

The Human × AI operating model: Rethinking trust design

11:45 Hall 10b

Ather Abbas · Jonathan Timmis OBE · Jonny Wathen

Introductions



Ather Abbas

Director of Strategy and
Transformation



Jonathan Timmis OBE

COO



Jonny Wathen

CEO & Co-founder





About TransforMATive

We support Multi-Academy Trust leaders to make confident decisions about digital transformation — connecting strategy, technology, data, cyber, operations and innovation around the needs of their organisation.

What We Do

TransforMATive helps trusts move from ambition to practical, sustainable transformation — independent expertise across digital strategy, technology-enabled operating models, cyber and privacy, data and insights, AI and innovation, procurement and implementation.

What Trusts Gain

A trusted, independent partner supporting the whole journey: understanding current position, defining strategy, selecting solutions, delivering change and building long-term capability — plus a wider community sharing emerging practice.

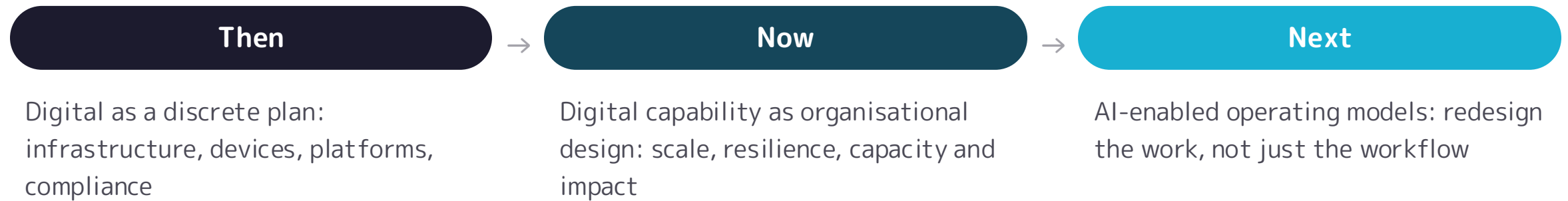
Our Reach

250+ Multi-Academy Trust organisations · established relationships across England · a national programme of Summits, Roundtables, TransforMATive LIVE, Labs and leadership exchanges.

From insight to impact: TransforMATive helps multi-academy trusts turn digital ambition into practical, sustainable organisational change.

The shift: digital is no longer the workstream

Technology is becoming the infrastructure beneath organisational transformation.



If we were designing our trust today, with the capabilities now available, would we design it this way?





Strategy

We will assist in co-creating a digital strategy that enables your Trust vision. We will engage stakeholders within the organisation, secure approval and support implementation.



Operations

For each agreed objective we identify we will present these in a format which will clearly show the expected benefits to the organisation and the cost and time expected to achieve the return on investment (ROI).



People

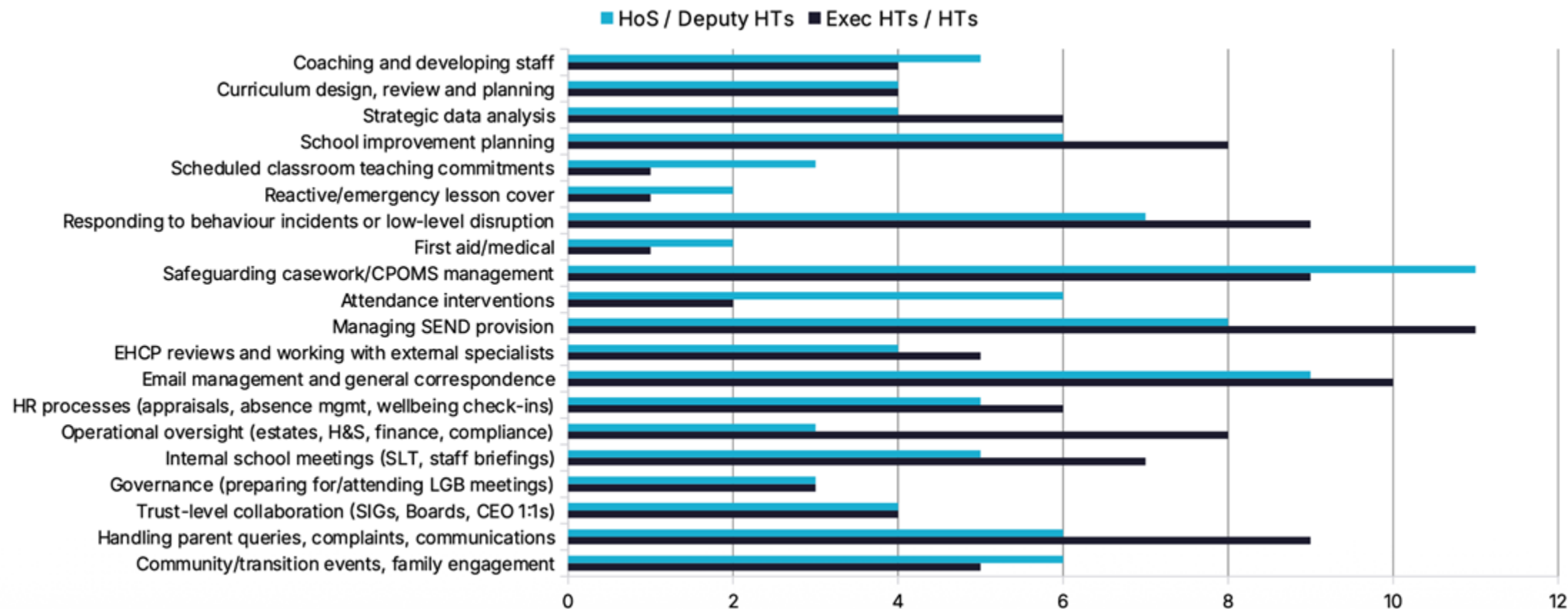
We are well placed to provide clients with mentoring services. Clients looking to develop their internal talent pool and develop their staff in readiness for moving up to senior roles.



