

Customer Experience Strategy

2025

SWAN HILL
Rural City Council



Acknowledgement of Country

Swan Hill Rural City Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land, and pays its respects to their elders, past and present.



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Introduction

Message from the Mayor and CEO

At Swan Hill Rural City Council, our community is at the heart of everything we do. Whether it's maintaining our local roads, providing essential services, or supporting local growth and wellbeing, we are committed to delivering meaningful, consistent experiences for every person who interacts with us - even when the outcomes may not be what they had hoped for.

This Customer Experience Strategy reflects our vision to place people first in every service, decision, and interaction. We recognise that trust, empathy, and responsiveness directly impact how our community members feel valued and understood, particularly when navigating technical or complex situations. Our residents, businesses, and visitors expect services that are prompt, accessible, and user-friendly. They also expect us to listen, act, and continuously adapt to meet their evolving needs.

As a Local Government, we acknowledge that, at times, delivering difficult news is an inherent aspect of our responsibilities and when this happens, our goal is to do so with compassion, transparency, and respect. We strive to simplify processes, communicate clearly in plain language, and ensure every person feels valued and heard. Whether it's a long-time resident registering their pet, a planning applicant navigating a challenging decision, or a newcomer accessing community services in their preferred language – the way we show up truly matters.

This strategy provides a clear roadmap for Council to strengthen these expectations through modern systems, empowered staff, and a culture that values genuine connection and continuous improvement. We are proud to present this strategy as a bold step forward, laying the foundation for meaningful change across our organisation and inspiring greater community collaboration.

Together - with our community and our dedicated staff - we will continue building a Council that is not only efficient and accountable, but also deeply connected to the people we serve.

Thank you for being part of our journey.

CEO Scott Barber and Mayor, Cr Stuart King





"We strive to support and provide for the community."

What is Customer Experience?

Understanding the journey of interactions between our community and Council.

Customer experience (CX) is the sum of every interaction a person has with Council, from asking a simple question to lodging a building permit or accessing community services. Unlike customer service, which often focuses on a single moment or transaction, customer experience looks at the entire journey: how easy, helpful, and satisfying the overall process feels. Delivering great customer experiences builds trust, strengthens community relationships, and ensures that services meet the real needs of our residents, ratepayers, businesses, and visitors.

In local government, customer experience is **community experience**.

Different customers, different journeys

Behind every customer interaction is a unique need, goal, or life moment.



I'm starting a business



I need some support services



We're moving to Lake Boga



I'm getting a new pet



I'm building a house



I need a disability parking permit

Our community and services

A snapshot of our people, places and services.

Swan Hill Rural City Council (SHRCC) serves a diverse community of more than 21,000 people with over 40 nationalities across 12 townships, from Robinvale and Swan Hill to Lake Boga. Our region is shaped by its strong agricultural roots, growing industries, and the natural beauty of the Murray River. Our community is dynamic and evolving. Our people and places influence the range of services Council provides and ensure we meet the needs of both residents and visitors.



Figure 1. Map of the Swan Hill Rural City region, adapted from Goulburn Murray, "Swan Hill Rural City" (2025).

2,644
Number of businesses (2023)

5,778
Active Library members (2024)

591,000
Total visitors (2024)

195
Full time Council staff (2025)

4.5%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (2021)

39 years
Median age (2023)

Our services

- Recreation and Community Facilities
- Transport Services
- Governance and Administration
- Community Services
- Environmental and Waste Management
- Cultural Services
- Family, Youth and Children's Services
- Pioneer Settlement
- Economic Development and Marketing Services
- Public Health, Safety and Regulatory Compliance



Research summary

Current state assessment of Council

Understanding our strengths, challenges, and opportunities through insights from staff and customers.

To build a meaningful and achievable customer experience strategy, we first needed a clear understanding of how services are experienced today, what's working well, and where opportunities lie. This assessment was grounded in hands-on research, including staff workshops, staff and customer interviews, a customer survey, mystery shopper calls, and a national benchmarking exercise comparing council CX maturity across Australia.

Research overview

Quick summary of the research methods used.

Method	Description	Outputs
 **Workshops**	Four co-design workshops were held with a total of 42 Council staff members.	Workshop canvases filled out with sticky notes of what's working well, what's not working well and opportunities.
 **Interviews**	A total of 22 interviews were conducted, including 17 with customers and 5 with Council staff.	Audio recordings, transcripts, and notes.
 **Survey**	The customer survey received 159 responses.	Survey, excel spreadsheet, charts, and sentiments.
 **Mystery Shopper Calls**	Three mystery shopper calls were made to the Swan Hill and Robinvale reception teams, covering enquiries about pet registration, building permits, and reporting a pothole.	Audio recordings, transcripts, and notes.
 **CX Maturity Index**	Over 30 local councils across Australia were surveyed as part of a 2024–2025 CX Maturity assessment.	SurveyMonkey survey, excel spreadsheet, and charts.

Key themes and insights from our staff and community.

What we're doing well

The strengths we can build on to deliver even better customer experiences.

1

Staff who are engaged, proactive and work as a team

Customers appreciate staff who are knowledgeable, collaborative, and committed to delivering proactive support, such as addressing a customer by name from memory.

2

Exceptional services that are visible to the community

Services like waste management, libraries, and parks and gardens are consistently praised, along with the friendly and helpful approach of frontline and reception staff.

3

Authentic community engagement

Customers value the genuine rapport built with staff and the opportunity to engage directly with Councillors and senior leaders at community events.

4

Technology that uplifts customer and staff experience

Tools such as Microsoft Teams and timely website and social media updates help streamline staff communication and keep the community well-informed.

Where we can improve

The pain points and gaps we need to address to meet rising expectations.

1

Slow response times and poor follow-ups create a bottleneck

Customers are often left waiting without acknowledgement or timely update, including after-hour, which increases staff workload and creates frustration on both sides.

2

Siloed departments result in inconsistent CX standards

Service quality varies across Council due to internal disconnects, lack of shared accountability, and limited collaboration between department teams.

