

SOUTH GIPPSLAND SHIRE COUNCIL

Draft Digital Strategy 2018



INNOVATION
SOLUTION
BRANDING
IDEAS
MARKETING
SUCCESS
MANAGEMENT
ANALYSIS



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*South Gippsland
Shire Council*

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Introduction

In its Digital Strategy Council is committing to use emerging technology to put customer needs and expectations first in delivering services through digital channels.

We want to make people’s interaction with South Gippsland Shire Council a ‘user-friendly’ experience that works for residents and visitors of all ages.

We will use emerging technology to improve our data and support decisions that facilitate process improvements, deliver service efficiencies and create greater opportunities for community collaboration and innovation.

This applies not only to customer interaction but to how we manage the Shire’s assets – that is our parks, roads, footpaths and our built environment. Improved data that can be more widely shared will support greater amenity.

Vision

Our Digital Strategy has three areas of focus:

Better Services

Services must be user friendly. The services we deliver have an impact on our customers' lives – so our approach to digital must be centred around customers and focused on delivering a high quality customer experience.

A Digital Strategy can drive a shift to a “Tell us Once” style operation where information is shared across multiple departments instead of a customer having to contact multiple departments.

Building more user-friendly services will also require good strong feedback mechanisms so we can understand what works and what requires further improvement based on customer experience. This will lead to more opportunity for people in the community to contribute their voice to Council's decision making process and with the benefit of a greater diversity of views Council will be better informed about community need.

People don't need to contact Council every day but when they do it is often as part of a significant event such as having a baby, building or extending a house or setting up and starting a business. Working towards the principle that people should be able to “Tell us Once” means we recognise that contacting Council should be easy, simple and intuitive.

We also recognise that although many people will want to transact business online, not everyone will and we need to facilitate phone and in-person transactions too.


Better Community Connection

Council helps the community and local businesses to access digital channels and applications that connect people and enable them to engage with each other.

Council will advocate for, work towards and explore opportunities for collaborative community projects. These may include common platforms and public Wi-Fi.

Council will also advocate for, work towards and explore opportunities to support business and the tourism economy through digital innovation.

Making Council's information available in ways that are accessible and user-friendly is a key theme of this Digital Strategy. Council collects a lot of data and it is not currently very easy for the public to access. Through this Strategy we will work towards giving businesses, residents and visitors access to more information in formats and channels that are user-friendly and accessible.



This will require Council to connect data which is currently not stored in a single database and work out how to organise it in ways which are useful for internal users as well as the community. In doing so Council will have regard to the need to balance accessibility with privacy as well as information integrity/security.

Better Processes

A more efficient and effective back office will deliver productivity gains which will reduce the cost-to-serve and release staff to focus on serving the customer.

Staff are highly mobile and systems and services are agile and well integrated.

Greater collaboration, automation and standardisation of systems and processes promotes the shared use of resources and systems between Councils and other agencies, delivering significant additional productivity benefits.

The Need for a Digital Strategy

Helping to create a better Shire

Rural and regional areas have long been poor second cousins to city councils in terms of access to technology and innovation. Now with broadband services becoming more widely available that disadvantage is rapidly disappearing and it is timely for Council to position itself for the future by adopting a strategic approach to digital opportunity.

An obvious example is the way smartphones have radically changed the way many people interact, communicate and do business. Council recognises the need to leverage off this and to adapt to other technologies as they emerge in order to provide continuously improving services and modern means of interaction.

In moving towards a digital future Council also recognises that some people will continue to prefer making contact by telephone or face-to-face. Council will therefore be mindful of the need to maintain traditional avenues of access through high-quality in person customer service.

Developing digital capabilities to provide services that are flexible and easy to use will be key to South Gippsland Shire's future sustainability and its ability to position itself as an attractive area to visit, live and do business in.

Community-Focussed Strategy at a Glance

ONLINE COMMUNITY and BUSINESS is...

Supported, connected and enabled in its use of digital technology

CONNECTED SERVICES are....