We help Trusts to digitally mature whilst realising efficiencies and improving effectiveness.

Extol Trust: how leaders spend their time

School leader survey — task allocation comparison, hours per week



TRANSFORMATIVE TRIBES

CFO Playbook: Recipes for Financial Success

Collaborative partners: Red Kite Connect · Civica · TransforMATIVE (2024/25)

A peer network of multi-academy trust finance leaders, sharing practice and benchmarking data.



Benchmarking the Finance Function Across MATs

James Wright, CFO, Astrea Academy Trust (June, 2025)

Driving excellence through shared insight

The finance function is fundamental to the sustainability and resilience of multi-academy trusts (MATs). Recognising the benefits of sector-led collaboration, a **benchmarking project** was launched to bring together MAT finance leaders to compare practices, processes, and resourcing, with the aim of raising standards and sharing knowledge.

What began as a conversation among CFOs developed into an open and inclusive benchmarking exercise. The approach was deliberately designed without restrictive parameters in the first phase, to encourage participation and honest engagement across trusts.

Initial findings showed a surprising consistency in the overall cost per pupil across the participating trusts. However, deeper analysis revealed significant differences in finance models, resourcing structures, and the involvement of educational professionals in financial processes.

Collaborative partners: Red Kite Connect · Civica · TransforMATIVE

Beyond the data, the project encouraged trusts to reflect on whether their budgeting, forecasting, and procurement practices were truly efficient, and whether processes could be standardised. There was strong interest in exploring what “best in class” might look like.

The benchmarking process also created valuable new networks, connecting finance leaders and their teams across MATs, building relationships at every operational level, which is essential for embedding improvement across the sector.

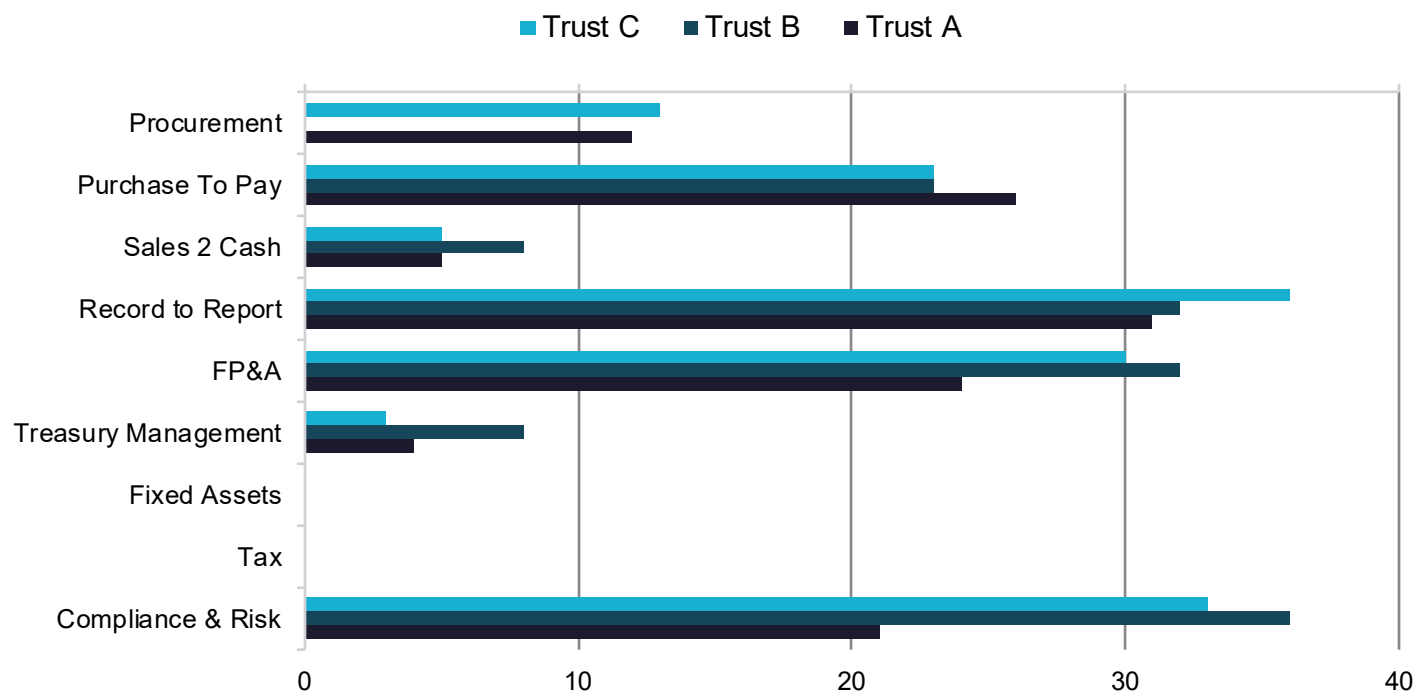
Looking ahead, there are plans to expand participation, refine the dataset, and move towards developing sector-owned frameworks supporting standardised, efficient and context-sensitive processes in areas such as procurement and purchase-to-pay.

