AI Readiness and its nuances for local government

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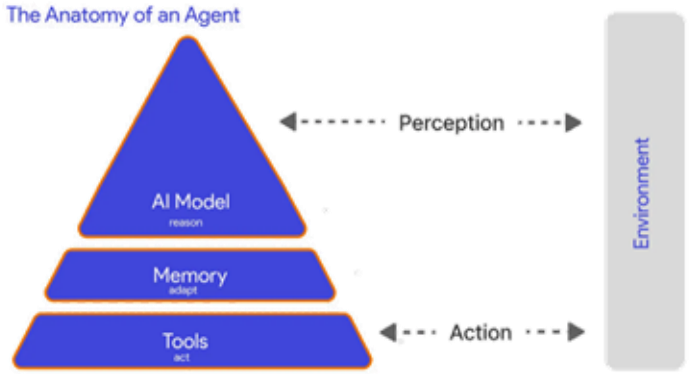
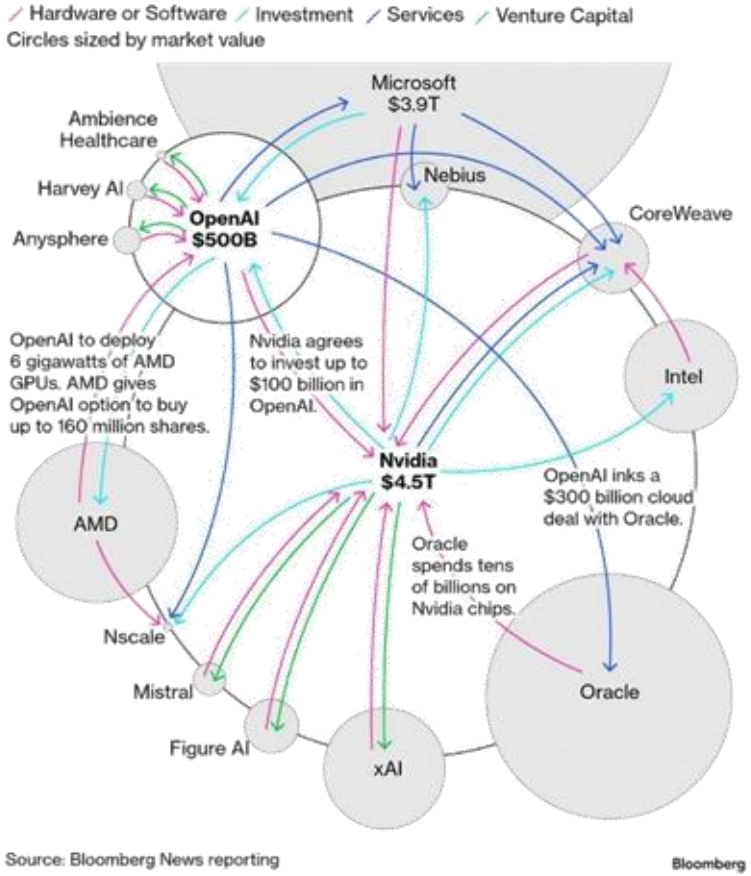
Why AI Readiness?





TREND

Hyperautomation

Increased focuses on growth, digitalization and operational excellence have highlighted a need for better, more widespread automation.

Hyperautomation is a business-driven approach to identify, vet and automate as many business and IT processes as possible. It requires the orchestrated use of multiple technologies tools and platforms, including RPA, low-code platforms and process mining tools.

How It's Used Today:

A global oil and gas company has 14 concurrent hyperautomation initiatives. These initiatives include targeted task automation, industrializing over 90 different areas including intelligent document processing, and automation of geoscience and offshore oil drilling operations. Decisions on what to automate are made strategically and are premised on targeted business outcomes for either quality, time to market, business agility or innovation

By 2024, diffuse hyperautomation spending will drive up the total cost of ownership 40-fold, making adaptive governance a differentiating factor in corporate performance.

Source: Gartner

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What is AI?

