



The Langstane Housing Group

Information and Communication Technology Strategy 2021 – 2023

SMT approval date	3 June 2021
Committee / sub committee	Board of Management
Approval date	30 June 2021
Implementation date	26 July 2021
Review date	3 years

1. Executive Summary

The Information and Communication Technology Strategy (“ICT Strategy”) contained within this document is intended to show how the companies within the Langstane Group will develop and build on the current technology base to provide for future requirements. The Strategy will examine the governance, infrastructure and operating systems of the Langstane Group and the relationships with other electronic and manual systems. It will also consider the future role of ICT in the development of the Langstane Group with particular emphasis on operating efficiency and security of the systems, and of developing a digital interface with stakeholders to improve the services offered, in particular to tenants and prospective tenants of the Langstane Group.

At the core of the strategy will lie the integration of all of the various facets of ICT to improve the working practices of the Langstane Group, enhance the security and robustness of the systems and data, and improve communication both within the Group and with external stakeholders.

The Strategy will also set out objectives for the improvement of mobile working and of customer driven interfaces, and to ensure that these are flexible enough to allow for future technological developments as far as is practicable.

2. Introduction and Background

Langstane Group currently has an in-house ICT system, which consists of a number of servers located within the Head Office in King Street, Aberdeen. These are currently configured on a virtual server basis to allow maximum flexibility and efficient usage of the computing power available.

Users are connected to the system using Citrix software via thin client technology – this allows Windows applications to be accessed via individual devices from a shared server. A number of mobile devices are connected to the system, again using Citrix. The sub-office in Elgin is connected to the network as are the office telephone systems.

Back-ups of the system data are carried out on a regular schedule based on the type and source of the data. These backups are made to separate storage areas which are then in turn replicated offsite to a cloud back up facility.

Security of the systems is managed via firewalls, e-mail scanning software and security monitoring, scanning solutions installed on individual PC's and Servers combined with security awareness training of staff.

Langstane Group Business Plan 2020 – 2025

The Group Business Plan states that the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Strategy sets down how the Group will achieve the maximum benefit from ICT and deliver efficiencies in support of administrative functions.

The key focus is the delivery of the Road Map which will sit behind all the improvements being made to customer, contractor and staff remote access to systems and information. This will facilitate the provision of 'self-service' options to tenants and other customers and allow staff and Board of Management members access to good quality, up-to-date information that enables them to carry out their functions. This is essential to allow us to be efficient and effective without compromising on service delivery standards.

Internal Management Plan (IMP)

The IMP requires Langstane to ensure ICT equipment and software meets modern day requirements and assists in the production of good quality, real time performance data.

3. Aims and Objectives

3.1. Purpose of the ICT Strategy

The purpose of the Langstane Group ICT strategy is to:

- Present the ICT vision for the Langstane Group in accordance with the objectives of the Business Plan
- Document the structure and processes required to achieve that vision
- Define a program of work, systems and projects to support the achievement of the Langstane Group's ICT vision over the next three years.

3.2. The ICT Strategy document includes:

- A summary of Langstane Group's key business outcomes and organisational capabilities required to be supported by the ICT strategy
- The ICT vision
- An overview of the existing ICT environment
- Recommendations
- Priorities and implementation plan.

4. Strategy

4.1. Langstane Group ICT Vision

The Langstane Group ICT Vision is to:

- Establish an ICT environment that provides robust access to core services and supports staff to work effectively
- Have the group engaged and involved in exploiting ICT in innovative and strategic ways to improve customer outcomes.

The ICT vision is underpinned by a set of 5 key pillars which form the foundation for successful delivery of the ICT strategy:



ICT-as-a-Service

- Utilising established service management principles (e.g. ICTIL, ISO20000) to ensure users have access to the right systems at the right time, via suitable media, in the right level of detail and accuracy.
- Access to and benefit from the latest applications and technology.
- Multi-layer User-support mechanisms to ensure staff have tools to help resolve issues, including ICT policies, procedures, user guides and instructions.
- Proactive rather than reactive external support where relevant.

“Single where possible” solutions

- Standardised approach applied to infrastructure and services regardless of location.
- Implement systems which only require a single entry of data, which is then processed and accessible by multiple people for multiple purposes.
- Single “source of truth”, where data/information is stored as a single copy, not duplicated in multiple locations e.g. information silos in duplicated spreadsheets.

