Agilisys

Building Responsible AI in Local Government:

How Agilisys Helps Councils Procure and Implement AI Ethically and Responsibly

Introduction

The Local Government Association's new guidance, Responsible Buying: How to Build Equality & Data Protection into Your AI Commissioning, sets the tone for a future where technology in local government is not only effective - but also ethical. At Agilisys, we fully support this shift. With 25+ years of experience partnering with councils, we've seen how powerful AI can be when implemented with transparency, inclusion, and accountability. Whether it is accelerating EHCPs or supporting Adult Social Care teams, we help local authorities integrate Generative AI in ways that reflect the public sector's values and obligations.

But responsible AI does not begin at procurement - and it certainly does not end at go-live. Councils must ask the right questions, engage the right people, and build the right governance frameworks. This report lays the foundation for that approach - and we are proud to stand with our public sector partners to make it happen. As technology evolves, so must our commitment to equity, safety and public trust. Download our latest insights to understand how your council can commission and embed AI solutions responsibly - ensuring better outcomes without compromising on ethics or data protection.

1. Asking the Right Questions from the Start

The LGA rightly emphasises that effective commissioning of AI solutions begins with knowing what to ask. Many councils are still building their confidence in this space, especially when it comes to understanding the ethical implications of automation, data processing, and algorithmic decision-making.

At Agilisys, we help local authorities frame the right questions during early discovery and supplier evaluation stages to ensure solutions add-value in the long term. For example:

▷ What strategic outcomes are behind wanting AI in the first place? Are you trying to design services, improve citizen experiences, improve service quality, or operate more efficiently? Or lots of the above?

▷ Does your skills base and talent strategy align with your procurement appetite? And what is the level of readiness for AI adoption across your people?

▷ What kind of data including personal data will be processed or stored, where, why and how?

▷ How has the supplier tested for potential bias in their model? Can the supplier clearly explain how the AI system arrives at its outputs?

▷ Do you understand how any new products would fit into your rationalised Enterprise Architecture without leading to functional proliferation and duplication over time? (Are you adding, or replacing?)

When we support councils to procure AI tools, we recommend including cross-functional teams - such as Data Protection Officers, Equality Leads, and Service Managers - so that risks and opportunities are understood across the organisation. We also check that your existing Enterprise Architecture doesn't already offer key capabilities, to ensure you don't 'pay twice'.

With the end customer at the heart of what we do, our engagement typically includes structured supplier question packs, template evaluation frameworks, and access to our in-house experts in AI governance.

> **Councils do not need to be AI experts, but they do need confidence they are on a path to realisable value and that the right checks are in place. We bring a structured, proven approach to procurement that helps avoid costly or ethically risky decisions.**
>
> Ross K, Director of Innovation, Agilisys

2. Supporting Councils at Every Stage of the AI Lifecycle

The LGA notes that AI deployment should be treated as a continuous journey, not a one-off technology purchase. We strongly agree. In our work with councils, we provide tailored support across every stage of the lifecycle - from pre-procurement scoping through to live deployment and ongoing improvement.

When working with local authorities, we recommend:

During Procurement:	During Implementation:	Post-Go-Live:
Clarify the legal basis for processing data under UK GDPR and ensure that there is clear reference to any equality impacts in business cases and project scoping documents.	Engage frontline teams in user testing of our Agilisys EHCP tool, team huddles and feedback cycles to ensure our Generative AI tools reflect the realities of service delivery and all data protection processes are being followed.	Monitor outputs and outcomes with a structured review cycle with frontline teams as well as transparent reporting so councils can see how and in what ways their staff are using AI tools to improve citizen outcomes.

Working closely with frontline teams is the most rewarding part of the work Agilisys does with Local Authorities, and we ensure close coordination with our partners at every stage. This is especially critical for services such as Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) or Safeguarding, where decisions directly affect children and families.

By collaborating together with the professionals who know their communities best, we co-design tools that not only save time but also improve the quality and consistency of support, ultimately helping deliver better outcomes for those who need it most.

> **The technology is just one part of the puzzle. To really make AI work in critical services like EHCP provision or Safeguarding, councils need strong governance, good training, and a way to learn from the people using it day to day - especially those on the frontline who know what families actually need.**
>
> Ethan Andrews, Head of Delivery, Agilisys Transform

3. Making DPIAs Count: More than a Tick-Box Exercise

Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs) are a legal requirement for AI systems that process personal data - but they are also a key opportunity for understanding the broader implications of a new tool. The LGA guide cautions against treating DPIAs as an afterthought or formality. We agree.

At Agilisys, we work with councils to develop meaningful & robust DPIAs that go beyond compliance. Our approach includes:

▷ Co-authoring the DPIA with both data protection officers and programme leads to ensure relevance, clarity and completeness.

▷ Describing in plain language the nature, scope, context, and purpose of personal data processing by the AI system and the necessary safeguards that are in place to protect sensitive data.

▷ Identifying any need for further training, or mitigations based on the risks identified and helping councils address and act on these.

When we implement AI with local authorities, we recommend completing the DPIA at the start of the process - ideally before procurement - so that findings can shape system design and supplier requirements.

> **We treat DPIAs as critical design documents, not legal afterthoughts. They are how we ensure our technologies respect citizen's rights, builds public confidence, and meet the highest standards of ethical governance.**
>
> Pippa Barlow, Delivery Associate, Agilisys Transform

Conclusion: A Trusted Partner for Responsible AI in Local Government

Councils across the UK are beginning to realise the potential of AI to transform service delivery, clear backlogs, and create more time for frontline professionals to spend with residents. But the journey must be responsible, inclusive and transparent from the outset.

With over two decades of public sector expertise, Agilisys is proud to stand alongside councils as a trusted partner—helping them understand the risks, ask the right questions, and implement AI in ways that protect communities and promote better outcomes for all.

We are not just bringing technology. We are bringing the support, governance, and values that local government deserves.

Our role goes beyond software—it's about creating the conditions for safe experimentation, co-designing with those closest to the challenge, and ensuring that no decision is made in isolation. We understand that ethical and effective AI isn't just about what a tool can do, but how it fits into local priorities, existing systems, and lived realities.

As the sector moves forward, we are committed to helping every council move with confidence—from first conversation to long-term impact. Because responsible AI isn't a destination. It's a practice. And we're here to walk that journey with you.

Agilisys

If you're interested in learning more about how Agilisys supports local government with responsible AI,

follow us on	**visit our website at**	**get in touch directly at**
in www.linkedin.com/company/agilisys/	⊕ www.agilisys.co.uk	✉ info@agilisys.co.uk