Ultimately, this collaborative approach shows the collective strength of MATs in shaping their own standards, challenging accepted practices, and sharing insights that lead to better outcomes for pupils and communities.



Finance Benchmarking: cost per pupil by finance process area

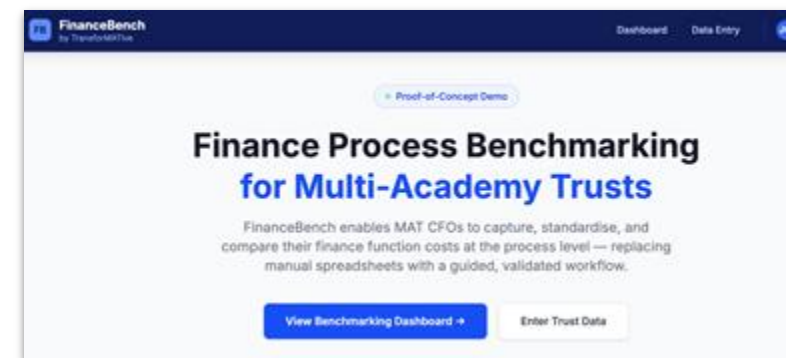
Finance Benchmarking tool by TransforMATIVE (June 2026)



£ / pupil. Source: FinanceBench by TransforMATIVE dashboard.

Exact figures (3 tracked line items)

Process	A	B	C
Data Entry	£9.00	£11	£9.23
Acc. Reconciliation	£11	£15	£5.54
Mgmt Accounts Prod.	£5.53	—	£16





Lift Schools: a provocation for AI in 2034

A vision for use of AI in the future

"Imagine stepping into a Lift School in 2034, where technology has seamlessly integrated into every aspect of the educational experience, and the vibrancy of human connection remains central."