3

Perceived lack of transparency creates mistrust

Some customers feel their feedback isn't genuinely heard or valued, with certain engagements seen as tokenistic or lacking clear follow-through.

4

Infrastructure that does not meet all customer needs

Issues with parking, accessibility, and footpath maintenance are impacting both residents and visitors, which highlights gaps in inclusive design.

Supporting quotes from our staff and community.

What we're doing well

These quotes highlight moments that made people feel supported, valued, and heard.

"I usually go on the website. You get an instant acknowledgment. I find that easier than in person." – *Customer*

"Rubbish bin collection - you couldn't complain about. That's all good." – *Customer*

"It's good to see the actual Councillors out and about and you know, mingling in with the people at events, you know, they're very approachable." – *Customer*

"Customer service is the last thing to fall. That's our priority." – *Staff*

"Swan Hill has a fabulous library and staff, a real asset to our community. The Pioneer Settlement as well as Art Gallery. The 50m Town Pool is also very valued." – *Customer*

"When there isn't a paper form for older customers or those who lack digital literacy, they come into the Council and do it with our help." – *Staff*

"The front counter has been really good. I've watched all the staff at the front help each other out." – *Customer*

"Our parks and gardens are exceptional." – *Customer*

"Internal training is done through Pulse, which is really useful. It's nice to have training." – *Staff*

"Helpful, friendly service. Clean office spaces." – *Customer*

"A good collaboration was the cat stuff, because they put it out to us. They let community have their voice. They closed the loop by feeding back." – *Customer*

"The Robinvale team are doing quite well." – *Customer*

"We have a responsive Council which does the best it can with limited funds. There are pockets of stars working at Council and their work is appreciated." – *Customer*

"Social media is great for staying informed." – *Customer*

Supporting quotes from our staff and community.

Where we can improve

These reflections show pain points, frustrations, and opportunities to deliver a better experience.

"Council have improved in getting community feedback, but it's useless unless the engagement loop is closed."
– *Customer*

"I don't contact the council often. When I did over the issue of not being able to access the squash courts after work, two weeks went by and I hadn't heard a thing until I followed up."
– *Customer*

"I do get questions from people about after hours. During the fires or floods, they couldn't answer the phone and people were dropping off." – *Staff*

"They're relying on those automated systems and they're great. But the reality is it's nothing like somebody to talk to."
– *Customer*

"We don't always feel too integrated with the main Swan Hill Council." – *Staff*

"We worry about how long staff stay at Council and how long we can communicate with that particular person."
– *Customer*

"It's a bit of a joke, really. It's just token stuff. It's not, authentic inclusion. I don't think it's a culturally safe environment from my understanding."
– *Customer*

"Phone contact and call back when you say you are going to. Hate message bank."
– *Customer*

"I answered surveys about different projects coming up, but there is no sort of response to your answers."
– *Customer*

"You don't want people to come to the office, but you don't answer online stuff."
– *Customer*

"You don't want people to come to the office, but you don't answer online stuff."
– *Customer*

"Always someone different being around so no consistency."
– *Customer*

Quantitative insights from our community.

Survey

159 residents shared their experiences and expectations through our community-wide survey.

126 Respondents live in SHRCC municipality for more than **10 years**.

30% of customers prefer to interact with Council **in person** while **40%** have interacted this way in the past.

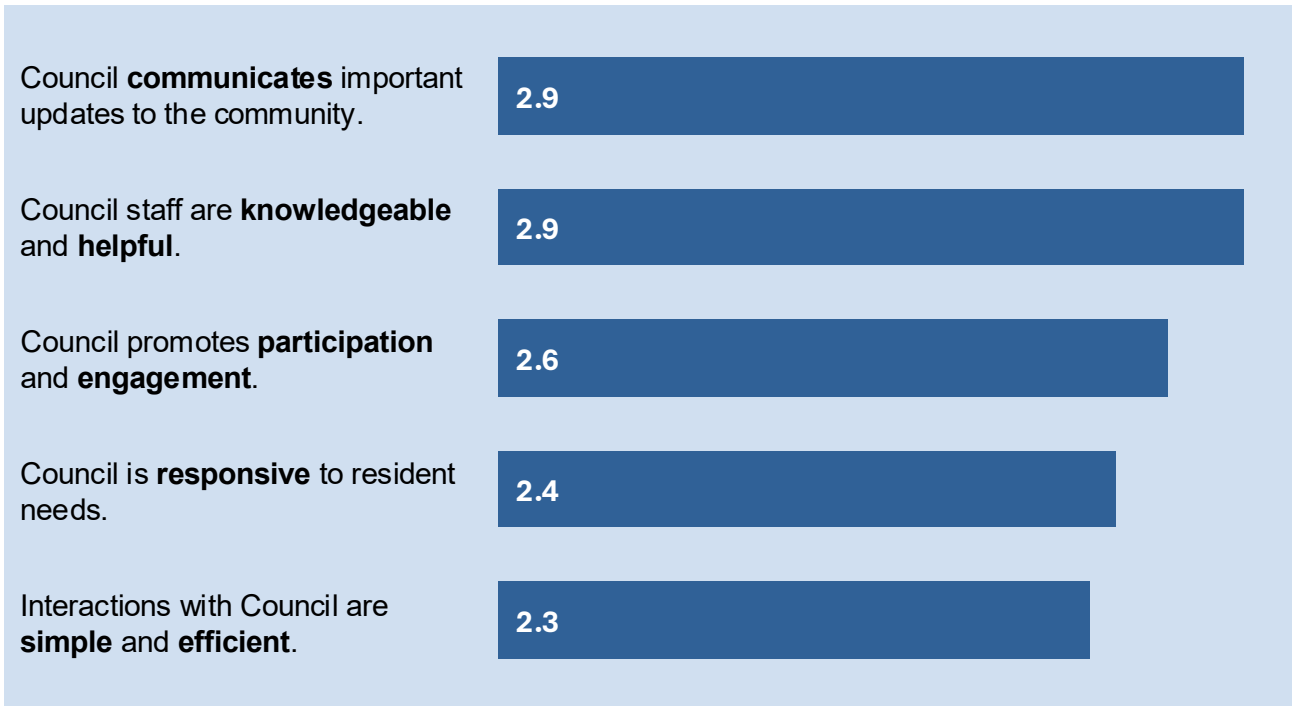
2.6 **Overall experience** with Swan Hill Rural City Council out of 5.

