Service Definition: Architecture Options Analysis

About SOCITM Commercial Ltd

SOCITM Commercial provides independent, vendor-agnostic advisory and delivery support to local authorities, mayoral combined authorities and wider public sector organisations.

Acting as a trusted advisor and critical friend, we help clients navigate complex technology, service and organisational change. Our collaborative and evidence-based approach connects technology decisions with strategic priorities, service outcomes, affordability, deliverability and public value.

We bring an understanding of local government reform, devolution, shared services, digital transformation, ERP, CRM and EAM programmes, and data legacy modernisation. We work alongside client teams to simplify complex decisions, provide objective challenge and identify practical options tailored to each organisation's needs.

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1. Service overview

Our Architecture Options Analysis service helps local authorities, mayoral combined authorities and wider public sector organisations make confident, evidence-based technology and transformation decisions.

Acting as a trusted advisor and critical friend, SOCITM Commercial provides independent, vendor-agnostic assessment of architecture and service design options. The service can support cloud adoption, ERP, CRM and EAM implementation, application rationalisation, data legacy modernisation, shared platforms, data integration, legacy modernisation and technology consolidation arising from local government reform or devolution.

We work collaboratively with stakeholders to define requirements and evaluation criteria, then assess viable options against strategic fit, user and service needs, affordability, security, interoperability, scalability, sustainability, risk and deliverability. The resulting evidence supports governance, procurement, investment and implementation decisions.

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2. Who the service is for

The service is designed for public sector organisations planning significant technology, service or operating model change, including:

- Local authorities and emerging unitary authorities
- Mayoral combined authorities and strategic authorities
- Constituent councils and cross-authority partnerships
- Public sector organisations creating shared services
- Programmes considering ERP, CRM, EAM or corporate systems transformation, including data legacy modernisation
- Organisations modernising legacy applications, data or infrastructure
- Senior leaders, governance boards, digital teams and procurement functions

3. Challenges the service addresses

- Multiple viable options without an agreed evaluation approach
- Unclear costs, risks, dependencies or implementation implications
- Legacy systems restricting reform, integration or service improvement
- Technology decisions influenced by supplier or platform preference
- Complex cross-authority requirements and governance arrangements
- Need for clear evidence supporting business cases and procurement
- Limited internal capacity to challenge technical assumptions independently

4. Scope of analysis

The precise scope is agreed with the client. Depending on the requirement, the assessment may consider:

Area	Examples
Business and service	Strategic outcomes, user needs, service models and operating model implications
Applications, ERP, CRM and EAM	ERP, CRM and EAM options, business systems, data legacy modernisation, application rationalisation and shared platforms
Data and integration	Data migration, interoperability, APIs, information sharing and reporting
Cloud and infrastructure	Cloud, hybrid and on-premises options, hosting, resilience and scalability
Security and compliance	Security, privacy, accessibility and assurance requirements
Delivery and transition	Dependencies, sequencing, capability, procurement and mobilisation

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Commercial and value	Whole-life cost, affordability, benefits, risks and public value
Reform and devolution	Consolidation, shared services, cross-authority design and transition

5. Our approach

Our approach is collaborative, proportionate and evidence-based. It is tailored to the maturity, complexity and urgency of the decision.

1. **Mobilise and agree scope:** Confirm purpose, stakeholders, governance, decision timetable and required outputs.
2. **Understand the current state:** Review existing services, applications, data, integrations, infrastructure, contracts and constraints.
3. **Define requirements and criteria:** Agree functional, non-functional, commercial, security, sustainability and strategic evaluation criteria.
4. **Develop viable options:** Create a proportionate shortlist of realistic architecture or service design options.
5. **Evaluate and compare:** Apply agreed scoring, trade-off analysis, cost modelling and risk assessment.
6. **Challenge and validate:** Test assumptions through stakeholder workshops, evidence review and critical friend challenge.
7. **Recommend and plan:** Present a preferred option, rationale, key conditions and implementation considerations.
8. **Support governance decisions:** Provide clear materials for executives, boards, business cases or procurement planning.