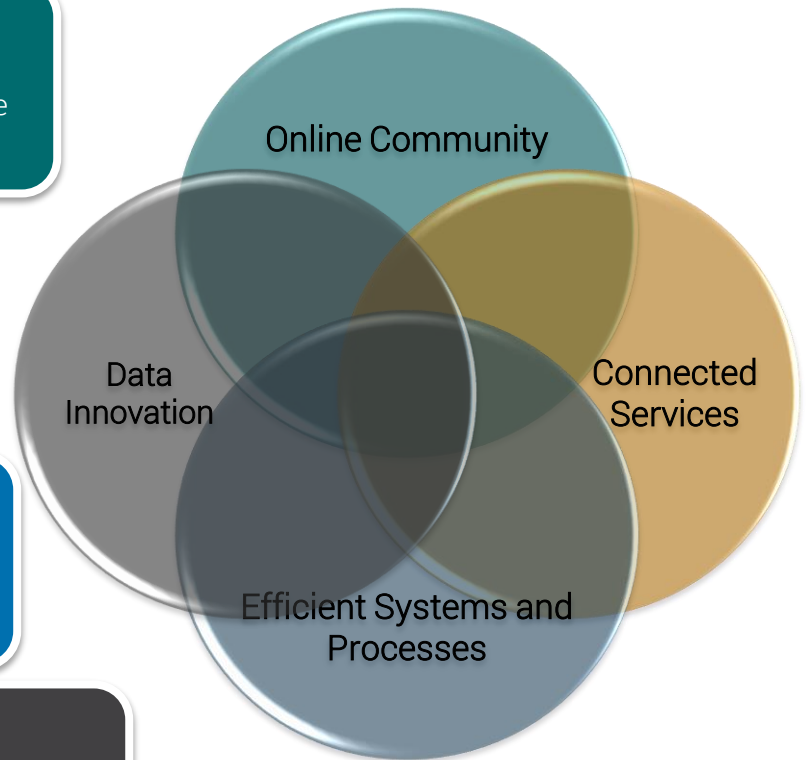
User-friendly, accessible, responsive and transparent, providing choice

EFFICIENT SYSTEMS and PROCESSES are...

Agile, integrated and automated

DATA INNOVATION is...

Joined up and effectively governed.



Strategic Outcome 1 – Customer Focused Services

Customers' needs and expectations are central to how we provide digital services. Digital channels must be designed from the user perspective. Council will seek to consult, engage and co-design digital channels with customers.

What it looks like in practice

- Council has better insight into customers' needs and expectations
- Council will develop and implement an engagement, design and test process with customers where it is realistic to do so
- The community can increasingly access council services and make transactions online anywhere, at any time from any device
- Customers who wish to contact Council by phone or in person are supported to do so
- Customers can "Tell us Once" instead of having to access multiple departments, multiple times
- The use of digital channels and social media is appropriately resourced. This is particularly important as social media increasingly develops as a customer service channel.

What will be achieved

Customer insight will inform service re-engineering including identifying gaps and opportunities, testing digital services and providing feedback.

Digital channels that are easy to use, device agnostic and easily accessible 24/7, providing anywhere, anytime access.

Improved customer service.

Our success indicators

- Customers are engaged in service re-design.
- There is more customer choice in how they access Council services.
- Customers report greater satisfaction with Council services.

Strategic Outcome 2 – ‘Smart’ Communities

Council will facilitate community participation through encouraging the use of smart digital technologies that connect people, by sharing data and by supporting the community to engage with Council and each other.

Partnerships with businesses, education institutions and community groups can also introduce fresh ideas, different skills and alternative perspectives on building ‘smart’ communities and growing the local economy.

Council will explore working in partnership with the community on collaborative projects that meet community and/or business need.

What it looks like in practice

- Council publishes key data sets to the community and interested parties.
- Council encourages the community to learn about digital opportunities by publishing research, sharing information and facilitating forums.
- Council explores the appetite and potential for collaborative digital partnerships and advocacy in support of economic and tourism growth.
- Digital engagement opportunities are developed for customers, the community and suppliers.



What will be achieved

A public-facing Geographic Information portal provides up-to-date information on community facilities and Council activity (including maintenance works).

Key data sets and research are available on or through Council's website, which inform development, community interest and business investment.

Council supports and engages with the community and local businesses on collaborative projects and appropriate smart technologies to grow the economy and facilitate destination marketing.

Where possible people and businesses are not disadvantaged by a lack of digital capability.

Our success indicators

Data is made available where practical and useful to the community.

Businesses and communities are supported to gain advantages from digital technology.

Strategic Outcome 3 – Modern Processes

Back office systems and processes will be modernised; and we will provide staff with the equipment and software that enables them to work productively in the office or in the field.

Council has an obligation to deliver quality services at the lowest efficient cost to the community. Costs increase for both customers and Council when it takes time, effort and repetition to do business with us.

