ENTRY FORM

Please complete this form if your council is entering a project in one of the five Award categories. Entries for the Emerging Leader of the Year Award should refer to the nomination form for that Award.

Conditions of Entry:

1. Entry is open to any New Zealand local authority or council controlled organisation (CCO). There is no limit on the number of times a single local authority or CCO may enter.

2. Awards will be presented at the 2016 SOLGM Gala Dinner being held in Wellington on 14 April 2016. There is no entry fee, but it is a condition of entry that the organisation purchases at least one ticket to the Gala Dinner, per entry.

3. The judges' decision on the award winners is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

4. From time to time SOLGM invites selected entrants to present their entries at various SOLGM learning and development events. It is a condition of entry that the entrant organisation agrees that it will make itself available to present at up to two such events (prior to 31 December 2016) if called upon with SOLGM covering any required travel costs. SOLGM will endeavour to give reasonable notice in respect to this requirement.

5. Entries must include:
   - a completed registration for the Gala Dinner – see Clause 2 above.
   - a completed and signed written entry as prescribed in this Form.
   - a PowerPoint slide describing the entry for display at the Gala Dinner. These must be supplied in the widescreen 16:9 format, not the default size.
   - your organisation's logo in a high resolution format suitable for print.
   - a 2-3 minute video on your project suitable to display at The Marketplace – the exhibition space being provided for Award entries prior to the Gala Dinner. Organisations entering projects in these Awards may also choose to take an exhibition space with representative/s in attendance who can talk about the entry.

6. All organisations that enter provide SOLGM with assurances that all material included within their entry is theirs to use. It is a condition of entry that entrants agree to indemnify SOLGM from any financial or non-financial consequences in the event that their entry contains intellectual property that belongs to a third party. SOLGM reserves the right to request amendments or reject an entry under this clause.

7. SOLGM reserves the right to reject entries that significantly exceed the word limits prescribed.

8. Entries must be submitted by email to Raymond Horan – raymond.horan@solgm.org.nz by 5.00pm on 3 February 2016. Entries that are incomplete as at this date and time (i.e. those that are missing one or more of the items listed in clause 5 above) will be returned to the entrant without entry into the Awards.

Please Complete

Please refer to the guidelines for information on completing this form

Entry Category (please tick one only for each entry – refer to the information on categories here)	☐ Innovation in Organisation and People Development ✓ Transforming Service Delivery ☐ Innovation in Council-Community Relations ☐ Collaborative Government Action ☐ Innovation in Policy and Regulatory Development
Name of Organisation submitting entry	Stratford District Council (Stratford)
Name of Project	# CxT (Customer Experience Transformation) **– Building Consent Inspection Process** *'Creating frictionless moments of magic for our customers'*
Project Summary (word limit – 150)	Stratford District Council had a number of aims, issues and risks the CxT project needed to address including: • Knowledge retained in people's heads and not documented • No standardised processes leading to variable customer service • Inefficient and ineffective manual processes • The need to deliver a high standard of customer service • Inculcating a continuous improvement culture • The need to provide visibility of the process to the customer • Lack of metrics to measure customer service quality • Transferrable to national building consent processes The CxT project was a combination of tools, technology, people and processes. Key deliverables included transforming the manual building consent inspection process into a digital process and introducing a Council wide Customer Service Charter implementing customer service standards ensuring every customer receives the same level of service. An important strategic outcome was to enable Stratford to contribute to the wider goal of a nationally agreed building consenting process. Word count – 147 words.
Strategic Context (word limit – 300)	The council's long-term plan provides the strategic context for the project, where the vision is for a "progressive prosperous district where communities are celebrated". One of the key delivery mechanisms is "affordable quality services and infrastructure". A frequent interaction for council customers is regulation and licencing, particularly for new building work. The council is acutely aware of the time and cost implications of regulations for investment decisions. A focus for CxT has been implementing systems that reduce time and cost for customers. Council has a full cost recovery model for building consents, so any reduction in the time taken to process consents is a benefit to the customer. Council implemented digital software enabling building inspectors to complete inspections so they can be sent electronically to the builder and transferred straight to file without further administrative handling. This

| | has resulted in savings of approximately $200 to the customer per consent. Customers can now track the progress of their consent online, reducing more expensive direct interactions with council staff and providing visibility of the service to the customer.