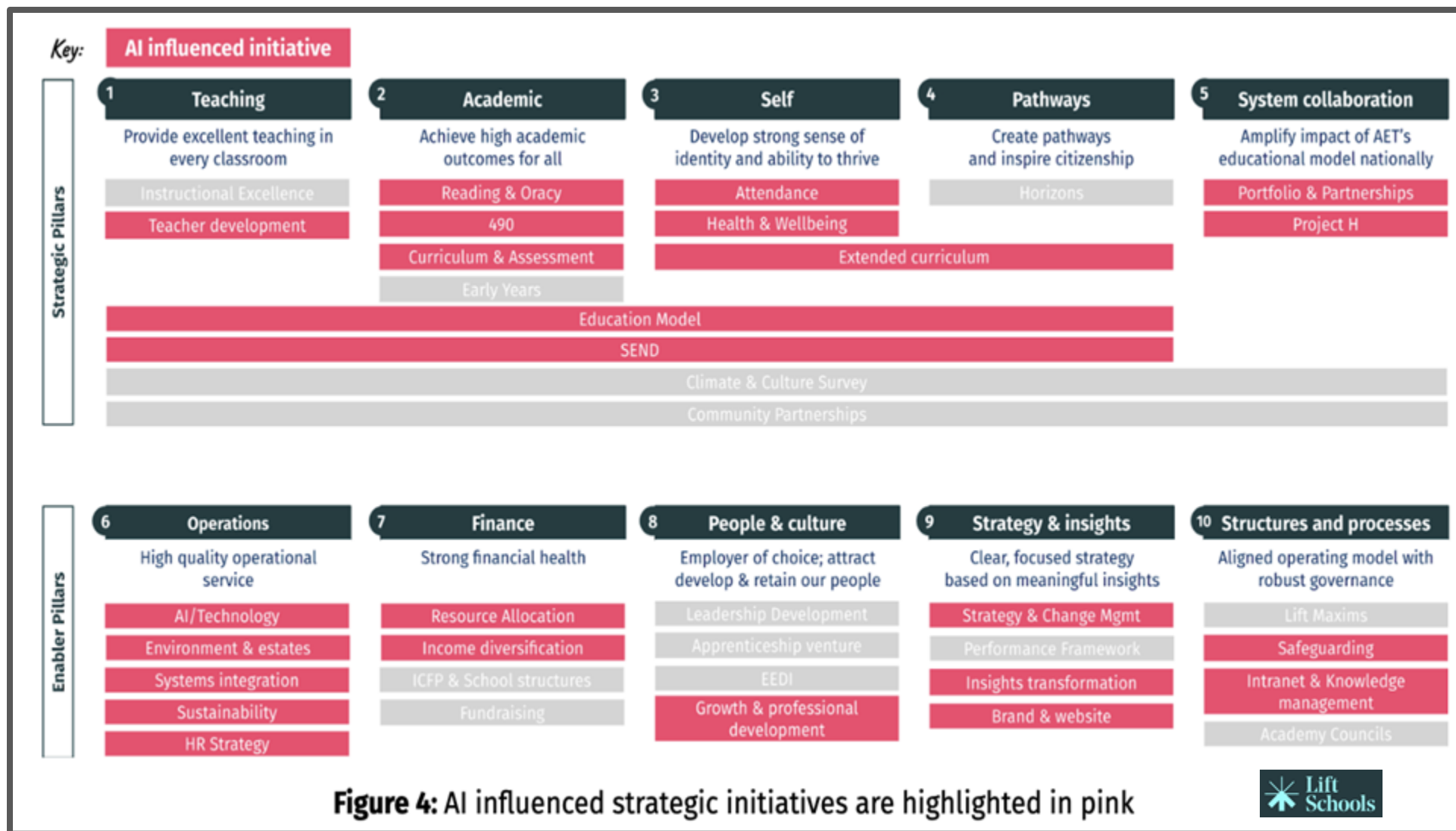


- Personalised learning companions: AI assistants that adapt to how each pupil learns best, from interactive geometry models to animated phonics challenges.
- Emotional attunement: systems that notice stress signals and gently prompt breaks, study-schedule support and encouragement.
- Inclusive by design: tailored support for SEND pupils, from text-to-speech and predictive spelling for dyslexia to adaptive communication tools for non-verbal pupils.

James Browning, COO, Lift Schools

Source: "Vision for use of AI in the future: Lift Schools in 2034" — written as a provocation to inspire Lift Schools' AI strategy, not a definitive vision.





What the research surfaced

Four leadership tensions that sit beneath most digital transformation work.

Ambition ↔ **Readiness**

Can we move fast without exceeding organisational capability?

Consistency ↔ **Agency**

Where does trust-wide entitlement add value, and where should schools retain choice?

Automation ↔ **Human judgement**

What should be removed, redesigned or deliberately protected?

Vision ↔ **Execution**

How do we turn strategy into sustained adoption across schools?

Trust Redesign Framework

A simple diagnostic for redesigning trusts around purpose, not technology.

GOVERNANCE · RISK · CULTURE

1 Purpose

What are we trying to achieve?

2 Operating Model

How should the trust organise itself to deliver this?

3 Processes

How should work actually happen?

4 People & Capability

What should people do, and what capabilities do we need?

5 Digital, Data & AI Enablers

What can technology, information and intelligence enable?

1. Purpose: start with the organisational outcome

Without purpose, digital transformation becomes activity rather than impact.

LEADERSHIP QUESTION

What are we trying to achieve?

REDESIGN TEST

Do we have enough clarity to make choices and to stop doing things?

- Educational purpose and pupil outcomes
- Staff experience and workload
- Growth, mergers and resilience
- Equity, inclusion and entitlement

Purpose creates the criteria for every later decision: what to standardise, what to automate, what to invest in and what to protect.

2. Operating Model: redesign how the trust works

Scale creates value only when decision rights, services and accountability are clear.