Information-Focussed

- Provide information, in the correct format, on required devices to management, staff, partners, stakeholders and clients for timely, accurate evaluation and decision-making.

Secure, highly available, robust & compliant

- A comprehensive business continuity plan which is periodically tested.
- Connectivity alternatives.
- Hardware fault tolerance engineering with automated failover (no single points of failure) for key hardware components - e.g. routers, network switches and wireless access service
- Strong physical and cyber security defined by policies and periodically tested.
- Proven, documented equipment configurations with failover options.
- Be compliant in protecting and retaining data e.g. GDPR.
- Be compliant with all regulatory and legal requirements in all areas of operations.

ICT Competency-driven

- Develop the ICT competency of staff and users to ensure they are maximising the potential of the organisation's investment in ICT and the ability to manage the deployment of new technology effectively.

4.2. Current Position

A summary of the key findings of the current ICT environment, architecture and applications are as follows:

- 4.2.1. ICT has a relatively high level of focus within Langstane Group. There are opportunities to improve the management of ICT within Langstane through clarification of the ICT team role and responsibilities, their increased involvement in the delivery of the ICT strategy and support for the implementation plan over the next three years.
- 4.2.2. The current mode of operation for the ICT team due to the problems of managing an aged infrastructure with downtime issues etc. is reactive and of maintaining a basic service. The objective would be to create an environment whereby the ICT team has the capacity to innovate and improve the level of exploitation of current ICT assets and more effectively assess the applicability of future ICT trends.
- 4.2.3. There is a range of issues with the multiple applications deployed within Langstane Group (in terms of business processes, culture and adoption of the systems and technology) and opportunities for improvement in managing these, in particular with clearer visibility of where the lines of demarcation are between internal ICT and external providers and improved integration between systems to minimise manual input.
- 4.2.4. A substantial amount of the dissatisfaction with ICT within the Langstane Group relates to issues with ICT access and support for the remote and mobile workforce. The infrastructure and hardware is legacy and aged with issues of reliability. This causes user dissatisfaction through system downtime and loss of data which impacts on business efficiency and utilises resource to firefight. Upgrading is therefore required as a priority to meet user needs. Communication will be improved between the ICT team and users to ensure buy-in from users when undertaking process or system enhancements.
- 4.2.5. The current ICT team will implement a formal ICT Service Management system to manage:
- ICT Helpdesk
 - Configuration management database (used to store information about hardware and software assets in logical layers to understand connections and dependencies)
 - Change and project management
 - Service catalogue (contracts with external providers)
 - Knowledge base

This will provide evidence of ICT performance for management purposes as well as visibility of the workload of the ICT team.

4.2.6. To ensure the delivery of the many expected initiatives a prioritised implementation plan will coordinate the planned scope of ICT project work.

4.3. Strategy / Roadmap

Langstane is committed to achieving ICT Excellence which is the combination of best practice across all areas of ICT to support the delivery of the organisations objectives. These are visualised in Appendix 1.

