



Empowering insight led regional
collaboration and decision making through
more efficient and effective use of our
collective capabilities

To enable improved strategic decision making by and for the South of Scotland economy, a **partnership-based Intelligence Hub** should be created.

The Hub should join up existing capabilities across the partnership through a **Hub & Spoke delivery model** that provides a **beacon for insight-led analysis** to enable improved decision making.

The Hub will improve the quality, efficiency, and speed of insight, enabling **better decisions, more external investment, stronger economic performance, and more coordinated action** across partners.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Partners in the South of Scotland (SOS) previously agreed to create and evolve a Regional Intelligence Hub (RIH) to capture and analyse currently fragmented data where a 'single source of truth' can help make improved strategic decisions for the region and strengthen business cases to attract new investment.

South of Scotland Enterprise and Scottish Government co-funded follow-on work on behalf of partners to explore the SOS RIH in more detail over a 10-week period. The exploration focussed on the core Purpose of the SOS RIH and the Operating Model that would support its delivery and evolution.

The exploration of the South of Scotland Regional Intelligence Hub also helped inform a 'Frame of Reference' that other regions could use to guide the exploration of their own version of a Regional Intelligence Hub. The 'Frame of Reference' can be found in Appendix A.

The case for a South of Scotland RIH was agreed in the previous phase of work, along with 8 recommendations on how to move to the next stage. The 10-week follow on work focussed on making explicit what is possible in the first MVP stage. This should include what the resourcing implications might be for SOSE as Lead Partner and other Partner organisations.

To help understand resource implications it was necessary to start with agreeing the Purpose of the SOS RIH, and the Value sought from the Hub. The Purpose and Value would then determine the required capabilities, leadership, and governance. Collectively, this represents the Operating Model for the SOS RIH

- Partners agreed the purpose of the SOS RIH was to be a beacon for **Insight-led Analysis and decision making to attract and make best use of investment**
- The value from the SOS RIH will be **better decisions, more external investment, stronger economic performance, and more coordinated action**. This will be achieved via increased speed, more efficient use of collective resources, and improved quality of outputs in the capture, analysis, and use of data & information held across the respective partners.
- It was apparent that - collectively - partners already have some of the capability required. The challenge is in releasing capacity and building capability. The delivery model therefore should find a way of bringing the relevant capability together with a focus on supporting informed strategic decision making. **A Hub & Spoke structural model for delivery was agreed.**
- The Hub & Spoke model means SOSE will act as the main base (i.e. the Hub) for the regional intelligence hub, providing the leadership, securing and managing staff time, data, skills, and analytical support from SOSE and partners that everyone can feed into and draw on (i.e. the spokes).

The recommended next steps is **to start small** with a core number of partners. The focus should be on **quickly mobilising an MVP1** of the Hub that focusses on the aggregation, analysis and interpretation of publicly available data for no more than 3 Strategic Questions and establishing the foundations of the Hub (e.g. data sharing agreements, standards of operation). The Hub should **then scale as value is demonstrated**.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The premise of a South of Scotland Regional Intelligence Hub (SOS RIH) is to help partners to collectively and individually attract and make best use of investment and cases. Partners need to make strong evidence-based cases and decisions to secure and maximise that investment and funding.

At the moment, evidenced-based cases and decisions are sub-optimal due to the difficulties with fragmented data sets, or data sets that don't provide enough granularity at a regional level. We are also using inconsistent data sets, and often reinventing the wheel rather than using what we collectively have.

The SOS RIH will be a beacon to add quality, efficiency, and speed to proactive 'Insight-led Analysis'. It will challenge assumptions while supporting and influencing Strategy and Policy at both regional and organisational levels.

It is recognised that changes in the political and business environments result in changing priorities for the work of partner organisations, creating uncertainty and challenges in investing in new initiatives. It is also clear that there are risks of investing in new initiatives in the hope that they provide value. Therefore, it is essential that the SOS RIH has 'agility' in its DNA to enable flexibility and scalability in response to changing demands and circumstances.

However, let's not lose sight that change often brings opportunity. New Ministers, new ideas, and new priorities are heading our way shortly. We need to quickly get ready to respond to these opportunities, and do so better than our competitor regions.

The South of Scotland is well placed to get started quickly in creating an initial Hub, by adopting a Minimum Viable Product (MVP) approach. One of the benefits of the RIH is that partner organisations can make more efficient use of existing resources by achieving more collectively than any partner could achieve individually. Additional resources will likely be required, but we will only seek this if all attempts to draw on or redirect existing collective expertise have been exhausted.

The development of the SOS Hub requires great partnership working. Fortunately, partners in the South of Scotland are starting from a very positive position – active engagement and excitement at the potential of the SOS RIH. Much thought has gone into the creation of the Hub and its opportunities.

Notwithstanding the positivity, there are challenges to be overcome. The development of the Hub will need to address a number of potential structural and cultural challenges. The partners firmly believe the benefits from a SOS RIH far outweigh the challenges in creating one.

The approach to next steps in creating the SOS RIH is defined by speed, pragmatism, and evolution.

There is a desire to move quickly as the need for improved evidence-based cases and decision making is becoming critical. The MVP1 of the Hub can be established quickly with a small core team of three. The focus for the first 12 months will be mobilising the foundations for the Hub and testing the value that can be derived before moving towards a fully mature model.

2. WHY DO WE NEED A REGIONAL INTELLIGENCE HUB?



*The beacon connects what is separate,
revealing what is possible.*

WHY DO WE NEED A REGIONAL INTELLIGENCE HUB?

A Regional Intelligence Hub for the South of Scotland will help partners collectively and individually attract and make best use of investment and funding, and do so while reducing reliance of external consultancy spend.

Each of our organisations feel the increased demand on our respective services. We are all feeling the pressure from tightening finances. We are all driven to make even more impact from within our existing resources but our ability to do so with our current delivery models is challenging.

Of course, our region is not alone in these challenges. They are being felt at a national level as well as across every other region. As everyone tries to respond to common challenges, we are likely to experience increased competition for scarce investment and funding in the future.

We all therefore need to make more of existing resources, make fully informed decisions on the use of existing funds, and put forward even more compelling cases to attract additional investment and funding. One way of doing that is by being proactive and achieving more from our collective intelligence than we currently do from our individual data sets.

However, the data and information across the region is currently fragmented. That fragmentation reduces the speed of response to opportunities as they arise. The fragmentation impacts the credibility and trust in the data we are using to make important decisions. And the effort required to pull together, analyse, and use credible and trusted data can be highly inefficient.

