Artificial Intelligence
Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee
6th March 2025

Coventry City Council

coventry.gov.uk

Items we will cover…

- Our current position regarding Artificial Intelligence
- Our developing policy position regarding Artificial Intelligence
- Our approach to skills and Artificial Intelligence
- Next steps with Artificial Intelligence

Our current position regarding Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Everyday uses of AI

- AI powers virtual assistants like Siri and Alexa for voice commands.

- Recommendation systems on platforms like Netflix and Amazon use AI

- AI is used in navigation apps for real-time traffic updates.

- Chatbots provide customer support on websites and apps – these are being enhanced using AI.

- AI is used to improve car safety using features such as automatic breaking and driver-assist steering.

- AI is common on smartphones for secure log in via facial recognition.

- Social media platforms also use AI to determine what content you see based on the content you have previously interacted with.

- The image on this slide was created by AI

Our current position regarding Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Where AI could help within the organisation

- Areas that currently need a large amount of administrative effort

- Areas that require linking lots of bits of data together

- Areas that would benefit from being able to analyse and summarise large amounts of data

- Areas where data input / manipulation into a line of business system is time intensive

- Areas that could benefit from "chatbot" type functionality

- Generic, repeatable tasks where there is similar activity undertaken irrespective of service area

Our current position regarding Artificial Intelligence (AI)

What is the opportunity for the city council by using AI

- Using data to understand our residents better
- Providing more information and data to better serve residents
- Allowing to redesign our services in ways that were not possible before – becoming much more resident focussed
- Creating the opportunity for earlier interventions
- Joining up delivery across, and outside, the organisation leading to process improvement
- Enhanced casework and case management
- Organisational efficiency and optimisation

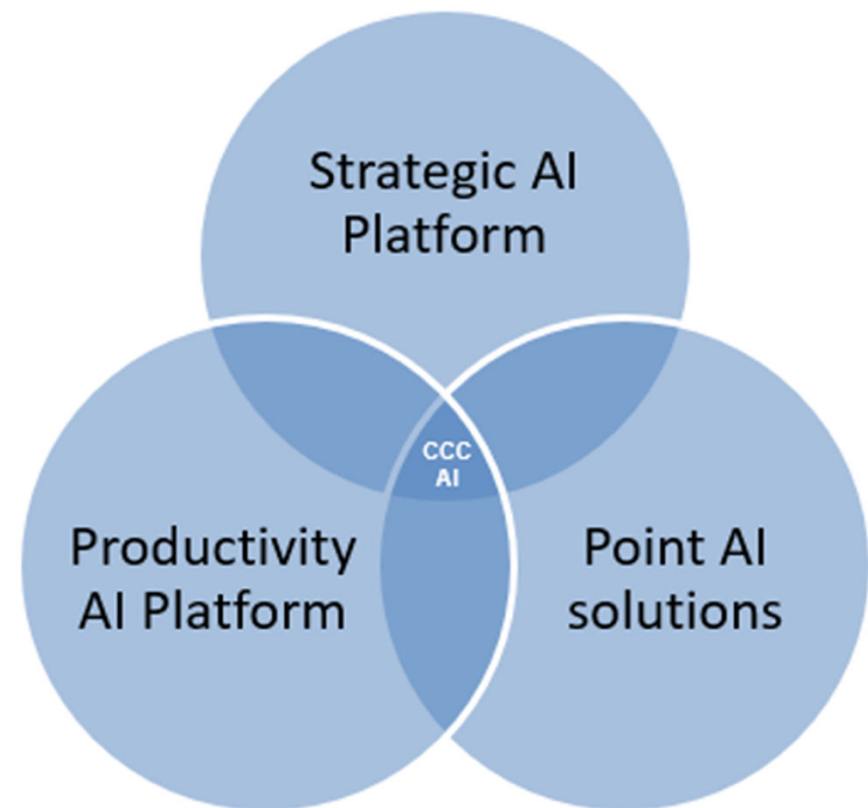# Our current position regarding Artificial Intelligence (AI)

AI is not new, it has been around since the 1940's/50's

Since April 2023 there has been an explosion of AI toolsets largely due to how accessible and cheap large scale compute resource has become and large technology companies creating AI products push directly to consumers

We have been running several pilots to understand the potential the AI has for the organisation.