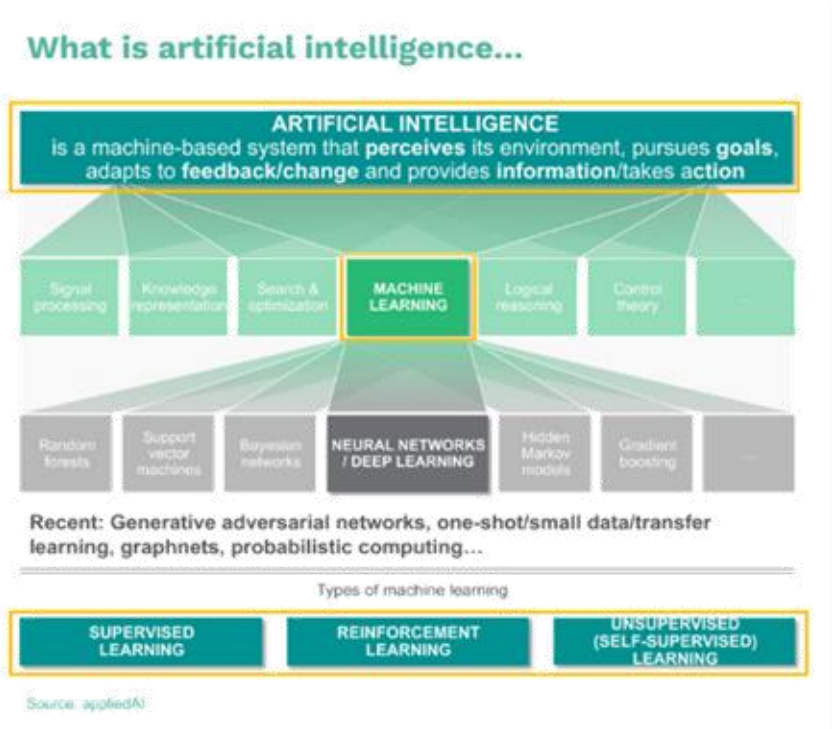
"a science and set of computational technologies which perform and continuously improve their performance through learning and self-correction without direct human intervention"

(Brynjolfsson & McAffee, 2017; Stone et al, 2016; Russell & Norvig, 2010)

AI sub-types: Machine Learning (ML), Deep Learning (DL), Natural Language Processing (NLP), Computer Vision, Artificial Neural Networks (ANNs), Large Language Models (LLMs), etc.

"AI washing" – the practice of touting a technology solution as AI when it may be no more than simple automation or a new marketing spin for an existing application

Enterprisers Project



https://eit.europa.eu/sites/default/files/creation_of_a_taxonomy_for_the_european_ai_ecosystem_final.pdf