Therefore, we require a RIH to help us individually and collectively make better use of our collective capabilities to make better decisions that result in stronger economic performance. We can achieve this through collective and coordinated action.

The proposed SOS RIH will help deliver more value by addressing the issues of quality of outputs, speed of collection, analysis & use, and efficient delivery.

Value: The Hub will deliver impact by enabling more informed decisions through us having a shared and trusted national and local level evidence base, produced by qualified staff.

Quality: The Hub will ensure consistent standards, shared skills, and real time access to data. It will improve credibility, granularity, and the ability to understand limitations and unintended consequences. It will enable partners to check conflicting data and make informed choices.

Speed: Demand for responsiveness is rising. The Hub will enable quicker access to trusted data, proactive horizon scanning, and faster responses to investment and funding opportunities. It will support “real time responses” and better management of strategic questions.

Efficiency: The Hub will help reduce duplication and get answers ‘right first time’. This will enable effective use of partner resources (without an over reliance on external consultancy expertise), and will stop us reinventing the wheel. The shared data and processes will help the whole system be more efficient and impactful than the sum of its parts.

3. WHAT WILL THE HUB DO?



***A beacon turns scattered signals into
a shared sense of direction.***

WHAT WILL THE HUB DO?

The SOS RIH will be a beacon to guide proactive 'Insight-led Analysis', particularly at a strategic level. It will challenge assumptions while supporting and influencing Strategy and Policy at a regional and organisational level.

The Hub's purpose is fundamentally to provide insight and analysis. It's core functions include:

- Generating trusted, high-quality analysis for partners and the partnership
- Providing a regional evidence base for strategy, investment, and policy
- Supporting horizon scanning and proactive identification of opportunities
- Enabling consistent, compelling regional narratives
- Publishing data and insights
- Coordinating intelligence gathering, validation, and dissemination.

You might hear someone from the Hub say to a regional partner - *"Thanks for getting us involved in the early stages of your discussion. We'd love to offer a different lens through which to consider things."*

Focusing on the Insight-led Analysis approach allows us to benefit from the foundation infrastructure that would be required for more reactive and transactional models, without the higher levels of investment that would be required for additional layers others have built that we don't need.

The 'Insight-led Analysis' will proactively and reactively help explore questions such as:

1. Specifically, who are the businesses within the region who might gain most from the development of AI-related skills – especially those not currently engaged?
2. What are the emerging professions that businesses in the region are crying out for now and potentially in the future that we need local students to train / develop skills in?
3. Within Scotland's industrial planning where does the South have the strongest proposition to lead the way nationally? Where are our relative strengths and weaknesses?
4. Who is travelling to the region, for what, and how do we increase their spend while here?

The previous phase of work captured 43 similar strategic questions. Six were developed into example answers to support discussion in this phase of work. They can be found in Appendix B.

Three alternative Purpose statements were considered by the partners before settling on proactive 'Insight-led Analysis'. Some of the infrastructure required to enable the more reactive versions of a Hub will also be relevant for the preferred option. These alternatives can be found in Appendix C.

4. HOW WILL THE HUB OPERATE?



***By drawing information together, the
beacon makes the unseen visible.***

HOW WILL THE HUB OPERATE?

The Operating Model will have 'agility' in its DNA to enable flexibility and scalability in response to demand.

The Operating Model for the hub has been developed using the framework shown in Figure 1.

The Purpose is the guiding light for determining all activity, processes, and capability.

The Structure is the most appropriate for the region based on the nature of the existing and required capabilities.

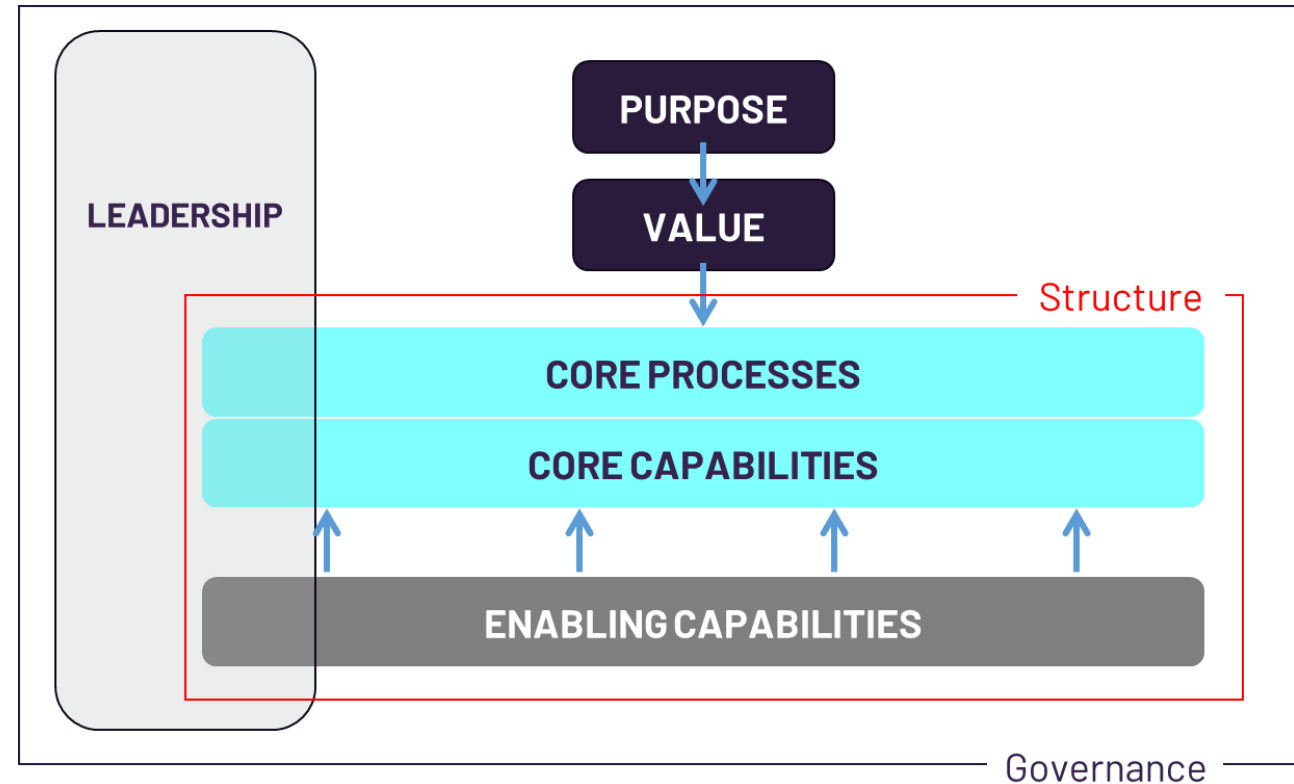
The Governance arrangements are then the most appropriate for the Purpose, Processes, Capabilities, and Structure.