Email (**26%**) and **Phone** (**18%**) are the second most popular interaction preferences.

Average ratings of Council offerings and services (out of five).

Library Services	Waste Collection	Parks and Recreation	Community Programs	Road Maintenance	Planning and Development
4.18 (Good)	4.01 (Good)	3.68 (Good)	3.09 (Neutral)	2.29 (Poor)	2.28 (Poor)

Average ratings of experience statements with Council (out of five).



Customer experience market research

Staying ahead of the curve by understanding where customer experience is heading.

Customer expectations are evolving rapidly and are influenced by technology and service innovation. In shaping this strategy, we considered not only our local context, but also broader shifts in how customer experience is being delivered and measured globally. We explored trends from leading private sector research and public sector thought leadership, including insights from IBM and Gartner. These trends reveal a shared priority across sectors: to become more proactive, personalised, and trusted in how services are delivered and experienced.

Private sector trends

1. Proactive service is the new standard
Customers expect organisations to anticipate their needs before they ask.

2. AI-powered customer service is growing
Customers are increasingly comfortable with chatbots and predictive service. Fast, smart responses are now a baseline expectation.

3. AI + Omnichannel = Seamless experiences
Businesses are pairing omnichannel engagement with AI to create integrated, frictionless services across in-person, digital, and mobile platforms.

4. Voice-first interactions are growing
Tools like Siri and Alexa are reshaping customer journeys, pushing organisations to rethink their channels.

Public sector trends

1. Trust and accountability
Governments must deliver with transparency and build lasting trust in public institutions.

2. Personalisation and choice
Citizens want services tailored to their needs, with more control and clarity in how they engage.

3. Balancing responsibilities
There's growing attention on the boundary between personal vs. state responsibility in service delivery.

4. Decentralised service delivery
Power and resources are shifting closer to local levels, requiring councils to adapt and lead.

5. Building workforce capacity
Public sector success depends on building CX capabilities and digital literacy at all levels.

Gartner predicts that by 2026, over 60% of government organisations will prioritise investment in business process automation – almost doubling since 2022.



Strategy overview

Vision and purpose

Defining the future customer experience we want to create and why we're committed to getting there.

A vision describes the future state we aspire to achieve. It's the long-term ambition that guides our direction. A purpose, on the other hand, grounds us in the 'why' – the reason we exist and who we're here to serve. We're building on the Council's existing vision statement and strengthening it with a renewed purpose that places people at the centre of everything we do.

Vision statement*

Our long-term aspiration for the community we serve.

> Built on strong foundations that embrace our rich history and natural environment, our region will be a place of progression and possibility, we are a community that is happy, healthy, and harmonious – we are empowered, we are respectful, and we are proud.

Purpose statement

Why we exist and the role we play in the everyday lives of our customers.

> We strive to support and provide for the community.

**Note: Vision statement may be subject to change following the release of the new Council Plan in August 2025.*

Values and pillars

The foundational principles and themes that shape how we work and what we aim to deliver.

Our values guide reflects what matters most in the way we serve our community, work with each other, and make decisions. Our pillars define the key areas we focus on to help our region thrive. These values and pillars have been developed and endorsed by Council and are already woven into how we operate. In this strategy, we continue to honour and embed them to ensure that our customer experience efforts are aligned with what Council stands for and strives to achieve.

Our values*

The principles that guide our behaviour and how we work with our community.

Community engagement	Leadership	Fairness	Accountability	Trust
Ensuring that our communities are consulted, listened to and informed.	Engaging the community to form views on strategic issues through strong advocacy.	Valuing and embracing community diversity and ensuring equal treatment for all.	Maintaining transparency and efficiency while valuing feedback in all activities.	Acting with integrity and earning trust as a reliable partner in service delivery and facility provision.

Our pillars*

The core themes that reflect what matters most to our community..



Liveability

Building a healthy, connected and growing community supported by infrastructure and services.



Prosperity

Strengthening our prosperous local economy through sustainable growth, education and value-added jobs.



Harmony

Being a welcoming community recognised for maturity and mutual respect among all members.



