



PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ePlanning Strategy

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
<i>Purpose of the ePlanning Strategy</i>	1
Background	2
<i>National ePlanning Strategy</i>	2
<i>COMSEQ Framework of Leading Practice</i>	2
<i>COMSEQ Current State Analysis and 'Development Planning Branch and Engineering and Environment Branch Action Plan'</i>	3
<i>Ipswich Long Term Community Plan (i2031)</i>	3
<i>Corporate Plan</i>	3
<i>Operational Plan</i>	4
Planning and Development Department Business Plan	4
Key Factors	5
ePlanning Initiatives	6
Monitoring and Review	10

Introduction

Purpose of the ePlanning Strategy

This ePlanning Strategy has been prepared to establish the direction for the growth and implementation of ePlanning initiatives at Ipswich City Council (ICC). It will allow for the identification of priorities for advancing ePlanning initiatives, provide guidance during the budget process for funding of new initiatives and ensure all stakeholders within ICC are aware of the importance of these initiatives to improving our capability within an ePlanning environment.

The creation of this strategy ensures ICC can meet its responsibility to deliver high quality planning and development services to its customers and stakeholders. It will also act as a guide to exploring further opportunities for collaboration with industry stakeholders on ePlanning matters. Ensuring the strategy is publically available will also allow members of the public to broadly understand ICC's intentions for future ePlanning initiatives.

Background

There are a number of established policy documents that relate to the implementation of ePlanning initiatives at ICC. A summary of the key points of the relevant documents is outlined below.

National ePlanning Strategy

The National ePlanning Strategy was finalised in June 2011 by the National eDA Steering Committee. It comprehensively outlines the national direction for the implementation of ePlanning initiatives within planning and development sectors across the nation. It aspires for government, industry and the community to work together to achieve the vision of Australia being a leader in electronic planning services by 2020.

The National ePlanning Vision is *'In 2020, I will be able to access all relevant information and easily participate in planning and development anywhere, anytime to help create better places'*. This vision is to be delivered through the creation of a 'single entry point' system for applicants, Councils, governments, agencies and the community to participate in the planning and development process. This vision is based on the intention of shared, centralised services that are accessible by all.

Importantly, this strategy includes a definition for ePlanning, being any process that *'encompasses business process models, methodologies, specifications, systems, services and technologies that support the planning industry in Australia in delivering efficiencies to its stakeholders'*. Further, the strategy identifies that ePlanning to date has mainly focused on Electronic Development Assessment (eDA) services only, rather than taking a holistic view of the entire planning and development process. Accordingly, the National ePlanning Strategy divides goals and strategies into five components, - "Plan, Know, Decide, Confirm and Improve". These components are designed to cover ePlanning requirements throughout the entire planning and development lifecycle, from plan making, to development assessment and through to compliance.

The Strategy also establishes an ePlanning Implementation Continuum in four (4) stages, - "Offline, Essential, Advanced and Premium". At the lower end, stakeholders have little or no use of technology in planning and development services. At the higher end, stakeholders extensively utilise technology to deliver planning and development services. The ePlanning Delivery Blueprint further identifies the goals to reach Essential, Advanced or Premium standards within each of the five (5) strategy components.

COMSEQ Framework of Leading Practice

The Council of Mayors – SEQ (COMSEQ) developed the Framework of Leading Practice as part of a wider program of planning reform. It takes a structured approach to detailing the opportunities for future improvements within the DA environment in Queensland. The document contains benchmarks for leading practice against which Councils can assess their progress and set goals for improvement. The framework establishes four elements - "Manage, Interaction, Process and Strategy". Under each element, there are multiple components and leading practice measures, which are supported by six levels of criteria, based on the Essential, Advanced and Premium structure of the National ePlanning Strategy, and a points system, to allow Councils to quantitatively benchmark their progress.

The 'Interact' element contains an overall outcome for ePlanning Services that states *'Council has a clear vision for the future of its e-planning services that is informed by customer expectations and benefits to the organisation. e-Planning services are*

Background

consolidated and offer a user-friendly interface to provide both customer (i.e. applicant or the general community) and Council with all the necessary tools and information required to lodge and/or assess development applications in the most effective and efficient manner’. Integral to achieving ‘Premium’ status within this element is the development of an ePlanning Strategy that facilitates transition towards an electronic-based development assessment environment, identifies clear timeframes for implementation and aligns with the National ePlanning Strategy. This component also outlines criteria under the five components of Plan, Know, Decide, Confirm and Improve that a Council must meet to achieve Essential, Advanced or Premium status.

