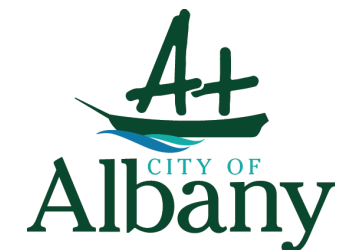


# City of Albany

ICT STRATEGY 2021 - 2023



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## INTRODUCTION

This document defines the current ICT Strategy for the City of Albany. ICT continues to expand into all areas of the City's operations and it is important that the City has a clear strategy for digital technology. This strategy supersedes the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Strategic Plan 2012 – 2017.

### OBJECTIVE

This strategic document begins with a description of the challenges and opportunities facing the City. Building on this base, the strategic focus areas are introduced and explained. Lastly, potential projects are recommended that should enable the City to improve the services it provides and provide those services more cost effectively.

### SCOPE

This document is a strategy and not a strategic plan. It provides the key focus areas for the City and should be used in conjunction with a separate program of projects (recommended projects included in the appendix).

This approach allows the City to be clear about the big picture and not be distracted by product names and new technology. As such, there is more emphasis on the strategic key focus areas.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

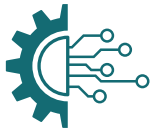
Technology continues to expand into all areas of the City's operations and it is important that the City has a clear digital strategy. This document defines the strategic focus areas that, in conjunction with a program of projects, will enable the City to improve the services it provides and provide those services more cost effectively.

### CONTEXT (INFLUENCING FACTORS)

There are a number of influencing factors that provide context to the key focus areas of this strategy. Whilst, historically, the City has not resisted digital transformation, it has not been a key area of focus. With the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the City staff have found that the current processes and IT systems are not adaptable and have restricted the organisations ability to operate in a changing social environment. In addition, the digital engagement expectations of City customers has grown, and continues to grow.

### STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

The three focus areas for the ICT Strategy are:



#### 1. Digital Transformation

Digital transformation is the 'process' and 'cultural' change of an organisation where digital technologies are used to improve existing business processes and customer experiences to meet changing business and customer expectations.



#### 2. Information Management

Data is the raw material for information. Data is processed into information. The reliance on digital information is increasing across the organisation, as does the use of spatial data.

Records management continues to be an important legislative requirement but information management is more critical to future City operations. Clear, accurate and timely operational information will improve the service staff provide to the public.



#### 3. Fit for Purpose

As the City ventures forth with improved information management and a program of data transformation, it is important that the organisation does not get lost in a mire of new, 'bleeding edge' technology.

Technology purchasing decisions should be made on a 'fit for purpose' basis.

**The key focus areas are holistically integrated. Successful digital transformation relies on solid information management. Pragmatic 'fit for purpose' decisions are important to ensure the City's investment in new technology is not wasted.**



## DELIVERY

The recommended delivery methodology to address the key focus areas is to define a road map and identify two or three projects that will kick-off the information management and digital transformation journey for the City.

The road map can be reviewed and adapted as projects are completed.



## CHALLENGES

The successful delivery of the key focus areas is dependent on a number of factors:

- **Citywide Engagement:**

Commitment to the outcomes of the ICT Strategy is required from staff, managers, executives and councillors.

- **Records Management to Information Management:**

The transition from historical records management to information management is a necessary shift for the City and the impact will be far reaching.

- **New/Changed Roles:**

The successful delivery of the ICT Strategy requires new data analyst roles and changes to some of the current customer facing roles. Traditionally, the City's customer service approach is based on a direct, 'personal' service to customers. The experienced customer service staff with domain knowledge are best placed to develop consistent and clear information that customers can access through 'self-service' technology.

## SUMMARY

In its current state of mind, the City will continue to use technology to deliver the obligatory services to Albany residents and visitors. However, there is an opportunity to digitally transform the organisation through a program of projects and improve City operations so service delivery is either improved or more cost effective, or both. The City can work through the program methodically, ensuring that staff and customer engagement is maintained and the 'Fit for Purpose' focus area is not forgotten.