6. Evaluation framework

Evaluation criteria are agreed with the client and weighted to reflect organisational priorities. Typical criteria include:

- Alignment with organisational strategy and reform objectives
- User, service and operational requirements
- Whole-life cost, affordability and value for money
- Security, privacy, resilience and regulatory considerations
- Integration, interoperability and data requirements
- Scalability, flexibility and future adaptability
- Sustainability and responsible technology choices
- Delivery complexity, dependencies and transition risk
- Internal capability, capacity and operating model impact
- Market availability, procurement and commercial considerations

7. Deliverables

Deliverables are tailored to the decision and may include:

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- Current-state findings and decision context
- Agreed requirements and weighted evaluation criteria
- Shortlisted architecture or service design options
- Option profiles covering strengths, limitations and dependencies
- Comparative scoring and trade-off analysis
- Indicative cost, affordability and benefits assessment
- Risk, security and implementation considerations
- Recommended option with evidence-based rationale
- Indicative transition or delivery roadmap
- Executive decision paper and governance presentation
- Reusable evaluation templates and decision frameworks

Outputs are provided in accessible, commonly used formats appropriate to client requirements and can be structured to support business cases, governance approvals, procurement or implementation planning.

8. Example cases

Context	How the service can help
Local government reform	Compare architecture options for consolidation, transition and future authority design.
Mayoral combined authority	Assess shared platforms, integration and operating model implications across partners.
ERP, CRM and EAM transformation, including data legacy modernisation	Compare ERP, CRM, EAM, hosting, integration, data legacy and implementation options independently.
Shared services	Evaluate cross-authority platforms, governance, data and service design options.
Legacy modernisation	Assess retain, replace, re-platform, consolidate or retire options.
Cloud adoption	Compare cloud, hybrid and transitional architecture approaches.
Data and integration	Evaluate interoperability, migration and information-sharing options.

9. Public sector standards and good practice

Where relevant to the engagement, the assessment considers applicable public sector guidance and client policies, including:

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- Technology Code of Practice
- Government Service Standard and GOV.UK Service Manual
- NCSC cloud security guidance and Cloud Security Principles
- Accessibility requirements and inclusive design
- Data protection, information governance and privacy expectations
- Open standards, interoperability and sustainability considerations

Applicable standards and assurance requirements are agreed during mobilisation. The service provides analysis and recommendations; responsibility for formal compliance decisions remains with the client and relevant assurance bodies.

10. Engagement model

The engagement is scoped collaboratively according to the number of options, organisational complexity, evidence available and governance timetable. Delivery can be remote, on-site or hybrid and may include workshops, interviews, document review, analysis and governance presentations.

Timescales, team composition, deliverables and commercial arrangements are agreed for each engagement. This allows the service to support either a focused discovery or a more detailed multi-organisation assessment.

11. Knowledge transfer

Knowledge transfer is embedded throughout the engagement. We work alongside client teams, explain the evaluation method and provide reusable artefacts where appropriate. This builds internal confidence and supports transparent future decision-making.

12. Why SOCITM Commercial

- Public sector focus; across local government and combined authorities
- Independent, vendor-agnostic advice and objective challenge
- Trusted advisor and critical friend approach
- Understanding of reform, devolution and shared services
- Ability to connect technology decisions with service outcomes
- Evidence-based recommendations designed for governance decisions
- Practical focus on affordability, deliverability and public value

13. Service boundaries

Architecture Options Analysis is an advisory service focused on evaluation, comparison and recommendation. Unless separately commissioned, it does not include detailed solution design, software development, technical build, system configuration, migration execution, product licensing or implementation delivery.

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This separation protects the independence of the recommendation and allows clients to procure or commission subsequent design and implementation support through an appropriate route.

14. Client responsibilities

- Provide timely access to relevant stakeholders and documentation
- Confirm decision authority, governance and evaluation priorities
- Identify applicable organisational policies and assurance requirements
- Validate factual information, assumptions and cost inputs
- Retain responsibility for procurement, compliance and investment decisions

15. Client outcomes

- A clear, defensible comparison of viable options
- Independent evidence supporting investment and procurement decisions
- Improved understanding of costs, risks and dependencies
- Better alignment between technology, services and strategic outcomes
- Reduced risk of premature commitment to a supplier or platform
- A practical route from decision to mobilisation and delivery

Contact us

For further information about this service or to discuss your requirements, please contact:

Email: Hello@socitm.net
Website: www.socitm.net

Legal and publication details

SOCITM Commercial Ltd

Registered company number: 14547420

Registered office: 2 Shenley Grove, Stafford, ST17 9PT, United Kingdom

VAT number: 456 1707 86

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