COMSEQ Current State Analysis and ‘ICC Development Planning Branch and Engineering and Environment Branch Action Plan’

Further to the release of the COMSEQ Leading Practice Framework, ICC carried out a gap analysis to determine the current levels of achievement against the leading practice benchmarks. This also identified which areas needed to be the focus for improvement initiatives as ICC strives to implement leading practice. As part of this analysis, it was identified that ICC only reached Essential in the Strategy component of the ePlanning category as no ePlanning Strategy currently exists. This outcome was identified within the Development Planning Branch and Engineering and Environment Branch Action Plan, with a goal of preparing an ePlanning Strategy and reaching a minimum ‘Advanced’ status. The key objectives to reach this goal include the development of an ePlanning Strategy that:

- guides the implementation of ePlanning initiatives;
- contains clear implementation timeframes; and
- is made publically available.

Ipswich Long Term Community Plan (i2031)

ICC’s long term community plan provides the overarching community vision for the future direction for the City of Ipswich. The i2031 Plan is based around seven key themes - growth management; natural environment; strong diverse economy; infrastructure and services; integrated transport and movement; community spirit and wellbeing; and ethical governance. Integral to achieving these outcomes is a well informed and resourced workforce who have the necessary tools and skills to provide outstanding customer service and make timely decisions.

Corporate Plan

The Corporate Plan details ICC’s implementation of the Long Term Community Plan, its goals, strategies and actions. Providing the necessary skills, training, tools and resources is integral to ensure staff stay informed and make effective and timely decisions.

Background

Operational Plan

ICC's Operational Plan provides the basis for delivering the services required to achieve the overall vision. The operational plan identifies a number of challenges and opportunities for the Planning and Development Department. To ensure the goals of the Operational Plan can be met, identified opportunities include: maintaining good working relationships with the development industry; and utilising resources to facilitate good planning and development outcomes.

Planning and Development Department Business Plan

The Planning and Development (P&D) Department Business Plan provides the departmental details for delivering the corporate vision. The document contains ten strategies, one of which is based on 'Information Technology'. This strategy aims to *'develop and implement information technology systems that meet business needs, value add to business processes, increase productivity and improve access to information'*. The document lists a number of actions which are specifically related to ePlanning, including, for example, the transition of the department to a paperless office (ongoing) and introduction of a web portal to deliver planning and development information to the community in an efficient manner. It is intended that this ePlanning Strategy will inform future P&D business planning, and opportunities for future improvement.

Key Factors

The key factors that were considered in developing the strategy's ePlanning initiatives include:-

Understanding the importance of ePlanning to ICC

- Reviewing the National ePlanning Strategy for relevance to ICC
- Considering ePlanning initiatives and strategies currently being implemented in South East Queensland
- Determining the ePlanning aspirations for ICC

Investigating the Current State of Play

- Taking stock of ePlanning initiatives already implemented at ICC

Undertaking a Gap Analysis

- Considering the 'gaps' between the current state of play and the ePlanning aspirations

Setting Implementation Timeframes

- Assigning timeframes to those initiatives and projects identified to 'fill the gaps'

Making the ePlanning Strategy Accessible

- Ensuring the ePlanning Strategy can be accessed by all stakeholders

ePlanning Initiatives

The National ePlanning Strategy identifies five components - “Plan, Know, Decide, Confirm and Improve”, as a basis for categorising components of the ePlanning framework. Similarly, the COMSEQ Framework of Leading Practice utilises a model based on these components within the ePlanning Strategy category, identifying benchmarks under the categories of Strategy, Know, Decide, Confirm and Improve.

The differences in the proposed structures results primarily from the stronger focus on development assessment within the COMSEQ Framework. Further, the first category in this structure, being ‘Strategy’, has been specifically included to identify the intention for Councils to prepare a detailed and comprehensive ePlanning Strategy to guide the implementation of ePlanning Initiatives.