Whilst these pilots have shown a significant potential for the organisation, they have also highlighted several areas that need careful consideration including; data protection, data quality, ethics, cost and sustainability etc.

Our work to date has shown that there is no "one-size fits all" and that we need a controlled number of "right fit" solutions to deliver our overall approach to AI

Strategic AI Platform

CCC AI

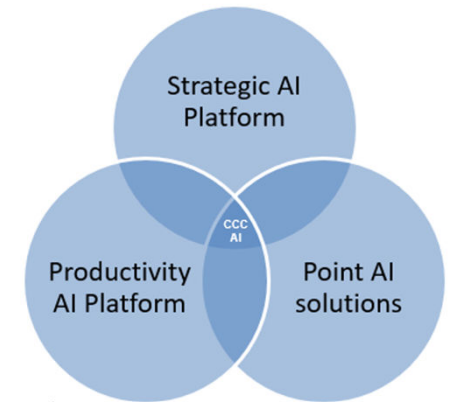Productivity AI Platform

Point AI solutions

Our current position regarding Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Strategic AI Platform:
This is where we are thinking less about our line of business systems and more about our core datasets, and business function/output.
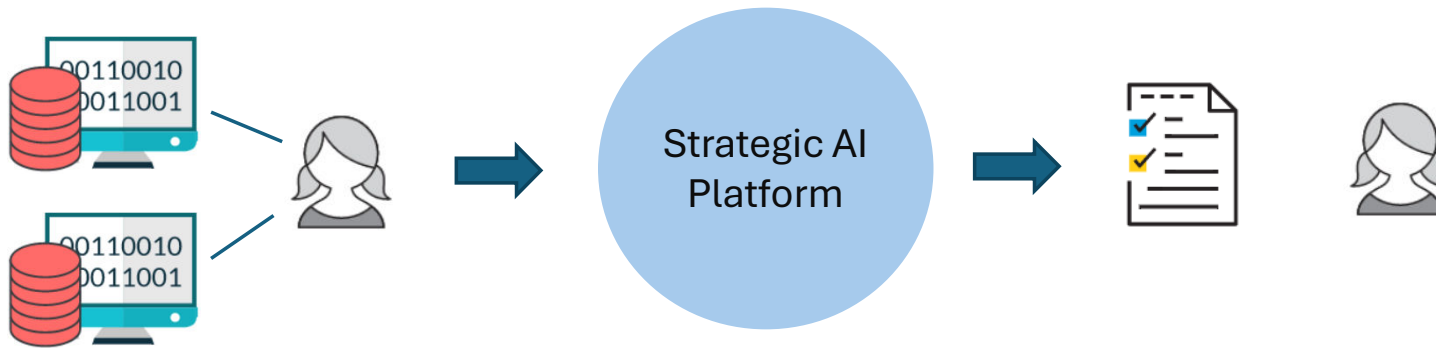
Following a pilot within Childrens Services we are working with a company called Palantir for a further 12 months in the development of our strategic AI platform

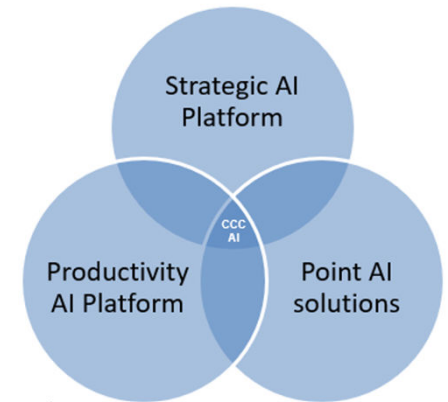# Our current position regarding Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Productivity AI Platform:
This is a more general AI productivity / assistant platform. For us, given our use of Microsoft tools – this is Microsoft CoPilot and wider Microsoft services. For example using CoPilot for minute taking or helping create reports and presentations.

