LOCAL GOV STRATEGY FORUM

Local Gov Strategy Forum

20th, 21st & 22nd May 2024

Interim Client Research Report

Total Delegate Group: **128**

This is an interim report based on the findings of the 128 chief executives, directors and other strategic leaders from local government organisations who have confirmed their attendance at the upcoming Local Gov Strategy Forum on the 20th, 21st and 22nd May 2024.

To deepen our insights, we interviewed the highest decision-makers via video and telephone interviews to discuss trends and issues within their organisations.

DELEGATE GROUP BREAKDOWN

47
C-level &
Director

45
Head of
Department

36
Senior
Management

MAIN FINDINGS OF THE REPORT

MODERNISATION OF TECHNOLOGY:

Embracing modern technology is pivotal for local governments, as it empowers them to revamp services, optimise delivery methods, and remain responsive to their constituents in our ever-evolving digital landscape. The growing dependence on modern digital tools underscores the urgency of investing in robust technology infrastructure and cybersecurity measures, prompting local governments to redirect more resources toward this critical domain. By adopting modern technologies, local authorities can improve their operations and create more accessible online platforms for citizens to engage with government services.

AUTOMATION - SELF SERVICE:

Representing a transformative approach to enhancing services, automation plays a pivotal role in improving and streamlining the delivery of services. Automation tools such as self-service portals allow citizens to access government services conveniently and independently online, reducing the burden on government staff and resources. This not only improves the overall efficiency of service delivery but also frees up valuable time for employees to focus on more complex tasks and personalised interactions. Additionally, automation fosters greater transparency and accountability in service provision by minimizing errors and ensuring consistency across interactions, ultimately leading to a more responsive and citizen-centric government.

CYBER SERVICES:

Cyber services allow governments to protect sensitive data that could be at risk of data breaches. Which includes citizens' personal information, financial records, and critical infrastructure details. Secure cyber security also prevents service disruptions which can delay essential services provided by local governments, affecting everything from emergency services to online service portals. Robust cyber security measures help in preventing service interruptions, ensuring continuity and reliability for residents. In addition, cyber services empower governments to proactively detect and counteract cyber threats, bolstering their ability to safeguard not only sensitive data but also the overall stability of essential public services.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) emerges as a transformative asset for local governments, enhancing operational efficiency, refining decision-making, and optimising service delivery. By harnessing data and analytical insights, AI enables local leaders to predict future trends, facilitating proactive decision-making. Moreover, AI's prowess in analysing historical data aids in judicious budget allocation, providing valuable recommendations for optimal resource utilisation. This multifaceted role positions AI as a crucial ally for local governments striving for streamlined processes and effective resource management.

The challenges being prioritised by the Chief Officer- Digital and Communications for Rugby Borough Council

· Integration of AI
· Sustainable Levels of IT Support
· Modernisation & Digital Transformation

