Women in Public Sector IT Strategy Forum

24th, 25th & 26th February 2025

Interim Client & Vendor Research Report

Total Delegate Group: **86**

This interim report presents survey findings from the confirmed delegates attending the upcoming Women in Public Sector IT Strategy Forum, taking place on the 24th, 25th and 26th February 2025.

To provide deeper insights, we conducted video and telephone interviews with top decision-makers, discussing key challenges and priorities within their organisations.

The report also highlights the offerings of sponsoring vendors, identifies market gaps, and explores trends in public sector spending.

DELEGATE GROUP IN ATTENDANCE

Attendance is set to rise to over 100 CIOs, digital directors, and IT leaders from across the public sector.

40
Chiefs & Directors

24
Heads of Departments

22
Senior Management

WOMEN IN PUBLIC SECTOR IT STRATEGY FORUM, ATTENDED BY:

DELEGATES KEY CHALLENGES AND PAIN POINTS BEING ADDRESSED

MODERNISING LEGACY INFRASTRUCTURE

The highest priority for public sector IT leaders is updating or migrating from legacy systems. These outdated systems are expensive, unsecure, and incompatible with modern technologies. Modernisation improves efficiency, enhances cyber security, and supports scalable solutions, enabling governments to meet citizens' growing demands for digital services.
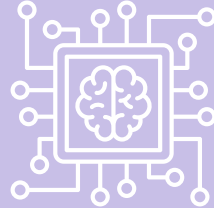
GROWING INVESTMENT IN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

An overwhelming 83% of public sector decision-makers are increasing AI spending to enhance service efficiency, automate repetitive tasks, and deliver personalised citizen interactions. AI also helps process large volumes of data to provide actionable insights, improving decision-making and public service delivery.

RISING FOCUS ON CYBER SECURITY

Increased cyber threats like ransomware and phishing have made cyber security a critical priority. As digital transformation accelerates, businesses face mounting pressure to safeguard sensitive data and maintain operational continuity. In response, investments are surging in advanced cybersecurity solutions, such as AI-driven threat detection systems and end-to-end encryption.

EMPHASIS ON TALENT ACQUISITION

Attracting professionals from other industries is a top priority for public sector leaders to fill skill gaps and bring innovative approaches. However, competing with the private sector's higher salaries and flexible work environments remains a challenge, prompting efforts to offer better benefits, career growth, and opportunities for meaningful impact.
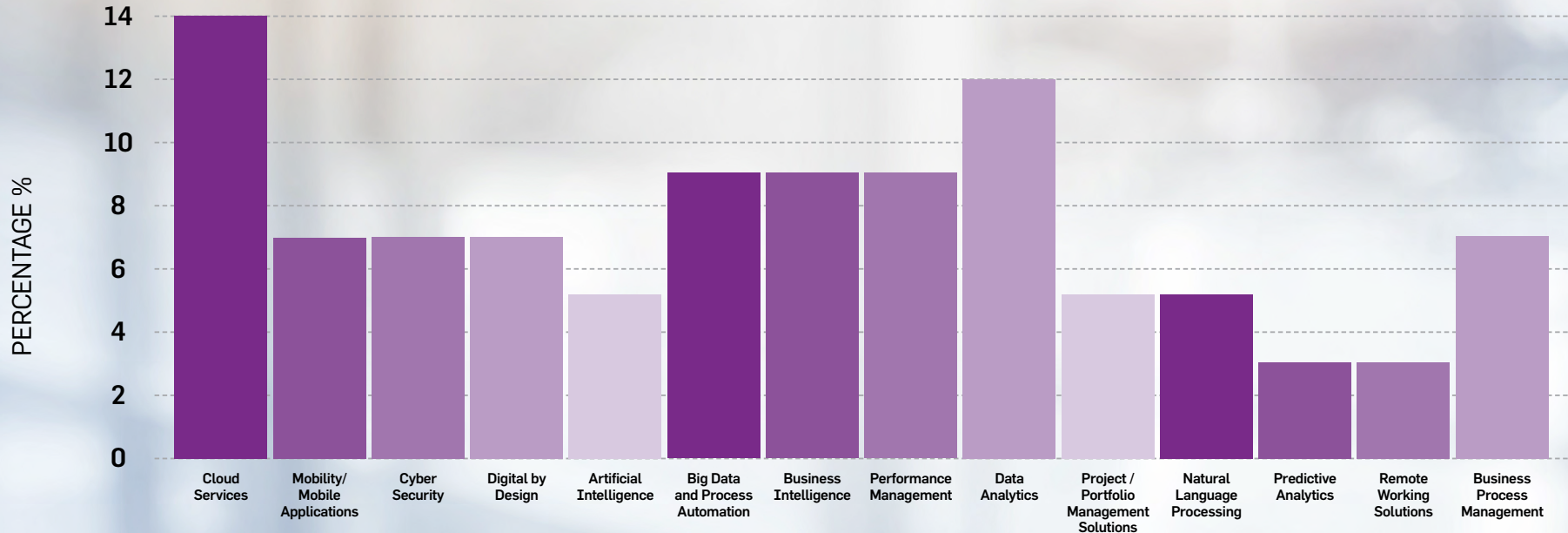
OUR VENDORS' EXISTING OFFERINGS

