

Entry for SOLGM “Transforming Service Delivery Award”

Project Name:

Mobility Strategy - “on-the-go” services for Waimakariri District Council

Project Summary:

Waimakariri District Council (WDC) covers a large geographic area and has more than 60 highly mobile staff/roles across council who spend on average 4,626 hours off-site every month. The Digital Transformation Strategy (DTS) identified the need to provide more digital services to field staff across various functions, enabling a better flow of data to and from the field as well as providing improvements to staff productivity and customer service.

It was clear to all staff and their respective functions that to resolve the fragmented issues, a digital mobility framework/strategy at WDC would benefit all. This was developed and approved alongside a Mobility Roadmap that recommended and defined a pragmatic, structured approach to deliver a range of mobility initiatives. As mobility forms are part of the end-to-end business process, this also meant that in addition to the mobility strategy, the back office processes and any applicable e-services, had to be reviewed.

Strategic Context:

Mobility was identified as an integral component of WDC’s overall strategic direction. WDC’s DTS and Organisational Development Strategies (ODS) also identified Mobility as a key programme of work to provide electronic access to view and update information in the field to deliver significant service and productivity benefits to the council as well as helping support data quality and integrity improvements.

WDC sought to implement a mobility platform as a core hub for the development of its mobility based services.

The key goals of the mobility strategy were;

- Improve customer service
- Deliver productivity improvement
- Facilitate the development of end to end digital processes and workflow across council
- Improve quality, relevancy, timeliness, temporal accuracy and completeness of digital data captured in the field supporting a ‘single source of the truth’
- Easy and efficient to use for all field staff, helping make WDC a great place to work
- Support council to provide a safe working environment for field based staff

The vision was:

“Enable the efficient and effective delivery of digital information and processes to support council staff to provide an agile service from any location”

The key strategic outcomes sought were;

- Positive adoption of mobile devices and digital processing by field staff
- Demonstrable productivity and customer service improvements for field based services

- Field based digital services support the end to end workflow to enable key council services to be carried out end to end digitally from customer request to service fulfilment
- Improved quality of data collected and maintained in the field which results in improvement in asset management, maintenance and reporting
- Cost efficiencies through increased collaboration with other councils to share and leverage digital services developed elsewhere
- WDC reputation as a progressive district council is enhanced

Project Management:

As part of developing the mobility strategy requirements, interviews were undertaken with a wide range of business units across the Council. The mobility strategy was signed off by Management Team, DTS group and Council and funding approved.

To ensure overall governance of the programme a Mobility Steering Group was formed which included the Sponsor, Project Manager, Programme Owner and Managers from contributing/impacted Business Units.

The Mobility Project Team consisted of the Project Manager and WDC IT support/developer staff. This team meet fortnightly to confirm progress, confirm completion of actions, table issues and roadblocks. In addition, weekly project meetings were held with external supplier throughout each phase to ensure work remained on track and within budget.

A charter for each phase of the project clearly defined the scope, objectives, success criteria, assumptions, constraints, dependencies, critical success factors, key deliverables, budget, timeframes, and risks. To ensure quality deliverables, each Mobility form/process followed a structured System Development Lifecycle (SDLC). Business and functional requirements were gathered and signed off for each form. They were then designed, developed, tested, QA'ed, deployed, and supported post implementation.

Each phase ended with a formal Post Implementation Review (PIR). Findings allowed the project team to adapt and incorporate changes into subsequent phases.

The implementation of mobility has a significant impact on the organisation and field based staff, in particular in terms of process and technology change. In order to ensure that staff are supported and business benefits realized, a significant amount of organisational change management was required. The programme costs allowed provision for additional resource to support the delivery of the programme. An external Project Manager and BA were engaged to manage implementation of the Mobility Strategy and help with change management.

Relationship Management:

The mobility strategy has resulted in a collaborative programme between Council, Datacom and Gallus Consulting. WDC partnered with Datacom Local Government Solutions to implement Datascape Mobile Capture as a mobility platform and core hub for the development of its mobility-based services, alongside using ArcGIS Survey123/Collector for mapping based forms. Gallus were engaged by WDC to supply Project Management and Business Analysis across the programme.

Datacom's Datascape Mobile Capture and ArcGIS platforms were attractive to WDC because they are shared Software as a Service (SaaS) solutions, which enabled WDC to work collaboratively with other councils across New Zealand. WDC can share services, processes and forms with other Councils, thus reducing costs and development time. For example, the cost of developing a new FCP (Food Control Plan) form was split between a number of councils. This also meant WDC could internally build capability over time to be in a position to be able to undertake the bulk of development of its mobility solutions.

