

Focusing on citizens to improve their well-being

South Dublin County Council

The Challenge

- Help improve the well-being of citizens in the county

The Benefits

- Accessible information about facilities that citizens can access to improve their lives
- A service designed and created specifically to meet the needs of citizens
- The ability to enrich and update the web app very efficiently with a small team
- Added insight to support strategic decision making



Responding directly to the needs and wishes of citizens, South Dublin County Council has used web and mobile solutions from Esri's ArcGIS platform to create and enrich a new Community Facilities web app. This online service is expected to help improve the quality of life for people living, working and doing business in the area.

The Challenge

In its Corporate Plan 2015-19, South Dublin County Council set out its mission to make the county of South Dublin the "best possible place in which to live, work and do business." This strategic document clearly articulated the council's focus on citizens, stating that "the health and well-being of the people of South Dublin County" would be a key measure of success. To help it achieve its mission, the council decided to create a new online, map-based information service to give citizens better information about nearby community facilities that they could use to help them lead healthier, more fulfilled lives.

The Solution

As a long-standing user of Esri technology, South Dublin County Council already had the ArcGIS Platform and GIS skills it needed to create its new web app, with no additional investment in software. It was also able to develop the solution very quickly and easily in-house, without the need for outside consultancy, using Esri's ArcGIS Online and the available templates.

At the outset of the project, the council held a series of focus groups with members of the public, to find out what information citizens would find useful, and then designed the app to cover precisely these themes. Through this citizen engagement, the council received requests for data that it didn't hold, such as information on allotments and accessible parking spaces around the county. Rather than leave this information out, and fail to meet citizens' expectations, South Dublin County Council allowed employees to access ArcGIS Online from a wide range of tablets and smart phones, empowering them to collect the specific information citizens wanted to see.

In addition, South Dublin County Council sourced information for citizens by streaming data directly into its Community Facilities web app from third party organisations using web services. For instance, the council pulled in census information from AIRO, which saved time and avoided reinventing the wheel. Moving forwards, the council plans to use Esri's Collector for ArcGIS app to allow staff members to collect supplementary data using mobile devices, to enrich the app while travelling around the county. As new information is collected, it can be uploaded directly into the ArcGIS Online app and made visible to citizens immediately.

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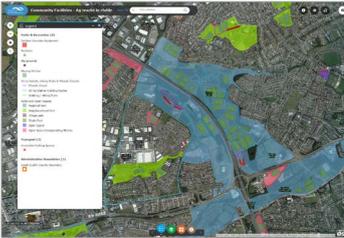
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The Community Facilities web app doesn't just show the locations of parks and sports grounds, but the specific types of pitches and facilities available

Benefits

The new GIS-based Community Facilities web service is now helping South Dublin County Council to achieve its corporate mission by:

Engaging with citizens to encourage healthier lives

The web service makes it very easy for citizens to discover local facilities that might help enrich their lives and enhance their sense of well-being. Whether they are looking for their nearest library or checking local sports facilities, all the information they need is easy to find in one simple web app.

Delivering just what the citizen wants and values

South Dublin County Council now has the impressive ability to collect and publish additional information for citizens very quickly – at a low cost for the council but with a high value for the general public. For example, it can now easily gather and share information about not only where social clubs and sports centres are located, but if these facilities offer yoga, boxing or chess clubs.

Empowering members of staff to work efficiently

Over recent years, the headcount within some council departments has reduced, so teams have to be able to work more efficiently to deliver a good service. The use of ArcGIS Online and the Collector for ArcGIS app enables the council to capture, update and publish information for citizens with smaller teams. The information can also be updated more often, making it more accurate, and updates are instantly visible online.

Improving decision making and strategic planning

While the app was first and foremost developed to deliver an enhanced service for citizens, it has also proven exceptionally useful as a decision support tool for senior executives. It is very easy to see, for example, whether play parks and youth facilities are located in the regions that have the highest densities of families with young children. Senior managers have an instant view of the facilities – or lack of facilities – in a given area, allowing them to focus on deploying new services where they are most needed and continually improve community facilities for citizens.

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