The key issues being tackled by the Chief Financial Officer for Winchester City Council
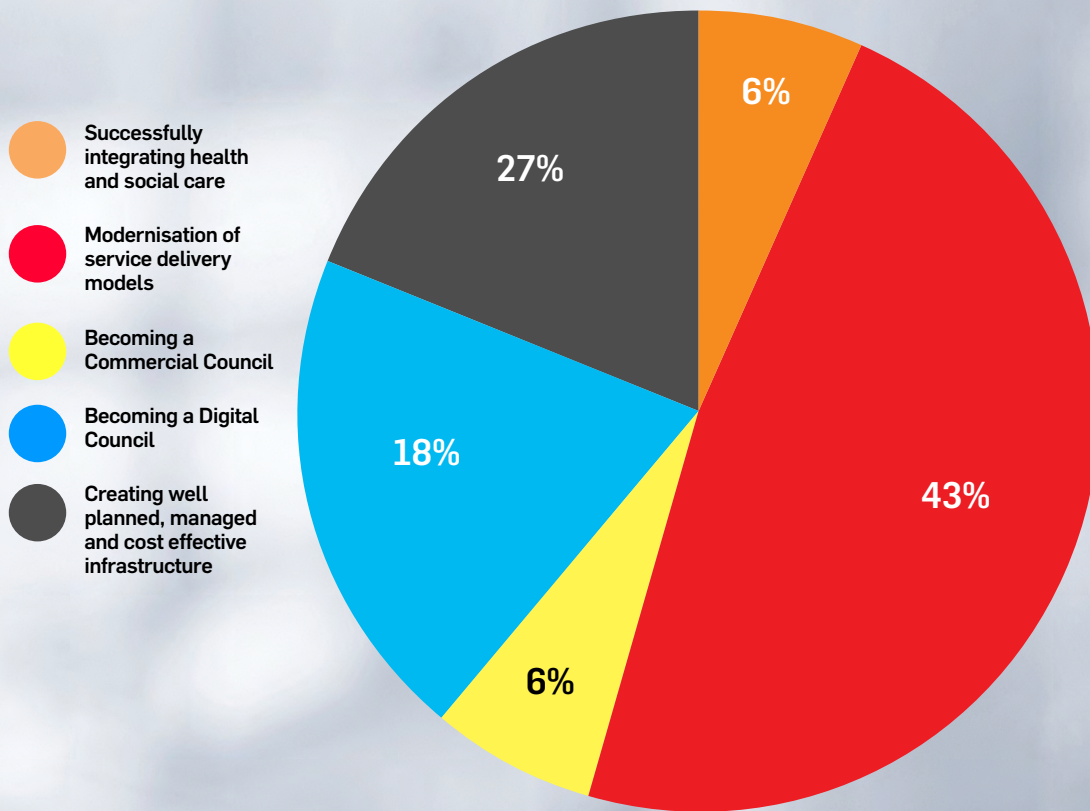
· Finance and Procurement
· IT- Strategy and Digital Transformation
· Customer Service and the Customer Journey
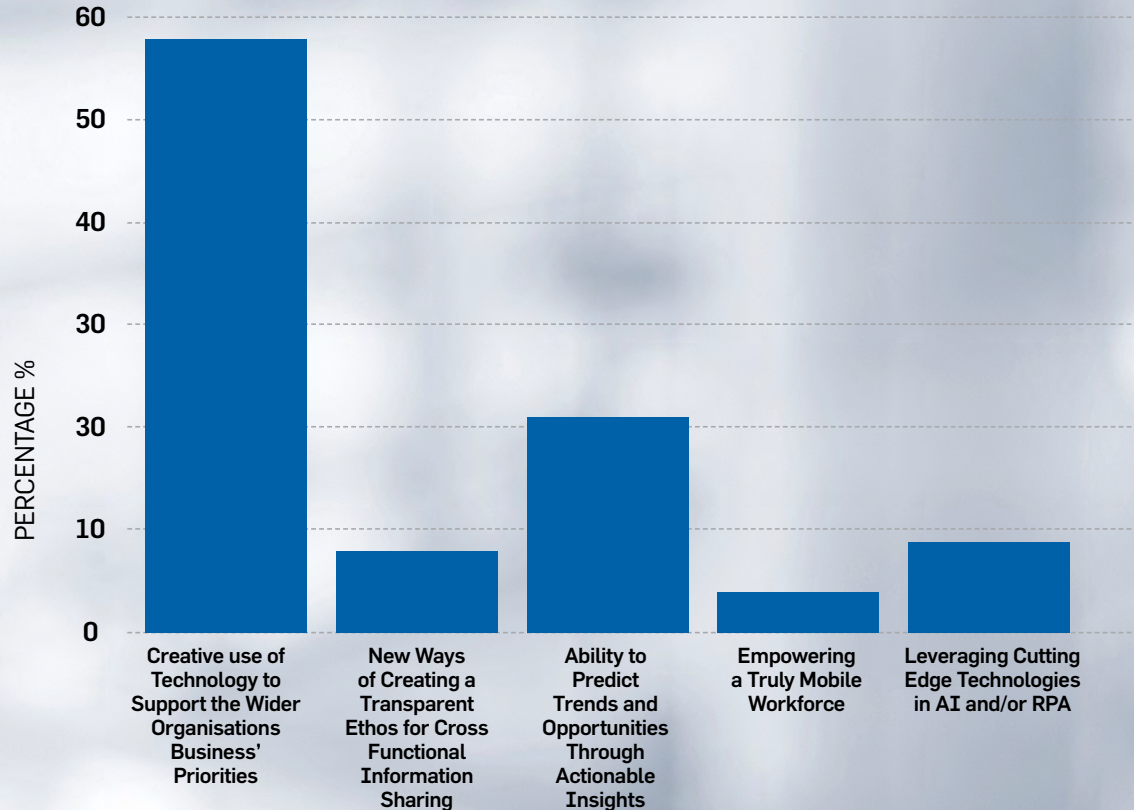
COMBINED SPENDING POWER OF GROUP