Fig 1

In addition to gathering client data, we have also compiled the offerings of our existing vendors. This comprehensive approach allows us to identify gaps in expertise and areas where our clients' needs are not fully satisfied. By pinpointing these deficiencies, we can better address our clients' requirements and provide a comprehensive set of innovative solutions to the public sector.

COMBINED SPENDING POWER OF THE DELEGATE GROUP

£1.13 billion+

PERCENTAGE %

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

SPEND MAPPING

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Fig. 2

- 83% Increase
- 17% Stay the same

● Increase   ● Stay the same
● Decrease

CYBER SECURITY

Fig. 3

- 68% Increase
- 32% Stay the same

● Increase   ● Stay the same
● Decrease

CLOUD SERVICES

Fig. 4

- 68% Increase
- 32% Stay the same

● Increase   ● Stay the same
● Decrease
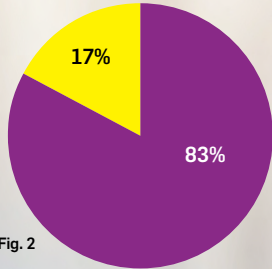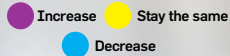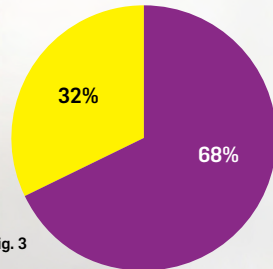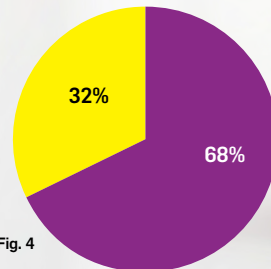
BIG DATA AND PROCESS AUTOMATION