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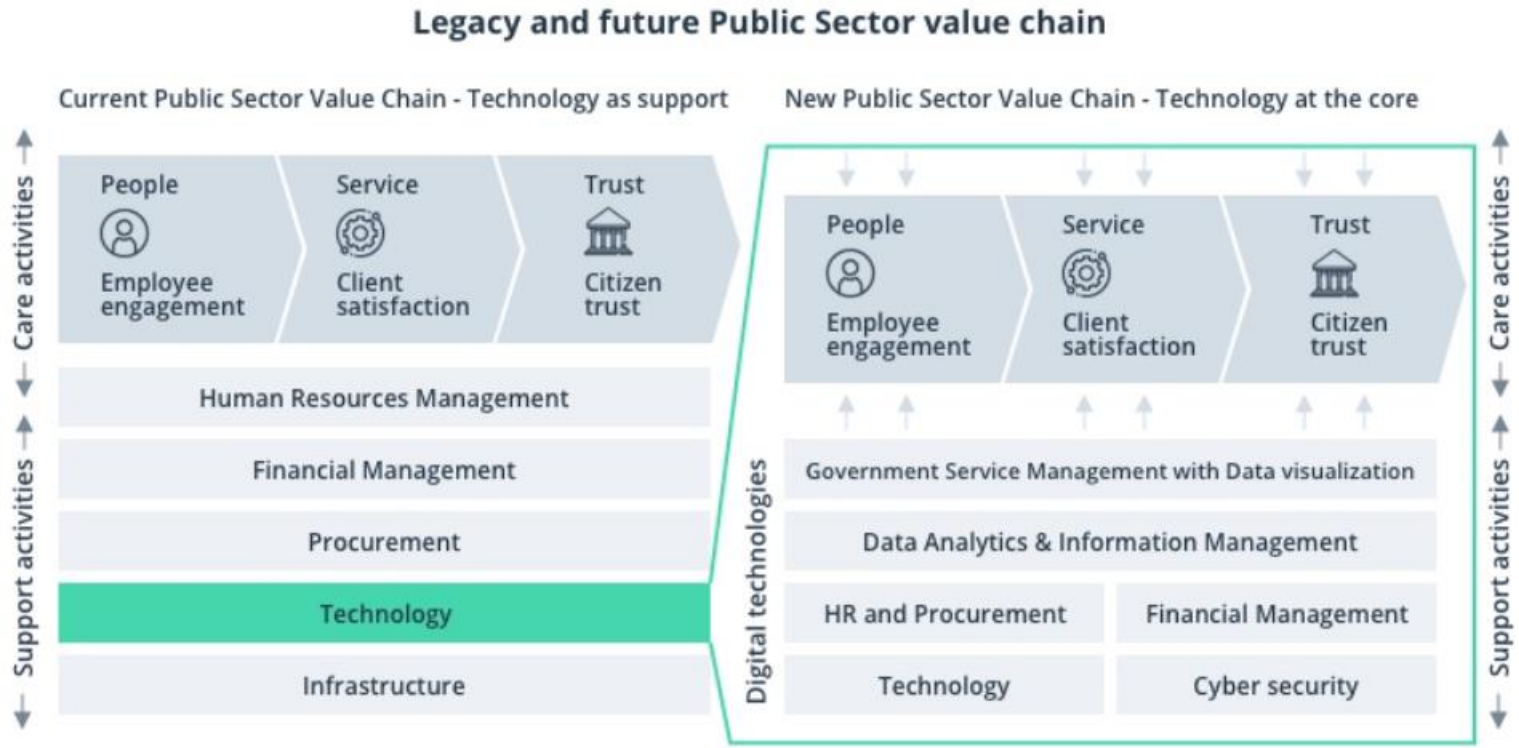

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What's the risk?

- AI is moving from niche to a **key feature of public sector transformation**, but readiness is uneven across councils.
- Local delivery is constrained by **variable capacity, resources, and data readiness**, creating uneven risk exposure
- Risk teams need to treat AI as an **enterprise risk**: service resilience, governance discipline, and public trust

"How ready are UK local authorities to adopt and scale Artificial Intelligence?"