## STRATEGIC CONTEXT

There are a number of factors that have influenced the ICT Strategy. These provide context as to why the focus areas are important for the City to improve the services it provides and deliver services more cost effectively.

### INFLUENCING FACTORS – IT INDUSTRY

The following IT Industry factors have influenced the focus areas of the ICT Strategy and provide context to the holistic objective.

#### Software as a Service (SaaS)

The IT Industry continues its move towards Software as a Service (SaaS) as its preferred method of providing software applications. In simplistic terms, SaaS applications are accessed through a web browser and rely on good internet connectivity.

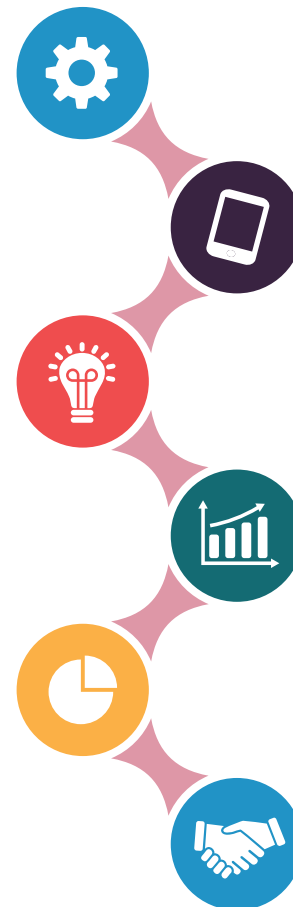
The industry intention is to push users into SaaS as it provides them an on-going revenue stream and therefore, they are no longer reliant on waiting for users to pay for the upgrade. It is inevitable that the City will need to move to SaaS applications and the transition should be carefully managed to reduce the impact on staff and ensure good customer service is maintained.

#### Smart City... Intelligent Community

The Smart City interest across local government has morphed into Intelligent Communities. The City continues to use available technologies to improve the services it provides to the community.

#### Open Data

There is an increasing expectation that local government data should be made available through the Federal Government's 'Open Data' service. The intention is that a 3rd Party can use this data in conjunction with other datasets to provide information more useful than the data on its own. Once setup, this enables more supplier self-service and reduces the City operational effort.



### INFLUENCING FACTORS – STAFF & CUSTOMERS

#### Mobile Expectations

There is an increasing expectation from the public that they should be able to complete City related tasks and obtain information from a mobile device or smart phone. For example: online payments, operating hours, and event information. City related information should be available on-line, rather than requiring a phone call or visit to the City in person.

#### Increased Digital Dexterity

Staff at the City continue to develop their 'digital dexterity' with the ability and desire to exploit existing and emerging technologies for better business outcomes.

### INFLUENCING FACTORS – THE NEED TO BE ADAPTABLE

The staff's collective experience of running a local government authority during the COVID-19 pandemic has emphasised the need for the City to be more digitally adaptable. The reduction of face-to-face contact necessitated the need for increased online information and video conferencing technology.

## STRATEGIC GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The guiding principles that form the basis for actions in the ICT Strategy 2021–23 are as follows:

The delivery of the ICT Strategy should improve the service delivery to Customers and other stakeholders.

### REDUCE OPERATIONAL COSTS

Where possible the delivery of the ICT Strategy should improve internal processes.

### DIGITALISATION

A commitment to invest resources in the continual improvement of City processes and services.

### INCLUSIVE BUT NOT RESTRICTIVE

The technology used to deliver the ICT Strategy should be industry standard, supportable and not bleeding edge and unproven.



### IMPROVED SERVICE

Notwithstanding the project delivery costs. Through the delivery of the ICT Strategy, the City should reduce operational costs and/or delivery a better service for the same cost.

### STAFF

There is desire at the City to continue to digitise internal processes and staff need to adapt to new technologies and the digital world.