Leadership

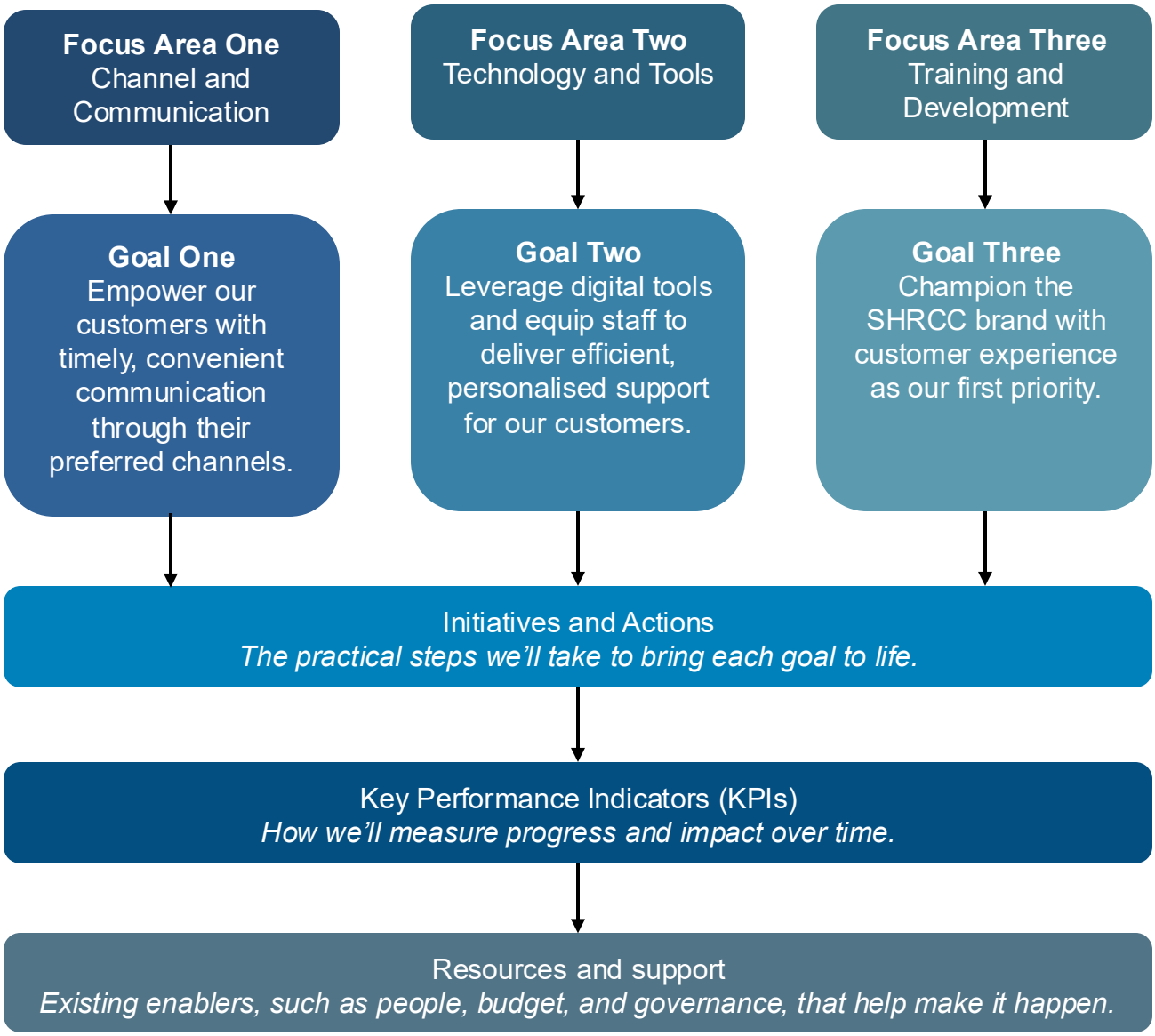
Ensuring accountable leadership, strong advocacy and transparent decision-making.

**Note: Values and pillars are subject to change following the release of the new Council Plan in August 2025.*

Focus areas and goals

Clear priorities, aligned goals, and practical steps for a better customer experience.

This strategy is structured around three key focus areas: Channel and Communication, Technology and Tools, and Training and Development. Each have a clear goal to guide action. These focus areas were created with Council staff through co-design workshops and are grounded in rich research, including insights from customers, frontline teams, market research, and broader sector best practice. For each goal, we've outlined targeted initiatives and actions, measurable KPIs, and the resources and support required to bring them to life.





Focus areas



Channel and Communication

Making it easy and convenient for customers to connect with us and stay informed.

Overview

We want to make it easier for people to get in touch with Council in a way that suits them. Clear, consistent communication helps build trust and makes sure the community stays informed and connected.

Goal

Empower our customers with timely, convenient communication through their preferred channels.

Key Initiatives

The actions we'll take to bring our customer experience goals to life.

1. Coordinate communication channels to improve consistency and visibility
2. Establish consistent internal and external communication protocols
3. Close the loop with clear resolution and escalation paths for customer enquiries
4. Engage the community to understand their preferred communication channels
5. Map the customer journey to identify touchpoints that matter most

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

How we'll measure progress and know we're on the right track.

Metrics	Tools	Ownership
• Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT) • Net Promoter Score (NPS) • First contact resolution rate • Channel usage trends (website, phone, email, in-person)	• Questions in annual customer survey • CRM analytics • Website analytics • Phone analytics	• Director Corporate Services • Customer Service and Revenue Coordinator • Community Engagement and Communications Coordinator



Initiatives and actions to support strategic goal

1. Coordinate communication channels to improve consistency and visibility
1.1 Conduct a full audit of current communication channels using latest research data from the CX Strategy and Council Plan to identify overlap, inconsistency, or gaps.
1.2 Create a centralised communication plan that outlines what channels should be used for different types of messages (e.g. SMS for time-sensitive updates, email for reminders, social media for general news).
1.3 Set up a regular review cycle for all channels to monitor usage, performance, and emerging needs, and adjust resourcing or messaging based on the data.

2. Establish consistent internal and external communication protocols
2.1 Develop approved response templates for channels, such as social media and email, to ensure consistency.
2.2 Empower staff across departments with access to clear communication protocols to confidently respond to internal and external customer enquiries.
2.3 Launch a short-form information series on social media to increase community awareness of council services.

3. Close the loop with clear resolution and escalation paths for customer enquiries
3.1 Display service standard timeframes for key services on the website.
3.2 Resolve customer enquiries at the first point of contact wherever possible, using a clear process that includes checking the website, internal knowledge base, and referral protocols.
3.3 Ensure all enquiries receive timely updates, including acknowledgement confirmations and realistic timelines.

4. Engage the community to understand their preferred communication channels
4.1 Consider accessibility requirements of customers, e.g. offering real-person support for those unable to navigate online forms or providing key information in Easy Read or community languages.
4.2 Publish a “How to Contact Council” guide in plain language with translation options across all channels, tailored for key groups (e.g. older residents, new migrants, young people).
4.3 Gather community communication preferences through surveys and pop-up engagements to understand and compare channel preferences after establishing consistent communication protocols and coordinating communication channels.

5. Map the customer journey to identify touchpoints that matter most
5.1 Use journey mapping to highlight and prioritise the most critical communication touchpoints across each service area.

Existing resources and support to enable delivery

To deliver on our customer experience goals, we need the right foundations in place. Council will make use of existing staff and systems to streamline communication, improve enquiry tracking, and maintain clear and consistent messaging. Light-touch coordination and regular updates will help ensure customers can connect in ways that suit them.