Given that the intention of this ePlanning Strategy is to identify ICC’s overall intentions for the implementation of ePlanning initiatives across the whole spectrum of ePlanning, the National ePlanning Strategy structure has been adopted to identify ICC’s ePlanning intentions. Accordingly, the following five (5) categories are utilised:

Category	Key Features
1. Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Quality strategic plan making· Consultative and innovative processes
2. Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Open data· User friendly access to information
3. Decide	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Transparent, accountable and timely decision-making· Streamlined application lodgement and allocation
4. Confirm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Monitoring and resolution of issues within the planning and development framework
5. Improve	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Performance monitoring and management of business systems· Ongoing training and support for staff within the electronic environment

ePlanning Initiatives

updated 3 June 2015

ACTION	DETAILS OF PROPOSED ACTION	PURPOSE AND BENEFITS OF PROPOSED ACTION	PROGRESS SO FAR	TIMEFRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION	PRIORITY	PROGRESS REVIEW DATE
PLAN						
Online lodgement of planning scheme submissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lodgement of planning scheme submissions directly through online portal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity for further integration of planning and development functions Enhanced lodgement and management capabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning scheme submissions can already be accepted by email 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After implementation of ePathway (2016/17 financial year) 	Medium	End of 2016/17 financial year, after successful implementation of Pathway Smart Client
Notification of planning scheme amendments	Planning scheme amendments to be notified via numerous electronic channels, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email eAlerts Portal website Social media (Facebook, Twitter) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take advantage of new technology platforms to distribute information and better engage with stakeholders regarding planning scheme amendments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> eAlerts already utilised to notify of planning scheme amendments, including limited updates via Facebook and Twitter Online Portal 'Public Notice / Planning Projects' already used to notify of planning scheme amendments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timeframe to be determined once Online Service Delivery project is completed by Finance and Information Technology Branch 	Medium	After completion of Online Service Delivery project
Utilisation of new technologies, including spatial data tools, to assist with communicating planning strategies and policy	Explore opportunities to utilise new technologies, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3D modelling, augmented reality and fly throughs Drones Spatial data analysis tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilise new technologies to improve plan making, informed decision making and implementation Provide stakeholders with a better understanding of intended planning and development outcomes Further improvements in process automation Improved ability to send, view and receive material in multiple file formats as a result of improved software options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICC IT systems have some existing capability to support 3D modelling software (ArchiCad) Some staff have begun training in ArchiCad Some functionality within existing mapping programs for enhanced spatial data analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possibilities of new technologies to be explored prior to finalisation of new planning scheme 	Medium	Action to be reviewed once status of previously proposed new State planning legislation is known
KNOW						
Electronic delivery of the Planning Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and secure software and technology to deliver an ePlanning Scheme (including mapping) in an interactive electronic format 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase legibility and useability through internal hyperlinking of related content in the Planning Scheme and to extrinsic material Delivery of interactive planning scheme mapping Reduction in costs to access the Planning Scheme relative to 'hard copy' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electronic delivery of the Planning Scheme to date has been static (ie PDF format) delivered through PD Online / Ipswich Planning Portal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be delivered as part of the new Ipswich Planning Scheme 	Medium	To be determined in conjunction with program planning for the new Planning Scheme and once status of previously proposed new State planning legislation is known
Expanded capability of online portal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvements in existing components of Portal e.g. mapping, property enquiries, planning scheme, application history 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further expansion of 'one stop shop' for planning and development information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning Portal already exists: www.ipswichplanning.com.au ICC's website has been recently updated to a new format 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timeframe to be determined once Online Service Delivery project is completed by Finance and Information Technology Branch 	Medium	After release of 2015/16 ICC budget
Improvements in electronic mapping systems and property enquiry tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review suitability of existing mapping capabilities and opportunities for improvement New mapping systems (internal and external) to be adopted in future to accommodate better functionality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further expansion for 'one stop shop' for planning and development information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electronic mapping system (Stratus) already exists Existing PD Online system is currently used for property enquiries ePathway is currently undergoing internal testing (future direction) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Testing and implementation of new internal mapping system to be completed by end of 2015/16 financial year External GIS solution to be implemented once new internal mapping system in use 	Medium	After release of 2015/16 ICC budget
Interactive Infrastructure Charges Calculator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electronic calculator for calculating infrastructure charges that can be accessed by all stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder ability to access more accurate pre-project cost estimates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic electronic infrastructure charges monitoring and recording already in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action to be reviewed once status of previously proposed new State planning legislation is known 	Low	Action to be reviewed once status of previously proposed new State planning legislation is known

