

ICS.AI

WHERE SHOULD YOUR COUNCIL START WITH AI?

One joined-up, costed plan for the whole council - built with your teams and checked by your own finance team.

SMART: AI Assessment

ICS.AI

IT'S NO LONGER A CASE OF WHETHER LOCAL GOVERNMENT WILL LOOK TO AI. IT'S WHEN AND HOW.

There's no shortage of AI ideas, pilots or demonstrations. The question is how they fit together.

THE CASE FOR CHANGE

THE EASY SAVINGS ARE GONE

Local government is past the point of innovation conversations. This is a budget conversation.

35

councils given a record £1.5bn of exceptional financial support for 2026-27

£7bn

funding gap by 2028-29 just to keep services at today's level

51%

of council finance chiefs lack confidence they can meet statutory duties by then

In February, the government agreed around £1.5bn of exceptional financial support for a record 35 councils for 2026-27. The LGA estimates councils face a £7bn funding gap by 2028-29 just to keep services at today's level, and half of councils' finance chiefs (51%) lack confidence they'll have enough funding to meet their statutory duties by then.

After more than a decade of cost cutting, the traditional levers - shared services, headcount freezes, maximum council tax rises - have largely been pulled. The next savings won't come from cutting budgets. They'll come from changing how the work gets done. And timing matters: a saving identified for 2028 doesn't help a council that runs out of road in 2027.

PILOTS DON'T ADD UP TO TRANSFORMATION

AI is everywhere. 95% of councils are exploring or using it, yet only 22% report realised cost savings. Scattered pilots each bring a different vendor, different guardrails and a separate bill. They never compound, governance gets duplicated, and the council is left to turn each one into savings. What works is one programme across the whole council - with governance done once, and benefits counted from a proper baseline.

> "We can no longer rely on traditional savings measures alone and need to find new ways of working to maintain high-quality services and meet future pressures."
>
> Patrick Murray, Head of Digital, Transformation and Customer Services, Renfrewshire Council

Sources: GOV.UK, Exceptional Financial Support for local authorities for 2026-27; LGA, July 2026; LGA council budget setting survey 2026/27; LGA, State of the sector: Artificial Intelligence 2024 and 2025 update.

ICS.AI

WHY COUNCILS COME TO US

FOUR PROBLEMS. ONE ANSWER.

It's no longer a case of whether local government will turn to AI. It's when, and how. There's no shortage of AI ideas, pilots or demonstrations. The question is how they fit together.

SPRAWL

Fragmented pilots and pockets of AI across departments, with nothing joined up.

One joined-up plan for the whole council

NO PLAN

A vision, but no credible organisation-wide roadmap, or a business case to back it.

A costed roadmap and a business case finance will back

DISCONNECTED

Leadership, services, finance and IT not aligned on where AI fits.

Everyone engaged, from your SLT to the front line

STUCK

Strategies and ideas that never turn into delivery.

An actionable plan, ready to move into delivery

WHAT COUNCILS ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE

SAVINGS THAT COUNT

Closing the gap in this year's budget, not in three years' time.

BETTER SERVICES

Faster answers for residents, with fewer handoffs along the way.

CAPACITY

Less admin for stretched teams, and more time for the work that matters.

ONE DIRECTION

A plan leaders and Members can back, not another pilot.

Every council starts from a different place. The assessment works out where AI gets you there fastest.

OUR EXPERIENCE

12 ASSESSMENTS. ONE APPROACH.

We have delivered the SMART: AI Assessment for 11 councils and one university. Every one produced a different plan - but the method behind them is the same, and it's been refined every time.



11 councils + 1 university
40+ workshop hours per council

Up to 200 per organisation
250+ proven use cases in catalogue

Across all assessments so far

WHAT 12 ASSESSMENTS HAVE TAUGHT US

- Leadership - a clear vision, a whole-council mandate, and honesty about where you are.
- The right people - quality over quantity, with finance and a technical lead in the room.
- Data - the more you share, the better the outcome, and quality matters as much as volume.
- Approach - real use cases brought to life, and benefits realisation from day one.
- Governance - ethics built in, a risk-based approach and a risk register that can flex as AI changes.

ICS.AI

INSIDE AN AI ASSESSMENT

WHOLE COUNCIL. NOT JUST IT.

An assessment brings your leaders, managers and frontline staff into the same room, service by service, to find where AI can make a real difference - and what needs to be in place to make it work.

5-7 DAYS
on site with your teams

90-120 MINS
per service workshop

EVERY SERVICE
From customer services, finance, HR to housing, planning, social care and leadership

WHO'S IN EVERY WORKSHOP

Senior leaders for the strategy; managers for the operations; the people who do the work day to day; finance for the numbers; and technical leads for the systems.