Central

Shared services · Core platforms · Trust-wide entitlement

Federated

School identity · Local adaptation · Context-sensitive delivery

Partnered

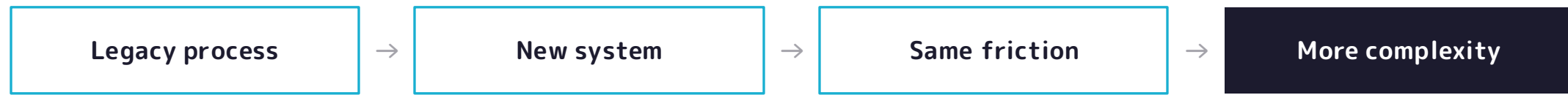
Specialist capacity · Sector expertise · Place-based collaboration

Operating model question — Where does consistency create value and where does agency matter?

3. Processes: do not digitise dysfunction

Technology should not simply make inefficient work happen faster.

TYPICAL PATTERN



BETTER SEQUENCE



Question for leaders — What are we doing because we inherited it, not because it creates value?

4. People & Capability: build capacity to change

Transformation cannot depend on a few specialists or informal champions.

Executive leadership

Sets purpose, appetite and direction

Functional owners

Redesign services, processes and controls

School leaders

Translate model into practice and culture

Practitioners

Adopt, adapt and improve the work

Capability is not just training — it is the organisational ability to make decisions, redesign work, communicate change, govern risk and sustain adoption.

5. Digital, Data & AI: enablers, not the starting point

Start with the organisation you need; then ask what capability enables it.

Shared platforms

Reduce duplication and create common ways of working

Automation

Remove repeatable low-value activity with controls

Data foundations

Create visibility, evidence and decision support

AI capability

Augment people and redesign work responsibly

Design principle — Do not start with “Where can we use AI?” Start with “What work should exist?”

The Human x AI Operating Model overlay

A practical way to decide what should remain human, augmented, automated or removed.

Model	Role of AI	Human role
Human-led	AI informs	People lead with judgement, relationships and values
AI-augmented	AI assists	People direct the work and take accountability
AI-led / human-governed	AI performs most activity	People supervise outcomes and exceptions
Automated	Rules execute	People set controls and monitor performance
Eliminate	Work removed	People focus on higher-value activity

Aim: use AI to amplify human impact, not replace it by default.

The Human x AI Operating Model

Designing the right balance of human judgement, AI capability and automation to deliver better outcomes for schools and communities.

MODEL	ROLE OF AI	HUMAN ROLE	EXAMPLE ACTIVITIES
1 HUMAN-LED Technology supports; people own the judgement.	AI surfaces trusted workforce data, comparisons and prompts to inform human decision-making.	1 Leaders interpret the insight, hold conversations, exercise judgement and act with care.	• RKLT: sickness and absence intelligence dashboard • Compare absence ratios across teams, schools and professions • Link absence, appraisals and return-to-work activity • Use insight to support accountability, training and wellbeing
2 AI-AUGMENTED AI increases capability; people remain in control.	AI drafts, summarises and structures outputs to improve productivity, consistency and quality.	2 People set the intent, review outputs, assure quality and own implementation.	• Oak National Academy: AI-generated lesson plans, slides, quizzes and worksheets, with teachers refining content, context and suitability before classroom use • Policy implementation packs, checklists and guidance • AI-generated roles, responsibilities and supporting templates • Faster content creation with human review
3 AI-LED / HUMAN-GOVERNED AI performs first-line activity; people supervise outcomes and exceptions.	AI answers queries, triages requests and uses governed content and data to provide first-response support.	3 People oversee outcomes, handle complex cases and intervene when needed.	• Waterton Academy Trust Robin Education: AI-powered website compliance and policy auditing, with exceptions and identified risks reviewed by trust leaders • Eclipse / TransforMATIVE: AI-powered document redaction for SARs and information disclosure, with final review and approval retained by staff • E-ACT agents using integrated data for finance, education and people leaders
4 AUTOMATED Technology completes defined processes with appropriate controls.	Automation executes repeatable workflows, scheduled outputs and routine process steps reliably at scale.	4 People set rules, monitor performance, validate outputs and manage exceptions.	• Automated finance consolidation, purchasing approvals and board reporting across the trust • Automated headteacher reporting from attendance, outcomes, staffing and budget data • Governance transcription, minutes and trend capture in Teams • Routine workflow triggers and scheduled reporting
5 ELIMINATE Redesign removes activity that no longer needs to exist.	AI and redesign remove non-value-add work, duplication and unnecessary coordination.	5 People focus on higher-value work that requires expertise, support and decision-making.	• Remove repetitive resource reformatting and worksheet creation • Reduce manual report compilation and data reconciliation • Remove calendar chasing and routine booking coordination • Eliminate low-value written marking through more effective feedback approaches

P DESIGN PRINCIPLE Start with the outcome and purpose. Then decide what should remain human, be augmented, automated or removed — responsibly.