### INVESTMENT IN CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT

The delivery of the ICT Strategy should be inclusive but not restrictive for City customers and the public.

### PROVEN AND RELIABLE

## KEY FOCUS AREAS

The three key focus areas for the ICT Strategy are:

1. Digital Transformation.
2. Information Management.
3. Fit for Purpose.

The key focus areas are linked (as shown in Figure 1) in that they need to be considered holistically and not individually.

Successful digital transformation relies on solid information management and 'fit for purpose' decisions need to be made to ensure the City's investment in technology is not wasted.

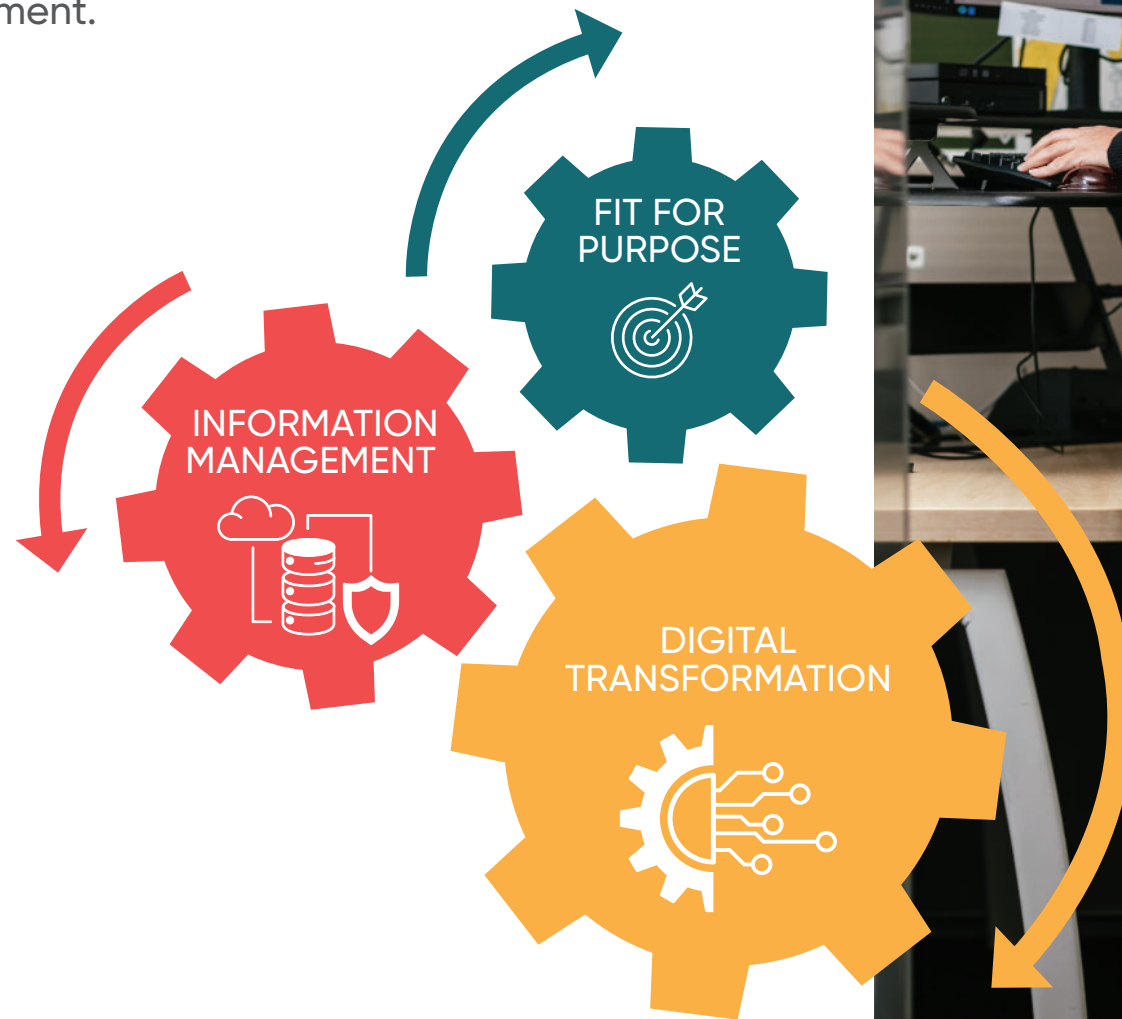
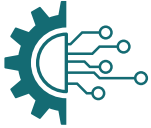