Point AI solutions:
We run over 300 line of business systems. The majority of suppliers for these are creating AI modules or functions directly integrated into their systems. These are considered on a case-by-case basis

Across all of these types of platform AI should be viewed as an **assistant to colleagues**, helping to analyse or summarise data, or create content based on sets of instructions, much like a personal assistant. AI **cannot, and will not** be used for automated decision making, it presents / creates data / information for a colleague to then, review and then make a decision / take action.

Our developing policy position regarding Artificial Intelligence

Some incredibly important considerations in the use of AI

- **Bias**

  AI's "knowledge" is based on the data it has been trained on and what it has learnt from. If that data contains a bias, either intentionally or unintentionally, then it will influence the output that AI provides

- **Ethics**

  Beyond bias, there are a wider set of ethical considerations that need to made in the use of AI. The Turing Institute describes these as a "*set of values, principles, and techniques that employ widely accepted standards of right and wrong to guide moral conduct in the development and use of AI technologies.*"

- **Accuracy**

  The technology is very impressive – but the accuracy of content that is created does need to be checked – in the same way you might when working with new colleagues in training

- **Security / Privacy**

  AI relies on access to large amounts of data to learn from. We need to be very careful and clear about what data can be processed and how and where it is processed. Data protection and processing transparency are fundamental.

- **Cost, Scalability & Sustainability**

  The computer power required, particularly by Generative AI systems, is significant and therefore there is a cost and environmental impact associated. We need to be mindful of the full costs (financial and environmental) of AI solutions, and how scalable this might, or might not make them

Please create a picture of a family which would best represent the diversity of Coventry

Copilot

Sure, I'll try to create that for you.

February 2024

February 2025

Our developing policy position regarding Artificial Intelligence

- **Ethics**

- We have well established **Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)** processes and procedures which deal with systematically identifying and minimising risks related to personal data processing. It helps the Council comply with data protection obligations and accountability requirements. DPIAs are particularly important when a new data processing activity is introduced or when significant changes are made to existing processes, and therefore, will be used in conjunction with all AI projects

- We have well established **Equality Impact Assessments (EIA)** processes and procedures which deal with ensuring that we consider the effect of the Council's decision-making processes on different groups of people protected from discrimination and will be used in conjunction with all AI projects

- We need to develop a framework which assesses the ethical implications of AI projects
  - We are not alone – all organisation's investigating AI are considering their approach to ethics
  - We are reviewing the approach suggested by SOCITM (Society for Innovation, Technology and Modernisation)
  - We need to think about how we align this assessment with the DPIA/EIA approach already in place

Our developing policy position regarding Artificial Intelligence

Human Agency, Liberty and Dignity

Technical Robustness and Safety

Privacy and Data Governance

Transparency

Diversity, Non-discrimination and Fairness

Accountability

Full definitions for reference on next slide

Source: Ethical framework for Smart Information Systems - Socitm (https://socitm.net/resource-hub/collections/digital-ethics/ethical-framework-for-smart-information-systems/)

Our developing policy position regarding Artificial Intelligence

Human Agency, Liberty and Dignity: Because we value the ability for humans to be autonomous and self-governing (positive liberty), humans' freedom from external restrictions (negative liberties, such as freedom of movement or freedom of association), and because we hold that each individual has an inherent worth and we should not undermine respect for human life (human dignity), we need to ensure that AI and big data systems do not negatively affect human agency, liberty, and dignity.

Technical Robustness and Safety: Because we value humans, human life, and human resources, it is important that the system and its use is safe (often defined as an absence of risk) and secure (often defined as a protection against harm, i.e., something which achieves safety). Under this category we also include the quality of system decisions in terms of their accuracy, reliability, and precision.

Privacy and Data Governance: Because AI and big data systems often use information or data that is private or sensitive, it is important to make sure that the system does not violate or infringe upon the right to privacy, and that private and sensitive data is well-protected. While the definition of privacy and the right to privacy is controversial, it is closely linked to the importance of an individual's ability to have a private life, which is a human right. Under this requirement we also include issues relating to quality and integrity of data (i.e., whether the data is representative of reality), and access to data, as well as other data rights such as ownership.