A wider strategic outcome was alignment with the national GoShift programme which aims to standardise and simplify building consenting processes nationally. Stratford is one of twenty one councils involved in this with the support of MBIE. The processes introduced in the CxT project have been specifically designed to be transferable to the national standards aimed at improving performance, consistency and service delivery across the building consent system.

The introduction of a customer service charter was an important component of the project providing measurable metrics for customer service standards and a feedback loop on customer complaints and compliments. The importance of customer service was underlined by Minister Bennett in the Rules Reduction Taskforce Report which 'identifies a clear need for a customer service culture'.

299 words |
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| Project Management (word limit – 300) | Stratford introduced the PRINCE2 project management methodology over the last year, training a number of staff in its use. Using PRINCE2 we identified project roles, responsibilities and key deliverables and timeframes.   An important issue was ensuring staff received adequate training in the new software and the integration of the software with existing technology. Another issue was ensuring staff were involved in all stages of the development of the customer service charter and were provided adequate time to give feedback. We needed to ensure that the new measures we were introducing for customer service were able to be achieved by staff while adding value to our customers.

To address these issues we ensured the project team involved a number of key staff from across the Council and we also had our draft Customer Charter reviewed internally and externally. Changes were made following the feedback from these reviews. Customer service training was conducted 18 months prior to the customer charter being implemented which ensured staff had adequate time to be involved throughout the entire process and understand the drivers for change and what we wanted to achieve.

Quality assurance involved working with key stakeholders including our external building community to ensure the new software and associated processes would meet their requirements. External stakeholders were involved throughout the project. We held a 'Builders get Together' workshop inviting the Stratford building community and associated organisations including designers and architects. The workshop involved an interactive discussion on what was working and what could be improved. The workshop provided positive feedback giving us assurance the new digital delivery model would deliver a number of benefits to our customers and key stakeholders.

275 words |
| Relationship Management (word limit – 300) | Relationship management was a critical success factor in the CxT project. In the *Reflections from our audits: Service delivery* the Auditor-General noted the importance of listening to and understanding people's needs |

	and learning from feedback. To ensure we understood our stakeholder needs we conducted a stakeholder analysis which confirmed who our various stakeholder groups were, their requirements and their preferred method of communication. As mentioned previously this involved an interactive workshop. The workshop was an important opportunity to build relationships and ensure we had support for the CxT project and stakeholders understood the benefits for them. It also provided an opportunity to ask questions and clarify what was and wasn't required in the building consent process. We received extremely useful feedback from the workshop which informed the project. It also demonstrated the value of our stakeholder engagement analysis. The research we conducted as part of this analysis told us that the majority of our stakeholders preferred face to face communication on the project. The Auditor-General in the same report noted the importance of leadership stating *'Leaders who inspire quality service delivery through their values, actions, behaviours, and empowerment'*. We believed that for our project to be successful required not only instilling these values but living and breathing them. Our values are clearly stated in our Customer Service Charter for both staff and our customers. An important component of the CxT project was the implementation of a business improvements register identifying and prioritising improvements to key business processes and the establishment of a new email address for stakeholders to email their suggestions for further improvements. Not only did this empower our stakeholders but it also provided an important feedback loop encouraging a continuous improvement philosophy throughout Council where improvement never ends. 290 words
Continuous Improvement (word limit – 300)	CxT incorporated a number of mechanisms to ensure the future sustainability of the project. The establishment of a business improvements register and a new email address ensured that ideas for improving key business processes and removing impediments to providing quality service to customers were captured. Staff from across the organisation meet on a regular basis to review the register and suggestions coming through from the business. Lessons learned from the programme included ensuring you consider training and change management well before implementation. We commenced customer service training for staff 18 months before the development and implementation of our Customer Service Charter. This ensured staff understood the need for change and the importance of having service standards along with being part of the CxT project from its inception. Another key lesson was the importance and value of conducting a stakeholder engagement exercise. This was invaluable in ensuring we identified all of our stakeholders and their requirements including how they wanted to be communicated with. Stakeholders gave us particularly positive feedback from our Builders Get-together workshop and the opportunity it provided to meet face-to-face. In order to continually improve the process we needed to document the steps in the process and identify where we could improve the process.