Figure 1: Key focus areas



## DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION



Digital transformation is a process and cultural change in an organisation where digital technologies are used to improve existing business processes and the customer's experience.

There is an increasing need for the City to digitally transform to:

- Improve customer experience through improved information flow and positive engagement.
- Increase agility, innovation and collaboration in City operations.
- Enable customers to self-serve and reduce City effort.
- Meet the increasing expectations of customers.
- Empower the workforce with technology so that they are better informed.



### *PROCESS & CULTURAL CHANGES REQUIRED FOR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION*

The successful implementation of a program of data transformation requires significant process and cultural changes in an organisation.



### *SHARING INFORMATION*

For a customer to be able to complete a self-service process (e.g. Development Applications) then they need to be provided with all the information and rules around that process. Where traditionally the customer would ring the City, they need to easily find the information online.

This requires customer service staff to share their knowledge. This sharing approach should be extended to suppliers, partners and other government agencies through the 'Open Data' service.

A more transparent approach makes it easier to manage customer expectations.





### *SELF SERVICE*

There needs to be an acceptance of online self-service and automation by the staff that process customer requests and applications. Self-service for staff, customers and suppliers should be encouraged.

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### *DATA QUALITY*

As the organisation relies more heavily on digital information, an increased focus on data quality is critical.

Effective City operations relies on good information management and data quality is important.

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### *TECHNOLOGY FIRST*

Look to use technology to improve processes and customer experiences. Understand how the technology works and how it saves time, effort and improves the service.

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### *REASSESS BUSINESS PROCESSES*

The City's internal business processes are largely built around the capability and current functionality of the City's legacy Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system.

The ERP has been ingrained in the organisation for nearly two decades and now any process improvement ideas are focused on the how the current ERP operates and not genuine process improvement.

A fresh approach is required to support a program of digital transformation.

## INFORMATION MANAGEMENT



Data is the raw material for information. Data is processed into information. The reliance on digital information and spatial data is increasing across the organisation.

Records management continues to be an important legislative requirement but its objective is to record information for historical purposes. Information management is more critical to future City operations because clear, accurate and timely operational information will enable staff to deliver a better service to the public.

Solid information management practices are key to the successful digital transformation of an organisation.

To enable improved decision making, there is a requirement to:

- Improve and regulate the quality of digital information.
- Provide timely access to information (but not necessarily real-time).
- Better integrate separate business systems across the City.
- Manage staff and customer access to the information.
- Better present digital information so that it can be easily understood.