ePlanning Initiatives

ACTION	DETAILS OF PROPOSED ACTION	PURPOSE AND BENEFITS OF PROPOSED ACTION	PROGRESS SO FAR	TIMEFRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION	PRIORITY	PROGRESS REVIEW DATE
Open Data Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create an open data strategy to guide ICC's development in this area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide stakeholders with access to additional datasets not currently available Create opportunities for new programs and ePlanning initiatives through the use of crowd-sourcing/mash ups as a result of improved access to data sources 	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timeframe currently unknown 	Low	Action to be reviewed once portal or equivalent is fully operational
Real time searching of historic property information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand online GIS system to accommodate more information e.g. drainage plans, contours Development of real time property search information system to improve stakeholder access to historic information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digitisation of historic records will improve longevity of existing historic information Greater access to historic data to assist in decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Property searches can currently be requested online 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject to data cleansing requirements and successful implementation of ePathway System (2016/17) 	Medium	After successful implementation of ePathway System
Improvement in customer engagement options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Live video chat for general customer development and planning enquiries during business hours Development of social media strategy Improved web conferencing functions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved opportunities for engagement with stakeholders, particularly those who do not live in Ipswich Development of social media strategy will allow ICC to stay 'ahead of the game' by capitalising and controlling release of information and use of digital/social media platforms for positive purposes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Web conferencing hardware currently available for use Current ICC IT systems have the capability to support a variety of video and online conference options e.g. Microsoft Lync 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot testing of new customer service software to commence 2015/16 financial year Implementation of new customer service system to be carried out within 2016/17 financial year, subject to outcome of pilot tests 	Medium	Once pilot testing has been completed (expected by end of 2015/16 financial year)
Utilisation of QR Codes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of QR Codes for planning and development matters e.g. require as standard on public notification signs, heritage trails/buildings, flood markers etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interactive engagement with members of the public who may not normally engage Embrace new technologies as standard practice for planning and development to improve accessibility to information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Queens Park heritage (audio) trail already developed with some incorporation of QR codes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities for implementation to be explored during 2015/16 financial year 	Medium-High	End of 2015/16 financial year
DECIDE						
Development of ePathway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully integrated online application lodgement and assessment system Associated online payment functions with 'shopping cart' function to pay for multiple fee components with a variety of payment options, possibly including EFT transfer, credit card, BPay Issue of all application correspondence directly to/from ICC/applicant through system Electronic notification of application correspondence and decisions Ability to send and receive material in multiple file formats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in 'double handling' of physical and electronic application material Combined electronic lodgement and payment system is a significant timesaver for stakeholders Ability for ICC officers to communicate directly with applicants via online lodgement system – continuous electronic record maintained for reference and accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All applications currently assessed and handled electronically, whether via Smart eDA (state government platform) or email communication Online credit card payments can already be accepted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some elements of electronic customer service to be implemented with new customer service software during 2015/16 financial year Move to Pathway Smart client by end of 2015/16 financial year, subject to successful implementation of Objective file management system Implementation of ePathway system by 2016/17 financial year, subject to successful implementation of Pathway Smart client Review of ePathway to understand how application correspondence will be handled (end of 2016/17 financial year) 	High	End of 2015/16 financial year
Online lodgement of submissions against DAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lodgement of development application submissions directly through a portal or equivalent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity for further integration of planning and development functions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning scheme submissions can already be accepted by email 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After implementation of ePathway (2016/17 financial year) 	Medium	End of 2015/16 financial year, after successful implementation of Pathway Smart Client

