



# AI governance in the UK's local government sector and how Socitm can help

ASPE webinar

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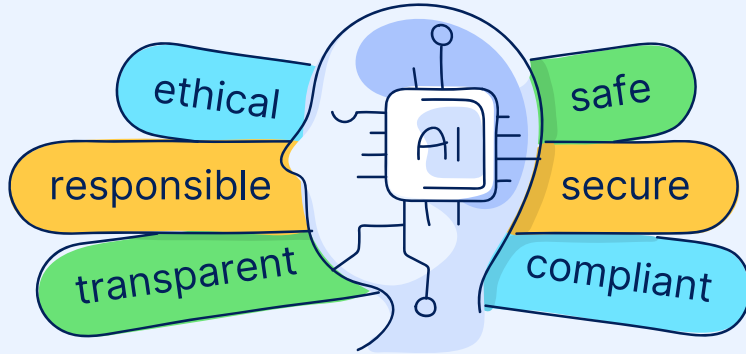


# How Socitm aligns with the GoLLM and Heriot-Watt AI readiness of UK local authorities study:

- *“Oversight bodies warn that **without consistent governance**, public-sector AI deployment risks fragmentation, unequal adoption and declining public trust.”*
- *“**Strong governance** prevents fragmented digital efforts and unmanaged risks. It creates the stability required for digital transformation to scale effectively.”*

# What is AI governance?

*AI governance refers to senior or high-level planning, management and oversight of AI technologies and systems focused on identifying AI risks and opportunities.*



- **Practical mechanisms for implementation, enforcement, and accountability.**
- **Ethical and societal implications of AI.**
- Governance is **ongoing, NOT** just a checklist or one-off audit.

## Why is AI governance important?

71%

...of county or unitary authority council staff in England **lack the necessary training** to use AI ([County Council Network](#))

50%

...of English councils **lack the right skills or capabilities** to use AI ([LGA](#))

>40%

...of UK public servants have **encountered errors** in the course of their work caused by use of GenAI tools ([Global Government Fintech](#))

> $\frac{3}{4}$

...of UK councils **do not have corporate usage policies** for AI or GenAI ([LocalGov](#))

# Risks and consequences of using AI without governance

**Flawed decision-making** resulting from systematic data **bias**, causing **discrimination** and **stereotyping**

**Over-dependence** on AI outputs

**Environmental harm**

**Ethical violations** due to lack of transparency and explainability

**Frauds, scams** and **manipulations**

**Inaccuracies** and loss of human judgment including **misinformation**

**Toxic, abusive** or **harmful** outputs

Unregulated data use leading to **privacy** or **security breaches**



# How are UK local authorities governing AI within their organisations?

## Authorities

Working groups,  
governance boards

## Strategy or vision for AI adoption across organisation

AI programmes of work

## Usage policies

AI or GenAI specific or existing  
information governance /  
data protection policies

## Guidance

Usability guidance, frameworks,  
procedures, checklists and  
approval processes for AI use

## Assessments

Risk, data protection impact,  
algorithmic impact

## Monitoring

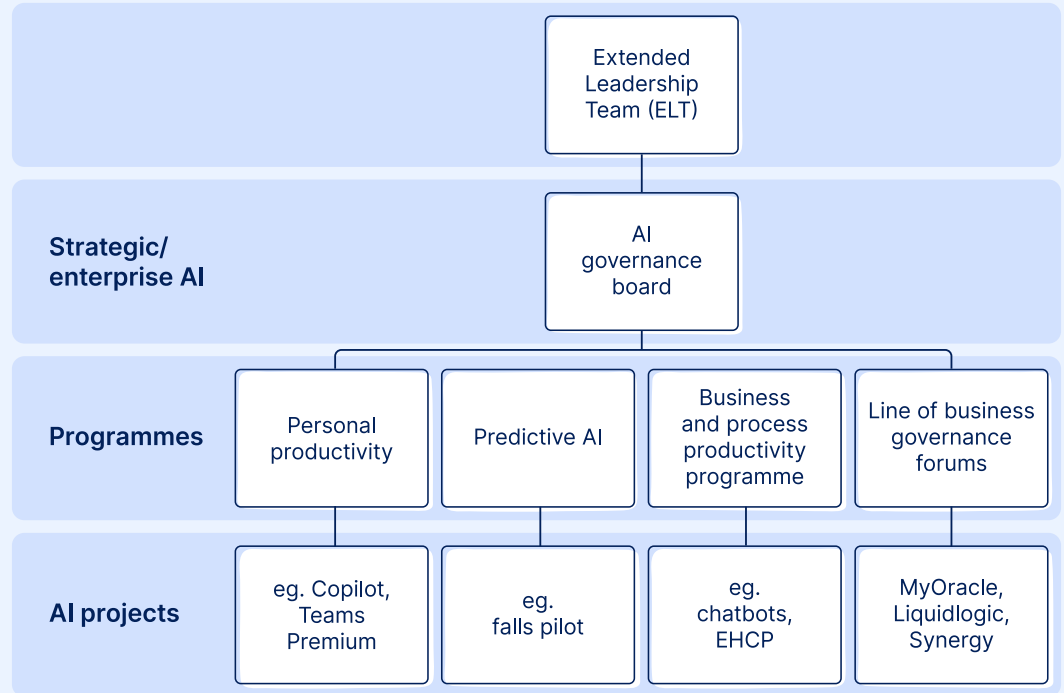
Audit and evaluation,  
documentation, logs,  
bias, transparency and  
explainability tools