When all five are in one room, an idea can be identified, costed and sense-checked in a single conversation.

ALL ARGUMENTS COUNT

Every workshop has its sceptics and its champions, and we welcome both. Sceptics' concerns - "Will it undermine professional judgement?", "Is our data really safe?" - become design rules: governance, safeguards and a human in the loop. Champions become early wins and AI Champions. Bring both with you, and the people in the middle follow.

READINESS ACROSS FIVE AREAS

- Strategy and leadership - vision, sponsorship and priorities
- Technology and data - your systems, data and how they connect
- Service and use case - where AI can make the biggest difference
- People, skills and process - capability and appetite for change
- Ethics and governance - safe, responsible and well-governed AI

FULL SUPPORT, START TO FINISH

- An experienced senior team, including former senior local government leaders
- Sector specialists where you need them
- One dedicated team from kick-off to final readout
- Hands-on sessions with real AI technology
- A business case built on your own data
- Comms support to engage your staff, Members and leadership.

USE CASES

UP TO 200 OPPORTUNITIES. SPECIFIC TO YOU.

Every assessment produces its own list, shaped by your services, data and priorities - drawn from our catalogue of 250+ proven use cases, or found by your own teams in the workshops. Here are six that come up again and again.

CROSS-CUTTING

Inbox management

Shared mailboxes triaged, routed and first replies drafted

£1.1m a year*

REVENUES

Debt and benefits

Separates can't pay from won't pay, and flags unclaimed benefits

£708k a year*

CUSTOMER SERVICES

AI contact centre

Phone and web enquiries answered 24/7, with a warm handover to staff

£563k a year*

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Safeguarding triage

Referrals summarised and prioritised for the front door team

£442k a year*

HOUSING

Certificate checks

Gas and safety certificates read, checked and chased in seconds

£293k a year*

INFORMATION GOVERNANCE

FOI & SAR automation

New requests matched to past disclosures, with first drafts written

£122k a year*

**Example savings: medium-scenario annual estimates from one recent council assessment.*

ONE NOBODY SAW COMING

WHOSE SOFA IS IT ANYWAY?

A resident snaps a photo of a dumped sofa. AI pins the location, works out who owns the land - council, highways or private - and sends it to the right team, first time. Today, every report is checked by hand.

HIDDEN SYSTEMS

THE SYSTEMS THAT AREN'T SYSTEMS

Spreadsheets + SharePoint lists + mailbox rules = a hidden system. Nobody bought them as a system, but services depend on them every day - and they're often where the biggest bottlenecks, and the biggest wins, are found.

WHAT YOU GET

A FULLY COSTED PLAN. THE CHOICE FOR TRANSFORMATION IS YOURS.

AI READINESS SUMMARY

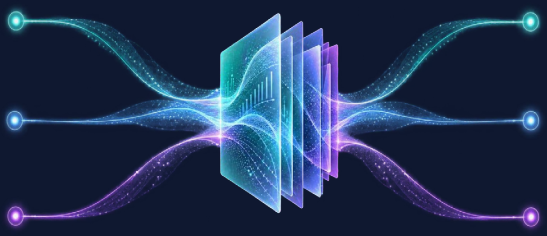
A clear picture of where your council stands today.

PRIORITISED USE CASES

Up to 200 ranked opportunities, from our catalogue and your own ideas.

SAVINGS PLAN

Use-case financial modelling, beyond a headline estimate.



PHASED ROADMAP

A four-year sequence tailored to your priorities, environment and capacity.

BUSINESS CASE

Costed, validated by your teams and ready for committee or board.

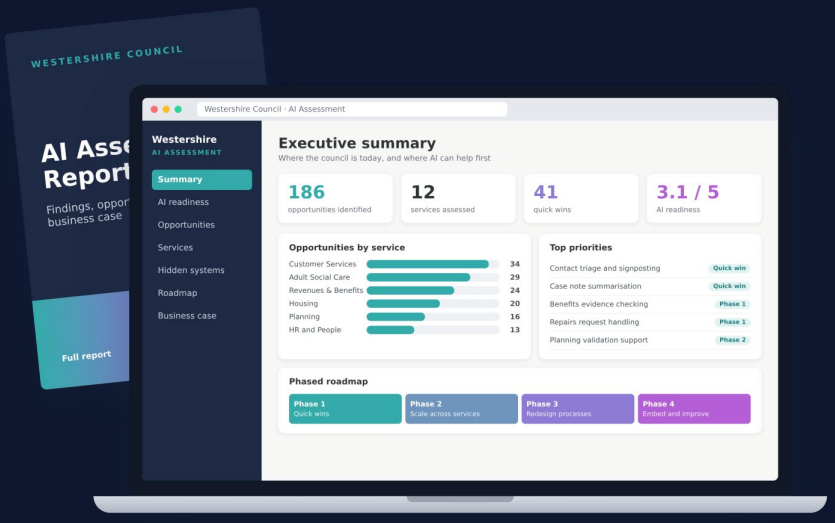
FULL REPORT

The detail officers need and a summary Members can read in minutes.

