



Business Transformation Strategy

2022-26

June 2022





Northern Grampians Shire Council
LIVE | WORK | INVEST | VISIT

CONTACT US

-  ngshire@ngshire.vic.gov.au
-  www.ngshire.vic.gov.au
-  (03) 5358 8700
-  PO Box 580 Stawell VIC 3380

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***The Business Transformation Strategy 2022–26
has been developed to provide a simple roadmap
of where we are going and how we are going to get
there, with clear actionable goals and identified actions
needed to achieve them.***



Our vision:

Our vision for business transformation at Northern Grampians Shire Council is:

“To be leaders in customer experience and service delivery with improved business processes using new and available technologies”



Our purpose:

“To engage across the organisation to enhance processes and the use of technologies”

Our goal:

“Optimised processes for improved service delivery to the community”

Introduction

Council is committed to exploring and implementing new and innovative ways of doing things to achieve the best outcomes for the community. The Northern Grampians Shire Council *Business Transformation Strategy 2022-26* represents a vision for technology reform, building on the achievements realised by implementation of the previous strategies.

Purpose

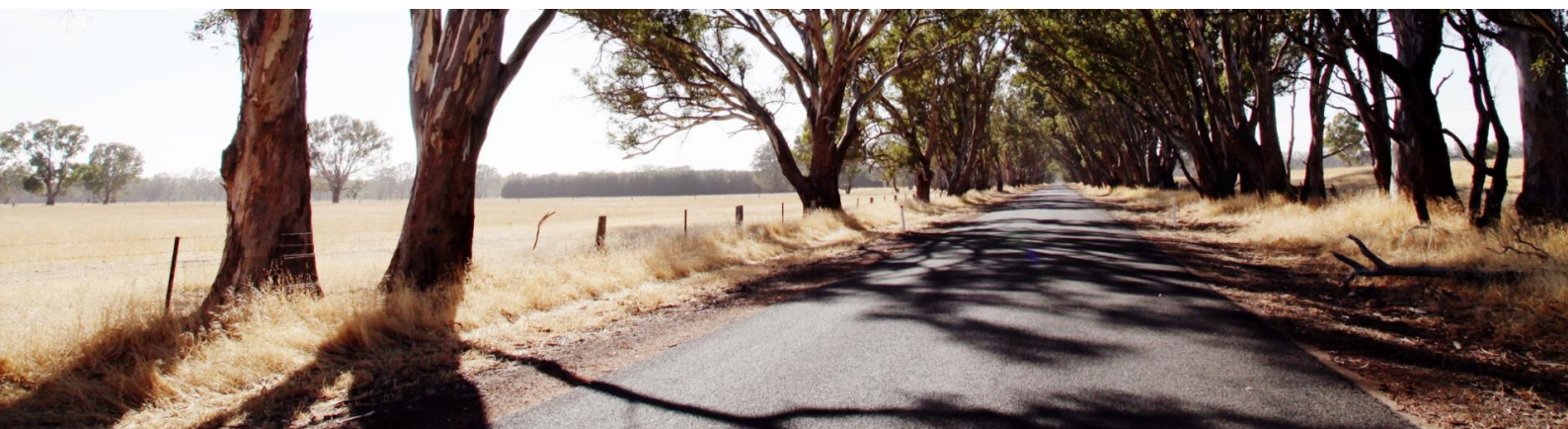
The *Business Transformation Strategy 2022-26* will build upon the work undertaken to date and continue to guide the organisation towards delivery of improved services to the community taking advantage of the latest available technologies, ensuring council is connected, customer focused, and outcome driven.

Background

In 2013, development of Council’s *ICT Strategy 2013-17* provided direction for migration of the ICT environment from a static desktop environment to a mobile computing environment wherever appropriate. The strategy provided 16 key recommendations, which laid the foundation for the implementation of council’s *Anywhere, Anytime, Any device* strategy. Most of the recommendations were implemented during this period, resulting in significant change and improvements to Council’s current technology environment.