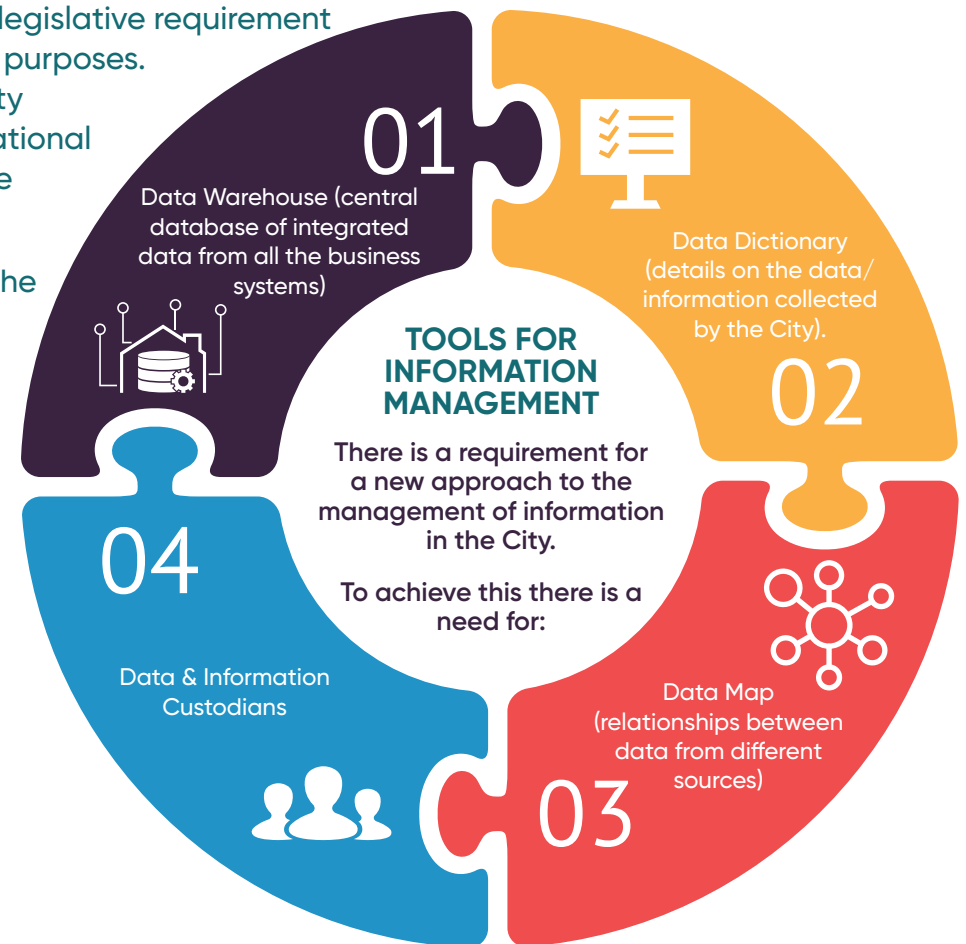


Figure 2: Tools for information management

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## GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES FOR INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

The model for information management should take into account two government initiatives:

1

### **Born Digital – State Strategy for Managing Information and Data (State Records Office of Western Australia)**

The core objective for the strategy from the State Records Office is that Government agencies implement fully digital information management environments.

2

### **data.gov.au (Digital Transformation Agency, Australian Commonwealth Government)**

Where possible, the City should embrace the concept of 'open data' through the <https://data.gov.au/data/> website. This provides suppliers and customers with the ability to 'self-serve' for information that would normally take City staff time to process and send.



## FIT FOR PURPOSE



Traditionally the concept of 'Technology Modernisation' sits alongside Digital Transformation. As the City ventures forth with improved Information Management and a program of Digital Transformation it is important that the organisation does not get lost in a mire of new, bleeding edge technology. Technology purchasing decisions need to be made on a 'fit for purpose' basis.



### ENTERPRISE RESOURCE PLANNING (ERP) SYSTEMS

The City of Albany, like the majority of local governments, has a modular ERP software system from a single supplier that has been in use for many years. The ERP has core modules for financial management, payroll, record management, rates and licence control, plus minor modules for other areas of the organisation. Predictably, the ERP system is strong in some areas (generally the core modules) and weaker in the modules that are less used.

Whilst there are some advantages with this approach, local governments are effectively held to ransom with a 'one size fits all' local government specific ERP because of high cost and the effort required to change to an alternative. As such:

- **Processes are built around the capability of the ERP system, and not the requirements of the organisation, stopping the City delivering change through data transformation.**
- **Continual improvement is restricted by the capability of the ERP.**
- **The limitations and frustrations from users of the minor modules are 'accepted' for the greater good.**



Taking into account that:...

- **The City has stopped using some modules from the legacy ERP system,**
- **Software applications are becoming easier to learn and more intuitive, therefore less investment is required to implement,**
- **City staff continue to better accept and adapt to technologies changes with phone upgrades and website changes,**

...the City should not replace the legacy ERP with another 'one size fits all' local government ERP system.