A THE AIM Use AI and automation to amplify human impact, build capacity and redesign work responsibly for schools and communities.

FROM AUTOMATED DATA TO ACTIONABLE INTELLIGENCE

Connecting information to identify patterns, priorities and opportunities for earlier intervention



1

AUTOMATE

Capture information routinely

HR Dashboard

Filters

Total Staff

1,640 ↑ +3%
vs. last year

Absence Rate

5.1% ↓ -0.6pp
vs. last year

Turnover Rate

6.2% ↓ -0.8pp
vs. last year

Attendance & Absence



Compliance & Safeguarding

- ✓ Cyber Security Awareness 92% complete
- ✓ KCSIE 2025 Training 88% complete
- ✓ Safeguarding Assurance By school

[View](#)

Attendance and absence
Compliance (e.g. Cyber Security Awareness, KCSIE 2025) – live on the HR dashboard
Safeguarding assurance by school
Return-to-work activity
Appraisal and development
Colleague feedback

Less manual collection.

More reliable, real-time information.

2

CONNECT

Bring information together

Workforce Intelligence

Filters

Summary Absence Attrition Tenure Appraisal CPD Wellbeing

Attrition (YTD)

0.8%

Forecast attrition

7.7%

Forecast leavers

967

Est. Supply Cost

£371,509

Attrition Forecast vs Actual (YTD)



Identify trends and underlying causes
Compare schools, teams and periods
Reveal relationships between measures
Bring together absence, compliance, safeguarding, attrition and development data
Focus leadership attention

Moving from individual data points
to a joined-up picture.

3

ACT

Turn intelligence into action

Leadership Action Centre (Roadmap)

This is our roadmap, grounded in our current data. Not a live screen today.

Priority Alerts Safeguarding Wellbeing Attrition (Next)

Priority Alerts

School A

- Absence rate is above Trust average High
- Safeguarding training below target High
- Appraisal non-completion Medium

[View insight](#)

Next on the roadmap

Attrition dashboard

- Forecast attrition by school and role
- Leaver seasonality and reasons
- Budget impact and scenarios

Leaver Seasonality (example)



Intervene earlier
Target support and development
Strengthen leadership accountability
Improve colleague wellbeing, attendance and retention
Use current data to prioritise and plan the next steps

A clear roadmap to impactful action
– informed by where we are today.



Less time gathering information. **More time acting on it.**

One Team One Trust

STRATEGIC TRANSFORMATION

“

Transformation succeeds or fails because of people.

THE ORDER WE CHANGE THINGS IN

Human behaviour



Digital



Data



AI



Impact

Cross-functional

One plan across education, finance, people, IT and estates

Conditions for innovation

Big Idea backs the best thinking of our people

Beyond business as usual

Changing how the system works, not just keeping it running

Collective intelligence

No academy navigates complexity alone



FIVE THEMES, ONE SHARED ENDEAVOUR

Not separate workstreams or competing priorities. Progress in each strengthens the others.