Fig. 5

- 65% Increase
- 35% Stay the same

● Increase   ● Stay the same
● Decrease

DATA ANALYTICS

Fig. 6

- 59% Increase
- 39% Stay the same
- 2% Decrease

● Increase   ● Stay the same
● Decrease

DIGITAL BY DESIGN

Fig. 7

- 51% Increase
- 49% Stay the same

● Increase   ● Stay the same
● Decrease
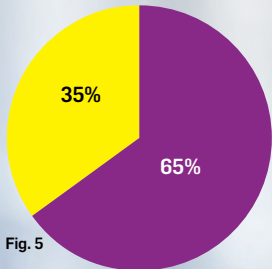
An impressive 83% of the attending client group have expressed an increase in spending on artificial intelligence. With the ability to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of public services, AI enables organisation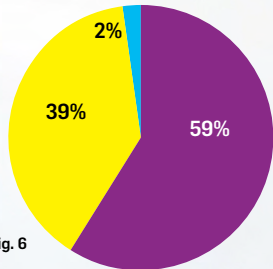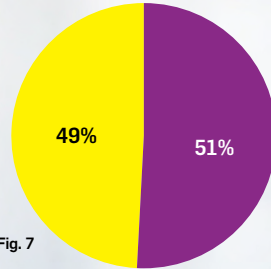s to process vast amounts of data rapidly, providing actionable insights that inform better decision-making. This technology also improves service delivery by automating repetitive tasks, reducing errors, and enabling personalised citizen interactions.

Due to growing threats, cyber security is another key area experiencing an increase in spending. As services become more digitised, the risk of cyber-attacks like ransomware and phishing rises, necessitating stronger defences. Advanced tools such as AI-driven threat detection and encryption, help protect sensitive information, ensure service continuity, and maintain public trust. Of our current vendors, only 7% have direct offerings within this area (Fig 1), highlighting a real need for providers of this technology.

WOMEN IN PUBLIC SECTOR IT STRATEGY FORUM
INTERIM CLIENT & VENDOR RESEARCH REPORT

TOP TECHNOLOGY PRIORITY

Legend:
- Finding new ways of creating a transparent ethos for cross functional information sharing
- Leveraging cutting edge technologies in AI and/or RPA
- Harnessing the power of data to provide actionable front-line intelligence
- Empowering a truly mobile workforce
- Updating or migrating from legacy infrastructure
- Digital engagement through mobile apps

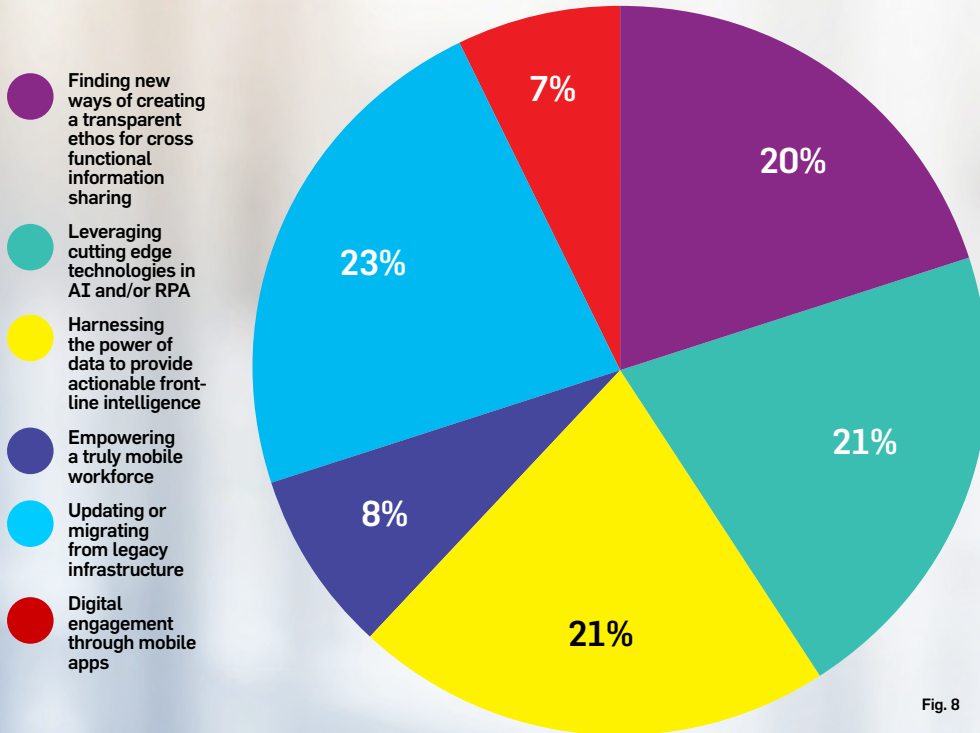Pie chart values: 20%, 21%, 21%, 8%, 23%, 7%

Fig. 8

The delegate group have highlighted their top technology priorities, with updating or migrating from legacy infrastructure emerging as the main concern across the public sector. Updating legacy infrastructure is essential as outdated systems are costly, unsecure, and incompatible with modern technologies. Modernising improves efficiency, enhances cyber security, supports scalability, and enables governments to meet growing citizen demands for reliable digital services.

