

Local Authority AI Opportunity Canvas

An editable template to help councils define a problem worth solving, test whether AI is appropriate, and scope a pilot that can be governed properly.

Use this canvas before any procurement or pilot approval. It is designed to keep the discussion focused on public value, service design and assurance — not on technology for its own sake.

Recommended approach: complete this template with a service lead, digital lead, information governance representative and operational owner in the same room.

How to use this template

Complete one canvas per proposed use case.

Write in plain English. If the answer is vague, the use case is not ready.

Keep the first pilot narrow: one service, one workflow, one owner, one measurement plan.

Core fields

Field	Notes / your answer
Use case title	Give the use case a plain-English name, for example: 'Adult social care case note drafting' or 'Resident front-door triage for housing support'.
Service area	Which council service owns the problem?
Problem statement	Describe the current bottleneck or pain point. What is happening today, and why does it matter?
Who benefits first?	Which residents, staff teams or partner organisations would see the first benefit?
Resident outcome	What resident outcome would improve if this worked?
Operational outcome	What team outcome would improve? Think: faster response, reduced admin, improved consistency, reduced avoidable demand.
Why AI?	Why is AI the right tool for this problem? Could a simpler rules-based, content or process change solve it instead?
Human role by design	Which parts of the process must stay human? Where will approval, judgement or escalation sit?
Data required	What data, documents or knowledge sources will the tool need? Include any personal or special category data.
Systems and integrations	Which systems, websites, directories or case management tools would this touch?

Risks and concerns	List the top risks: privacy, bias, accessibility, hallucination, vendor lock-in, safeguarding, staff adoption, reputational risk.
Assurance needed	Which approvals or reviews are needed? DPIA, security review, procurement, equality impact assessment, accessibility review, union engagement, service governance.
Pilot scope	Define the first 90-day pilot: team, volume, channels, data, success measures, exclusions.
Baseline today	What is the current baseline? Time taken, calls handled, response times, error rate, satisfaction, backlog, cost, or another relevant measure.
Success measures	List 3 to 5 measurable outcomes for the pilot.
Go / no-go decision point	What must be true at the end of the pilot for the council to continue, pause or stop?

Worked example

Field	Example
Worked example	AI-enabled digital front door for cost of living and wider resident support
Problem statement	Residents are unsure where to go for help, arrive through the wrong channels, or contact the council only when their situation has worsened.
Resident outcome	Residents get quicker signposting, clearer next steps and easier access to support outside office hours.
Operational outcome	Routine information requests are handled more consistently, freeing staff for more complex enquiries.
Human role by design	Complex, urgent or safeguarding-related cases are escalated to people. Staff remain responsible for final decisions.
Pilot scope	Single service area or clearly bounded information set; monitored launch with named service owner and weekly review.

Decision test

If the council cannot explain the public value, the human role and the measures for success in one page, the use case is not ready for procurement.