Freedom of Information – Response – 26769

I am submitting an FOI request seeking to understand how public bodies are exploring or applying Artificial Intelligence (AI) to support service delivery. These questions are intended to gather insights into current practice, governance, and future planning. They should not be interpreted as critical; we are simply researching how public services are approaching emerging technologies.

Please provide answers to the following:

1. AI Use in Operations
1. Does your organisation currently use any form of Artificial Intelligence (AI) or automated systems in its operations?
Yes

o If yes, please list the tools or systems in use and provide a brief description of their purpose (e.g., administrative support, triage, analytics, chatbot services, etc.).
o If not, please state whether your organisation has explored or piloted any AI-based technologies in the past 3 years.
Suffolk County Council (SCC) uses the following AI tools:

- Microsoft 365 Copilot – Assisting with everyday productivity

- Vaisala – used to survey highways street furniture

In addition, suppliers, such as LiquidLogic, provide AI tools within their applications to support business processes, for example, LiquidLogic Formflow and Beam Magic Notes.

2. AI for Decision-Making
2. Does your organisation use AI or algorithmic systems to support or inform decision-making in any area (e.g., resource allocation, risk assessments, case prioritisation)?
No

o If yes, please describe the type of decision-making supported and the nature of the AI's role (e.g., advisory, automated assessment, automated decision).
o Please also confirm whether human oversight is applied.
Whilst AI or algorithmic systems are not used to support or inform decision making within SCC, human oversight is required of every use of AI to ensure that any information produced by way of administrative support is accurate.

3. AI Chatbots and Customer Interaction
3. Does your organisation currently use chatbots or virtual assistants—AI-driven or rules-based—to support public enquiries or internal staff functions?
Yes

o If yes, please specify their purpose, whether they are AI-based, and when they were implemented.

Non-AI based Chatbots are used within some internal services, such as IT and HR systems.

4. Policies and Governance
4. Does your organisation have any formal policy, strategy, or guidance relating to the use of Artificial Intelligence or automated decision-making?
o If yes, please supply a copy or provide a link.
Yes – SCC's Artificial Intelligence (AI) policy is published on the council's website and may be accessed here.

In addition to the above published policy, there is a range of internal guidance available to staff about the use and considerations that should be made whilst using AI tools.

o If not, please indicate whether such a policy is in development.
N/A

5. Data Protection and Ethics
5. If AI systems are used, what measures or frameworks does your organisation have in place to ensure:
o Compliance with data protection and privacy obligations
o Transparency for service users
o Ethical or responsible use
(For example, DPIAs, algorithmic impact assessments, ethical guidelines—if applicable.)
Aside from the AI policy provided in response to question 4 above, SCC has comprehensive processes in place to ensure compliance with data protection legislation. These include a robust DPIA process whereby any new use of tech, including AI tools, (or the review of any existing processes which involve personal data) are assessed for any risks to information and where appropriate steps are taken to mitigate those risks, or processing does not take place.

SCC also has an Ethics Panel which will be called to consider any ethical questions that may be raised about the use of personal data, including the use of AI tools. Terms of Reference for the Ethics Panel are available on the council's website.

6. Trials, Pilots, or Future Plans
6. Has your organisation run any pilots, trials, or exploratory projects involving AI in the last 3 years, or does it plan to do so in the next 12–24 months?
Yes

o If yes, please provide brief details of the purpose, timeline, and status of these initiatives.
Both transcription and summarising services to help reduce recording time for front line social care workers and social care call centre staff. (Liquid Logic Formflow, Beam Magic Notes).

Copilot Studio & Oracle investigations to provide ease of access to HR and Financial policies by employees.

Copilot Studio Agent to provide access to find information on the public website.

Two trials (currently paused) one with Agilisys and one with Invision 360 to explore AI drafting tools that support the creation of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) more quickly, more consistently, and at a higher standard. Helping councils meet timeliness

requirements and free up caseworkers to spend more meaningful time with children and their families.

In addition, there is a pipeline of work to investigate potential AI solutions across the organisation

7. Staff Training and Awareness
7. Does your organisation provide any training, guidance, or internal communications to staff relating to AI, its use, or its implications?
Yes

o If yes, please describe the type of training or include documents if available.
As well as the AI policy provided above, there is a suite of guidance for staff that is available on SCC's intranet which includes practical advice on what staff need to consider when using AI Tools, including what SCC information can be used alongside AI tools, data protection obligations that need to be accounted for and the need for transparency when AI Tools are being used.

A number of webinars were held for staff which provided an overview of the capabilities of AI Tools, and how they could be used in line with the council's data protection policies.