£2.5 Billion

PERCENTAGE %

40
30
20
10
0

£100,000 – £250,000 | £250,000 – £500,000 | £500,000 – £750,000 | £750,000 – £1,000,000 | £1,000,000 – £5,000,000 | £5,000,000 – £10,000,000 | £10,000,000 – £25,000,000 | £25,000,000 – £50,000,000 | £50,000,000 – £100,000,000 | £100,000,000+

BUDGET RESPONSIBILITY PER PERSON

TOP STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Successfully integrating health and social care

Modernisation of service delivery models

Becoming a Commercial Council

Becoming a Digital Council

Creating well planned, managed and cost effective infrastructure

6%

27%

18%

6%

43%

The modernisation of service delivery models was firmly established as a top strategic priority for senior leaders from across local government. This objective involves enhancing resource allocation efficiency, resulting in cost savings, and streamlined processes. Modernisation aims to achieve long-term financial benefits by transitioning away from outdated legacy systems known for their unreliability and inefficiency. Furthermore, this strategic initiative underscores the commitment to harnessing cutting-edge technologies and innovative methodologies, ensuring that local government entities remain adaptive, responsive, and better equipped to meet the evolving needs of their constituents.

Simultaneously, creating a well-planned managed and cost-effective infrastructure stands as another top-ranked strategic priority among senior delegates. Similarly to modernisation, new infrastructure improves the efficiency of the organisation. Well-developed and established infrastructure is also more attractive to investors, which can be pivotal to local governments to attract funding.

TOP TECHNOLOGY PRIORITIES

PERCENTAGE %

Y-axis: 60, 50, 40, 30, 30, 10, 0

Categories:
- Creative use of Technology to Support the Wider Organisations Business' Priorities
- New Ways of Creating a Transparent Ethos for Cross Functional Information Sharing
- Ability to Predict Trends and Opportunities Through Actionable Insights
- Empowering a Truly Mobile Workforce
- Leveraging Cutting Edge Technologies in AI and/or RPA

The creative use of technology to support the wider organisations businesses priorities has emerged as the foremost technological priority among local authority leaders. With technological advancement becoming a necessity for all public sector organisations, local governments are no exception. New technology is now becoming a requirement for effective and efficient service delivery to aid both staff and citizens. More than half of the delegate group are looking to invest in long-term cost savings. Embracing technological innovation not only addresses the immediate needs of local governments but also positions them strategically to navigate future challenges, reinforcing their commitment to delivering public services that are not only effective and efficient but also forward-thinking and adaptable.

Enhancing the data power to anticipate trends and identify opportunities through actionable insights stands out as a key technological imperative for our group. The capability to forecast trends empowers government leaders to make data-driven decisions, fostering a heightened level of reliability in their strategic choices. Better anticipating trends allows local governments to proactively address potential issues before they escalate, leading to improved service delivery and increased satisfaction.
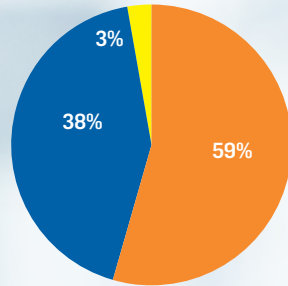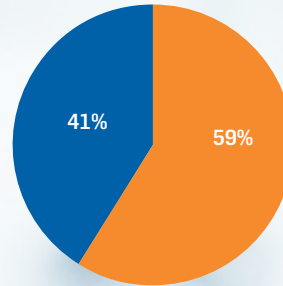
SPEND MAPPING

CLOUD SERVICES

- 35% Stay the same
- 65% Increase
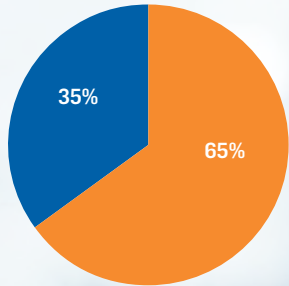
Legend: ● Increase ● Stay the same ● Decrease

CYBER SECURITY

- 3% Decrease
- 38% Stay the same
- 59% Increase

Legend: ● Increase ● Stay the same ● Decrease

AI AND ROBOTIC PROCESS AUTOMATION

- 41% Stay the same
- 59% Increase

Legend: ● Increase ● Stay the same ● Decrease

BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

- 1% Decrease
- 46% Stay the same
- 53% Increase
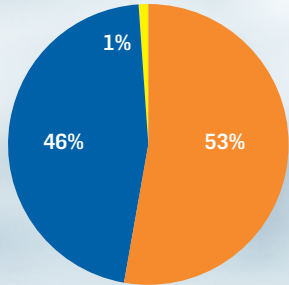
Legend: ● Increase ● Stay the same ● Decrease