Given the MVP approach being taken, and the fluid nature of the work of all of the partners, the Operating Model needs to be suitably flexible to enable scaling (up and down) as demand requires.

The following pages provide more detail on each of the component parts of the Operating Model.

It is worth noting at this point that this is the Operating Model for a fully functional 'Insight-led Analysis' based Hub. This will take time to create but shouldn't stop us just getting started.

Figure 1: Operating Model framework used to explore the SOS RIH



HOW WILL THE HUB OPERATE?

Purpose

To be a beacon for proactive 'Insight-led Analysis' that challenges assumptions while supporting and influencing Strategy, Investment and Policy at a regional and organisational level.

Value

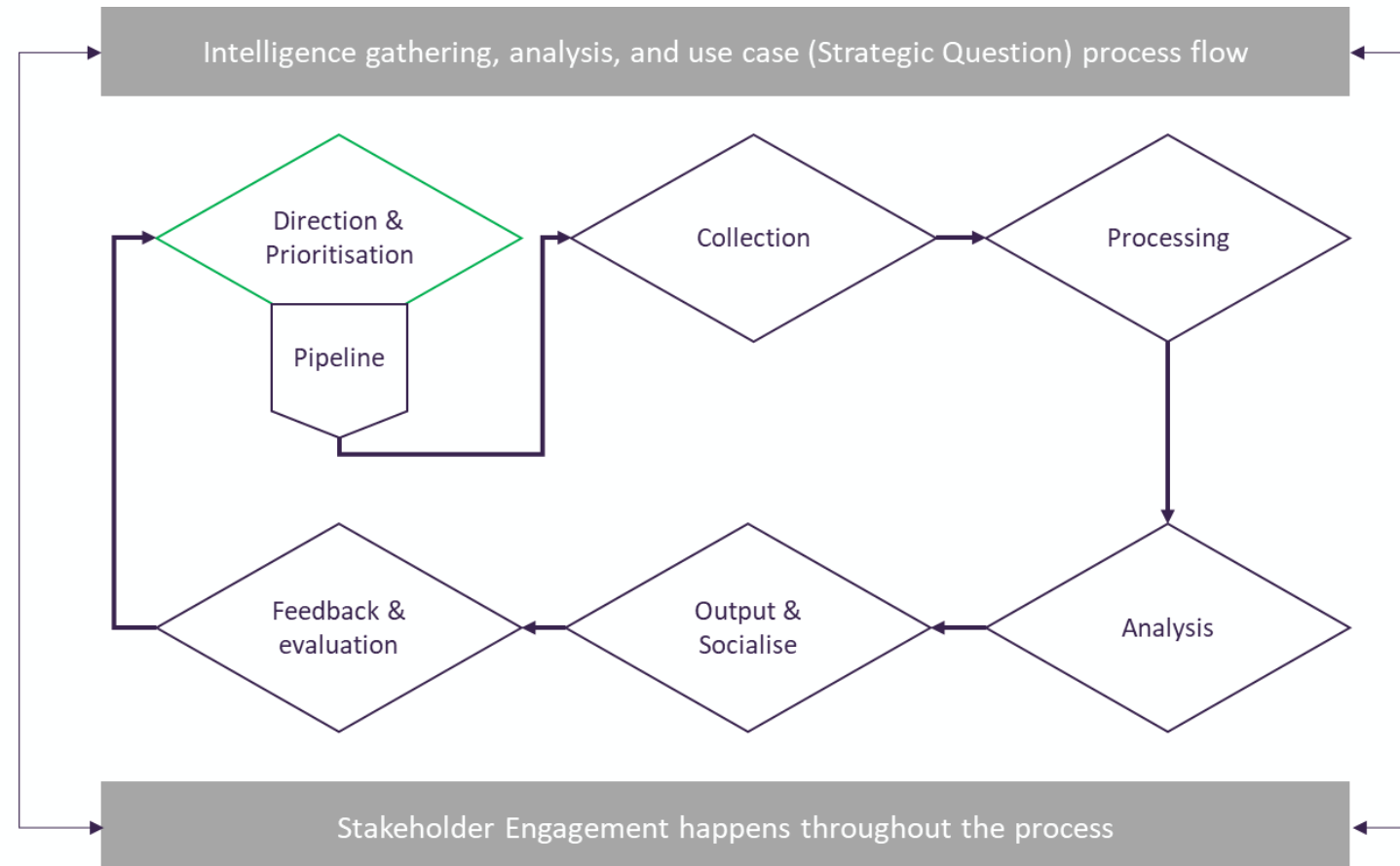
The Hub will enable more informed decisions through us having a shared and trusted national and local level evidence base, produced by qualified staff.

Core Processes

The core processes are shown opposite. The end-to-end process will be built on a number of principles:

- We will take a Digital First approach at each stage of the process
- Performance metrics will be agreed for each 'question' before leaving the Pipeline
- At the outset of each 'question' there will be clarity on who is involved, when, and why
- There will be high visibility of decision-making and progress.

Figure 2: SOS RIH process flow



HOW WILL THE HUB OPERATE?

Core Capabilities

The core capabilities required in the fully functional Hub will be serviced via a multidisciplinary team including:

- Economists
- Data scientists and analysts
- Communications and data visualisation
- Intelligence gathering and writing capability
- Technologists / computer scientists
- AI and agentic AI expertise
- Liaison officers and political/leadership interface
- Training coordinators
- Governance and legal expertise
- Cloud and physical infrastructure support.

Enabling Capabilities

The enabling capabilities required in the fully functional Hub are:

- Senior level commitment to partnership and resource sharing
- Clear ownership and accountability
- Modern technology infrastructure
- Partner data quality and sense checking
- Data sharing agreements and legal frameworks
- Training and capability building
- Shared learning and case studies.

Leadership

The Hub requires leadership that is visionary, ambitious, independent, representative, inquisitive, proactive, forward thinking, and benefits focused.

It is again worth noting these capabilities are not all required for MVP1. We have highlighted the capabilities required for that stage. We have also provided a detailed spec for the initial roles in Appendix D.

HOW WILL THE HUB OPERATE?

Structure Options

A number of options were considered for the best structure to suit the nature of the existing and desired future partnership. They were also considered in the context of speed and ease of getting started; and critically its scalability to respond to future demand.

The preferred option is the Hub & Spoke Model shown opposite. Fundamentally, partners provide time, expertise, and capability from existing resources in return for speedier and higher-quality outputs in a most efficient manner.