	Standard operating processes have been developed for the building consent inspection process. This was an important part of ensuring that the project was sustainable as no longer is key knowledge locked inside individual staff members heads. It is now documented fully. It has also addressed a key risk concerning succession planning as several staff associated with the process are reaching retirement. Now the process has been documented and streamlined this risk has been reduced. Standard operating procedures have now become business as usual and fully integrated as a way of working across council. 299 words
Project Success (word limit – 900)	Before the CxT project there were no explicit standards or metrics for customer service. There were no consistent measures for the time taken to answer phone calls or timeframes for returning messages. Some staff had a voicemail and others didn't. There were no timeframes for responding to correspondence or formal feedback loops or processes for customer feedback. Prior to the CxT project the building consent inspection process was completely manual resulting in a time consuming process due to the manual handling of documentation. This resulted in a lack of visibility of the process to the customer. The customer had no idea where their consent was in the process. The process was not documented with important knowledge being retained in particular staff member's heads. This also resulted in a lack of standardised processes. Prior to the project the existing processes were not aligned to wider national building consenting standards. CxT introduced a council wide Customer Service Charter providing a number of benefits including: • Documenting our customer service standards • Ensures every Stratford District Council customer receives the same level of service • Providing clarity to staff on the expectations of them in regards to customer service • Providing information to customers about how they can help us to help them • Acknowledge complaints and compliments The implementation of customer service standards means every Stratford District Council customer can expect to receive the same level of service regardless of who they may be dealing with. Set standards also provide clarity to staff about what is expected of them in terms of the service they provide. By digitising the building consent inspection process we have introduced a standardised process which also aligns to the wider national building consenting process. A key part of the digitisation process was the development of standard operating procedures which significantly reduced key person risk by ensuring subject matter expertise was captured and documented. Ancillary benefits included reducing the cost of service provision with approximate savings of $200 to the customer per consent, depending on the number of inspections required. This equates to $40k per annum.

Customers can now track the progress of their consent online, reducing more expensive direct interactions with council staff and providing visibility of the service to the customer. There is now one form replacing several previously required.

Consent processing time has reduced by 20% and the decreased administrative overhead for specialist staff has allowed them to focus on additional process improvements in other areas and core functions of Council.

A number of unexpected benefits were gained as a result of the CxT project. These included the uptake of standard operating procedures in other Council areas. This has resulted in the identification of a number of opportunities for streamlining key business processes. The first step in developing standard operating procedures is to map the current process. When we have done this we have identified a number of redundant and superfluous steps. An additional benefit is confirming who the business owner is for a key business process. The business owner ensures the process is kept current and opportunities for continuous improvement are constantly explored.

Further benefits included improved education of our building community achieved through the course of the project, for example the 'Builders get Together' workshop helped clarify a number of items including concerning what needs a consent and what doesn't. The face-to-face interactions also strengthened the relationships with our key external stakeholders.

Barriers traversed included resistance to change, diverse stakeholder requirements, training staff and customers in new ways of working using new technology, processes and tools.

A key challenge for Stratford was overcoming the mentality that we were too small and as a small organisation we didn't need to have standard operating procedures or formal customer service standards.

To overcome these cultural barriers we ensured that staff were fully involved in the development, review and implementation of the customer charter. The drivers for change and benefits of the CxT project were explained throughout the project and numerous opportunities were provided for question and answer sessions. Story telling was used to bring real-life examples of where adhoc processes and procedures and manual delivery of services led to poor customer service. We found using actual stories was a powerful change agent.

We also took the step to get our customer charter externally reviewed providing excellent feedback and additional assurance that we were benchmarking our standards appropriately.

Throughout the project we have taken a continuous improvement philosophy formalised by introducing a business improvements register, and the establishment of a new email address specifically for stakeholders to email their suggestions for further improvements. We have a group of staff who regularly review, prioritise and implement the suggestions.