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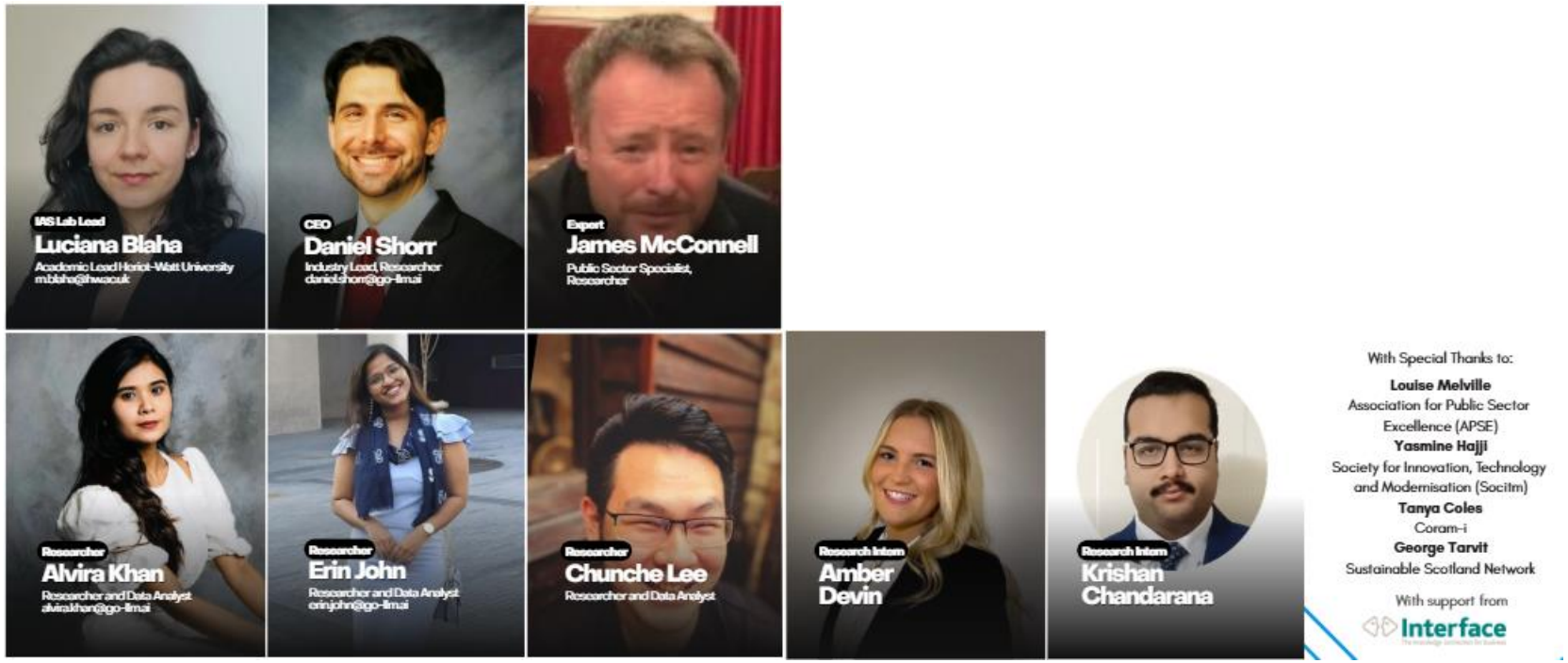
Team



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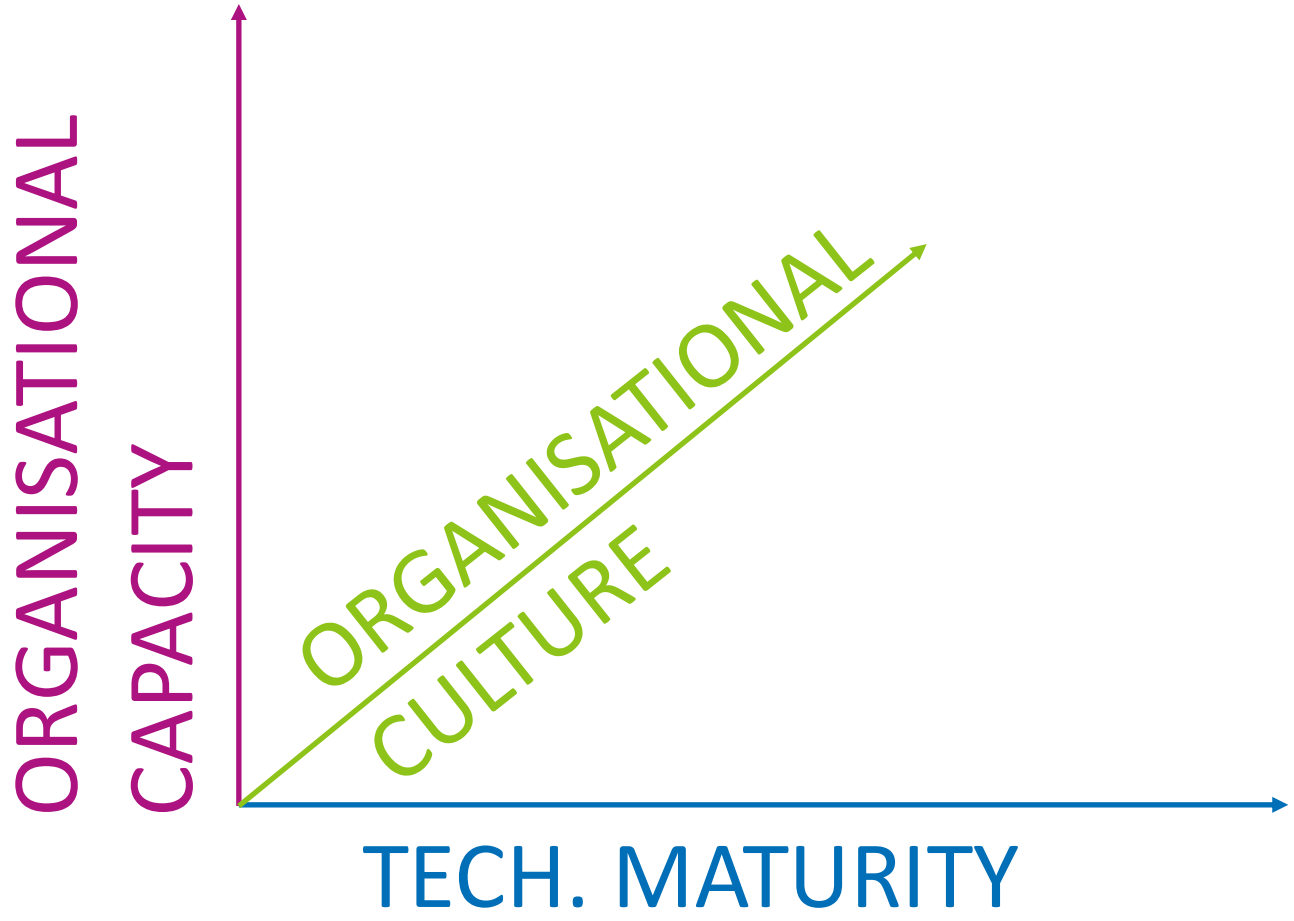
What is Readiness?