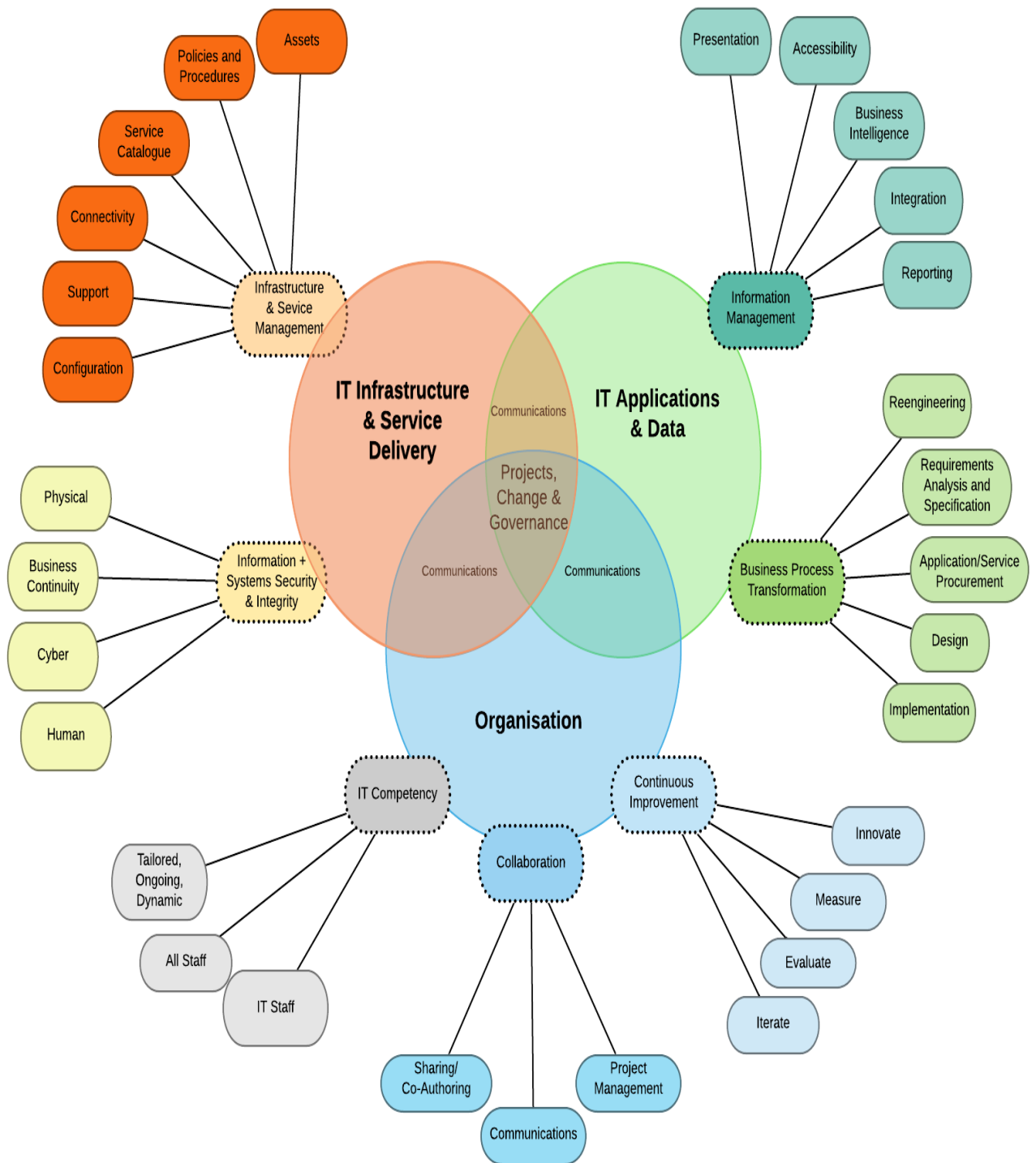
A technology roadmap has been developed and shares a strategic-level plan for ICT initiatives for the Group, such as migrating to a new cloud system. Appendix 2 outlines the key areas of focus and goals.

The strategic objectives to be achieved are as follows:

- Create a robust programme management capability / function for the delivery of projects
- Clearly define the ICT team role, including oversight of the execution of the ICT strategy
- Develop an architectural framework, including agreed technical / application / information architecture target diagrams
- Reposition the ICT team as a strategic ICT advisor for the Langstane Group
- Restructure the ICT team to match the ICT direction
- Review and update the ICT policies to ensure that the business needs are met in balance with costs and security needs
- Upgrade the application architecture
- Develop a training strategy and improve access to training for Langstane Group employees regardless of their location
- Develop a benefits realisation framework and ensure that all business cases adopt the framework.
- Maintain a Disaster Recovery environment and ensure regular tests are conducted
- Continue with video conferencing and remote working evaluation and ensure the full scope of business requirements are defined.

Appendix 3 represents a pictorial portrayal of where the Langstane Group wants to be in terms of structure and management of ICT.

Appendix 4 is the prioritised implementation plan for the next three years.



An ICT roadmap ensures a coherent 36 month ICT plan relating to the following areas:



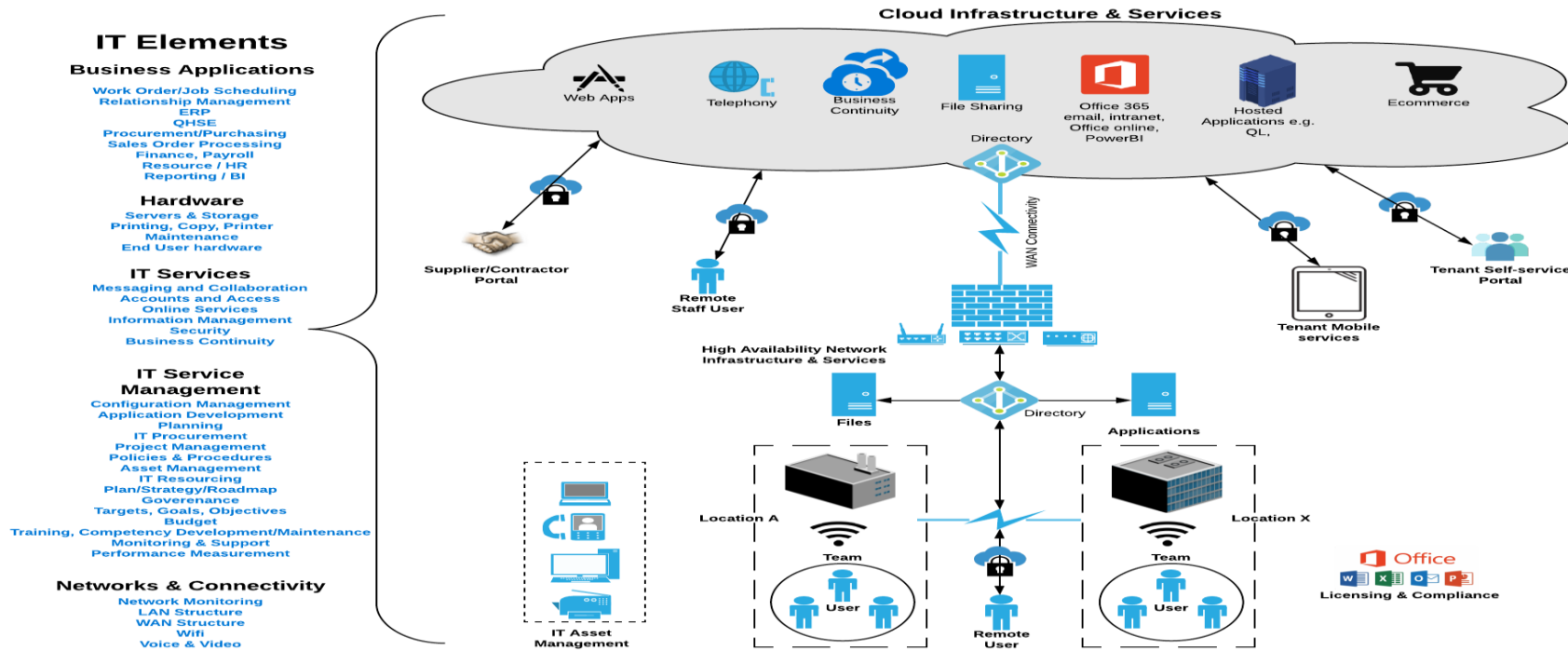
ROADMAP GOALS

- User-friendly ICT tools that can be used more effectively
- Reduced number of solutions, integrate, eradicate “Shadow ICT” (ICT projects that are managed outside of, or without the knowledge of, the ICT team)
- Standardised processes across the organisation, particularly for similar roles
- Scalable solution that can be delivered as a service to other organisations
- Capability to use predictive reporting technology and workflow to deliver benefits
- Improved training and ensure the self-sufficiency of the users of core systems
- Improved team working and communications – presence, messaging, voice, video
- A standardised toolkit for staff (Plug and Go) across all locations
- Improved ICT service management via internal / external ICT expert resources
- Adoption of appropriate hosting deployment, Cloud, On-premises or Data Centre.

ICT Future – Overview

Appendix 3

The ICT provision aims to provide each user with the information and process support required to enable them to maximise the performance of their role and assist the Group in the achievement of its business plan.



	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Governance and Administration			
Analyse skills, capabilities and training requirements of the ICT Team			
Implement ICT Service Management system			
Review relationships with external service providers			
Review methods of communication			
Infrastructure			
Improve connectivity through improvement or upgrade of the Wi-Fi, firewall and web filter			
Migration to the Cloud			
Microsoft 365 Migration			
Operating systems			
Set up formal team for the ongoing development of QL & related solutions			
Review back-up and disaster recovery provisions			
Implement or improve dashboards / reporting / business intelligence for QL & Finance			
Achieve Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation			
Business Support Services			
Housing Application Portal			
I-Contractor Solution			
Mobile Solutions – Tenants			
Mobile Solutions – Staff			
Knowledge Management			
Website			
Corporate Services Support			
Replacement phone solution			
Financial Systems review and replacement			

Integrated Payroll / HR system			
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