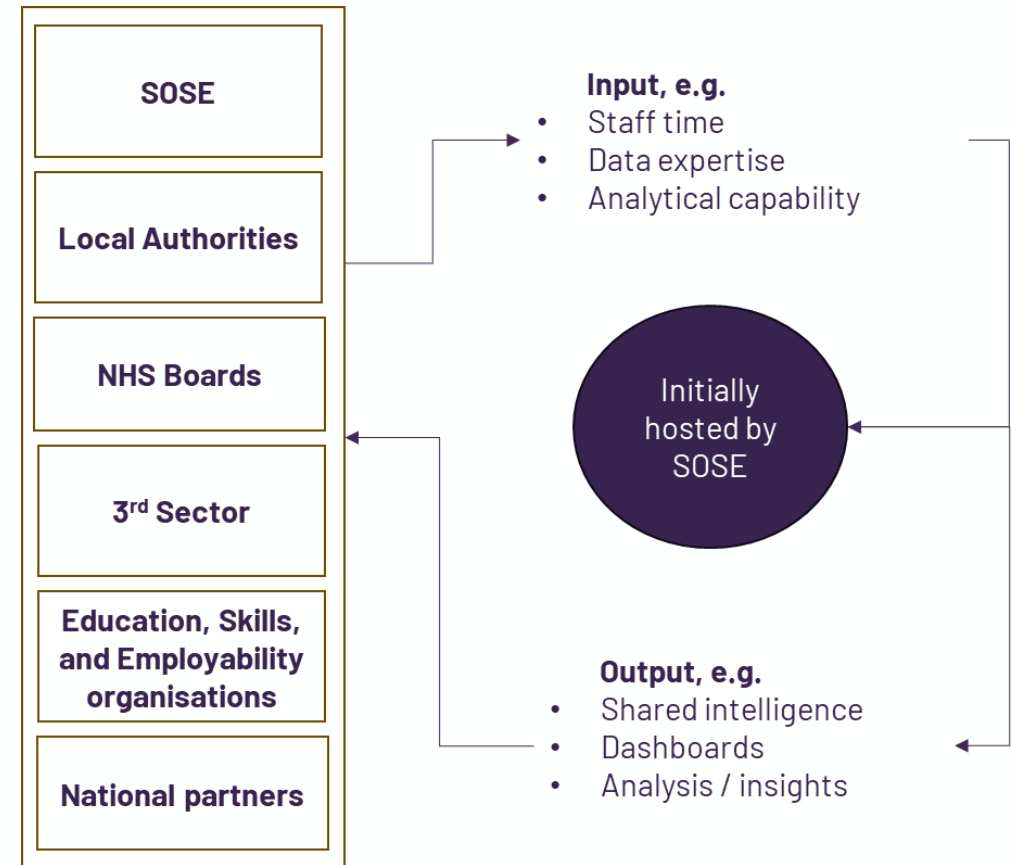
The Hub & Spoke model means SOSE will act as the main base (i.e. the Hub) for the regional intelligence hub, providing the leadership, securing and managing staff time, data, skills, and analytical support from SOSE and partners that everyone can feed into and draw on (i.e. the spokes).

SOSE is noted as the host initially. This follows the suggestion in the previous phase that the Hub needs a lead Partner organisation to drive & deliver its growth. As the fundamental purpose of the Intelligence Hub is to inform and enable decisions to be taken about regional growth, it is sensible that SOSE initially assumes the role of Lead Partner for the Hub.

This model is predicated on partners across the region formally providing dedicated time, expertise, and capability to meet demand. Given the Value set out earlier, this will result in more efficient use of existing resources and not automatically a requirement for additional resources.

More detail on the alternative options (Central Hub, Federated / Commissioning, and Outsourced) can be found in Appendix E.

Figure 3: The SOS RIH Hub & Spoke structure



HOW WILL THE HUB OPERATE?

Governance

The governance requirements for the MVP1 may be minimal as the SOS RIH will start small and be focussed on making the most from publicly available data. However, as the model matures each partner organisation will need to take advice once the full requirements of the fully functional Hub become clearer.

At a fundamental level, the following should be considered:

- Named chair / champions
- Clear organisational roles
- Accountability for data, resources, and staff
- Data Sharing Agreements if required (the intent in MVP1 will be to use publicly available data or data where there are already data sharing agreements in place)
- Alignment with other data projects across the region.

It is also proposed that the Regional Intelligence Hub has a representative who attends REP meetings and that there are quarterly agenda items – led by the RIH – to discuss system signals, indicators and policy changes that may inform the RIH work programme.

5. DO WE HAVE THE CAPABILITY?



A beacon guides partners from isolated data to collective intelligence.

DO WE HAVE THE CAPABILITY?

The answer is reasonably positive. Across the partners we probably do have some of the capability needed to get started. One of the benefits of the RIH is that we can make more efficient use of or redirect our existing resources by achieving more collectively than we could individually. We will only seek additional resource if we have exhausted attempts to use our existing collective expertise.

However, this positive position is based on each partner being committed to:

- Starting the Hub small with a core team of 3 who can mobilise the MVP 1 and drive growth based on demonstrated value
- Source the appropriate time, expertise, and capability from existing resources across a small number of partners who will form the foundation of the Hub. In doing so, there is an acceptance that initial benefits may not flow to all partner organisations during MVP1
- Team members being dedicated to the Hub on a full-time basis otherwise capacity will never be freed up. Actions are always more powerful than intentions
- The development of a pragmatic work programme for Year 1 that involves generating insights to address 3 Use Cases with the use of publicly available data and building the foundations for the Hub in terms of governance, data sharing agreements, standards etc.

We have noted below what will be required to set up and test the MVP1. More detailed descriptions are included in [Appendix D](#).

People

1. **Hub Director** – provides strategic leadership for the Regional Intelligence Hub, ensuring that intelligence, data insight, and digital capability are aligned with regional priorities. The role is responsible for coordinating multiple public sector partners, shaping the intelligence agenda, and ensuring the hub delivers actionable insights that inform policy, operational decision-making, and regional outcomes.

Expertise: data & digital, programme delivery, start-up & scaling of functions, partnership working.

2. **Data Analyst** – transforms complex data from partner organisations into clear intelligence and insights that support regional decision-making.

Expertise: data analysis, data visualisation, communication of insights to technical and non-technical audiences.

3. **Technologist** – designs, builds, and maintains the technical infrastructure that enables the Hub to securely collect, manage, integrate, and share data across partner organisations.

Expertise: technology architecture, integration expertise, development of analytical tools and applications.