Instead, there should be a focus on **a). whether the individual ERP modules are 'Fit for Purpose'** and **b). the integration with the rest of the City systems.** Future software purchases should not be limited to traditional local government ERP suppliers.



## WHAT DOES 'FIT FOR PURPOSE' MEAN FOR THE CITY OF ALBANY

The principle of 'fit for purpose' for the City of Albany encompasses technology that is:



- **Based on industry standards.**
  - **Easy to use.**
  - **Configurable (as opposed to programmable).**
  - **Not over engineered.**
  - **Cost effectively 'best of breed'.**
  - **Cover the core requirements.**
- 



## IMPLEMENTING 'FIT FOR PURPOSE'

To implement the 'Fit for Purpose' mantra, a different approach is required for technology procurement.

- **Increased focus on requirements analysis and in particular a more pragmatic approach to the core requirements.**
- **Embrace the software as a solution concept and change suppliers if necessary.**
- **Integration of the solution with other City systems.**

## METHODOLOGY (used to address the key focus areas/ key issues)

It is tempting to implement a program of projects that addresses the key focus areas for the whole organisation.

The recommended methodology to address the key focus areas is to define and deliver two or three projects based on an initial roadmap. Future projects and roadmap direction is based on the progress of the projects in-train. This allows the City to stay in control of data transformation costs and the impact to the organisation. The advantage of this approach is that the projects should be able to be delivered relatively quickly and should sustain the engagement of staff and customers.

## PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

Whilst performance metrics will be attributed to each project to deliver the key focus areas of the ICT Strategy, there are overarching performance metrics for the program to deliver the goals of the key focus areas.

KEY FOCUS AREA	MEASURE	PERFORMANCE METRIC <i>(Before &amp; After individual projects in program)</i>
Information Management	Decision making based on information quality and timeliness.	Empirical study of decision making at the City based on data available. Assessment of quality of that data.
Digital Transformation	Time to complete process (e.g. Development Application or Customer Service Request).	Time-in-motion study before and after digital transformation projects. E.g. number of applications per staff member per time period.
Fit for Purpose	Additional cost of technology and resources to deliver improved Information Management and Digital Transformation.	Comparison of additional cost of technology vs process time-saving through digital transformation and improved information quality
Overall ICT Strategy	Overall satisfaction of staff and customers.	Staff satisfaction surveys. customer satisfaction surveys.

## IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

### GOAL: DELIVER THE KEY OBJECTIVES OF THE ICT STRATEGY

WHAT: ACTIONS	WHO: DEPARTMENT(S) AND OTHERS INVOLVED	WHEN: TIMELINE(S)
Draft Roadmap and agreed first project objectives and outcomes	Manager IT, Stakeholder Managers, ICT Steering Committee & EMT	Late 2021
Create project teams, governance, reporting	Manager IT, Stakeholder Managers, ICT Steering Committee	Early 2022
Deliver first projects in program	Project Teams	2022 – 2023





## REVIEW POSITION AND DATE

This strategy was adopted on 12th August 2021. This strategy must be reviewed every 2 years (or earlier if necessary) to ensure continued relevance and updated every two years.

This strategy is to be reviewed by the document owner on or before 11th August 2022. Any changes should be endorsed by the ITC Steering Committee and approved by the Executive Management Team.

## REFERENCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Additional sources that have informed this ICT Strategy include:

- [Office of Digital Government](#)
- [Federal Digital Transformation Agency](#)
- [KPMG Report: Customer and technology transformation in Local Government](#)
- [Citrix Report: Bringing digital transformation to local government](#)
- [UK Local Government Association: Digital Transformation Program](#)
- [IT Industry publications including IT News, Gov Tech Review, Image & Data Manager](#)

## ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

This strategy aligns with the following City of Albany strategies and plans:

- [Strategic Community Plan 2032](#)
- [Corporate Business Plan 2021-25](#)

## INTRODUCTION

This section includes recommendations for Tools/System, new roles and/or changed roles that would enable the delivery of the ICT Strategy key focus areas. It also includes a recommendation for the first projects that could be implemented in the early delivery of the ICT Strategy.