The *Business Transformation Strategy 2017-21* sought to build on that work and place Northern Grampians Shire Council as a leader in the use of technology, whilst continuing to identify and realise efficiencies and ensuring improved customer experience. During this period council’s servers were migrated to a cloud hosted solution putting council in an excellent position to very quickly adopt to new ways of working, including arrangements required in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the need to continue to provide services to the community in a very different working environment.

The *Business Transformation Strategy 2022-26* seeks to continue to build on this work and again place Northern Grampians Shire Council as a leader in innovation and the use of technology.



About us and what we do

The **Business Transformation Team** is made up of three key activity streams:

- Information Communication Technology (ICT)
- Business Transformation (BT)
- Geographical Information Systems (GIS)

ICT is widely recognised across Northern Grampians Shire Council as one of the key enablers for quality service provision and is an essential component for responding successfully to both the current challenges, and those of the future.

BT is about refusing to accept *'that's just how we do things'* and not falling into the trap that *'just because something is not broken it can't be improved'*. However, it is also recognised that business transformation is not just about technology, but also understanding and redesigning services, and the communication and cultural change required for this to be successful. This involves thinking about the whole service and getting multidisciplinary teams together to transform the experience for users to deliver change that makes a genuine difference.

ICT:

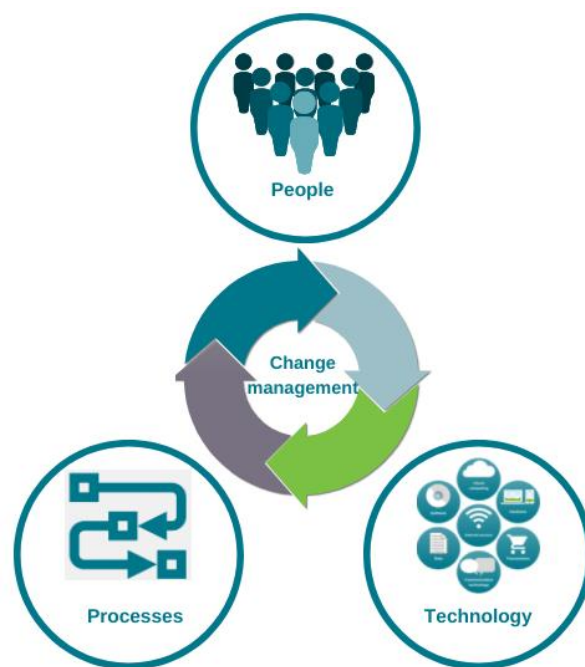
(Information Communication Technology)



**technologies that combine
to allow digital interaction**

BT:

(Business Transformation)



**components that combine to
drive business improvement**

GIS is a specialised area of expertise that plays a critical role in capturing, analysing, and managing spatial data to visually present information to the public, and support efficient internal daily operations to deliver services to the community.

Transformation is about refusing to accept 'that's just how we do things.'

Our values

The **Code of Conduct for Council Staff** provides a set of core values to guide staff conduct:

Code of Conduct for Council Staff

1. Core Values

Values help staff work out what is the right thing to do, legally and ethically. They can provide guidance to determine conduct and **are** particularly important in situations that are not covered by rules.

The core values of the Council are that we are a skilled and capable organisation which is:

CORE VALUES	
RESPONSIVE	through community engagement, listening to and responding appropriately to community needs
ACCOUNTABLE	being transparent and honest in dealings and responsible in decision making
FAIR	being informed and impartial in decision making
INNOVATIVE	being positive and able to find solutions
SUSTAINABLE	stewardship of the community, environment, economy and Council
RESPECTFUL	of people's views and diversity

When the Business Transformation department was formed in 2016, the team developed its own set of guiding principles in line with the core values.