Together all parties have worked collaboratively to successfully deliver a range of mobile services. Given that it has involved both internal and external stakeholders it has required structured communication and stakeholder management. Internally the project has involved various stakeholders/audiences across 12 different business units, resulting in a broad spectrum of stakeholders from both a knowledge and style basis.

During the project various communication tools have been used, e.g. video conferencing, teleconferences, screen sharing, meetings (team meetings, one-on-one), status reports, presentations, whiteboard brainstorming sessions, emails, business requirements documents, user acceptance testing, on-site training sessions. The project team also went out into the field with the end users to help them use the new mobility service and quick reference guides were developed and circulated to all end users.

Continuous Improvement:

The mobility solutions are integrated into the Council's Line of Business System, Technology One. Once new features and integration options become available in either Datascape or ArcGIS they are "retro" fitted to existing forms, an example of this is the ability to integrate mobile produced reports to our EDRMS (Electronic Document and Records Management System) which is being retro-fitted to existing mobile forms.

The project team have also been highly conscious of the handover to the business to ensure sustainability and continuation of the strategy once the project finished. The handover has now been completed and Mobility roll-out is now part of Business as Usual (BAU) at WDC with internal capability built up to be able to deliver additional forms and make enhancements to existing forms, without the need for external support.

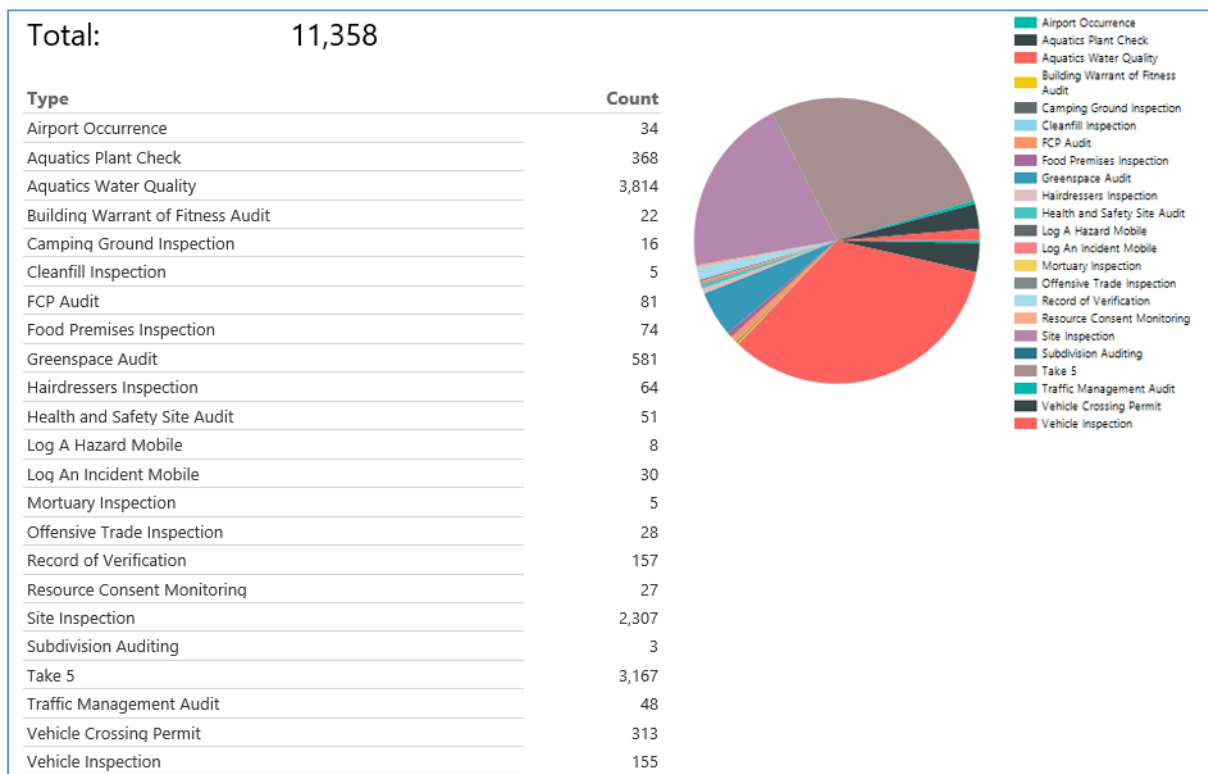
The project team have ensured that the mobility solution has been embedded as a sustainable development platform for mobility solutions and services as Council move into the future.