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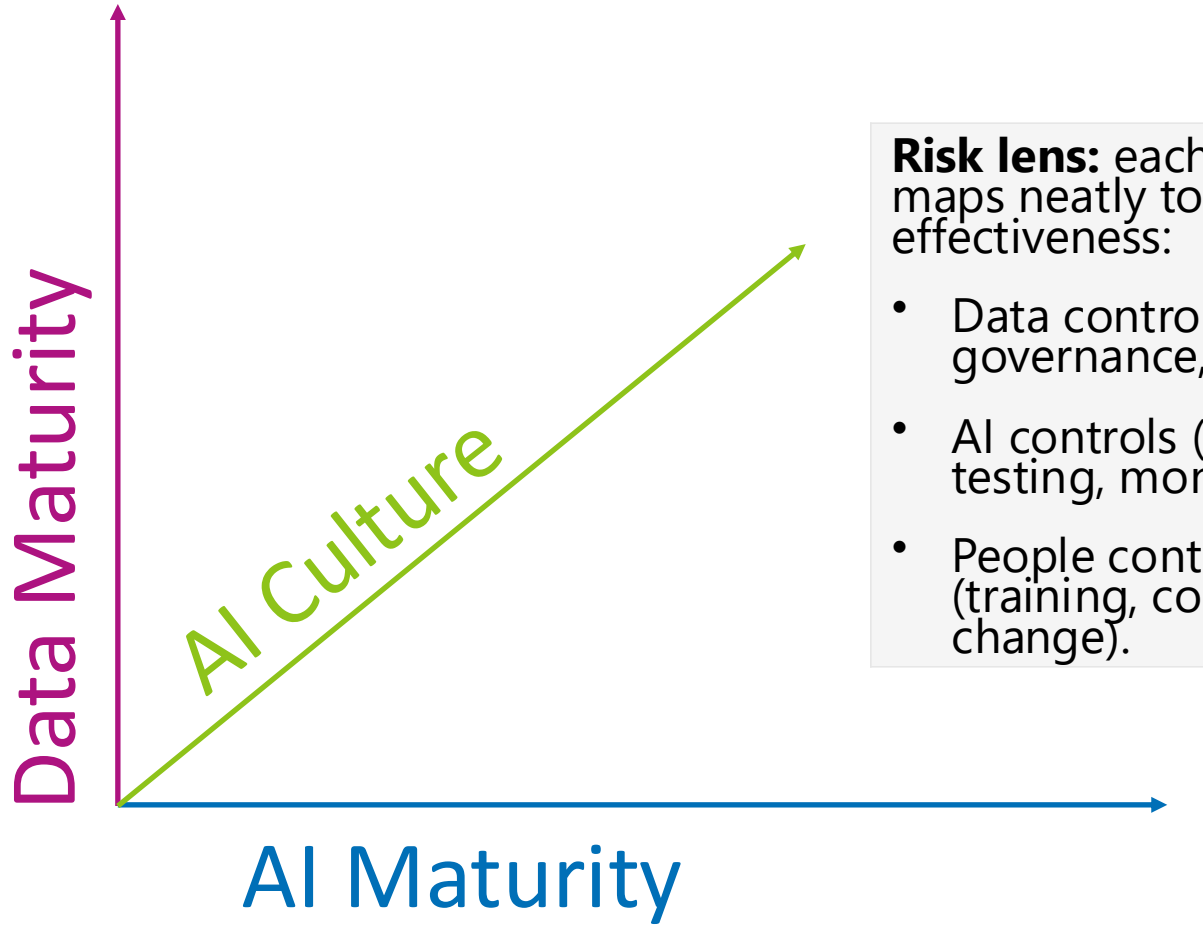