Academic Excellence

Every child thrives, whatever their starting point



Pupil Experience and Wellbeing

Ready to learn, keen to attend, able to flourish



Vibrant Learning Environments

Modern digital, governed AI and net zero schools



Employer of Choice

A career at E-ACT genuinely worth having

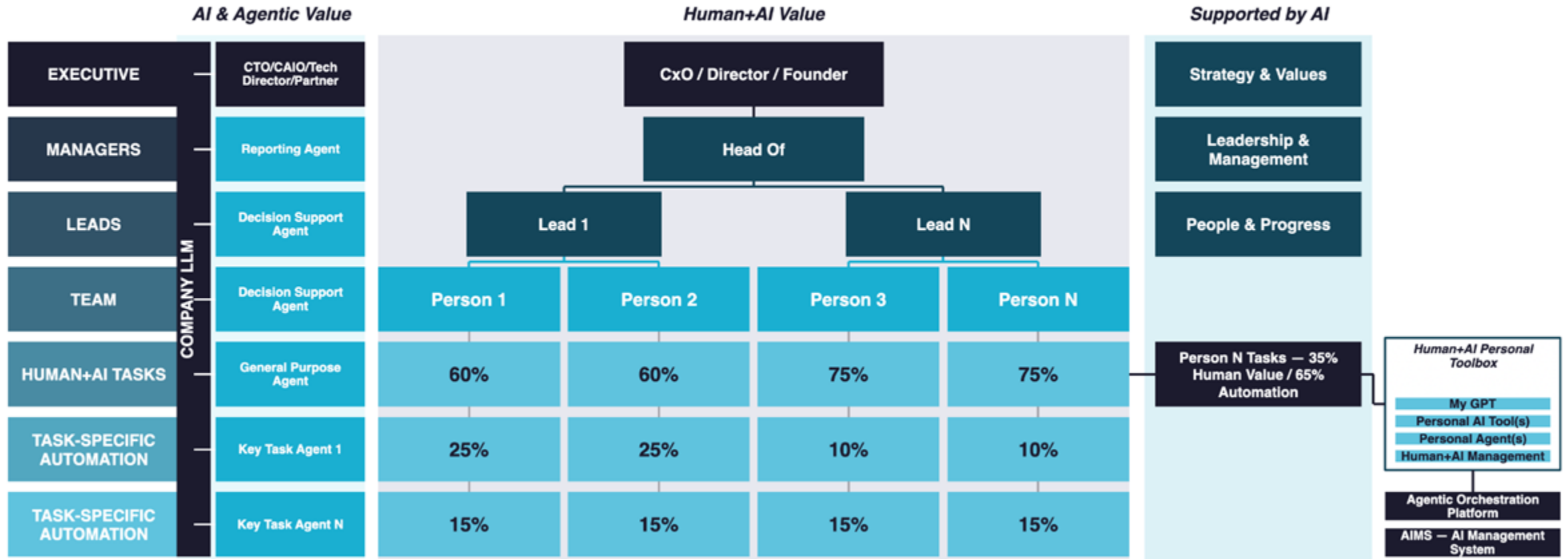


Efficient and Collaborative Trust

Energy goes into pupils, not systems



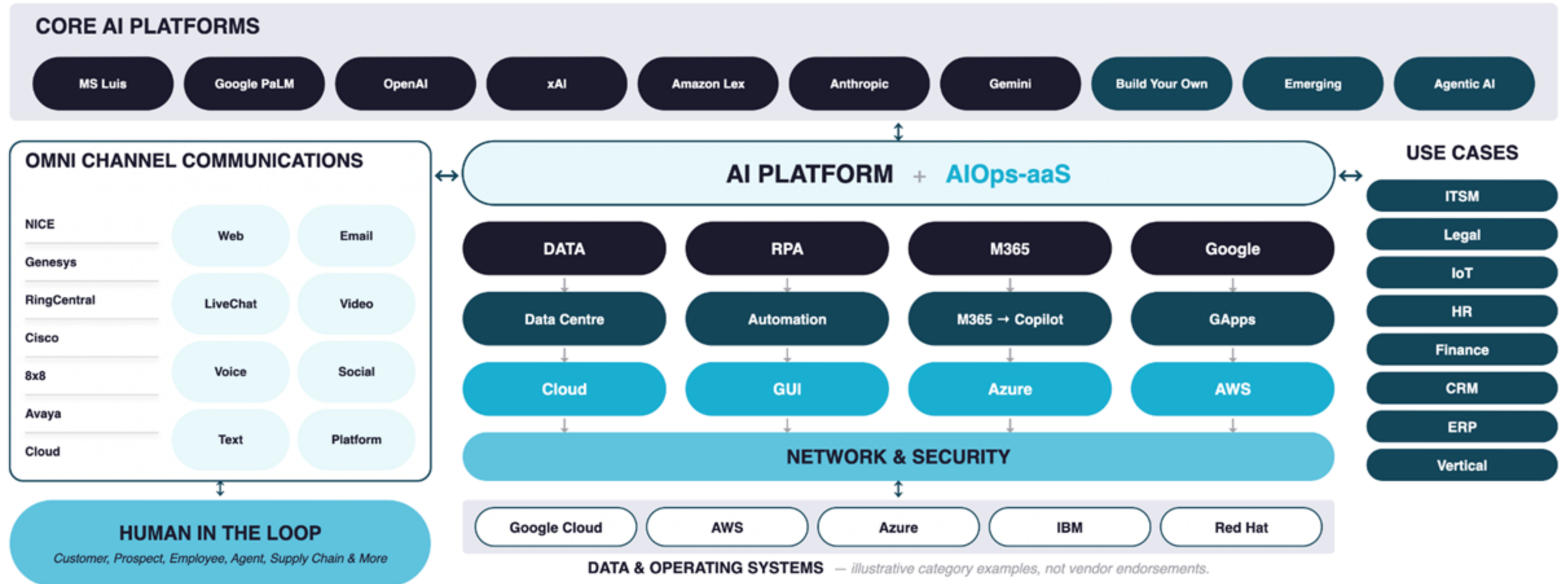
AI in the Organisation



Illustrative framework — role and agent labels are generic placeholders, not a specific client's structure.