Our initial view is that we collectively may have a gap in the critical position of Hub Director.

DO WE HAVE THE CAPABILITY?

Infrastructure

It would be sensible to leverage the existing technology infrastructure and emerging data strategy of the lead partner if possible. The emerging SOSE IT and Data Strategies show potential of providing scalable and open tech infrastructure for the fully mature model. The existing infrastructure should be suitable for the MVP1 requirements.

Governance

The Governance for the MVP1 stage should be light initially and scaled accordingly as the Hub matures. A Programme Board should be established comprising of the 2 or 3 initial partner organisations and the Hub Director. It might be helpful to include the lead partner's Head of Governance to help guide appropriate scalability.

The Programme Board should focus on delivery of the work programme that focusses on proving the RIH concept with the first 3 Strategic Questions and establishing the foundations of the Hub. The Programme Board should also remove barriers and support partner engagement and Hub advocacy.

A broader Advisory Group comprising the partners to date should be formed and should meet every 3 months to test the maturation of the Hub and agree future development.

Strategic Question

The first 3 Strategic questions should:

- Benefit two or more partners
- Require input from one or more partners
- Potentially impact two or more factors within the economy.
- In the first 12 months there should be attempts to also pose strategic questions that are not currently being thought about. These are likely to be in response to the changing political and economic landscape over the next 12 months

The selected questions should enable testing of the following:

- The relative speed of response between a pre and post RIH
- The relative use of resources between a pre and post RIH
- The relative quality of response between a pre and post RIH
- The additional value the RIH provided to respective partners that they couldn't get by answering the questions independently
- The clarity of the question – The future users of the Hub need to be 'intelligent customers'
- The participants and decision-making at each stage of the RIH process flow (Figure 2)

6. WHAT CHALLENGES DO WE NEED TO OVERCOME?



***In complexity and noise, the beacon
provides a trusted signal.***

WHAT CHALLENGES DO WE NEED TO OVERCOME?

We are starting from a positive position. Partners have been positively engaged, and excited at the potential of the SOS RIH. A lot of thought has gone into what could be created and the opportunities the Hub brings.

However, there are challenges to be overcome as we develop the MVP1 and beyond. We will need to address a number of potential structural and cultural challenges, including:

- **Hub advocacy** - selling the SOS RIH to the key decision-makers in our respective organisations. We all have obligations to deliver what we are responsible for so we need to avoid the Hub being a 'nice to have but additional cost'.
- **Funding and sustainability** ("Who pays?")
- **Capacity constraints** (time, skills, digital maturity)
- **Competing priorities across partners**
- **Fear of sharing data and unclear risk appetite**
- **Governance** for moving data quickly
- **Measuring benefits** and impact of the Hub

These challenges are all solvable but require strong and bold leadership, agreements, and cultural alignment.

7. GREAT, WHAT'S THE PLAN NOW?



***A regional beacon illuminates insights
no single light can reveal.***

GREAT, WHATS THE PLAN NOW?

The key to the success of the Hub will be momentum so it is vitally important that progress is made immediately following the circulation of this report.

Next steps (immediate)

- Report is shared with all Partners and Scottish Government.
- Lead Partner (SOSE) and core partner organisations (Scottish Borders Council and Dumfries & Galloway Council) meet and agree:
 - the content of this report including the initial Use Cases,
 - the initial resourcing of the core team against the capabilities defined in [Appendix E](#). Team members may be sourced from within partner organisations, secondment opportunities or, as a last resort, recruitment, and
 - the representatives for the Programme Board and the wider Advisory Group.
- Lead Partner (SOSE) mobilises technology infrastructure and governance.
- Aim is to have the core Hub team of 3 people and the technology infrastructure in place within 2 months of receipt of this report.
- Hub Director and core team to develop the first 12 months work programme with a focus on delivering value as quickly as possible and establishing foundations for scaling the Hub.

Work programme for the first 12 months

This is for the Hub Director to determine but may include:

- Embed the preferred operating model – Insight-led Analysis with aspects of Human Discovery being provided via the Advisory Group.
- Plan the technical work for the 3 Strategic Questions and additional ‘posed’ questions – agree what good looks like with the partner organisations and develop the backlog of activities necessary to deliver [We would suggest time-boxing the work on each Use Case to avoid overruns. The challenge therefore becomes ‘For this time and the limited resourcing of the core team, what can we achieve that will deliver value?]
- Design reporting arrangements to ensure Programme Board is engaged and supporting the removal of barriers.
- Establish the technology infrastructure and develop technology roadmap to ensure the infrastructure can be scaled with the Hub’s growth.
- Define performance metrics at the outset.
- Build digital-first processes.

If model looks like being successful start to:

- Firm up for scaled model – resourcing plan, partner engagement, etc.
- Develop data sharing agreements and governance mechanisms.
- Create a financial sustainability plan.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS



RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations to drive out the development of the MVP1 and move towards MVP2 are focused on speed and pragmatism, and evolution. We propose the following 10 recommendations.

1. Agree the focus is for Insight-led Analysis
2. Agree a Hub & Spoke model of delivery
3. Agree the benefits measurements around speed, efficiency, and quality of outputs
4. Start MVP1 with a small core resource ideally drawn from exiting resources: a Hub Director, Data Analyst, and Technologist
5. The initial core team should use 3 Strategic Questions to test the model
6. The initial core team should build the roadmap to MVP2 building on the suggestions of the programme for the first 12 months
7. Leverage the existing SOSE Technology Infrastructure
8. MVP1 should stay 'governance light'- and include SOSE's Head of Governance to provide guidance when scaling
9. Don't get bogged down in challenges
10. Continue to share lessons with and from other regions

APPENDICES

Appendices

A – Frame of Reference for use by other regions

B – Strategic Questions

C – Alternative options for the Hub's Purpose

D – Specifications for the initial 3 roles

E – Alternative structural options

Appendix A: Frame of Reference for use by other regions

Provided as a
separate document

Appendix B: Strategic Questions

Economic Growth and Business Development

Question: Specifically, who are the businesses within the region who might gain most from the development of AI-related skills — especially those not currently engaged?

Why asked: The productivity levels in the local business base are lower than the national average and lower than similar rural economies. AI is one response to improved productivity.