We feel the innovation aspect of the project was in the successful

	integration of people, processes, tools and technology, demonstrating that it isn't just large organisations that can get substantial productivity gains from improving processes and customer service. A key theme in the CxT project was reflecting on the experience of our customer and the importance of the customer telling their story. Feedback such as 'onsite inspection is great' reflects the tangible benefits to our community.
	Transferability was a key principle underpinning the CxT process. The processes have been designed to meet the standards used in the national GoShift programme. GoShift aims to standardise and simplify building consenting processes nationally with approximate savings of $4 million per annum.
	894 words
Support Material	✓ Link to a 2-3 minute video uploaded on YouTube ✓ PowerPoint Slide in the correct 16:9 widescreen format ✓ An electronic file of your Organisation's Logo (in a format suitable for print, preferably an EPS with transparent background) ✓ Confirmation that a ticket has been purchased for our Gala Dinner Other (please describe):
Requesting a space at The Marketplace (please note that space is limited – SOLGM will advise if the requested space is available shortly after entries close)	☐ Please tick if your organisation wishes to book a Booth at The Marketplace to showcase your project. The booth must include at least one representative from your organisation being available at The Marketplace from 12pm to 6pm on the 14th of April (allow extra time before and after these times for set up and pack up) to talk about your project. The booth measures 2.4m wide and 1.2m deep and the surrounding panels can be used to for displaying project collateral. The booths will come with power, a small plinth and a stool.
Contact Details (The person to contact at your organisation in respect to this entry)	Name: Kate Whareaitu Phone: DDI: +64 6 765 0644 Email: KWhareaitu@stratford.govt.nz
Signature of your organisation's Chief Executive or Nominee	Signature: _[signature]_ Name: _Matt O'Mara_ Title: _Chief Executive_ Date: _28/1/2016_
Entry Instructions:	Once completed please print, sign, scan and email this Entry to Raymond.horan@solgm.org.nz to reach him no later than 5pm on 3 February 2016. Please also attach to the email your support material as noted above. If you have not already done so please purchase at least one ticket (required as a condition of each entry) to the Gala Dinner.

Guidelines to completing the Entry Form:

Project Summary

This should be a high level overview or Executive Summary of the project.

Strategic Context – Scored out of 20

Applicants need to identify the rationale for the project and the proposed outcomes. This should include:
- The level of need and the evidence base that demonstrated the need
- The anticipated outcomes, and the causal impact of outputs
- The relationship to council's strategic direction
- The risks for the project and how they were mitigated

Project Management – Scored out of 10

Applicants need to identify how the project was managed. This should include:
- The key issues from the project plan - scope, timeframes, resources and governance
- The evaluation framework
- Examples of where feedback was used to inform continuous improvement
- What quality assurance systems were utilised

Relationship Management - Scored out of 10

Applicants need to identify their communication and relationship management with stakeholders:
- The different communication tools used
- The different audiences the project engaged with
- How it communicated with "hard to reach" groups

Continuous Improvements - Scored out of 10

Applicants need to demonstrate the project is sustainable. This will include:
- Lessons learnt from the programme
- How learning will be shared across the organisation
- Plans to integrate the project into business-as-usual

Project Success - Scored out of 50

Applicants need to identify how the project was successful. This should include:
- Before and after
- Barriers traversed
- Steps being taken to improve the programme
- Why the project was innovative or original
- What about the project outcomes, lessons etc. is this transferable to other local authorities and why?

2016 Categories

Innovation in Organisation and People Development
Is your local authority effectively developing its people and culture?

This category recognises innovative approaches to building an exceptional organisational culture or capability through the application of transformational leadership. Entries in this category might be multi-year programmes or one-off projects but they will involve organisational redesign, human resource management, capability development or related aspects. The approach must be capable of transfer to other local authorities.

Transforming Service Delivery
On-going fiscal constraints, increasing regulatory standards and increasing community expectations on the part of our communities are challenging us to find new ways of delivering a better service experience.

This category is for programmes or projects that result in an exceptional service experience through innovative delivery models or the redesign of business processes or practices. The programme or project can relate to any area of council activity which is about delivering improved value for money to ratepayers. The approach must be capable of transfer to other local authorities.

Innovation in Council -Community relations
Are your council's community relationships delivering results?

This award recognises programmes, projects or initiatives that demonstrate outstanding results through innovative means of community engagement or community empowerment. Entries may come from any area of local government activity, but must have community engagement, empowerment, or partnership as a key aspect. Entries may include successful collaboration with private or community organisations. The approach taken must be transferable to other local authorities.

Collaborative Government Action
What benefits has your community achieved through your council working with other local or central government agencies?

This award recognises outstanding results that have been achieved through local authorities working with other government agencies. This category could include programmes or projects from any area of local government activity, provided there is a demonstrable community benefit, and the approach is transferable to other local authorities.

Innovation in policy and regulatory development
Is your policy development or regulatory development cutting edge?

This award recognises the development of robust and effective evidence-based policy or local regulatory initiatives. Any policy, plan or regulatory initiative is eligible for this award. Entrants will be expected to clearly demonstrate their initiative was based on the application of the principles of effective policy or regulatory design and implementation, development of an evidence base and that the initiative is transferable to other local authorities.