Harnessing data for actionable frontline intelligence is another key priority which helps public sector decision-makers improve service delivery by enabling timely, informed decisions. It enhances resource allocation, emergency response, and public safety while promoting transparency and better outcomes for citizens.

TOP STRATEGIC PRIORITIES
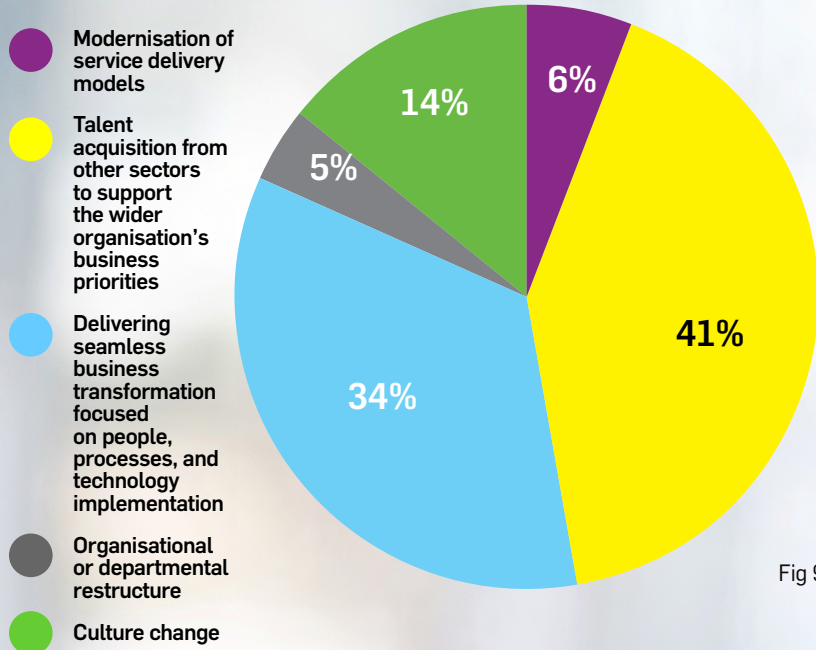
DELEGATES' TOP STRATEGIC PRIORITY

- **Modernisation of service delivery models**
- **Talent acquisition from other sectors to support the wider organisation's business priorities**
- **Delivering seamless business transformation focused on people, processes, and technology implementation**
- **Organisational or departmental restructure**
- **Culture change**

6%
14%
5%
41%
34%

Fig 9

STRATEGIC GOALS OUR PROVIDERS CAN HELP ACHIEVE

- **Modernisation of service delivery models**
- **Creative use of technology to support the wider organisation's business priorities**
- **Delivering seamless business transformation focused on people, processes, and technology implementation**