Risk lens: each dimension maps neatly to control effectiveness:

- Data controls (quality, governance, security),
- AI controls (assurance, testing, monitoring),
- People controls (training, comms, change).

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Scoring

Data Maturity	AI Maturity	AI Culture
Ability to collect/manage/use data reliably and securely to inform decisions	Capability to understand/use AI and incorporate it into operations for scalable efficiency/effectiveness	Leadership support and staff openness toward experimentation and data-driven working, supported by practices like training and communication.

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Scoring

Data Maturity	AI Maturity	AI Culture
Poor and inconsistent practices around data (1)	No interest in AI adoption/experimentation at this time (1)	Has little to no messaging or awareness-raising about AI technologies or their potential impact among staff (1)
Beginning our journey in terms of valuing and working with data (2)	Early interest in and conversations around AI strategy (2)	Has top leadership that recognizes the value of AI technologies, though staff involvement or communication is limited. (2)
Growing our capabilities in terms of driving value from data (3)	Initial experimentation and pilot projects with AI (3)	Acknowledges the potential benefits of AI and includes employees and stakeholders in early discussions and awareness efforts.(3)
Mastering good practice with data consistently seen as a priority (4)	AI used in at least one workflow (4)	Prioritises experimentation with AI in certain operations, with relevant staff engagement and feedback considered during implementation.(4)
Broad and deep capability with prediction of future data needs, seen as an exemplar (5)	AI already deployed across several business units and processes (5)	Has successfully integrated AI into some operations or services, actively involving employees in ongoing evaluation and improvement (5)

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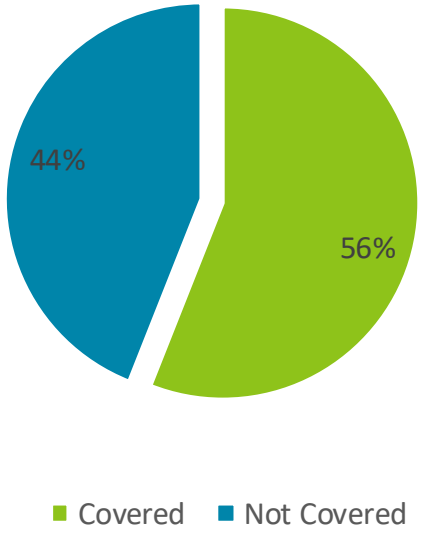
Sample

Region	Councils ranked	Total
England	153	319
Wales	12	22
Scotland	32	32
Northern Ireland	11	11