We will seek local, regional and State shared initiatives, partnerships and opportunities for digital innovation and sustainable improvement in pursuit of economies of scale.

What it looks like in practice

- Digital projects deliver measurable improvements to efficiency and effectiveness, automating workflows and providing the “single view of the customer” that contributes to better customer service.
- Improved customer relationship management, content management and data analysis drive efficient and effective service delivery.
- Council will align itself with the Australian Digital Service Standard.

What will be achieved

- A dynamic, agile and connected IT architecture which is aligned to business needs.
- Operational efficiencies through new technologies designed to achieve best value including a shift to mobile devices to support field-based work.
- Back end workflows are predominantly automated, requiring minimal manual input.
- Customer notification keeps people informed about the progress of their queries/applications.
- Improved data management, integrity, access and security, delivers an enhanced ability to analyse and use data to improve services.

Our success indicators

- More automation in Council back-office processes leads to faster response times to customers and a reduced cost-to-serve.
- There are fewer and decreasing barriers to doing business with Council.
- Customer queries are resolved faster.
- Appropriate shared services are piloted and established with surrounding councils that provide an identified benefit to the communities of South Gippsland Shire.



Governance

Digital transformation requires a cross-organisational approach that steadily breaks down traditional ways of working in silos. Council's business improvement activity will make best use of resources through adopting a partnership approach that transfers knowledge to business units, creating digital awareness and unlocking ideas at all levels.

Digital projects will generally use an agile approach to project management, which supports a relatively fast and iterative process. It is also considered the best practice approach to digital transformation in the public sector.

The IT Governance Board will be the key governance mechanism for ensuring that projects are aligned to the Digital Strategy Outcomes and appropriately prioritised and resourced. The Digital Strategy and the IT Strategy will be aligned.

Culture change

Digital transformation is likely to require staff to think differently about 'the way we do things around here'. We will support them to re-imagine the customer journey and how that might impact their daily work.

Digital transformation may be disruptive requiring well-planned and implemented change management to support staff to understand how, through working together to improve the customer experience, we can also improve their own daily experience of work.

Council's change management approach will be structured around two-way communication and engagement with staff; positive leadership; and appropriate support mechanisms which may include training as well as regular opportunities to raise and resolve issues.

Innovation

In seeking to maximise the cost-effectiveness of services, Council will actively consider emerging digital innovations and how they might be adapted and adopted.

In order to facilitate innovation Council will seek to create a digital test space, isolated from the network in which to safely trial apps, tools and technologies.

Accessibility and Quality

In developing its digital channels Council must focus on the user experience. Key design considerations include:

- Content that is easy to grasp, is accurate and regularly updated
- User experience that is simple and engaging
- Compliance with accessibility standards
- Keeping the customer informed

Evaluation and Review

Implementation of the Action Plan ([Appendix 1](#)) will be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure it delivers value and that Council is adapting to continued, and possibly increasing, digital disruption.

The Strategy will be formally reviewed three years after adoption to ensure it is still aligned to appropriate Council and Community Outcomes.

Precise success and reporting measures will be established for each project at the planning stage.

Digital Strategy Action Plan

This timeline represents the major initiatives for the next three years. New projects may be scheduled during the life of the Strategy.

Operational Efficiency	Customer Focus	Collaboration	2017/2018
Focus on improved service delivery through progressively implementing back office automation	In collaboration with the Communications team, explore and design diverse opportunities for customer engagement	In addition to the existing Shared Services initiative Identify and approach other agencies to discuss opportunities	
			2018/2019
Develop and implement improved data analytics to identify trends, opportunities, risks and inform decision-making	Develop a pilot collaborative community digital project Advocate in support of funding for digital economy and destination marketing	Continue to progress shared services opportunities and discussions	
Implement technology to support mobile and remote working for improved service delivery	Facilitate community access to Open Data by implementing a Geographic Information System (GIS) Portal on Council's website	Progress the GLGN shared procurement initiative	
Review integration activity, identify critical dependencies and commence prioritised actions	Key data sets and research start to be published		
			2019/2020
Address staff skills, awareness and capability. Ensure need is taken into account in developing training.	Implement improved Customer Experience via Tell us Once website facility (Customer Portal)	Continue to grow partnerships with other Councils and agencies to share services and develop projects, solve problems and innovate	
Identify which services are best suited to further digitisation and develop a prioritised implementation plan. Commence implementation	Carry out user consultation and engagement in service re-design in one area Implement service re-design based on community collaboration	Expand the GLGN shared procurement initiative	