the solution. The cost depends on a number of factors including in bound contacts across all channels and from there we can provide an indicative cost and associated business case.

Q: I would be interested to know if the pre-assessment care package model has been reviewed against HMRC guidance relating to the VAT treatment of health and welfare services. At face value, there could be a weak point here.

A: These pre-assessments will always need reviewing / confirming / actioning by appropriately trained individuals. This is aligned with our view that ai won't replace people - but people using ai might well replace those who are not.

Q: What checks are in place to check whether that legislation ingested is correct/accurate based on UK law?

A: The process is called human in the loop so that any recommendations made by AI will always need reviewing / confirming / actioning by appropriately trained individuals. This is aligned with our view that ai won't replace people - but people using ai might well replace those who are not.

Q: Some of those timelines are really short and impressive. For each solution did that include pre-assessment/Statement of requirements, etc. or just the time required to implement the technology test it and sign it off?

A: The timelines for the project do include the review of the requirements so we did move quickly with Derby, driven by necessity but also a commitment across the council that this was the best option to deliver cost savings without damaging service.

Q: Can you consolidate the intelligence derived to an individual user level rather than individual process level? i.e., how do the individual process solutions bring forward the opportunity to optimise the outcomes of individuals (real people) across multiple services - is that sort of benefit in view with this?

A: The data is logged anonymously so we don't have individual intelligence. If a user is logged in, then we can determine that level of detail. We can see trends and patterns in the data to determine the outcomes and we use ML (Machine Learning) to do this in certain case.

Q: Have you had an external and academic scrutiny of your models/approach especially in terms of bias and ethics?

A: No, but we would be happy to review it in that way.

Q: Has there been any work done on how people feel about using an automated system like this?

A: There is clearly a proportion of the public who prefer human contact and we don't intend to stop that, but we also recognise there is a proportion who don't want to wait and are comfortable working in this way.

Q: Did you have to apply a different governance model to this v traditional Technology deployments?

A: Not particularly - but of course a lot of this was done before the solution was signed off and I believe there was a significant joint effort between Derby City Council and ICS.AI to do so.

Q: Interested to know how many people you had working on the implementation and how many you now need to ensure the information remains up to date?

A: With it being AI, the info is constantly updated and if there are changes made to any of the target knowledge base, the assistant will pick these up on the fly.

Q: How much is an AI front end secure to hack attacks from professional criminal and state-based organisations?

A: The platform is set up in such a way that there is no access to any other part of your estate, and we would be more than happy to undertake any security questionnaires/checks to satisfy your requirements. As you can imagine, this is a standard part of the process with Local Gov.

Q: Is AI pre-trained in national regulations and legislation? So, the council just does a bit of tailoring training?

A: That's right, Gen AI is excellent at understanding complex policy / legal documents and we use that to drive the pre-built models. Our pre-built language model is live in a number of authorities at the front door. With the wider AI Transformation, as Mark is currently describing, there is a more in depth set of workshops that are required.

Q: Where is the data stored, is it in UK datacentres?

A: Yes, on your azure tenant.

Q: Always UK, or might it go overseas at times of capacity, performance issues etc.?

A: I am led to believe always - same system for downing street, DoD etc, it's part of the Microsoft, ICS.AI and Derby City Council partnership - it is designed to always be UK.

Q: Would be great to know of the presenters who may be happy to be contacted.

A: ICS.AI aren't involved in council to council contacts.

The following presenters from Derby City Council are happy to be contacted:

Andy Brammall – andy.brammall@derby.gov.uk

Lee Haynes – lee.haynes@derby.gov.uk

Jane Witherow (for queries related to Customer Services) – Jane.witherow@derby.gov.uk

Q: Any qualitative findings from a customer perspective?

A: Of the 40% of the calls that were deflected, half of those gave a positive response when asked if Darcie had been helpful. When transcripts of the calls have been reviewed by the Council (through random reviews, complaints or quality assurance) in many cases it's how the customer interacts that has been the issue. For example, the correct information or response is provided but the customer then asks to speak to an advisor, (only to be told the same thing), or the customer is unclear in what they're asking or even obstructive or abusive.