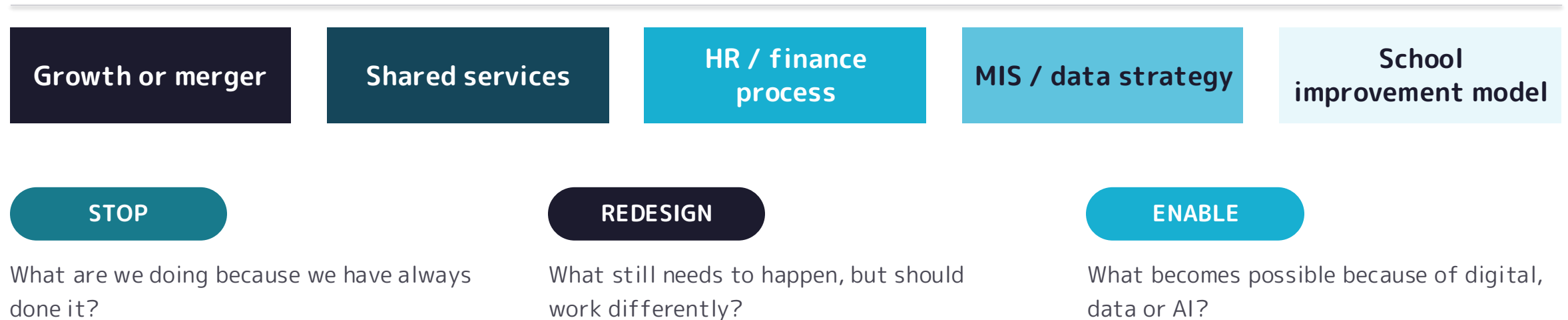
Powers Key Task Agents 1–N and the orchestration layer across all agents.

AI Platform Reference Architecture



Workshop diagnostic: choose one trust challenge

Apply the framework to a real operational or strategic issue.



Output: one redesigned opportunity, one risk to manage, one capability to build.

The leadership questions

- What should remain deliberately human?
- Where does scale create value?
- Which processes should stop, not be digitised?
- What capability must we build before we accelerate?
- How do governance, risk and culture shape every decision?

Better conversations. Stronger decisions. Greater impact.

New partner announcement

Welcoming TranforMAtive as a
CST Platinum Partner



Tranfor**MAtive**



Confederation
of School Trusts
The voice of school trusts



Governing AI in school trusts

Stewardship, assurance, and
responsible innovation

Samira Sadeghi and Jonny Wathen

in association with



Tranfor**MAtive**

October
2026



Confederation
of School Trusts
The voice of school trusts



Confederation
of School Trusts



Digital leadership in the age of AI

3 dates between 03 Nov 2026 to 17 Nov 2026

Building strategic capability and confidence across school trusts

Trust leadership masterclass



Tranfor**MAtive**
DIGITAL LEADERSHIP
SUMMIT 2026



Insights Webinar: Inclusive by design

Inclusive by Design: Using Digital Learning to Improve Outcomes for...

📍 Online

📅 21 October 2026 ⌚ 11:30AM

[RSVP Here](#)



Transformative LIVE: @ St Bartholomew's MAT

Transformative Live is a practice-led insight format designed to give...



St Bartholomew's Ce Primary School
Sedgley Road, Penn, Wolverhampton,
WV4 5LG

📅 12 November 2026 ⌚ 09:30AM

[RSVP Here](#)



Transformative LIVE: Leadership Exchange Sweden

Transformative Live is a practice-led insight format designed to give...



Tegelbacken 6, 101 23 Stockholm,
Sweden

📅 02 December 2026 ⌚ 12:30PM

[RSVP Here](#)

APPENDIX

One-page framework handouts

Optional take-away visuals for delegates.

Trust Redesign Framework

A simple framework to redesign trusts for scale, resilience and impact — powered by purpose, enabled by digital.

GOVERNANCE · RISK · CULTURE

1 Purpose

What are we trying to achieve?

2 Operating Model

How should the trust organise itself to deliver this?

3 Processes

How should work actually happen?

4 People & Capability

What should people do, and what capabilities do we need?

5 Digital & Data Enablers

What technology and information capability enables the model?

GOVERNANCE

Who decides? Who is accountable? How do we know it is working?

RISK

What could we lose or unintentionally create by changing it?

CULTURE — Will people understand, trust and adopt the change?

STOP

What are we doing because we've always done it?

REDESIGN

What still needs to happen, but should work differently?

ENABLE

What becomes possible because of digital, data or AI?