As described in Project Management above, at the end of each phase a comprehensive lessons learned (or Post Implementation Review) session was undertaken with all key stakeholders of the phase. The results of this session were formally documented, circulated, reviewed and signed off by the Steering Group. The key lessons learned were then absorbed into the planning and delivery of subsequent phases and projects.

The success of the Mobility programme has seen the lessons learned and its approach adopted by other subsequent programmes of work, for example, eServices. Lessons in design, deployment and training have also been embraced by other programmes. With a strong focus on mobility, roll-out is now Business as Usual and internal capability increased to deliver additional forms and enhancements to existing forms.

Project Success:

So far WDC have deployed 23 mobile forms through Datascape and 20 mobile forms through our ArcGIS Survey123 and Collector. Currently 99 tablet devices for field use are in use by business users. A snap shot of the delivered Datacom Sphere mobile forms and number of forms completed are shown in the graph below.



The 20 mobile ArcGIS forms have resulted in the update of about 14,596 records so far. The mobile map based forms cover for example: Various asset validations, protected trees assessment, rapid building assessment, various inspection forms for assets, service request etc.

Previously field processes were paper based and relied heavily on staff's diligence to adhere to process, complete manual steps and upload data into office systems as required. The rollout of digitised mobile forms has had the desired effect in that:

- Paper based forms have been retired and replaced with mobile forms. This reduces double (or triple) handling and removes time inefficiencies.
- Reports that were manually typed up from hand written notes are now automatically generated and emailed.
- Reports are now standardised, professional looking, easy to read and timely in that customers receive their reports in a timely fashion.
- A number of reports are now also automatically uploaded into the EDRMS, aiding compliance with the Public Records Act.

- Data is now automatically populated back into Technology One, resulting in improved data quality and timeliness of information for e.g. reporting.

An added benefit is the opportunity to review and improve not only in field processes but also supporting back office processes and document them.

Execution of the mobility strategy has traversed a number of barriers for Council, the two biggest barriers being change and use of technology.

Processes had been embedded and followed for many years and whilst it was recognised that there were efficiency gains to be made the uncertainty of changing what many staff had been doing for years was present across all business units. A number of staff were hesitant and lacking confidence in using technology. Push back and reasons not to use the mobile forms and tablets was common for the first few months.

The project team worked hard to alleviate fears and coach/support staff through change. They worked closely with the business, showed patience, trained them and provided one-on-one support where necessary, even going into the field with them.

Over time field staff have embraced the use of mobile tablets to complete work. They buy into the vision of the organisation and are committed to using the forms.

A good example of this is highlighted by the use of the mobile forms by the Food Verification inspectors who were hesitant and not in favour of using the devices and forms to begin with. They were sceptical that it saved time and was more efficient. So much so that they requested doing the inspections on paper then re-keying them into the form once back in the office. We listened to and addressed their concerns and questions and they are now one of the biggest advocates and formally stated this to a group of food proprietors at a Food Act meeting held at Council.

This project was innovative and demonstrates best practice because:

- Instead of using an “ad-hoc” approach to implementing mobility this project covered a wide range of business units across council, resulting in a mobility specific strategy and roadmap (framework) that provides:
 - A consistent set of council owned mobility devices;
 - A base set of digital services that will be deployed to all devices;
 - A number of core corporate wide mobile services which could be used across a range of business units;
- Mobility forms part of the end to end business process, so apart from the mobility side in conjunction the “back-office” processes and, if applicable, e-services side are also reviewed. This supports central government’s strategy of delivering end to end digital services by default.

Post implementation reviews indicate that time saving has been a big success story in the mobile roll-out. For example, time saved on Greenspace Contract Audits is estimated at 65 days per year, while forms for audits and inspections have saved around 97 days per year.

Intangible benefits include:

- Faster and more professional service for customers. E.g. a premises report can be turned around in less than 24 hours after inspection (previously could take 3-4 weeks)
- Relevant act and regulation information is available in the field in real-time against each question which provides clarity and allows the officer to discuss with customers

- Standardisation of forms and reports across units
- Ability to take and automatically include photos on the reports, linked to location
- Clear and more transparent rating scale on the output report - easier to interpret
- Results saved into the backend system, maintaining the 'one source of the truth'

Quote from our Greenspace Assets Officer:

"The Mobility Implementation Programme has provided the Greenspace Team with a valuable tool which allows fast, efficient and quality in field audits to be carried out and presented to our maintenance contractors. The system is simple to use, has saved us quantifiable time and allows us to gather, review and archive data and photos for transparent and professional auditing purposes."

WDC have developed a number of forms that have provided a launching pad for other Councils to utilise. For example, Dunedin City have picked up the Hairdresser, Licensed Premises forms and are also investigating the use 3 other forms.