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT/ LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- 1% Decrease
- 45% Stay the same
- 54% Increase
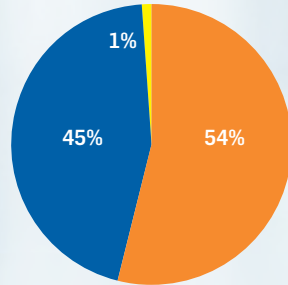
Legend: ● Increase ● Stay the same ● Decrease

MASTER DATA MANAGEMENT

- 1% Decrease
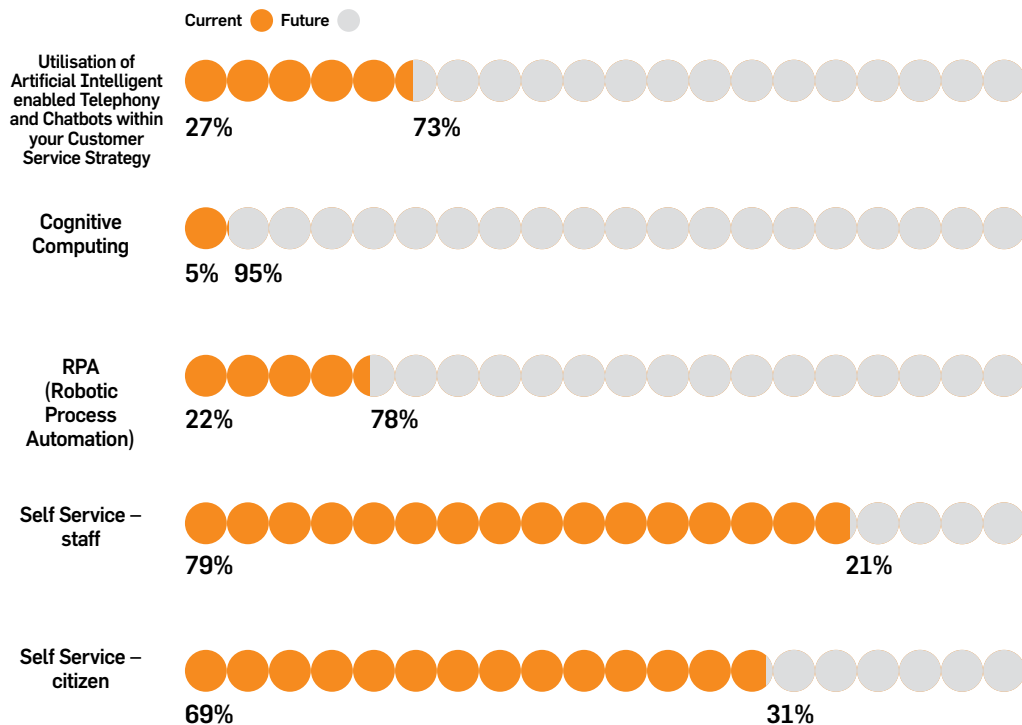- 37% Stay the same
- 62% Increase
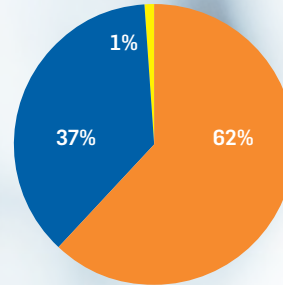
Legend: ● Increase ● Stay the same ● Decrease

Based on the insights from our client group, 59% of senior delegates at the Local Gov Strategy Forum have expressed an interest in intensifying investments in AI and Robotics. By harnessing data and analytical insights, AI enables local leaders to predict future trends, facilitating proactive decision-making. Moreover, AI's prowess in analysing historical data aids in judicious budget allocation, providing valuable recommendations for optimal resource utilisation. This proactive approach not only elevates citizen engagement but also contributes to enhancing the council's reputation by showcasing a commitment to transformative advancements.