Outputs from evidence-based intelligence:

- Sector profiles showing relative potential from AI
- Prioritised list of businesses to be supported
- A strategically informed pipeline of AI projects
- Engagement recommendations for each sector

Outcome from evidence-based decision:

- Increased AI & data literacy
- Improved operations (e.g. automation)
- New product/service innovation
- Improved productivity

Data assumptions:

Baseline regional data on productivity levels by:

- Company sector
- Company size
- Digital maturity
- Willingness / history to innovate

AI capability specific to each business type

- Business type identifying capability gaps
- AI skills development - engagement
- AI skills development - provision
- Barriers to engagement in capability development
- Showing signs of recruiting relevant skills

Engagement levels

- Companies who engage / don't engage with similar support (from SOSE, FE, HE, etc)

Informed or impacted

Likely sectors:

- Manufacturing & advanced engineering
- Logistics & supply chain
- Construction & built environment
- Health & social care providers
- Visitor economy & tourism
- Retail (especially independent)
- Agriculture & food production

Likely partners:

- SOSE business intelligence
- FE and HE institutes
- SG
- Business networks
- Industry bodies

Labour Market, Skills and Workforce Development

Question: What are the emerging professions that businesses in the region are crying out for now and potentially in the future that we need local students to train / develop skills in?

Why asked: Businesses have provided feedback on skills shortages. The increased use of technology is likely to have an impact on the future workforce. Partners need to be as well informed as possible to shape strategy and support.

Outputs from evidence-based intelligence:

- Mapping of emerging professions in SOS
- Skills development framework for colleges & universities
- Recommended updates to match business need
- Sector-specific future skills pathways

Outcome from evidence-based decision:

- Improved alignment between employer needs and skills supply
- Reduction in regional skills shortages over time

Data assumptions:

Baseline regional data on productivity levels by:

- Company sector
- Company size
- Identified skills gaps
- National labour market information for comparison
- Willingness / history to invest in skills development

Capability gaps specific to each business type

- Business type identifying capability gaps
- Skills development - engagement
- Skills development - provision
- Barriers to engagement in skills development
- Showing signs of recruiting relevant skills

Engagement levels

- Companies who engage / don't engage with similar support (from SOSE, FE, HE, etc)

Informed or impacted

Likely skills:

- Digital, data, and AI roles
- Cybersecurity
- Green economy and sustainability
- Healthcare and care economy
- Engineering, Construction, and Advanced Manufacturing technicians
- Digital creatives and UX roles

Likely partners:

- SOSE business intelligence
- SG
- SDS
- FE and HE institutes
- Business networks
- Industry bodies

Demographic and Population Changes

Question: What are the causes of the regions' 'Hourglass' demography (relative shortage of 15-30 year olds) and why / how do we improve the shape to support the business base?

Why asked: According to [source] there is a shortage of 15-30 year old staying in or coming to the region who could improve the size of the workforce and strengthen the sustainability of communities.

Outputs from evidence-based intelligence:

- Regional Youth Demography Intelligence Report
- Annual Youth Mobility Dashboard (push/pull factors)
- based Talent Strategy for Employers
- Policy recommendations for housing, transport, skills and economic development
- Cross-sector youth attraction & retention plan

Outcome from evidence-based decision:

- Increase in the % of 15–30-year-olds living in the region
- Improved retention rates of FE/HE graduates
- Improved business satisfaction with local talent supply

Data assumptions :

- Data that shows the age-profile imbalance in the region.
- Employers report shortages of younger workers / early-career talent
- Impact on employers
- Unfilled job vacancy data
- Evidence that the region seeks improved talent retention, attraction, and productivity.
- Youth mobility patterns
- Educational attainment linked migration
- Regional inequalities
- Labour market barriers
- Ageing population trends
- Destination analysis
- Job opportunities
- Comparative wages data
- Exiting efforts for talent retention / attraction

Informed or impacted

Likely drivers:

- High achievers are more mobile
- Higher wage regions
- Broader employment choice
- Don't return from FE / HE outwith region
- Higher density graduate level jobs
- Better career progression
- Public transport, connectivity, nightlife, culture

Likely partners:

- SOSE business intelligence
- SDS
- SG Skills
- SBC and D&GC Housing, Planning and Transport

Sustainability, Regeneration and Infrastructure

Question: What improvements in road / transport infrastructure will have most impact on economic development?

Why asked: According to [source] the current road / transport infrastructure is an inhibitor to economic growth and community sustainability.

Outputs from evidence-based intelligence:

For example:

Junction upgrades on main freight corridors.

Upgrading major A-roads to dual carriageway.

Enhanced bus and rail connectivity from labour-pool towns to employment centres.

Outcome from evidence-based decision:

- Improved productivity through better connectivity.
- Increased business investment due to reliable logistics and expanded labour pools.
- Higher employment and reduced inactivity.

Data assumptions:

- Evidence that the region faces constraints such as congestion, poor connectivity, unreliable travel times, limited freight capacity
- Evidence that the region facing constraints to housing and regeneration
- Businesses report logistics delays, recruitment difficulties tied to accessibility, or supply chain vulnerabilities
- National-level investment frameworks (e.g., Road Investment Strategy, 10-Year Infrastructure Strategy) provide a funding pathway
- Road capacity, reliability, and freight efficiency

Informed or impacted

Likely drivers:

- High achievers are more mobile
- Higher wage regions
- Broader employment choice

Likely partners:

- SOSE business intelligence
- SBC and D&GC Housing, Planning and Transport
- SG Transport
- Business networks
- Transport operators
- Community and environmental groups

Strategic Planning and Foresight

Question: Within Scotland’s industrial planning where does the South have the strongest proposition to lead the way nationally? Where are our relative strengths and weaknesses?

Why asked: Economic growth opportunities are likely to be Scotland wide. The South has many strengths to play in both a supporting and leading role. We can achieve bigger impact through a leading role.

Outputs from evidence-based intelligence:

- Single pipeline view of ‘Lead the Nation’ opportunities
- A comparative advantage dashboard
- A clear ‘where to lead / where to partner / where to fix’ view, backed by evidence and translated into investable priorities

Outcome from evidence-based decision:

- The South becomes Scotland’s ‘Lead the Nation’ in selected area
- Increased inward investment
- Improved productivity / innovation / skills transfer

Data assumptions:

National (Scottish and UK) strategies
Baseline regional data on sectoral and business strengths and weaknesses levels by:

- Sectoral opportunities – Scotland
- Opportunity capability requirements
- SoS sectoral capability statements
- Company by sector
- Company by size
- Identified strengths
- Identified weaknesses
- Regional labour market information for comparison

Informed or impacted

Example potential ‘Lead the Nation’ areas:

- Natural Capital & nature positive economy
- Land based net Zero
- Onshore wind and grid adjacent clean energy supply chain

Likely partners:

- SOSE
- SE
- SG Economic Development
- SBC and D&GC economic development
- Growth Deal partners
- Business / cluster networks
- Anchor businesses
- FE and HE institutes

Community and Wellbeing

Question: Who is travelling to the region, for what, and how do we increase their spend while here?