29%
14%
57%

Fig 10

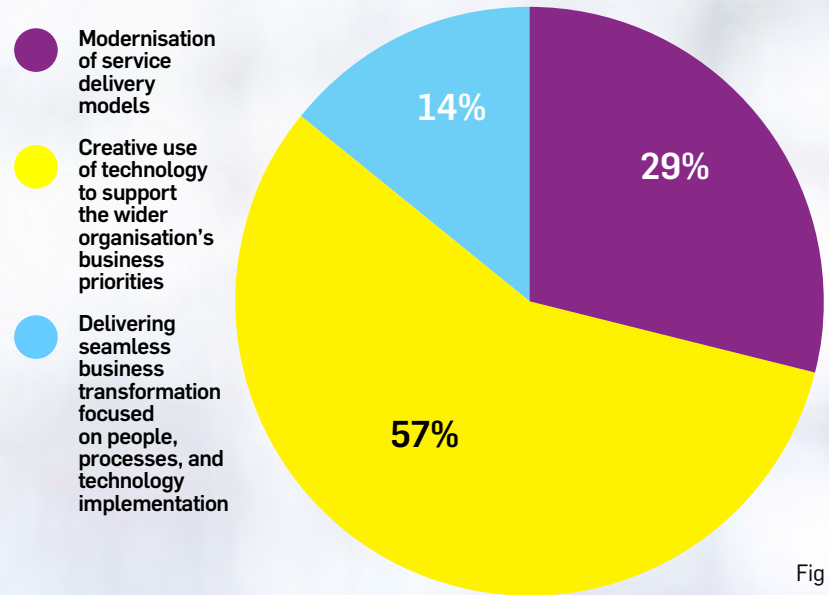**WOMEN IN PUBLIC SECTOR IT STRATEGY FORUM**
INTERIM CLIENT & VENDOR RESEARCH REPORT

TOP STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Talent acquisition from other sectors is a top priority for public sector leaders to bring fresh perspectives, specialised skills, and innovative approaches to meet evolving business priorities. Professionals from other industries often bring expertise in areas like technology, data analytics, and project management, which are crucial for modernising public services. This helps bridge skill gaps, improve efficiency, and drive innovation, ensuring the public sector can adapt to changing demands and deliver better outcomes for citizens.

Additionally, delivering seamless business transformation focused on people, processes, and technology implementation is vital as it directly enhances service delivery, enabling organisations to respond more efficiently to citizens' needs. This approach ensures adaptability to changing demands, such as political shifts or emerging crises, while optimising limited resources by reducing redundancies and improving cost-efficiency.

Despite over a third of senior decision-makers recognising the need for this transformation only 14% of our current vendors have the expertise to assist our client group with this strategic challenge.
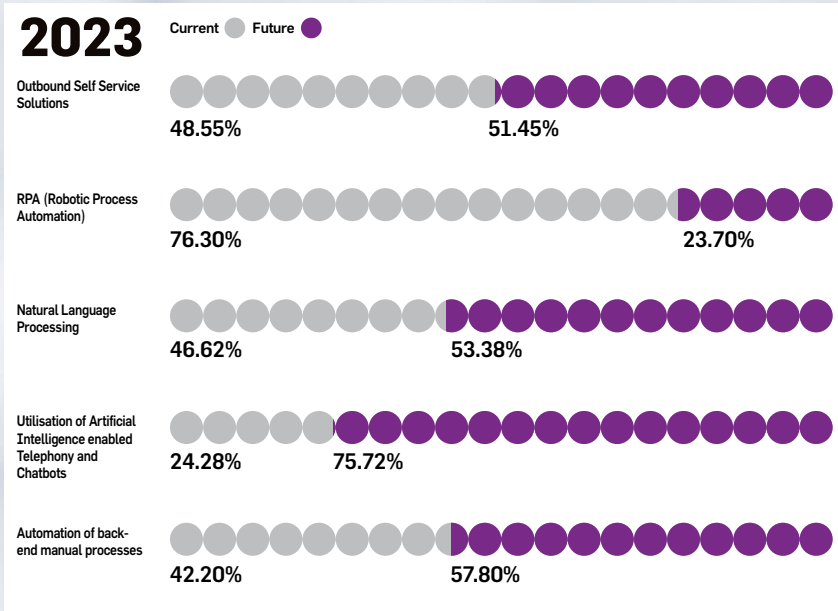
CHANGES TO AUTOMATION PRIORITIES

2023
Current ⚪ Future 🟣

Outbound Self Service Solutions
48.55%   51.45%

RPA (Robotic Process Automation)
76.30%   23.70%

Natural Language Processing
46.62%   53.38%

Utilisation of Artificial Intelligence enabled Telephony and Chatbots
24.28%   75.72%