The following seven guiding principles were identified and embedded into the approach for delivery of all BT services and are still applicable to how the team will deliver their services now and into the future:

Agile - we will evolve solutions through iterative development between cross functional teams

Collaborate - we will work together to achieve business improvements

Experiment - we will be bold and try new ways of delivery

Lead - we will build workforce capability that encourages creativity and innovation

Lean - we will provide value through continuous improvements and waste reduction

Plan - we will develop plans and implement projects where a clear benefit is determined, whilst balancing risk

Share - we will share data, information, and service capability with other agencies wherever appropriate

Transformation is about refusing to accept 'that's just how we do things.'

Our Objectives

When the Business Transformation department was formed in 2016, a set of operational objectives was developed by the team.

The following ten objectives were identified and embedded into the approach for delivery of all BT services. They remain relevant to the services the team aim to deliver now and into the future and have been used to help guide development of this strategy.

- **Investigate and implement innovative technologies to improve customer experience**
- **Provide a fast, reliable, and secure network**
- **Support the development and use of software systems that meet service needs**
- **Work with staff to provide and optimise use of appropriate client hardware**
- **Work with staff to investigate and implement innovative, cost-efficient technologies to improve service delivery**
- **Work with staff to improve quality and access to appropriate council data for informed decision making**
- **Ensure suitable ICT governance systems in place for new technologies**
- **Work with staff to redesign business processes to achieve greater efficiency and service excellence**
- **Work with staff to analyse data to inform decision making**
- **Provide appropriate resources to achieve planned objectives**

Transformation is about refusing to accept 'that's just how we do things.'

Organisational context – strategic overview

Alignment to the Shire Vision

Council has adopted eight outcomes identified as critical to the success of our community and our council. The outcomes represent what we work to achieve and have been informed by the *Northern Grampians Shire Community Vision* and the *Economic Development Strategy*.

While the services that the Business Transformation Team provide across the organisation support the delivery of just about every service, their work is most closely aligned with the strategic outcome of **“Being a better council”**.



Alignment to the Council Plan



Council has identified four goals in its [Council Plan 2021-25](#):

- Enhance Lifestyle and Community
- Boost Economic Growth
- Provide Sustainable Infrastructure
- Improve Organisation Effectiveness

Strategies and indicators relevant to the *Business Transformation Strategy 2022-26* are primarily contained within the **Improve Organisational Effectiveness** goal.

The operational components of the *Council Plan 2021-25* are the actions adopted to ultimately deliver on the goals and outcomes.

Development of the *Business Transformation Strategy 2022-26* is aligned with these goals, outcomes, and actions, in conjunction with technology trends, best practice and other external influences.

Review of the *BT Strategy 2022-26*

Ongoing financial pressures and the need for organisational efficiencies without sacrificing quality mean council will have to continue to become more efficient in the way that it works. Technology will continue to play a key role in transformation processes and opportunities to work smarter must be embraced by everyone.

There will always be a need for continuous innovation and response to change, challenges, and opportunities as they arise. While rapid improvements are an important part of responding to changing needs, business transformation is not a new concept, nor is it an overnight task. Business Transformation is a journey - not a destination!

This strategy is a continuation of the previous strategy, building on the work undertaken to date, and for that reason, the previous priorities, outcomes, and strategies have been incorporated and updated into this strategy, and this will continue to happen into the future.

Technology continues to change at a rapid pace, there are new solutions constantly offering opportunities to improve operational efficiency, and while the future direction of technology development can be predicted to a degree in the short term, it is very difficult to envisage what form emerging technologies will take in the longer term.

This strategy is an important tool for ensuring that influences and changes that affect the direction of council's Business Transformation service provision are captured and managed appropriately.

As such, it is a document that will continually evolve, enabling the organisation to move dynamically to meet new challenges and exploit new opportunities, while ensuring alignment to the Council Plan Goals and Outcomes. To ensure that the strategy maintains alignment with the Council Plan, annual reviews will be undertaken in conjunction with the annual Council Plan review and the BT Team business plan review.



Where are we now?

Due to the work undertaken over the period of the previous strategy, council found itself well positioned to respond effectively and efficiently to the unusual situation it was thrust into by the Covid-19 situation.