Furthermore, the group emphasised a sustained commitment to master data management (MDM), with 62% noting a surge in spending in this domain. Notably, local government leaders are recognising the strategic value of investing in master data management to guarantee the accuracy, consistency, and reliability of core data across diverse departments and systems. This becomes particularly vital in the context of local governments employing an array of systems and applications. MDM plays a crucial role in seamlessly integrating data across these platforms, fostering a more cohesive and efficient flow of information between departments, thereby fortifying the foundation for well-informed decision-making and streamlined operations
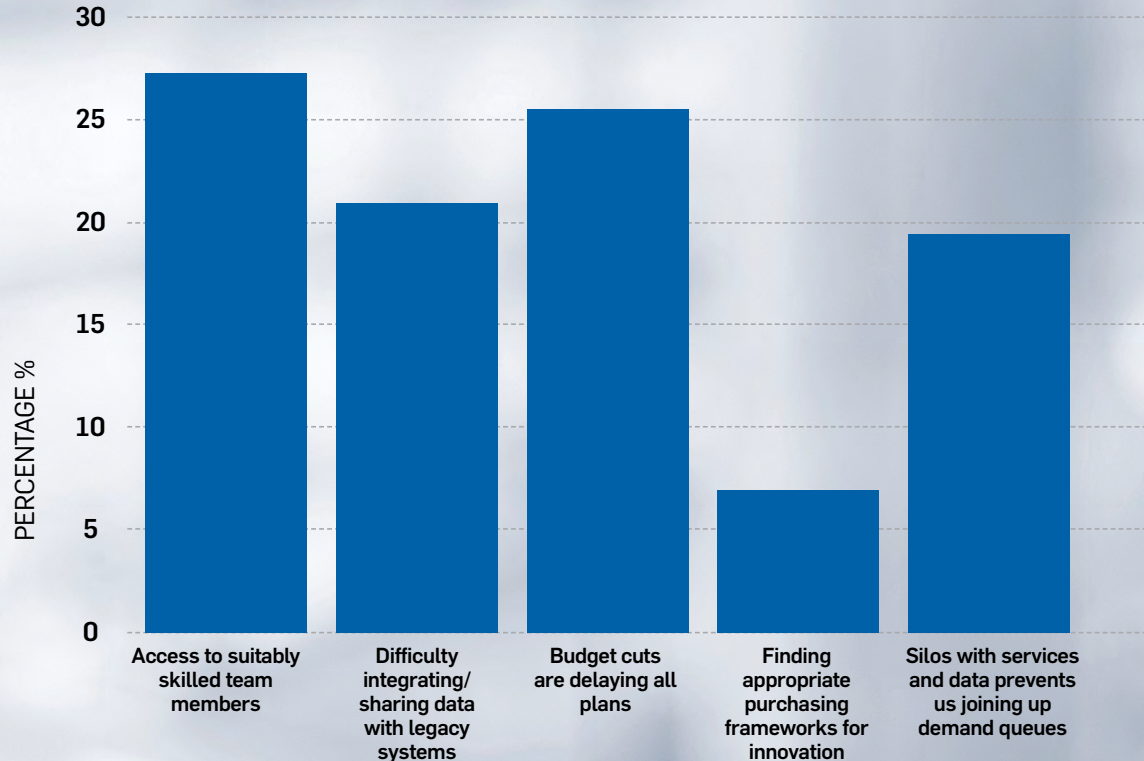
AUTOMATION: CURRENT AND FUTURE PRIORITIES

Current ● **Future** ○

Utilisation of Artificial Intelligent enabled Telephony and Chatbots within your Customer Service Strategy
27%   73%

Cognitive Computing
5%   95%

RPA (Robotic Process Automation)
22%   78%

Self Service – staff
79%   21%

Self Service – citizen
69%   31%

In the face of stretched government resources, the adoption of self-service models has emerged as the foremost technological priority for local councils. Whether tailored for staff or users, these models offer a transformative solution by empowering individuals to independently access and manage routine tasks and information. This not only amplifies efficiency but also allows local authorities to unburden themselves from administrative overheads, expediting service delivery and fostering a governance model that is both agile and responsive. Moreover, the long-term cost savings afforded by this technology serve as a strategic means to optimise budgets within the constraints of a resource-challenged environment. 79% of the group have said it is a current priority for staff and a further 69% for citizens.

Another area of strategic prioritisation is the utilisation of AI-enabled telephony and chatbots within your customer service strategy. This ensures that constituents can access services and information at their convenience, promoting inclusivity and responsiveness. Furthermore, chatbots can swiftly handle routine queries, providing instant responses to common questions. This efficiency reduces wait times for citizens and allows staff to focus on more complex and personalised interactions, improving the overall service quality.