People

- Existing customer service and comms staff to share responsibility for updates, enquiry tracking, and consistent messaging.
- Team leaders can encourage sharing of informal tips and FAQs during team huddles.
- Local volunteers and partner organisations can help share “how to contact Council” materials with harder-to-reach groups.

Technology and tools

- Existing CRM or contact tracking systems can be configured or more consistently used to capture contact preferences and enquiry history to reduce repetition.
- Standard templates and registers, like existing FAQs and "Hot Topics," can be used more deliberately across teams to ensure clear, aligned messaging.

Time and budget

- Allocate quarterly time blocks to review content, update FAQs, and engage the community on channel preferences.
- Use existing community events and outreach sessions to gather feedback on channel preferences.
- Encourage staff to build reflection time into existing meetings (e.g. end-of-week wrap-ups) to share lessons or challenges in communication consistency.

Governance

- Oversight by Director of Corporate Services, with Customer Service Lead coordinating high-level actions.
- Current team leads and supervisors can take light-touch ownership of auditing channel use and tracking response consistency.
- Communication protocols can be maintained and lightly governed by a designated Comms team lead who already manages external messaging.



Technology and Tools

Giving staff and customers the tools to get things done faster and smarter.

Overview

The right digital tools help our staff work more efficiently and allow customers to access services when and where they need them. Investing in smart, easy-to-use systems means fewer delays and better service.

Goal

Leverage digital tools and equip staff to deliver efficient, personalised support for our customers.

Key Initiatives

The actions we'll take to bring our customer experience goals to life.

1. Integrate technology systems to enable seamless service delivery
2. Implement a CRM for unified customer view and streamlined processes
3. Equip staff with modern digital tools to support their work in the field and office
4. Enhance digital service offerings for customers
5. Pilot new technologies for improved efficiency and personalisation

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

How we'll measure progress and know we're on the right track.

Metrics	Tools	Ownership
• Percentage of digital services available • Customer Effort Score (CES) when using digital services • Staff satisfaction with systems and tools	• Annual digital services audit • Post-interaction feedback • Annual staff survey or post-training survey	• Director Corporate Services • IT Manager



Initiatives and actions to support strategic goal

1. Integrate technology systems to enable seamless service delivery
2.1 Conduct a system integration audit to identify and address major integration gaps between systems to reduce manual rework and duplication.
2.2 Work with internal IT staff and potential vendors to define technical requirements and a roadmap, including timelines and dependencies. Ensure the roadmap aligns with the ICT strategy.

2. Implement a CRM for unified customer view and streamlined processes
2.1 Establish a clear vision and governance for the CRM, including its purpose and benefits.
2.2 Set up a cross-functional governance group or tech project control group to review the ICT strategy for alignment and identify existing funding sources or grants to support implementation.
2.3 Define CRM requirements through staff engagement, customer pain point analysis, and a review of tools such as Altitude.
2.4 Design a practical framework that outlines governance, usage standards, workflows, and data responsibilities to ensure consistent and sustainable CRM use.
2.5 Pilot the CRM in a core service area, support staff with practical training, and improve the system based on feedback. Share regular CRM insights and progress updates to build transparency, maintain momentum, and celebrate wins as adoption grows.

3. Equip staff with modern digital tools to support their work in the field and office
3.1 Conduct a digital readiness assessment to understand staff capabilities, confidence, and training needs.
3.2 Develop and implement a digital capability uplift program tailored to different staff roles, including hands-on training sessions and short how-to videos to build confidence in using new tools effectively.
3.3 Roll out standard tools across all departments (e.g. Microsoft Teams) and explore platforms like Miro and Mentimeter to support brainstorming, virtual planning, and cross-team engagement. Ensure accessibility is considered.
3.4 Provide mobile-enabled tools for field staff to access and update information in real time.

4. Enhance digital service offerings for customers
4.1 Audit current e-services and identify opportunities to digitise additional transactions for services such as parking fines, permits, and pet registrations, and reduce in-person visits.
4.2 Identify regulatory and policy constraints that limit the rollout of e-services, and work with relevant internal teams or authorities to address or navigate these barriers where possible.
4.3 Ensure digital services are mobile-friendly, accessible, and easy to use for all community members.
4.4 Promote awareness of existing and newly available e-services through community engagements.

5. Pilot new technologies for improved efficiency and personalisation
5.1 Trial after-hours AI-powered support options (e.g. “Chat Buddy Rob Swan” pilot for low-risk enquiries on the website or AI call centre triage) to provide round-the-clock assistance.
5.2 Explore the use of AI and automation to support the ongoing maintenance of the knowledge base, including auto-suggested updates, content tagging, and surfacing relevant articles to staff and customers based on enquiry patterns.

Existing resources and support to enable delivery

To deliver on our customer experience goals, we need the right foundations in place. The focus is on maximising current systems, introducing low-cost digital improvements, and equipping staff with easy-to-use tools. Targeted upgrades and peer support will enable smarter, more efficient service delivery without the need for major investment.

People

- IT and Customer Service staff already supporting systems can be engaged to share insights on integration issues or staff workarounds.
- Field staff with strong digital literacy can be invited to share practical tech tips with peers during toolbox talks or team meetings.

Technology and tools

- Communication platforms already in use (Teams, SharePoint, etc.) can be standardised to minimise confusion and reduce reliance on email or paper-based workarounds.
- Focus on maximising existing platforms (e.g. making the most of Microsoft 365 and using free tools like Canva).
- Trial simple add-ons (e.g. live chat widgets, AI pilots) before committing to larger investments.

Time and budget

- No-cost internal audits can be conducted using existing staff to identify pain points or duplication across current systems.
- Dedicate clear time-bound tasks for digital improvement (e.g. "Map and clean up 3 manual processes this quarter").
- Encourage teams to trial new digital tools using free versions or short-term pilots, leveraging support from internal IT rather than vendors.