With most of its servers in a private cloud, and already being embedded in a collaborative working environment the workforce was able to move quickly to a *working from home* environment and continue to provide services to the community seamlessly.

The work undertaken on redevelopment of council's website has resulted in an improvement in online transactions, with all forms on the website now being true digital forms that can be completed and submitted online, at a time that suits the customer.

However, as with all council services, there is a limit on what can be achieved with the available resources, and there is always more that can be done. Several legacy systems still exist, proving to be one of the major hurdles during the Covid-19 response.

During 2021 a major project was undertaken to migrate from the Google suite of efficiency tools to the Microsoft 365 environment, creating the potential to better collaborate with other councils and identify and implement operational efficiencies that can be leveraged using the Microsoft platform.

Council remains committed to collaborating across the local government sector to eliminate duplication, build capacity, and increase efficiency, using common standards and platforms where appropriate. Opportunities to work together have been investigated and partnerships formed, with two major projects currently underway in collaboration with several of our neighbouring councils.

Where do we want to be?

Council prides itself on being innovative and will strive to continue to build on the work undertaken to date.

A focus on implementation of '*best fit*' solutions to renew or replace legacy systems will ensure council continues to improve its service delivery, for both internal and external stakeholders. '*Best fit*' focuses on not necessarily 'the best' as indicated by the term '*best of breed*' which implies the biggest and best, and probably the most expensive, but the most appropriate option for council, meaning not paying for technology that over services council's needs, resulting in licensing costs for functionality that council does not have the resources to utilise or optimise.

Our aim is for secure technology and data that is easy to access and use in order to provide service excellence.

Major challenges and influences

In 2013, when the council's *Anywhere, Anytime, Any Device* ICT Strategy was developed, approximately **31%** of the workforce was connected to council's network. In 2022 **100%** of the workforce is connected in some way, and usage across the organisation is only going to increase in the future. This has resulted in more diverse technologies being implemented, and a much higher expectation to support the use of technology across the whole organisation.

With more than 200 employees user and system management requirements continue to increase, along with ICT service helpdesk requests, and now, more than ever, there is an expectation to plan and execute major projects to realise improvements, in parallel to supporting 'business as usual'.

The Covid-19 situation has increased the focus across the sector on cyber security and information governance. Being a very technical area of expertise, this places council in the same situation as many other small rural councils, with pressure to manage the ever-changing landscape of keeping council's network safe.



Employee engagement

Development of the Business Transformation Strategy 2022-26 was undertaken in conjunction with the information gathered from across the workforce by a survey conducted in December 2021.

The survey was undertaken, inviting all employees to provide insights into:

What systems do you use and how much?

