# AI tool Minute cuts UK council meeting admin by 60%, boosting public service efficiency



The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into local governance is rapidly taking shape through the ambitious initiatives revolving around a technology suite called “Humphrey.” Currently, 25 councils across the UK are testing a specific AI tool named ‘Minute’, designed to significantly reduce administrative burdens related to note-taking during meetings. This undertaking is part of a broader governmental strategy aimed at both streamlining operations and enhancing the delivery of essential public services.

Recent experiments have indicated that AI could save council officials an impressive 60 minutes of administrative work for every hour spent in meetings. Early users of ‘Minute’ report that this innovation addresses what nearly half of officials rank as the least enjoyable aspect of their job: the tediousness of taking notes. ‘Minute’ not only records minutes from meetings but also helps facilitate quicker decision-making by automating the documentation process. This has profound implications, especially in vital areas like planning, where efficiency can lead to expedited housing developments—a critical objective, with the government targeting the construction of 1.5 million homes by 2030.

As the Prime Minister convenes Heads of devolved governments and English Mayors for discussions on economic cooperation, the potential of AI tools to streamline public services is particularly relevant. These discussions are underscored by a greater government push to leverage technology in local councils, which are tasked with various essential services ranging from housing approvals to managing public safety concerns like pest control and graffiti reporting. In this respect, AI is being viewed not as a mere technological enhancement but as a tool for real societal impact.

The UK government's recent **State of Digital Government Review** highlighted an urgent need for a technological update within local councils, citing a staggering £5 billion spent annually on technology efforts without the corresponding number of digital specialists needed to optimise effectiveness. The findings suggested that most local authorities operate independently in negotiating contracts with major tech firms, which often leads to duplicate purchases and inefficiencies. The implementation of ‘Humphrey’ aims to rectify these discrepancies by facilitating shared resources and knowledge among councils, thereby fostering collective improvement in public service delivery.

In parallel with the trials of ‘Minute’, the **AI Knowledge Hub** was also launched, offering a repository of best practices and successful use cases of AI across the public sector. This initiative aims to democratise access to technology insights, encouraging faster and more effective adoption of AI methods within local councils. The government indicates that improving data sharing between councils and public bodies could be transformative, enabling each entity to learn from one another and implement solutions that have been proven effective elsewhere.

Minister for AI and Digital Government Feryal Clark has commented on the pressing need for technology adoption amongst local councils, arguing that their pivotal role in everyday life demands new tools to navigate modern challenges effectively. Clark stated, “For too long, they have been left to fend for themselves when keeping up with rapid innovations in AI.” This sentiment is echoed by Lords Minister for Housing and Local Government Baroness Taylor, who maintains that employing cutting-edge technology like ‘Minute’ will enable officials to focus on their core responsibilities rather than administrative frustrations, thus fostering a more robust housing delivery framework.

Considered in the context of ongoing debates about digital transformation in public services, the ‘Humphrey’ project explicitly reflects the UK government's aspirations to enhance productivity while aiming for ambitious financial savings—potentially up to £45 billion annually. Such aspirations, however, will require careful navigation of both technical and managerial challenges faced by local authorities as they embark on this digital journey.

The rollout of ‘Humphrey’ and its associated tools, therefore, represents both an immediate attempt to alleviate the burdens of bureaucratic inefficiency and a long-term vision for the integration of AI in delivering efficient, effective, and equitable public services. The outcomes of these trials will likely serve as a model for future governmental use of technology, transforming the way public service is conceptualised and delivered across the nation.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.wired-gov.net/wg/news.nsf/articles/AI+experiments+see+Humphrey+help+townhalls+cut+costs+and+improve+services+23052025171500?open)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.wired-gov.net/wg/news.nsf/articles/AI+experiments+see+Humphrey+help+townhalls+cut+costs+and+improve+services+23052025171500?open), [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/63f425a4-2b68-4cb6-bdae-e8649aa456e0), [[3]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/shake-up-of-tech-and-ai-usage-across-nhs-and-other-public-services-to-deliver-plan-for-change)
* Paragraph 3 – [[4]](https://www.civilserviceworld.com/professions/article/dsit-humphrey-ai-package-civil-servants-45bn-productivity-drive), [[5]](https://www.globalgovernmentforum.com/yes-civil-servant-meet-humphrey-the-governments-ai-package-for-officials/), [[6]](https://www.openaccessgovernment.org/using-ai-and-digital-tools-to-revolutionise-public-services/187783/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[6]](https://www.openaccessgovernment.org/using-ai-and-digital-tools-to-revolutionise-public-services/187783/), [[7]](https://www.cityam.com/public-sector-tackles-inefficiency-with-new-gov-ai-tools/)
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2. <https://www.ft.com/content/63f425a4-2b68-4cb6-bdae-e8649aa456e0> - An article from the Financial Times discussing the UK government's plan to digitize public services using AI tools like 'Humphrey' to achieve up to £45 billion in annual savings and productivity benefits. The plan includes automating administrative tasks and improving data sharing across public sector organizations.
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