## Roles & responsibilities

Senior Responsible Owner,  
AI project managers/officers vs.  
IT/digital/cyber/data/info  
governance leads

# AI governance example

Reporting structure of Norfolk County Council's AI governance board



# AI governance in practise

## Ask Cora - Digital assistant for carers

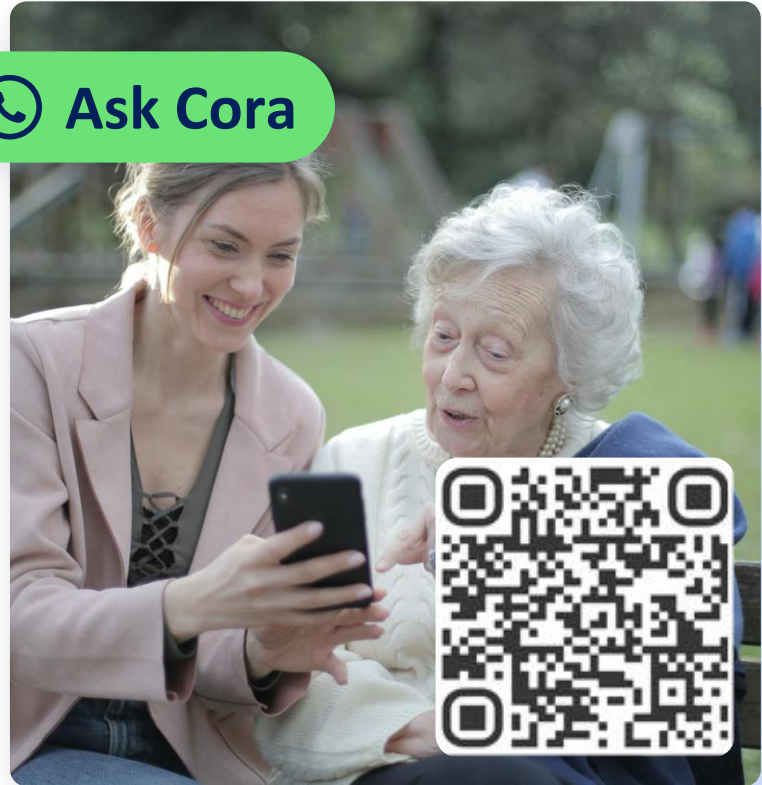
- Digital support for unpaid carers
- AI-powered WhatsApp digital assistant
- Trained to be open and honest, easily approachable by anyone, knowledgeable, kind, empathetic, patient and caring
- Access information and guidance 24/7



**Norfolk** County Council



**Ask Cora**



# Socitm's AI governance resources

Governance Board



## Sample terms of reference for an AI governance board (NEW!)

Template provided and adapted from Norfolk County Council.

[bit.ly/3YfiUXT](https://bit.ly/3YfiUXT)

Policy



## Sample corporate policy document for Gen AI use

Template produced with ALGIM (Association of Local Government Information Management), New Zealand.

[bit.ly/3WPpnaS](https://bit.ly/3WPpnaS)

Guidance



## Guidance on using GenAI large language models – Do's and don'ts infographic

Produced with ALGIM and LOLA (Linked Organisation of Local Authority ICT Societies).

[bit.ly/4jJ0xU7](https://bit.ly/4jJ0xU7)



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