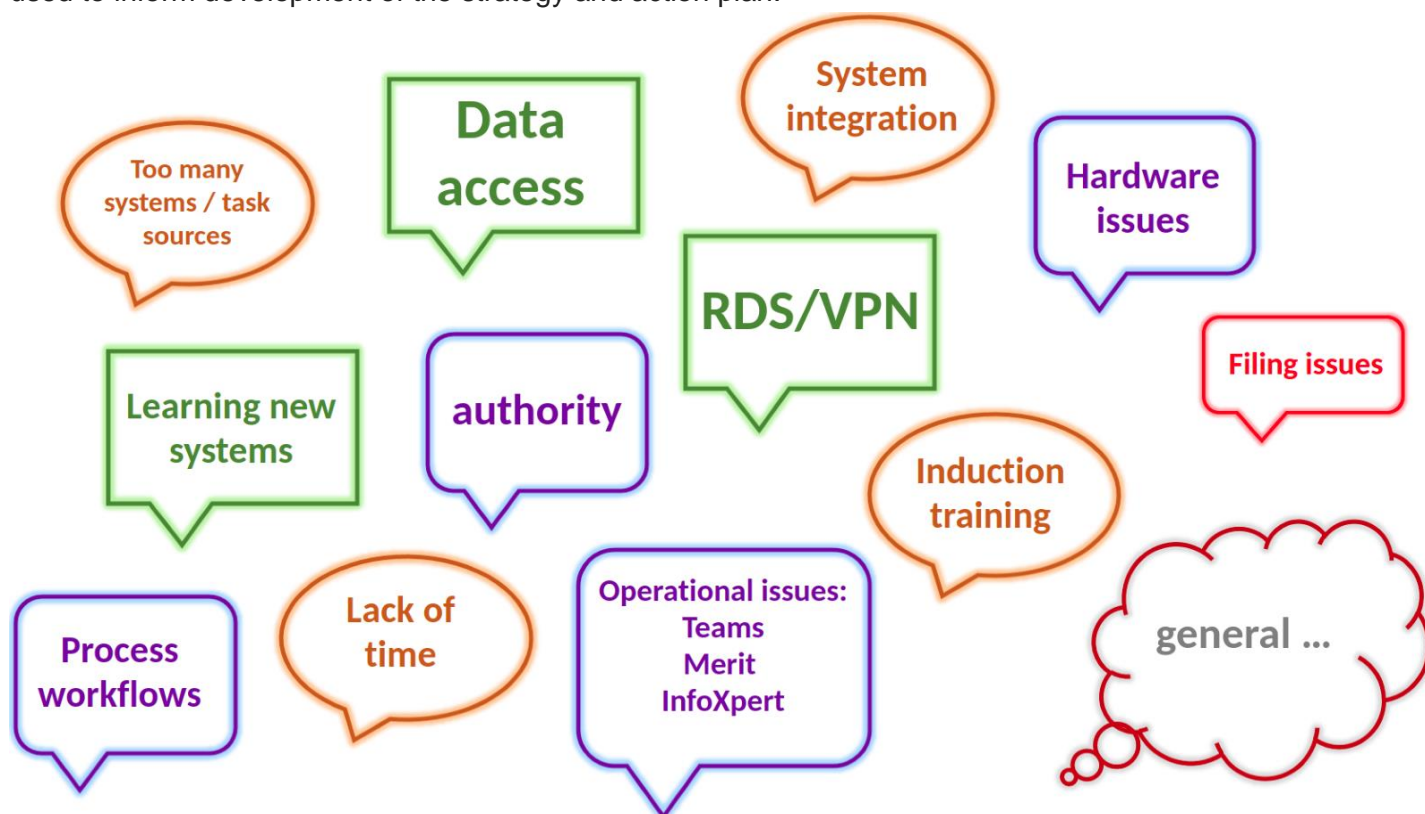
How do you access systems and what's your experience?

How do you experience issue reporting?

What do you think about our communication and training?

Pain points, good stuff, and any other general comments.

The response rate for the survey was 31% across the whole workforce (76 responses from 242 surveys distributed) which equates to 39% of all employees with a council email address (72 responses from 187 surveys distributed). The results were used to summarise employees' pain points which in turn have been used to inform development of the strategy and action plan.



Strategic Priorities

Three strategic priorities have been identified as the core values that underpin all business transformation activities and are the key focus areas that will lead to the achievement of our goals and successful outcomes for our customers.

The three priorities previously identified in the Business Transformation Strategy 2017-21 (*Customer experience*, *Digital first*, and *Data*) remain as relevant now as they were in 2017 and have been incorporated into the three strategic priorities identified in the development of this strategy.

The three strategic priorities are:

Accessibility



Usability



Security



The strategic priorities will be embedded into the approach and decision making for delivery of all BT services.

Strategic Outcomes

Likewise, the four outcomes previously identified in the Business Transformation Strategy 2017-21 remain as relevant now as they were in 2017 and have been incorporated into the five strategic outcomes identified in this strategy.

The five strategic outcomes are:

Customers experience seamless, easy to use, accessible services

Employees are enabled to optimise available technology and equipment

Employees are empowered to innovate and improve

Accurate, relevant data is easily accessible to make evidence-based decisions

Our ICT environment is well managed, modern, and secure

Strategic Goals

The following strategic goals are how we will achieve our desired outcomes.