## POTENTIAL PROJECTS

### *IMPROVED CUSTOMER SERVICE REQUEST PROCESS*

Currently Customer Service Requests are initiated by phone, email or [online web form](#). The requests are manually transferred to the legacy ERP system and allocated to the appropriate area.

An improved Customer Service Request process would include:

- An end-to-end digital process to complete the customer service request.
- Electronic notification of customer service completion.
- An online mapping system that provides information on issues reported and their progress.

### *ONLINE STAFF TIMESHEETS*

Currently the staff timesheet process is excel / paper-based and time-consuming for both staff and payroll officers. It is also prone to human error. An online timesheet system that staff can enter on any digital device would reduce the City effort to produce and process the timesheets.

### *BUILDING APPLICATIONS (ONLINE WORKFLOW SYSTEM)*

Current there is an online building [application form](#); but the applications are processed manually.

There is potential to implement the building application approval process into a workflow tool that enabled the applications to be processed in semi-automatic way, reducing the City effort for each application and ensuring better consistency of technical information.

## TOOLS / SYSTEMS

### *CONFIGURABLE PROCESS WORKFLOW SYSTEM*

A configurable process workflow system is required to effectively 'digitally transform' the organisation. This system would allow improved customer processes such as Development Applications, Online Dog Licence Registrations or Change of Address. It would also be used to take the paper dependency out of the internal processes such as staff on-boarding, and staff security access requests that are currently email paper chains.

### *DATA WAREHOUSE*

A cost effective, industry data warehouse system is required to consolidate digital data across the organisation so that it can be used to provide information to enable to better decision making for city operations.

### *BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE REPORTING TOOL*

A business intelligence reporting tool is necessary to provide effective reports and dashboards from the Data Warehouse. It is important that the reporting tool is adaptable and configurable so that report/dashboard generating skills can be spread across the organisation.

### *INCREASED GIS CAPABILITY (GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM)*

The operation of the City is, to a large extent, reliant on spatial information. It is important that the City's GIS capability is increased to take advantage of the spatial data collected by the City and allow more staff to access the GIS tools concurrently.

## NEW / ADDITIONAL ROLES

It is important to point out that a number of new roles and role changes are required to implement the ICT Strategy.

### *DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION LEADER*

There is a requirement for a Digital Transformation Leader. This will help ensure the goals of the ICT Strategy are achieved.

### *WEB EDITOR*

There is requirement for a dedicated Web Editor that coordinates and updates web content and images in collaboration with City subject matter experts. They would be the custodian for the City websites.

### *GIS OFFICER (ADDITIONAL)*

To maximise the GIS (Geographic Information System) capabilities in the City, additional GIS resources are required.

### *POTENTIAL ROLE CHANGES*

There is an opportunity to review roles through the organisation that exist largely to provide information to customers or the rest of the organisation. Where staff in these roles are subject matter experts, there is the potential to repurpose them as Information Management Officers.

### *INFORMATION MANAGEMENT ANALYST*

At present, whilst the City has records management officers, there is no role with direct responsibility for information management. As part of the transition to information management there is a need for a new position that would be responsible for information and data management.

The Core responsibility of the Information Management Analyst is to be the City's Data Custodian and maintain the Data Catalogue. They analyse data to improve quality and the efficiency of data systems. The key responsibilities of the Information Management Analyst are to:

- Identify, classify and describe information and data across all ICT systems
- Ensure information and data is preserved in formats that enable data integrity and reliability over time
- Monitor compliance with the City's existing policies and procedures regarding information and data management
- Assist departments in leveraging business information management techniques and tools to maximise operational efficiency and increase productivity