The report comes as a full written document and as an interactive website your whole council can explore.

It covers where you are today, every opportunity scored and costed service by service, what really runs your services - including the hidden systems - and a phased roadmap and business case leaders can approve.

On the website, leaders can adjust low, medium and high adoption scenarios and watch the business case change in real time.



WESTERSHIRE REPORT AND WEBSITE MOCK-UPS

Illustrative mock-up. Westershire is a fictional council.

EVERY NUMBER CHECKED

NUMBERS VALIDATED BY YOUR FINANCE TEAMS

The biggest reason AI business cases fail to convince is that nobody inside the council believes the numbers. They look like a supplier's predictions, and finance treats them that way.

The assessment is built to avoid that from the start. The business case is grounded in your own data, gathered through a structured data request. Data owners are assigned for each service. Then every figure is checked by the service teams who know the work and by finance, who know the money, before anything goes to your SLT or Members.

1

YOUR DATA

A structured data request

2

DATA OWNERS

Assigned for each service

3

SERVICE AND FINANCE CHECK

Every figure tested

4

SLT AND MEMBERS

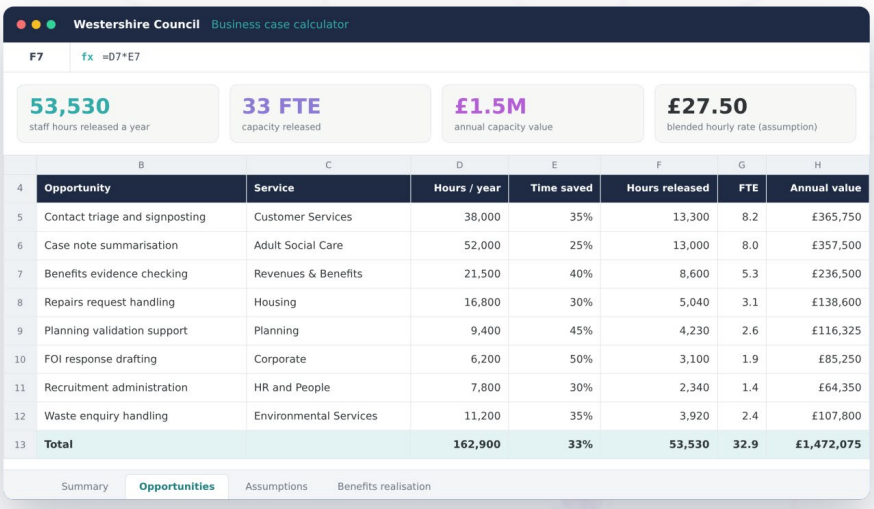
A business case they can stand behind

ONE BUSINESS CASE FOR THE WHOLE AUTHORITY

Every opportunity, across every service, goes through one consistent calculation: the hours involved today, the time AI can save, the capacity released and its value.

Options can be compared like for like, and each benefit comes with a clear plan for how it will be realised.

That calculation then becomes the reference point for the first 12 to 24 months of any programme that follows.



	Opportunity	Service	Hours / year	Time saved	Hours released	FTE	Annual value
5	Contact triage and signposting	Customer Services	38,000	35%	13,300	8.2	£365,750
6	Case note summarisation	Adult Social Care	52,000	25%	13,000	8.0	£357,500
7	Benefits evidence checking	Revenues & Benefits	21,500	40%	8,600	5.3	£236,500
8	Repairs request handling	Housing	16,800	30%	5,040	3.1	£138,600
9	Planning validation support	Planning	9,400	45%	4,230	2.6	£116,325
10	FOI response drafting	Corporate	6,200	50%	3,100	1.9	£85,250
11	Recruitment administration	HR and People	7,800	30%	2,340	1.4	£64,350
12	Waste enquiry handling	Environmental Services	11,200	35%	3,920	2.4	£107,800
13	**Total**		**162,900**	**33%**	**53,530**	**32.9**	**£1,472,075**

CUSTOMER STORY

DERBY CITY COUNCIL: FROM AI FRONT DOOR TO COUNCIL-WIDE TRANSFORMATION



1. Proved the AI front door

Showed AI working for residents.

2. Confidence to look wider

Ready to plan beyond one service.

3. The AI Assessment

A council-wide plan & business case.