BARRIERS TO DELIVERING SERVICE TRANSFORMATION PLANS

PERCENTAGE %

- Access to suitably skilled team members
- Difficulty integrating/ sharing data with legacy systems
- Budget cuts are delaying all plans
- Finding appropriate purchasing frameworks for innovation
- Silos with services and data prevents us joining up demand queues

The public sector is subject to constraints that prevent them from delivering an optimal service. One of the biggest challenges councils often encounter is access to suitably skilled team members to drive service transformation plans. Councils often find themselves facing a significant hurdle as the demand for digital and technical expertise consistently surpasses the available talent pool. In the absence of a proficient workforce, the execution of modernisation initiatives, particularly those reliant on advanced technologies, encounters impediments, resulting in delays and potential setbacks.

Securing budgets for the implementation of service transformation plans can pose challenges for departments. Demonstrating tangible, positive outcomes becomes crucial to bolster future investment prospects. The constraints of tighter budgets necessitate meticulous resource allocation and strategic long-term planning by authorities. By adopting efficient solutions, the quality of services provided by authorities can be enhanced, concurrently mitigating long-term costs. This strategic approach not only optimises current resources but also lays the foundation for sustainable and cost-effective service delivery in the long run.

DELEGATE INVESTMENT AREAS
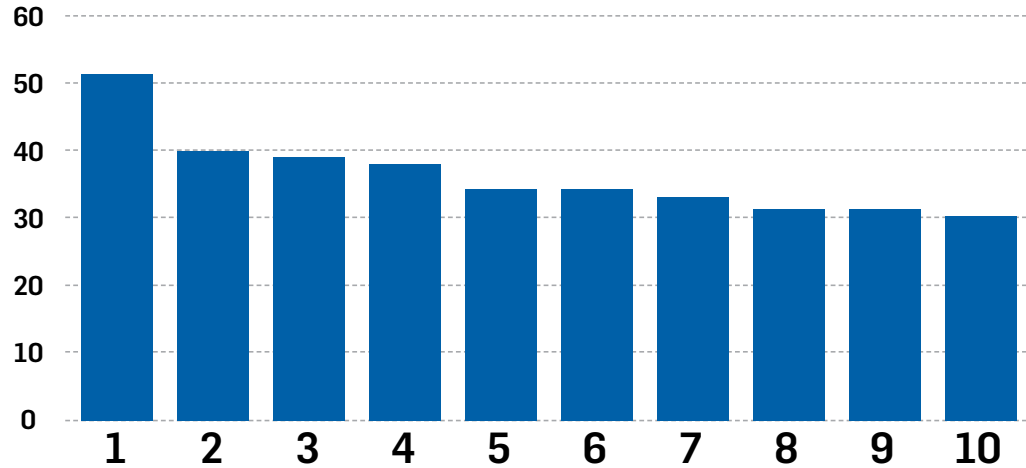
	Top delegate investment areas	%		Top delegate investment areas	%
1	Artificial Intelligence	51	6	Change Management	34
2	Business Intelligence	40	7	Service Redesign	32
3	Performance Management	39	8	Automation	31
4	Service Improvement	38	9	Data & Information Management	31
5	Big Data Analytics	34	10	Risk Management	30

Our group of senior decision-makers have underscored artificial intelligence as the primary focus of their investments, with more than 50% of local authority leaders highlighting they have plans to make significant investments. This shows the critical demand for transformative technologies that can effectively tackle challenges and elevate service delivery standards within local governments.

Additionally, business intelligence (BI) has garnered attention, with 40% of the group identifying it as their primary investment area. BI facilitates real-time monitoring of public service performance, ensuring services meet targets and allowing prompt addressing of any issues. Moreover, these tools empower local authorities to collect, analyse, and visualise data from diverse sources, fostering a data-driven approach for more informed decision-making and optimal resource allocation.

STRATEGY FORUMS

Live Events

CLIENT iQ

Client Insights

FORUM LINK

Collaboration App

All our Strategy Forums combine industry leading searchable analytics through Client IQ - our delegate discovery platform. Key client investment data is blended with enhanced networking capability via our Forum Link app for everyone to intelligently connect through multi-channel exchanges during our live Strategy Forums. Deep understanding and clever tech connecting smart people in smooth interactions. Goodbye static conferences, hello evolution.

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