AI Strategy

1. Does the council have an official AI strategy or roadmap?
   - If yes, please provide a copy or summary.
   - If no, are there plans to develop one?

2. Has the council allocated a specific budget for AI initiatives in the last three financial years?
   - If so, please provide details of the budget allocation and expenditure.

3. Are there specific teams, departments, or individuals responsible for overseeing AI strategy or implementation within the council?
   - If yes, could you provide their name, role, and contact information (email address and phone number)?

4. Has the council engaged with external consultants or organisations to develop or implement AI projects? If so, please provide details.

RESPONSE

1. Over the past 12 months Wigan Council have actively been developing and testing GenAI tools to support our core missions under our new era "Progress with Unity." This refreshed Council Strategy aims to enhance the lives of our residents by fostering greater equity, improving service delivery, and promoting community well-being. Indeed, a key transformation strand set out in the plan is to "Transform the way we operate through technology and AI underpinned by a relentless focus on data and insight."
   About Progress with Unity: A new era for Wigan Borough
   Roadmap – Yes, a wider strategy/road map will be developed during 2025/26

2. £150,000 allocated to AI driven digital solutions.

3. GenAI Working Group:
   Core members from Digital Services, Information Governance, Audit, guest members from HR, PR and other specific services ad hoc.
   Rob Gregory – Assistant Director, Digital Transformation,
   r.gregory@wigan.gov.uk
   07340 312867

4. The Council are working to co-produce GenAI tools with our Innovation Partners Agilisys Transform as a part of our managed IT contract.

AI Projects and Use Cases

5. Is the council currently using or piloting any AI tools or solutions?
   - If yes, what are the primary use cases (e.g., chatbots, fraud detection, process automation)?
   - Please list any vendors or solutions used.

6. Has the council completed or planned any feasibility studies or pilot projects related to AI?
   - If yes, please provide a summary of findings or expected outcomes.

Governance and Ethical Considerations

7. How does the council ensure ethical considerations in the use of AI, such as avoiding bias in algorithms or ensuring transparency?
   - Are there governance frameworks in place to address these issues?

8. Has the council undertaken any risk assessments for the implementation of AI technologies?
   - If yes, please provide details or copies of any assessments.

5. LLM tool co-produced with Agilisys Transform called QuickAction. Some use cases include:
   - Summarisation
   - Minute taking
   - Shadow approval of applications
   - Analysis of survey data

6. Extended testing of chatbot functionality. Lots of learning and some great results but platform not quite right and so continuing to trial on a different platform.
   Pilot of recording and summarising Adult Social Care Supported Self Assessments. Great results but ongoing pilot.
   Upcoming plans to trial Microsoft 365 Co-pilot with a focussed user group to assess benefits.

7. The GenAI Working Group is our governance group that discuss and consider all use cases. Information Governance colleagues are key to this. The group compliments the work done by our Joint Architecture Group (JAG) who robustly review the security elements of any solutions. Our QuickAction solution uses a governed corpus and only analyses the data that is directly fed into it. This reduces the risk of bias. Our chatbot pilot also used a governed corpus of information, along with a hierarchical approach to which data should be considered as a priority. Our GenAI Policy mandates that human oversight is key and that AI must not be used to make decisions.

8. I can confirm that assessments have taken place, however the Council confirms that it holds this information. Although it is being withheld from disclosure. Section 31(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA) states that information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice the prevention or detection of crime.

9. How does the council comply with data protection regulations (e.g., GDPR) when implementing AI projects?

9. Information Governance colleagues are core members of the GenAI Working Group.

Talent and Skills

10. What proportion of the council's staff has received AI-related training or upskilling in the past three years?

10. This data has not been captured.

11. Does the council employ data scientists, AI specialists, or other technical staff dedicated to AI initiatives?
   o If yes, how many, and in what roles?

11. This serviceis provided via the Managed IT Service Provider- Agilisys.

Infrastructure and Budget

12. What technological infrastructure is currently in place to support AI initiatives (e.g., data storage, computing resources, cloud platforms)?

12. The Council confirms that it holds this information. Although it is being withheld from disclosure. Section 31(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA) states that information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice the prevention or detection of crime.

13. Has the council faced challenges in implementing AI due to resource or infrastructure limitations?
   o If yes, please provide details.

13. No

14. Is there a long-term budget allocation plan for AI adoption or expansion?

14. Not at this stage.

Public Engagement

15. Has the council conducted any public consultations or outreach efforts regarding the use of AI in council operations?

15. Not to date – however the GenAI Working Group are working closely with colleagues in PR to discover the best way to approach this.

16. Are there mechanisms for residents to understand or influence how AI is being used by the council?

16. Not to date – however something that is to be considered as above.

Contact Information

17. Could you provide the name, role, and contact details (email address and phone number) of the person(s) responsible for IT or AI adoption within the council?

17. As per point 3.