Why asked: We can achieve greater economic impact by leveraging more from visitors to the region.

Outputs from evidence-based intelligence:

- A regional visitor segmentation dashboard: volume, spend, seasonality, avg length of stay, spend, growth, etc
- Journey and leakage map
- Intervention ideas

Outcome from evidence-based decision:

- Spend per visitor (overall, by segment)
- Average length of stay (and % staying 2+ nights)
- Occupancy / RevPAR (peak vs shoulder)
- Visitor economy GVA and jobs

Data assumptions:

Domestic overnight and day visits data

International visitor data

Origin data: local / Scotland / rest of UK / international

Party type: couples, families, groups, solo

Life stage / demographics: age bands, income proxy, accessibility needs

Travel mode: car, rail, coach, active travel

Booking channel: direct / OTA / package / tour operator

International travel trends

Business activity to increase spend

Business with opportunities to service visitors

Informed or impacted

Example potential spend increase trends:

- Increase length of stay
- Increase daily spend
- Attract higher value visitors
- Reduce friction to spend
- Improve visitor attraction promotion

Likely partners:

- SOSE business intelligence
- Visit Scotland
- Visit Britain
- SBC and D&GC economic development
- Growth Deal partners
- Business networks
- Events organisations
- Travel operators

Appendix C: Alternative options for the Hub's Purpose

COLLECT AND PUBLISH

Data Collection, Integration & Standardisation

Open data provision and public transparency

Regional data visualisation

Monitoring and Reporting on behalf of the collective partnership

"Thanks for your data. We will tidy it up, keep it safe with everybody else's, and make it available to all partners"

ENQUIRY LED ANALYSIS

Transactional enquiry

Analysis to respond to enquiries, e.g. Business Cases

Research analysis and modelling

"Thanks for your enquiry. We should have most of the data we need to provide initial views. You can then develop further to make a well informed decision on the question you are asking yourself"

INSIGHT LED ANALYSIS

Insight led Strategic Analysis

Challenging assumptions

Influencing Strategy and Policy (regional and individual partners)

Influencing Policy Support and Strategic insight

"Thanks for getting us involved in the early stages of your discussion. We'd love to offer a different lens through which to consider things"

'HUMAN' DISCOVERY

'Human' led intelligent discovery.

Posing the big questions (and help answer them)

Finding unknown insights to inform strategy and policy

"We have been exploring what is happening outside and inside the region and thought it would be helpful if we collectively considered the opportunities or risks of x"

Appendix D: Job roles for core Hub team

Hub Director	Data Analyst	Technologist
<p>The Hub Director provides strategic leadership for the Regional Intelligence Hub, ensuring that intelligence, data insight, and digital capability are aligned with regional priorities. The role is responsible for coordinating multiple public sector partners, shaping the intelligence agenda, and ensuring the hub delivers actionable insights that inform policy, operational decision-making, and regional outcomes.</p>	<p>The Data Analyst transforms complex data from multiple partner organisations into clear intelligence and insights that support regional decision-making. The role focuses on data analysis, insight generation, and the development of intelligence products that inform policy, planning, and service delivery.</p>	<p>The Technologist designs, builds, and maintains the technical infrastructure that enables the Hub to securely collect, manage, integrate, and share data across partner organisations. The role ensures the hub’s technology platform supports advanced analytics, collaboration, and scalable intelligence capabilities.</p>
<p>Key Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides strategic leadership and governance for the Regional Intelligence Hub. • Establishes strong collaboration across Hub partners. • Defines the regional intelligence strategy, priorities, and work programme. • Ensures insights generated by the Hub inform policy, operational planning, and resource allocation. • Builds trusted relationships with senior leaders across partner organisations. • Oversees data governance, ethical frameworks, and data-sharing agreements. • Secures funding and ensures the Hub operates sustainably. • Leads performance monitoring and demonstrate the impact of intelligence products. • Represents the Hub at regional and national forums. 	<p>Key Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect, integrate, and analyse data from multiple public sector partners. • Develop dashboards, analytical reports, and intelligence briefings. • Identify trends, patterns, and emerging risks across regional datasets. • Support evidence-based decision-making for policy and operational teams. • Work with partners to understand analytical needs and translate them into data products. • Ensure data quality, consistency, and compliance with governance standards. • Develop predictive models or scenario analysis where appropriate. • Communicate insights clearly to both technical and non-technical audiences. 	<p>Key Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and implement the hub’s data and technology architecture. • Develop and maintain secure data pipelines and integration platforms. • Implement data storage, management, and processing systems. • Enable secure data sharing between partner organisations. • Support the development of analytical tools, dashboards, and applications. • Ensure compliance with cybersecurity, privacy, and data governance standards. • Evaluate and adopt new technologies that enhance intelligence capabilities. • Provide technical support to Hub Director, Analyst and partner organisations.



Appendix D: Job roles for core Hub team

Hub Director	Data Analyst	Technologist
<p>Capabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic leadership and partnership development. • Strong stakeholder management across complex multi-agency environments. • Ability to translate intelligence and data insights into policy and operational action. • Knowledge of public sector governance, data ethics, and information sharing. • Programme leadership and delivery oversight. • Excellent communication and influencing skills. 	<p>Capabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong analytical and statistical skills. • Data visualisation and storytelling capability. • Ability to work with large and complex datasets. • Understanding of public sector data sources and indicators. • Critical thinking and problem solving. • Ability to translate analytical findings into actionable insights. 	<p>Capabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data architecture and systems integration. • Cloud platforms and modern data infrastructure. • Cybersecurity and secure data sharing. • Software development and automation. • Problem solving in complex technical environments. • Ability to translate technical solutions into user-focused tools.
<p>Experience</p> <p>Senior leadership experience within the public sector or a multi-agency environment.</p> <p>Experience leading data, intelligence, or analytical teams.</p> <p>Track record of delivering cross-organisational initiatives.</p> <p>Experience working with regional partnerships.</p> <p>Knowledge of data governance frameworks and public sector decision-making.</p>	<p>Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience working in data analysis, statistics, or intelligence roles. • Proficiency in analytical tools (e.g., SQL, Python, R, Power BI, Tableau). • Experience producing dashboards and analytical reports for decision-makers. • Knowledge of data governance, privacy, and data protection. • Experience working with public sector or regional datasets is desirable. 	<p>Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience designing and managing data platforms or analytics infrastructure. • Proficiency with cloud environments (particularly the environment of choice of the Lead Partner). • Experience with data engineering tools and APIs. • Knowledge of cybersecurity and data protection requirements. • Experience working with public sector technology environments or multi-agency data sharing.