Governance

- Directors and IT Lead work together to manage improvement efforts.
- Report progress in regular operational reviews or CX check-ins.
- Use existing data privacy and procurement processes to guide any digital tool evaluations or system adjustments.



Training and Development

Building skills and confidence to deliver a great customer experience every time.

Overview

Supporting staff with the right skills and knowledge helps us deliver great service every time. Ongoing training builds confidence and ensures a consistent, customer-focused approach across the organisation.

Goal

Champion the SHRCC brand with customer experience as our first priority.

Key Initiatives

The actions we'll take to bring our customer experience goals to life.

1. Strengthen the Knowledge Base as a core CX tool

3. Champion CX through leadership and recognition

5. Embed CX mindset across every department role and responsibility

4. Unite regional and central teams around a shared CX culture

5. Build a consistent and customer-centric training program

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

How we'll measure progress and know we're on the right track.

Metrics	Tools	Ownership
• Knowledge Base updated quarterly • Number of staff trained in CX categorised by department • Biannual staff survey in providing great CX	• Knowledge Base updating schedule and logs • HR records/ training attendance records • Biannual staff survey	• Director Corporate Services • Organisational Development Manager



Initiatives and actions to support strategic goal

1. Strengthen the Knowledge Base as a core CX tool
1.1 Develop and maintain a comprehensive and easily accessible knowledge base with established content governance processes, including regular reviews and designated department contributors.
1.2 Promote the knowledge base, especially in onboarding and induction processes, so all staff know how to access and use it effectively and are actively encouraged to contribute to it.

2. Champion CX through leadership and recognition
2.1 Encourage all staff – specially those in leadership roles – to model great internal customer experience through timely communication, acknowledgement of emails, and respectful collaboration.
2.2 Recognise and celebrate great customer service with informal shout-outs, internal newsletters, and small team-based acknowledgements.
2.3 Facilitate visits to other councils to learn from their CX practices for fresh inspiration and possible partnerships.

3. Embed CX mindset across every department role and responsibility
3.1 Include CX scenario-based questions during recruitment and onboarding phases to set expectations early.
3.2 Include CX responsibilities in all Position Descriptions (PDs), reflecting each role's contribution to the customer journey, while clearly emphasising across Council that CX is everyone's responsibility.
3.3 Openly share key CX metrics and insights across the organisation to foster a culture around transparency, ownership, and ongoing improvement.

4. Unite regional and central teams around a shared CX culture
4.1 Hold all-staff sessions to reduce the departmental silo effect and ensure everyone feels informed and connected regarding a shared CX culture.
4.2 Implement feedback mechanisms such as listening sessions or pulse surveys to monitor staff progress with CX initiatives, capture insights on what's working and what needs improvement, and ensure ongoing support for CX goals.

5. Build a consistent and customer-centric training program
5.1 Deliver training programs that incorporate a strong customer experience focus aligned with Council's standards, with pathways to accommodate varying CX skillsets or comfort levels.
5.2 Align rosters and schedules to allow protected time for training without disrupting service delivery.

Existing resources and support to enable delivery

To deliver on our customer experience goals, we need the right foundations in place. Customer experience will be embedded into team meetings, onboarding, and short learning opportunities. A small network of champions and consistent reinforcement will build confidence and capability across the organisation.

People

- Managers and supervisors can champion CX behaviours during regular staff check-ins and performance conversations without needing formal training roles.
- Identify a few informal CX champions across different teams to keep momentum going.
- Existing HR and Learning & Development staff can tailor CX messaging into onboarding sessions or informal team refreshers.

Technology and tools

- Use free or existing platforms for training delivery and to spotlight good CX stories and behaviours (e.g. PowerPoint, Teams).
- Keep knowledge base light-touch – even a shared Word doc or Google Sheet can be effective.
- The current Learning Management System (LMS) or training resources can be lightly adapted to incorporate bite-sized CX tips.

Time and budget

- Build CX messages into team meetings, onboarding sessions, and performance reviews.
- Set aside small, regular windows (15-30 mins) for bite-sized learning during quieter periods.
- Encourage cross-team shadowing or observation using current rosters to build empathy and knowledge of the customer journey.

Governance

- HR already managing PDs and onboarding can gradually embed CX responsibilities in new hires.
- CX insights and customer feedback from existing channels (e.g. complaints, call logs) can be collated into informal internal briefings without additional resourcing.
- A simple annual refresh cycle for CX training content



Implementation

Implementation roadmap

Focus Area: Channel and Communication

INITIATIVE	ACTION	SHORT TERM 0-6 MONTHS	MED TERM 6-12 MONTHS	LONG TERM 12 - 24 MONTHS
1. **Coordinate communication channels** to improve consistency and visibility	1.1 Audit existing channels using CX Strategy and Council Plan data to identify overlaps, gaps, and inconsistencies.			
	1.2 Develop a centralised plan outlining preferred channels by message type (e.g. SMS for urgent updates, email for reminders).			
	1.3 Establish a review cycle to track channel performance and adapt messaging or resourcing as needed.			
2. **Establish consistent** internal and external **communication protocols**	2.1 Create approved templates for key channels (e.g. email, social media).			
	2.2 Equip staff with clear protocols to confidently respond to internal and external enquiries.			
	2.3 Launch short-form social media content to raise awareness of council services.			
3. **Close the loop** with clear **resolution** and **escalation paths** for customer enquiries	3.1 Publish standard timeframes for key services on the website.			
	3.2 Resolve enquiries at first contact using a clear, consistent triage process.			
	3.3 Provide timely updates with acknowledgements and realistic timeframes.			
4. **Engage the community** to understand their preferred communication channels	4.1 Ensure support options for those unable to access digital channels (e.g. Easy Read, translated materials, human assistance).			
	4.2 Publish a plain-language “How to Contact Council” guide with translations, tailored for priority groups.			
	4.3 Collect and analyse community preferences via surveys and pop-ups to refine channel use.			
5. **Map the customer journey** to identify touchpoints that matter most	5.1 Use journey maps to identify and prioritise critical communication touchpoints.			