Automation of back-end manual processes
42.20%   57.80%

Fig 11

2024
Current ⚪ Future 🟣

Outbound Self Service Solutions
49.30%   50.70%

RPA (Robotic Process Automation)
46.48%   53.52%

Natural Language Processing
29.58%   70.42%

Utilisation of Artificial Intelligence enabled Telephony and Chatbots
56.34%   43.66%

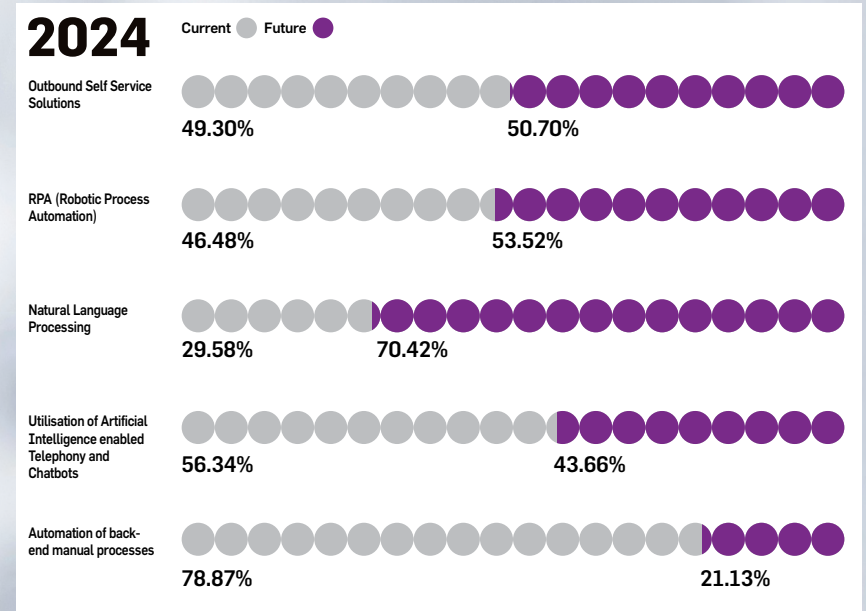**Automation of back-end manual processes**
78.87%   21.13%

Fig 12

After consecutive years of surveying public sector decision-makers, we are observing notable shifts in the automation landscape. In 2023, robotic process automation (RPA) was the top priority, with over 75% of respondents identifying it as a current focus.

However, its significance has diminished this year, with fewer than half now considering RPA a key priority. Instead, attention has shifted toward automating back-end processes, which has emerged as the leading focus for nearly 80% of respondents—a 37% increase compared to last year. This change highlights the evolving priorities within the sector as organizations adapt to new challenges and opportunities in automation.

VENDOR HIGHLIGHTS

WESHAPE

Specialises in:

- Cloud Services
- DevOps Consulting
- Data Services

"I think you've actually gone above expectations, which we don't say often. It's the first time we've come to this event and obviously you're hesitant around, is it going to offer the value? Are we going to be able to provide the value that customers want? And I think it's gone above expectations."

"We had a phenomenal time. We've met a lot of amazing people, but also got to really learn about what the market's doing. And I think that was the key thing for us."

VENDOR HIGHLIGHTS

ACTiCA
consulting

Specialises in:

- Digital Transformation

- Information and Cyber Security

- Procurement Support

"It's taken us by surprise just how positive the response has been. So much so that we probably needed more colleagues to come along to the event actually. To try and help facilitate and hold all the meetings from the requests that we got from the fellow delegates."

"Through the 20/25 remote meetings that we had we were able to understand the common themes across the whole delegate base. It helped us to better understand how we can align our services and capabilities."

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.

SHARE THE REPORT

www.wipsitstrategyforum.com
t. +44 (0) 1293 850 300
e. info@ahmediauk.com