ePlanning Initiatives

ACTION	DETAILS OF PROPOSED ACTION	PURPOSE AND BENEFITS OF PROPOSED ACTION	PROGRESS SO FAR	TIMEFRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION	PRIORITY	PROGRESS REVIEW DATE
DA fee calculator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of online DA fee calculator for use by applicants, with ability to convert outputs to pdf and submit quotes with application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration with online lodgement of development applications to allow for streamlined lodgement and application payment process Improved pre-project fee cost estimation for applicants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online EFT transfer payments can already be accepted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DA fee calculator cannot be created and implemented until current application fee structure is amended and Queensland Planning Provisions definitions are finalised 	High	December 2015 in conjunction with the review of the 2016/17 fee structure
Creation of 'How To' videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of 'How To' videos to educate applicants on lodgement process, interpreting conditions, reading planning scheme, determining level of assessment and applicable codes etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional method of electronic stakeholder engagement Encourages and assists first time applicants Further opportunity for engagement via social media e.g. YouTube Opportunities to better utilise proposed technology upgrades for a variety of purposes e.g. Microsoft Lync 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICC already has the IT capability for the creation of videos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities for implementation to be investigated by end of 2015/16 financial year 	Medium	End of 2015/16 financial year
Implementation of updated file management system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move from ECM (current file management system) to Objective (new file management system) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvements in internal file management to support more streamlined decision making Better internal processes to 'move' correspondence internally using their workflow processes First step in progressing to a fully functioning online lodgement system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective system testing already completed Implementation and 'go live' procedures for move from ECM to Objective progressing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation anticipated during 2015/16 financial year 	High	April 2016
Utilisation of new technologies to assist with DA assessment	<p>New technologies to utilise could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3D modelling, augmented reality and fly throughs Georeferenced pdfs Drones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved capabilities for in-depth assessment of more complex applications Ability to visualise proposed developments in context Be seen as a leader in utilising new technologies for DA assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICC IT systems have some existing capability to support 3D modelling software (ArchiCad) Some staff have begun training in ArchiCad Georeferenced PDFs undergoing trials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities for implementation and leveraging of capabilities of existing technology to be investigated by end of 2015/16 financial year 	Low	After release of 2015/16 ICC budget
CONFIRM						
Exploration of new technologies and systems, including apps, to management compliance matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of existing technologies and systems, including apps, utilised by local government to determine suitability to report development compliance matters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded capabilities for real time review and lodgement of compliance matters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities for implementation and leveraging of capabilities of proposed new customer service system to be investigated by end of 2015/16 financial year Possible implementation during 2016/17 financial year 	Low	End of 2015/16 financial year
In-field mobility strategy	<p>Review of existing in-field mobility options, with recommendations made for future, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Real time connection to internal systems to improve functionality Ability to support a range of mobile devices e.g. phones, tablets, with reliable connections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved capabilities for in-depth assessment of more complex applications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some mobile devices currently available for on-site use, albeit with limited functionality Internal review of system capability for compatibility with mobile devices currently underway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities, particularly for improvements to existing mobile device capabilities, to be investigated during 2015/16 financial year Possible implementation of improved mobile device technology during 2016/17 financial year 	High	End of 2015/16 financial year
IMPROVE						
Ongoing improvements in reporting and assessment against COMSEQ benchmarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of current reporting procedures once Objective is implemented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Objective will allow for better integration between Objective and existing Crystal reporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current systems (including Pathway and Crystal reporting) can support required reporting and assessment functions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> December 2015, pending successful implementation of Objective 	Low	January 2017

ePlanning Initiatives

ACTION	DETAILS OF PROPOSED ACTION	PURPOSE AND BENEFITS OF PROPOSED ACTION	PROGRESS SO FAR	TIMEFRAME FOR IMPLEMENTATION	PRIORITY	PROGRESS REVIEW DATE
Implementation of iFerret organisation wide (search tool)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iFerret is an organisation wide search tool that can search data across all existing ICC databases, including Oracle, ECM, Pathway and Network Drives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better search and find functions for ICC data, with possible applications for Planning and Development e.g. Planning and Development Certificates, RTI requests, historic information Potential to assist with improvements in timeframe monitoring and review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information search and find functions already exist for individual datasets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot testing to occur during 2014/15 financial year Rollout to relevant personnel during first half of 2015/16 financial year 	Low	September 2015

Monitoring and Review

This ePlanning Strategy has been prepared to establish the direction for the growth and implementation of ePlanning initiatives at ICC. Specific ePlanning initiatives have therefore been identified as low, medium and high priority, and review timeframes have been attached to all actions.

Given the reliance on advancements in new technology, the ability for existing IT systems to accommodate the proposed initiatives and budget support, this ePlanning strategy will require regular monitoring and review. The purpose of such a review will be three-fold: to clearly identify achievement of the ePlanning initiatives noted in the strategy; to revise timeframes and actions in accordance with changing and evolving priorities; and to consider new technologies, as they emerge and are tested. The outcomes and initiatives in this ePlanning Strategy will also need to be reviewed and adjusted against the outcomes of ICC's IT Strategy, including the Online Service Delivery project, as they emerge.

Guided by the timeframes outlined above, it is envisaged that this document be treated as a 'living document' that is updated and reviewed regularly.