Note: Some actions have been shortened in words to fit the page – please use the numbers as a guide.

Implementation roadmap

Focus Area: Technology and Tools

INITIATIVE	ACTION	SHORT TERM 0-6 MONTHS	MED TERM 6-12 MONTHS	LONG TERM 12 - 24 MONTHS
1. Integrate technology systems to enable seamless service delivery	1.1 Conduct a system integration audit			
	1.2 Define technical requirements and a roadmap, aligned with the ICT strategy			
2. Implement a CRM for unified customer view and streamlined processes	2.1 Establish a clear vision for the CRM			
	2.2 Set up governance structure (such as tech project control)			
	2.3 Define CRM requirements			
	2.4 Design a practical framework to outline governance, usage standards, workflows, and data responsibilities			
	2.5 Pilot the CRM in a core service area, support staff with practical training, and improve the system based on feedback.			
3. Equip staff with modern digital tools to support their work in the field and office	3.1 Conduct a digital readiness assessment to understand staff capabilities, confidence, and training needs.			
	3.2 Develop and implement a digital capability uplift program			
	3.3 Roll out standard tools across all departments			
	3.4 Provide mobile-enabled tools for field staff to access and update information in real time			
4. **Enhance digital service offerings** for customers	4.1 Audit current e-services and identify opportunities to digitise additional transactions for services			
	4.2 Identify regulatory and policy constraints that limit the rollout of e-services			
	4.3 Ensure digital services are mobile-friendly, accessible, and easy to use for all community members.			
	4.4 Promote awareness of existing and newly available e-services through social media and community engagements.			
5. **Pilot new technologies** for improved efficiency and personalisation	5.1 Trial after-hours AI-powered support options for customers			
	5.2 Explore the use of AI and automation to support the ongoing maintenance of the knowledge base			

Note: Some actions have been shortened in words to fit the page – please use the numbers as a guide.

Implementation roadmap

Focus Area: Training and Development

INITIATIVE	ACTION	SHORT TERM 0-6 MONTHS	MED TERM 6-12 MONTHS	LONG TERM 12 - 24 MONTHS
1. **Strengthen the Knowledge Base** as a core CX tool	1.1 Maintain an accessible knowledge base with clear content governance, regular updates, and nominated contributors.			
	1.2 Promote the knowledge base in onboarding to ensure all staff can use and contribute effectively.			
2. **Champion CX** through leadership and recognition	2.1 Encourage all staff—especially leaders—to model great internal CX through timely, respectful communication.			
	2.2 Celebrate great service with shout-outs, newsletters, and team-based recognition.			
	2.3 Organise council visits to learn from others' CX practices and explore partnerships.			
3. **Embed CX mindset** across every department role and responsibility	3.1 Use CX scenarios in recruitment and onboarding to set clear expectations.			
	3.2 Embed CX in all PDs, reinforcing that CX is everyone's responsibility.			
	3.3 Share CX metrics and insights openly to promote transparency, ownership, and improvement.			
4. **Unite regional** and **central teams** around a shared CX culture	4.1 Run all-staff sessions to break silos and reinforce a shared CX vision.			
	4.2 Use listening sessions and pulse surveys to track progress and support CX initiatives.			
5. **Build** a consistent and **customer-centric training program**	5.1 Deliver CX-focused training tailored to different skill levels and aligned with Council standards.			
	5.2 Align rosters to protect training time without impacting service delivery.			

Note: Some actions have been shortened in words to fit the page – please use the numbers as a guide.

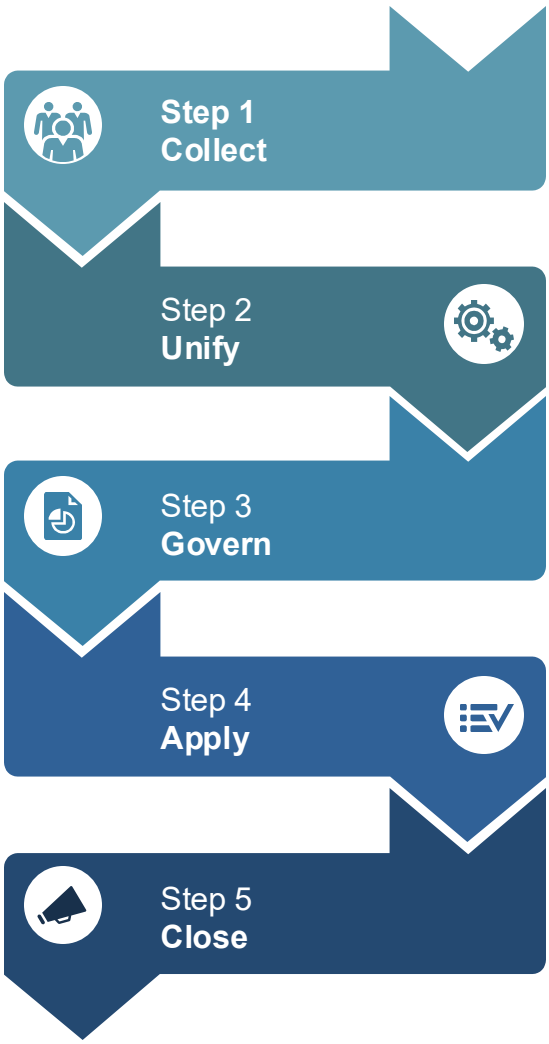
Voice of the Customer

A structured approach to turning our customer voices into meaningful action through a systematic process.

Capturing the Voice of the Customer (VoC) is essential to designing and delivering services that meet real needs, build trust, and demonstrate that we are listening. By embedding a consistent and intentional approach to customer feedback, we strengthen our ability to make informed decisions and deliver better outcomes for our community.

How the VoC Framework works

The framework involves an ongoing, organisation-wide process that brings customer perspectives to the forefront of decision-making:



We gather customer feedback and insights from multiple channels and touchpoints to capture a complete picture of their experiences.

We combine and analyse all feedback data to identify key themes, trends, and opportunities for improvement across the organisation.