Appendix E: Alternative structural options

CENTRAL
HUB

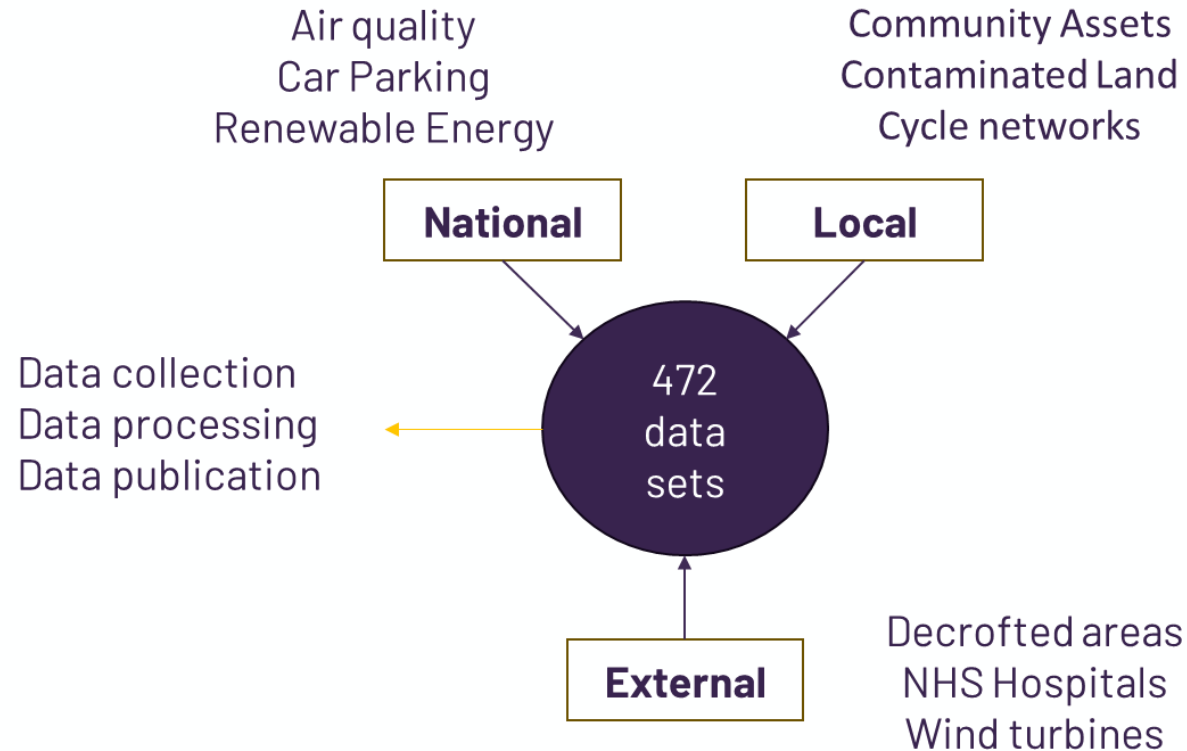
COMMISSIONING /
FEDERATED
MODEL

HUB & SPOKE

OUTSOURCED

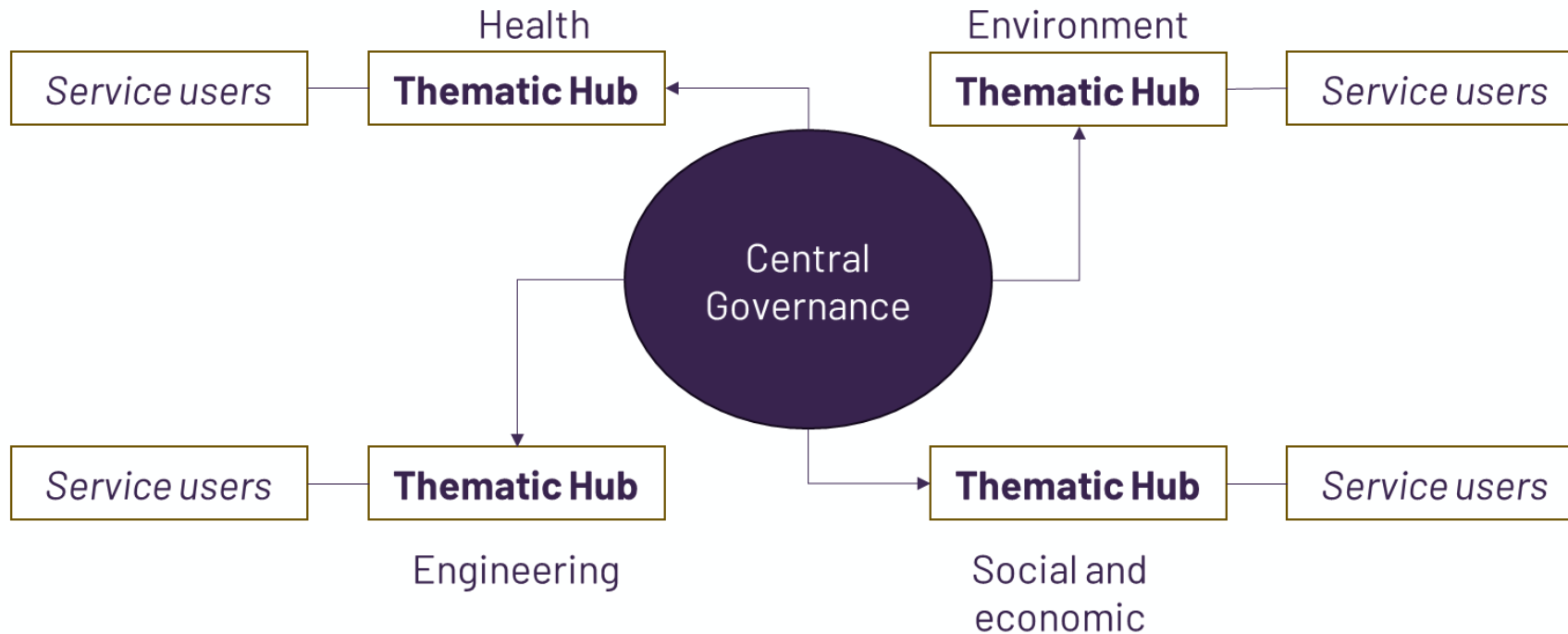
Appendix E: Alternative structural options

CENTRAL HUB Spatial Hub



Appendix E: Alternative structural options

COMMISSIONING / FEDERATED



Appendix E: Alternative structural options

OUTSOURCED NHS Data platform