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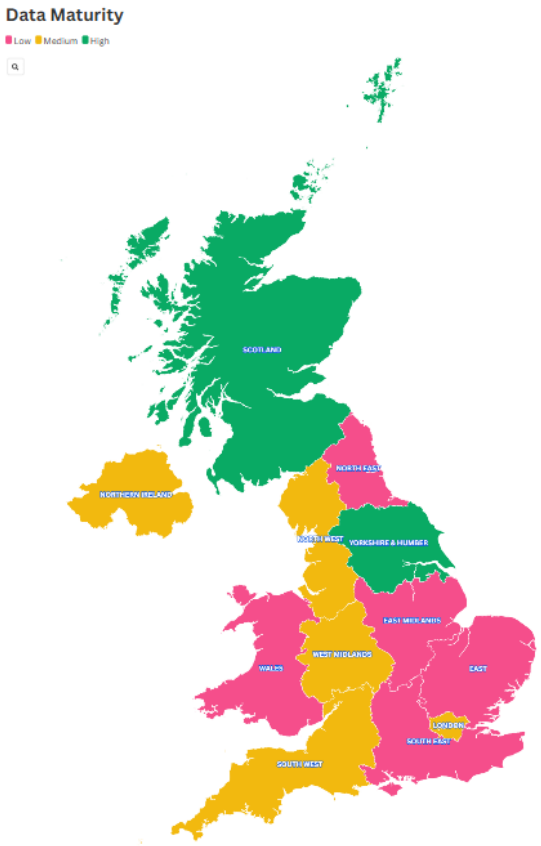
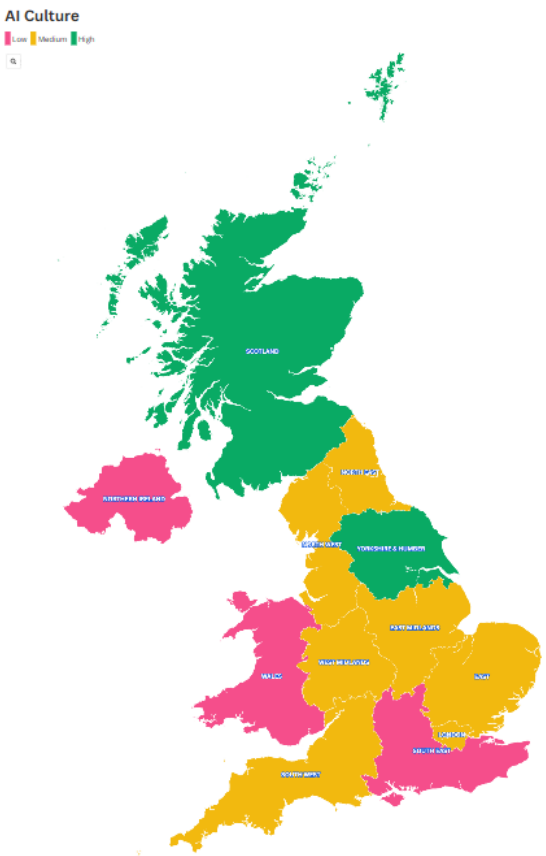
Findings