We establish clear leadership and accountability structures to ensure feedback is regularly reviewed and integrated into decision-making.

We embed customer insights into customer service design, staff training, and strategic planning to drive meaningful improvements.

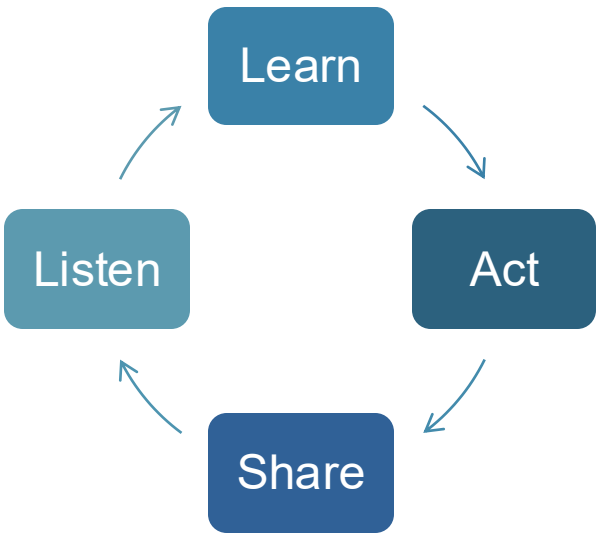
We communicate back to customers and stakeholders about the actions taken in response to their feedback, reinforcing transparency and trust.

Feedback and improvement plan

Building on what we hear to create continuous improvements and strengthen trust in the community.

Feedback is one of the most valuable inputs we have to understand our customers' experiences, expectations, and challenges. Once we collect feedback, this plan outlines how SHRCC will consistently act on feedback in a way that drives continuous improvements, enhances trust, and supports the delivery of our customer experience strategy.

At the heart of our approach is a continuous improvement cycle based on four key actions:



Listen: Actively seek feedback through surveys, conversations, and digital channels across the customer journey.

Learn: Analyse feedback to identify trends, understand root causes, and extract actionable insights.

Act: Prioritise and implement changes that respond to feedback, improve service delivery and improve issues.

Share: Close the loop and reinforce trust by communicating back to customers and staff.

Prioritising improvements

Not all feedback will lead to immediate action, but all feedback will be assessed.

We will prioritise improvement opportunities based on:

- **Volume and frequency**: How often are we hearing this?
- **Impact**: Who is affected and how significantly?
- **Alignment with our CX goals**: Does it support our focus on channels and communication, technology and tools, or training and development?
- **Feasibility**: Can it be addressed with current resources?
- **Risk and urgency**: Is there a compliance or reputational risk if left unresolved?



Appendix

Glossary of terms

Key Term	Definition
Channels	The mediums through which Council communicates with and delivers services to customers, such as website and phone.
Customer Centricity	Placing customer needs and experiences at the centre of service, interactions, and delivery.
Customer Effort Score (CES)	Measures how easy it is for customers to interact with Council and resolve enquiries.
Customer Experience (CX)	The sum of all interactions and impressions a customer has with Council services across all channels and touchpoints.
Customer Relationship Management (CRM)	A technology used by organisations to manage and support customer relationships through data and automated workflows.
Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT)	Measures customer satisfaction with a service or interaction.
Customers	Individuals, businesses, or organisations who use or are impacted by Council's services, facilities, or interactions.
CX Maturity Index	A benchmarking tool used to assess and compare an organisation's CX capability against sector standards.
First Contact Resolution	Resolving customer issues at the first point of contact.
Implementation Plan	A roadmap that details the actions, responsibilities, and timelines required to achieve strategies and goals.
Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Measures how effectively an organisation, department, or individual is progressing towards goals and objectives.
Knowledge Base	A centralised repository of information, FAQs, and resources to support staff and customers in accessing accurate information.
Mystery Shopper	An evaluation method where individuals assess service quality anonymously.
Net Promoter Score (NPS)	A customer loyalty metric that measures how likely customers are to recommend a company, product, or service to others.
Omnichannel Experience	Services across multiple channels to allow customers to move easily between digital, phone, and in-person interactions.
Position Description (PD)	A document outlining role responsibilities and KPIs at Council.
Resources	The people, tools, budget, time, and systems needed to implement and sustain CX initiatives.
Strategy	A long-term plan outlining Council's key goals and actions.
Voice of Customer (VoC)	The process of capturing and analysing customer feedback, expectations, and experiences to inform service improvements.

Project approach

The steps we took to create a community-driven strategy.

The Customer Experience Strategy was developed through a four-phase process, guided by the voices of our customers and staff, and aligned with Council priorities. This involved setting a clear foundation, gathering insights from customers and staff, shaping a customer-centric strategy, and building an implementation plan to guide action and continuous improvement.

Our four-phase approach

Structured stages to create a strategy that reflects our community and staff experiences.

Phase 1 →	Phase 2 →	Phase 3 →	Phase 4
Project Initiation	**Current State Assessment**	**Customer Experience Strategy**	**Implementation Plan**
Overview Set the direction and reviewed existing information to guide the project.	**Overview** Gathered insights from customers, staff, and benchmarking to understand the current experience.	**Overview** Developed a clear purpose statement, goals, and initiatives based on community and staff insights.	**Overview** Created a practical plan to deliver the strategy and support continuous improvement.
Key Activities • Held a strategic alignment session to set the project direction, map stakeholders and define success measures. • Reviewed existing documents within Council.	**Key Activities** • Benchmarked CX Maturity across councils in Australia. • Ran a community customer survey. • Conducted customer and staff interviews. • Facilitated staff workshops. • Analysed and synthesised data.	**Key Activities** • Held a CX Strategy workshop with staff to co-design our goals, initiatives, and KPIs based on our focus areas. • Drafted and refined the CX Strategy document. • Reviewed and updated the Customer Service Charter.	**Key Activities** • Evaluated a business case for technology improvements. • Created the implementation roadmap, and feedback and continuous improvement plan. • Delivered human-centred design training.

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This list is not exhaustive but represents the references mentioned in this report.