We will ensure customers experience seamless, easy to use, accessible services by:

- placing the customer at the centre of everything we do
- continuing to review and redesign processes and services
- continuing to review and develop council's website

We will ensure employees are enabled to optimise available technology and equipment by:

- reviewing our legacy systems and planning to renew or replace where appropriate, and improving the user experience where not
- continuing to review, develop, deliver, and monitor training and support programs
- continuing to investigate and leverage the Microsoft 365/Azure platform

We will empower employees to innovate and improve by:

- facilitating redesign of processes around the needs of the user
- investigating new and emerging technologies and supporting implementation where appropriate
- collaborating across the local government sector to eliminate duplication, build capacity, and increase efficiency, using common standards and platforms where appropriate

We will ensure accurate, relevant data is easily accessible to make evidence-based decisions by:

- building capacity to utilise new and existing tools to analyse data to inform critical decision making
- recognising data as a critical asset whilst protecting privacy requirements and ensuring accessibility
- releasing appropriate information into the public arena enabling the community to access and use the information
- collaborating with other agencies to standardise data to enable sharing where possible

We will ensure our ICT environment is well managed, modern, and secure by:

- conducting appropriate security audits and implementing identified improvements
- migrating to a modern public cloud platform
- migrating to modern identity management solutions
- migrating to modern software provisioning (cloud-based) solutions

These goals drive the prioritisation and allocation of available resources to the projects in the Business Transformation Action Plan.

Northern Grampians Shire Council Business Transformation Action Plan

Major projects currently planned for the period of this strategy are listed below and detail the actions required to achieve the strategic goals. The action plan will be reviewed annually, and further details of each project will be documented in the Business Transformation Team's annual action plan and individual project plans.

Project		Timeframe				
		2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
<i>Customers experience seamless, easy to use, accessible services</i>						
Customer service review	Develop and implement a 'first call resolution' customer service model					
LeaniNG Forward Stage 2	Plan and deliver priority customer experience improvements					
Website development	Develop and implement a <i>Website Experience Improvement Plan</i>					
<i>Employees are enabled to optimise available technology and equipment</i>						
ERP 'best fit' project	Renew enterprise resource planning (ERP) software – a collaborative project with our neighbouring councils					
ICT asset management	Develop and implement a formal <i>ICT Asset Management Plan</i>					
ICT support framework	Develop and deliver a formal ICT Support Framework to improve onboarding and ongoing ICT support					
Managing records better - together	Implement a new electronic records system (EDRMS) – a collaborative project with our neighbouring councils					
Optimise M365	Plan and deliver process improvements utilising the Microsoft 365 product suite					
<i>Employees are empowered to innovate and improve</i>						
Continuous Improvement	Plan and deliver priority process improvements					
<i>Accurate, relevant data is easily accessible to make evidence-based decisions</i>						
Data management	Develop and implement a <i>Data Management Strategy</i>					
Data utilisation	Develop and implement a <i>Data Utilisation Plan</i>					
Improve reporting	Investigate and implement reporting tools and build reporting capability across the council					
Accurate GIS data	Plan and implement GDA 2020 and the new Victorian digital cadastre					

continued...

continued...

Project		Timeframe				
		2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
<i>Our ICT environment is well managed, modern, and secure</i>						
Cyber security	Undertake cyber security audits and plan and implement audit recommendations					
Information security	Develop and implement an annual <i>VPDSF Action Plan</i>					
Move to modern cloud	Plan, prepare, and migrate servers to a public cloud					
Identity management	Plan and implement modern identity management systems					
Upgrade to cloud systems	Plan and prioritise a system review / renewal / replacement program					

**BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION AT
NORTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE COUNCIL**
... it's a journey, not a destination.







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-  (03) 5358 8700
-  PO Box 580 Stawell VIC 3380

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