



AI Readiness Checklist for Local Authority Chief Executives

A strategic self-assessment

Introduction

This checklist enables local authority leaders to quickly assess their organisation's AI readiness. It also includes sections on:

- The primary questions CEOs must keep front of mind
- The critical matters to address before embarking on the AI journey.

Keep in mind that this is an unsophisticated self-assessment. It does not 'weight' the responses. This tool will be useful for those at the start of their AI journey.

Scoring Instructions

Score each statement as: Yes = 1 point, No = 0 points.

1. Leadership and strategic direction

- We have discussed AI at executive team level.
- We have agreed what AI means for our authority.
- AI is viewed as a strategic capability rather than an isolated technology project.
- We have identified how AI supports organisational priorities and outcomes.
- AI forms part of our transformation agenda.

Section Score: ____ / 5

2. Governance, risk and trust

- Clear governance exists for AI use.
- Legal, regulatory and privacy implications have been assessed.
- Bias and discrimination risks are evaluated.
- Human oversight exists for AI-assisted decisions.
- Public trust and transparency have been considered.

Section Score: ____ / 5



3. Workforce and organisational capability

- We understand how AI may affect different roles.
- Staff have access to AI awareness training.
- Managers understand AI implications for teams.
- Experimentation is encouraged within agreed guardrails.
- Learning from AI pilots is shared.

Section Score: ____ / 5

4. Data and technology foundations

- We know where critical data resides.
- Data quality is sufficient for AI use.
- Data ownership is clear.
- Technology architecture can support AI tools.
- Security controls have been reviewed.

Section Score: ____ / 5

5. Service innovation and organisational impact

- Priority AI use cases have been identified.
- Potential resident benefits are understood.
- Opportunities to improve productivity have been assessed.
- AI could reduce administrative burden.
- AI could improve organisational decision-making.

Section Score: ____ / 5



Sense. Decide. Act.

6. Ethics, sovereignty and strategic independence

- We have established ethical AI principles.
- We have defined decisions that should never be delegated to AI.
- We know where local authority data is stored and processed.
- We understand whether data leaves the jurisdiction.
- We have assessed dependence (risk) on a single AI supplier.
- Contracts include data portability provisions.
- We can export our data in standard formats.
- We have considered open standards and interoperability.
- We are building internal capability rather than relying solely on vendors.
- We have contingency plans if a supplier changes pricing, terms or availability.

Section Score: ____ / 10

Overall AI Readiness score

Raw Score = ____ / 35

AI Readiness Score = (Raw Score ÷ 35) × 100

Final Score = ____ / 100

Readiness Interpretation

Score	Level	Interpretation
0-20	AI Vulnerable	Significant gaps in leadership, governance and capability.
21-40	AI Aware	AI is recognised but readiness remains limited.
41-60	AI Exploring	Early foundations are emerging but remain inconsistent.
61-80	AI Ready	Core capabilities are in place to scale AI responsibly.
81-100	AI Adaptive	AI is integrated into an organisational design optimised for an increasingly uncertain world.



Sense. Decide. Act.

Strategic questions for CEOs

How will AI improve outcomes for citizens?

How will we maintain public trust?

Are we building organisational capability or buying dependency?

What are the consequences of vendor lock-in?

How do we increase organisational intelligence without reducing organisational autonomy?

Critical risk flags

Regardless of overall score, executive attention is required if any of the following apply:

- No AI governance exists.
- Staff are using AI tools without guidance.
- No assessment of vendor lock-in has been completed.
- No ethical AI principles have been established.
- No executive-level ownership exists.
- No understanding of where local authority data is processed.

About

This checklist was developed by Ade McCormack through his Intelligent Organisation work.

Learn more about the [Intelligent Organisation](#).

Learn more about [Ade McCormack](#).

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