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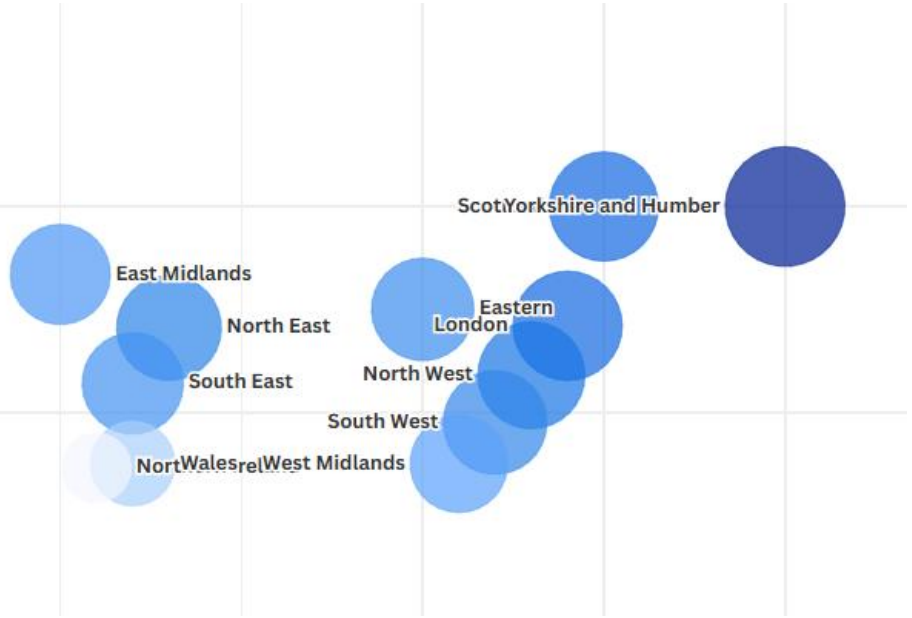
Findings

1. UK local authorities are engaging with AI, but progressing at uneven speeds, creating inconsistent control environments and assurance challenges.

2. Councils often showed innovation enthusiasm that outpaces organisational foundations needed to scale AI safely and consistently.

3. Readiness is driven more by leadership ambition, governance discipline, clarity of digital strategy and data capability than size alone.



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Findings

Performance Diagnostics: Overperformers vs Laggards

1. Outperformers show that high maturity is ***not tied to size alone; stronger internal leadership, cohesive governance and partnership maximisation*** explained variance in the study.

2. Laggards underperformed relative to their structural advantages due to ***strategic fragmentation, unclear ownership of data work, legacy processes, and slower cultural adoption.***

Audit implication: think about governance, capability and accountability—not just technical compliance.

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Risk SWOT

Strengths

National/sector guidance and ecosystems provide a base councils can align to for governance and ethical direction.

Weaknesses

Legacy IT, fragmented data systems, uneven internal capability impede scaling from pilots to consistent services, leadership and narrative misalignments

Opportunities

National guidance encourages “scan–pilot–scale” replication of what works. Best Practices can be found in each region

Threats

Without consistent governance, leadership and literacy, risk of fragmentation, unequal adoption and declining public trust, especially in sensitive domains.

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What Good looks like

Five common factors associated with consistent high maturity:

- **Mature digital governance** to prevent fragmented efforts and unmanaged risks, leadership, and literacy. Then, governance-led data integration into service processes (reducing silos and conflicting standards).
- **Long-term reinvestment or partnering** in interoperable data infrastructure, using shared resources, identifying key vendor ecosystems.
- **Partnerships** (universities, SMEs, hubs, neighbours) to pool expertise and capability, develop knowledge, skills and aptitudes.
- **Audit translation:** using best practice guidelines for regular performance and impact reviews.

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Categories & Examples

We reviewed 800+ UK council initiatives, which largely fell into these categories.

- **Conversational & service triage AI (resident + contact centre)**
  - Chat/voice, FAQ, routing, agent-assist
- **Staff productivity & "knowledge work" GenAI:**
  - Summarise, draft, search, explain (e.g., Copilot, meeting notes, policy Q&A)
- **Intelligent automation (process + document/data automation)**
  - RPA, forms/invoices, casework workflows, classification & extraction
- **Perception & enforcement in the physical world**
  - Computer vision, ANPR, fleet safety analytics, compliance evidence
- **Predict, target & optimise**
  - Predictive analytics, demand/risk scoring, optimisation, simulation/digital twins

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Spotlight example: D.A.V.E. by GoLLM

D.A.V.E. (Dynamic Analytics Visualisation Engine) was developed by GoLLM in response to a clear need from an early-adopting Scottish local authority: a faster, more cost-effective, and more consistent way to analyse large-scale feedback.

Use cases include:

- **Public consultations**
- **Employee engagement surveys**
- **Programme evaluation**
- **And other feedback-to-insights workflows**

Link to request a demo, meeting, or trial

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