Derby's assessment, our first and broadest, involved 100+ council staff across 44 planning, workshop and feedback sessions. It identified 261 AI opportunities, narrowed to a disciplined portfolio of 54. That plan then led into a wider AI transformation programme, governed by an AI Ethics Board with an independent chair and a DPIA for every use case.

261
AI opportunities identified in the assessment

54
prioritised into a delivery portfolio

1.4m+
resident enquiries handled through its AI front door

Up to 56%
enquiries resolved, against 20% expected

£12M+
savings identified across Derby's wider AI transformation programme

Read the Derby City Council story: ics.ai/customers/derby-city-council

CUSTOMER STORY

RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL: FROM PHONE AI TO COUNCIL-WIDE TRANSFORMATION

1. TRIAL (EARLY 2024)

A practical phone AI trial in Customer services built organisational confidence.

2. BUILD, PROVE, LAUNCH (2024)

Millie, Scotland's first council AI phone assistant, went live in November 2024 after a 24-week implementation.

3. ASSESS AND SCALE (2025-2026)

What is believed to be the most extensive AI transformation assessment by a Scottish local authority, then a competitive procurement.

Millie's results built the case for going further. Renfrewshire then assessed AI opportunities across the whole council, working with more than 100 staff across 25 service areas. Following a competitive procurement, it selected ICS.AI for a £5m+, three-year AI transformation programme.

Phase one, from November 2026, starts with proven, lower-risk solutions: upgrading Millie with generative AI, a new web-based AI Assistant for residents, AI support for staff, and AI agents for service inboxes, FOI and subject access requests, and complaints - supporting, not replacing, staff decisions.

Governance includes staff training, human oversight, data protection, trade union engagement and transparency reporting.

571K+
resident calls handled by Millie

40%
resolution, against a 5-10% target

£110K
direct savings in the first five months

32
workshops across 25 service areas

194
AI use cases identified in the assessment

£5M+
three-year AI transformation programme

> "ICS.AI has already demonstrated what AI can deliver for Renfrewshire through Millie and has experience delivering similar transformation programmes across UK local government."
>
> Patrick Murray, Head of Digital, Transformation and Customer Services, Renfrewshire Council

Read the Renfrewshire Council story: ics.ai/customers/renfrewshire-council-case-study

ICS.AI

HOW IT WORKS

FROM FIRST CONVERSATION TO A VALIDATED BUSINESS CASE IN 8-16 WEEKS

1 MEET YOUR SLT
A one-hour, in-person walkthrough

2 PROCURE
Usually via G-Cloud 15; Other frameworks available

3 PLAN
Workshops booked with our AI consultancy team

4 ON SITE
An intensive workshop week and a structured data request

5 BUILD
Your report and Detailed business case

6 VALIDATE
Your teams verify every number

7 PRESENT
The validated business case goes back to your SLT

HOW TO BUY

Available through the G-Cloud 15 framework, with other frameworks also available. A fixed fee, agreed upfront.

The assessment is a separate decision from any transformation that follows - you keep the plan, with no obligation to go further.

GUARANTEED OUTCOMES

UP TO £5M

TRANSFORMATION SAVINGS GUARANTEE*

For the transformation that follows your assessment.

Guaranteed - year-one savings, underwritten by ICS.AI and sized conservatively for your council.

Targeted - wider savings identified by the assessment, measured and tracked across the programme.

Future - further opportunities as AI capability grows, explored together in partnership.

**Subject to terms.*

FAQ

YOUR QUESTIONS, ANSWERED

If the AI tools already work, why do we need an assessment?

Knowing the tools work tells you what's possible. It doesn't tell you what's right for your council, in what order, at what cost, or what your teams need to make it happen.

Will it lead to job cuts?

None of our assessment reports has resulted in compulsory or voluntary redundancies at any authority, and none of our reports have recommended them - despite identifying millions of pounds of savings. The focus is on releasing capacity for stretched teams and improving services, alongside cashable savings.

Do we have to commit to anything else?

No. The assessment is a separate decision from any transformation that follows.

What does it involve for our teams?

Typically five to seven days on site, focused 90-120 minute workshops for each service, and a structured data request. The best assessments have decision-makers in the room, a senior sponsor who can open doors, responsive data provision and candid, open workshops.

Is our data safe?

Ethics and governance is one of the five areas every assessment covers, and safeguards and human oversight are built into every recommendation.

Do you work with universities too?

Yes - one of our 12 assessments was delivered for a university, using the same approach.

DISCUSS AN AI ASSESSMENT FOR YOUR COUNCIL

We'll come and meet your SLT in person, at no cost, and walk through what an assessment could find for your council.

ics.ai/request-an-ai-assessment

Book a time with Aneeq Star: cal.read.ai/aneeq-a7zae

Watch our SMART: AI Assessment webinar

info@ics.ai | 01256 403 800