Transparency: Because AI and big data systems can be involved in high-stakes decision-making, it is important to understand how the system achieves its decisions. Transparency, and concepts such as explainability, explicability, and traceability relate to the importance of having (or being able to gain) information about a system (transparency), and being able to understand or explain a system and why it behaves as it does (explainability).

Diversity, Non-discrimination and Fairness: Because bias can be found at all levels of the AI and big data systems (datasets, algorithms, or users' interpretation), it is vital that this is identified and removed. Systems should be deployed and used with an inclusionary, fair, and non-discriminatory agenda. Requiring the developers to include people from diverse backgrounds (e.g., different ethnicities, genders, disabilities, ideologies, and belief systems), stakeholder engagement, and diversity analysis reports and product testing, are ways to include diverse views in these systems.

Individual, Societal and Environmental Wellbeing: Because AI and big data systems can have huge effects for individuals, society, and the environment, systems should be trialed, tested, and anomaly-detected to ensure the reduction, elimination, and reversal of harm caused to individual, societal and environmental well-being.

Accountability: Because AI and big data systems act like agents in the world, it is important that someone is accountable for the systems' actions. Furthermore, an individual must be able to receive adequate compensation in the case of harm from a system (redress). We must be able to evaluate the system, especially in the situation of a bad outcome (audibility). There must also be processes in place for minimisation and reporting of negative impacts, with internal and external governance frameworks (e.g., whistleblowing), and human oversight.

Source: Ethical framework for Smart Information Systems - Socitm (https://socitm.net/resource-hub/collections/digital-ethics/ethical-framework-for-smart-information-systems/)

Our developing policy position regarding Artificial Intelligence

- **Sustainability**

- Choosing when is appropriate to use AI and when it is not, based on cost and sustainability

- Choosing the most appropriate AI model / "engine" to use for the relevant task ("right-sizing")

- Understanding the sustainability commitments from the hosting providers

"Microsoft has made significant strides towards achieving net zero emissions, with a comprehensive plan that encompasses carbon negativity, water positivity, zero waste, and ecosystem protection. The company aims to become carbon negative by 2030 and to remove from the atmosphere an equivalent amount of all the carbon dioxide it has emitted since its founding by 2050"

"Climate scientists agree that the world needs to reduce carbon emissions, and we're working to do our part. We aim to reach net-zero carbon emissions across our operations by 2040 by investing in carbon-free energy, scaling solutions, and collaborating with partners to broaden our impact."

Our approach to skills and Artificial Intelligence

- Data is the fuel for AI
- We have a large number of systems and a large amount of data
- Data has potential to be goldmine of insight
- Partnering with Multiverse in the delivery of Level 3, 4 and 6 Data Skill apprenticeships.
- 50 learners on two cohorts that launched in 2024
- Third cohort launching in March 2025
- Data hackathons to develop solutions, build community of practice and break down silo working

Next steps with Artificial Intelligence

Strategic AI Platform	Productivity AI Platform/Point AI solutions	AI enablers
Progressing pilot opportunities across the organisation with a view to creating options for longer term improvements and efficiencies. This is a whole organisation approach but with an initial focus on: - Childrens Services Administration (bringing in SEND and EHCPs) - Adults Services and Housing (with an initial focus on Housing Assessments) - Coventry Connects (Customer Services) – creating a single customer view/single property view (focussing on Residential Financial Support / centralised Financial Assessment)	Progressing pilot opportunities for productivity enhancements using CoPilot / Microsoft functionality including an initial review of where AI might be able to assist within our Translation service. Running a digital change and adoption survey which will hopefully highlight "quick win" areas to focus on increased support for adoption of existing technology to increase productivity and efficiency.	Progressing the third cohort of our Data Academy Apprenticeships with Multiverse. Developing our position regarding an ethical framework/assessment for AI projects. Continuing to monitor and develop the financial case for ongoing investment in Artificial Intelligence Developing a communication and engagement plan to "launch" our approach to AI as an organisation but also to be clear with the public as to how and when we will be using AI