(IT) Information Technology Strategy

Document Control

Responsible Person	Corporate Services Director
Review Frequency	**5 Yearly** (Strategic Review)
Reviewed by	Board
Date Approved	December 2019
Next Review Due	December 2024

Responsible Person	Corporate Services Director
Review Frequency	**Annually** (Yearly Update)
Reviewed by	Board
Date Approved	December 2023
Next Review Due	December 2024

	Yes		No	
Consultation Required	Yes		No	✓
Equalities Impact Assessment	Yes		No	✓
Added to Company Website	Yes	✓	No	
Associated Documents Considered	Yes	✓	No	

1. Introduction

1.1. This strategy sets out Waverley Housing's approach to using Information Technology (IT) to deliver a tenant focussed and cost-effective service.

2. Overall Aims and Vision of Strategy

2.1. Main aims of the strategy:

a) To improve delivery of services and improve efficiency, e.g. Housing Management System enhancements, use of web technology and mobile working.

b) To make information and communication more accessible, e.g. through access to email, internet and company systems through continued development of communications infrastructure.

c) To build confidence and self-esteem of employees and enhance the working environment, e.g. through learning opportunities and access to IT.

d) To provide an effective and efficient IT infrastructure to meet current and future needs.

e) To maintain current IT systems whilst continually reviewing service needs against market developments.

2.2 Our Vision:

a) Waverley Housing will have a fully integrated and comprehensive housing, property and financial management system.

b) Waverley Housing will have an interactive web site, enabling our customers and partners access to our services.

c) Waverley Housing will support employees and Board Members to develop their IT skills.

d) Waverley Housing will have a company intranet for use by office-based employees.

e) Waverley Housing will provide effective IT support to reduce time on administration allowing staff more time to focus on service delivery.

3. Objectives for the next five years

3.1 The Portal, Web Site & Intranet:

a) Provide 24 hour and 7 days per week access to interactive information on Waverley Housing through the www.waverley-housing.co.uk site.

b) Develop our website to provide tenants secure access to their rent account and enable online payments

c) Develop the use of SharePoint or other Microsoft tool to enable an enhanced intranet or company internal site to aid internal communication of the organisation.

3.2 A Best Value Tenant Focus:

a) Create a tenant-focussed company by integrating computer systems and creating more efficient processes.

b) Evaluate relevant new ICT products and services.

c) Ensure ICT investments are best value.

3.3. <u>The Technology Infrastructure:</u>

a) Continue to develop systems to assist in the communication process.

b) Continue to develop systems to assist in performance management.

c) Monitor marketplace for cost effective integrated mobile working solutions which interface with Open Housing and consider suitability for use by the company.

d) Evaluate Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Content Management System (CMS) products and develop where appropriate.

e) Continue to evaluate benefits of cloud-based software and products.

4. Website

4.1. The public, current and potential tenants will have access to the most up-to-date information on our services.

We now provide more detailed information on properties available to rent. We have also streamlined the process to view and apply for our properties. A dedicated area has been created within the website which is restricted for staff use.

The main priorities for 2024 are:

a) To continue to enhance and develop website.

b) To continue to develop enhancements to features available to tenants.

Future years' priorities are:

a) To consider a full re-design of the website.

b) To consider enhancements to the features available to tenants i.e. tenant Portal.

5. Social Media

5.1. Continue the development of social media tools such as X (Twitter) and Facebook to enhance communication with tenants and other customers and enhance our presence on social media.

6. Software

6.1. <u>Open Housing, Open Financials and InSight</u>

Waverley Housing main software systems are Open Housing (housing management system), Open Financials (financial reporting) and InSight (reporting). All are provided by Capita Software.

In 2022 a series of discovery and demonstration sessions were undertaken with Capita to review how effectively we utilise Open Housing system and to see the latest enhancements to the software, particularly in relation to online self-service portals for rent and repairs.

The main priorities for 2024 are:

a) Review the current use of Open Financials and Reporting features.

b) Develop an online payment option for tenants.

c) Upgrade from Capita Open Housing to Capita One.

d) Consider cost/benefits of Open Housing online self-service portals.Monitor marketplace for cost effective integrated mobile working / works planning solutions which interface with Open Housing and consider suitability for use by the company.

e) Ongoing development of Planned Maintenance module.

Future years' priorities are:

a) Consider cost/benefits of Open Housing online self-service portals.

b) Evaluate cloud-based versions of Open Housing and Open Accounts.

c) Ongoing development of Open Housing.

d) Develop and implement a training plan to improve the skills of Open Housing users.

6.2. Other systems

Other systems operated by the company are:

a) Sage HR 50 (human resource management software).

b) Sage Payroll 50 (payroll software).

c) Real Asset Management Series 4000 (financial fixed asset register).

d) BACSCOM IP (electronic payments/collections).

e) Housing Brixx (strategic modelling).

f) Filestream (electronic document management).

g) Mobysoft (rent arrears management).

Future years' priorities are:

a) Consider integrated HR and Payroll system.

b) Develop Housing BRIXX.

c) Develop Filestream.

d) Explore alternatives to Mobysoft (Capita)

7. Supporting Software

7.1. Network/Desktop Operating Software

Application servers are all migrated from Microsoft Server 2016 to Microsoft Server 2019.

Computers/laptops are currently running Windows 10 or Windows 11.

7.2. Office Software

All Laptops/PCs use Microsoft Office 365.

7.3. Email

The company uses Microsoft Exchange Online.

7.4. Storage Management

The company has a comprehensive backup process, enabling automatic backups. Cloud based backups are also taken. Details of the backup process can be found in the keep

Information Technology Back-Up & Restoration Procedure located within Disclosures-Handbook-.pdf (waverley-housing.co.uk).

7.5. Virus Software

The company always runs effective up to date antivirus software. We currently use Microsoft Windows Defender and Sentinel One.

7.6. Other Software

The company restricts the use of other software on its PCs. Compliance is in accordance with the Information Technology Policy.

8. Hardware

8.1. Servers

The company operates 3 physical servers that host 11 virtual servers. A backup server is also maintained. These are to ensure continuity of system services to users and provides an enhanced disaster recovery facility.

8.2. PC Hardware

All staff have laptops to facilitate working out-with the office.

Housing Officers and Property Officers are provided with cellular iPads. The cost v benefits of expanding our use of tablets will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Board Members have been provided with Tablets to allow them to access Board papers and to hold virtual meetings via Microsoft Teams. A review of tablets upgrading to IPads is currently underway.

To ensure laptops/PCs are kept up to date we will continually review and monitor their provision.

8.3. Multi-functional devices (MFD)

The company purchased 3 Canon MFDs in 2018/2019. These are networked and act as a copier, printer, scanner and fax. The units are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

8.4. Document Scanners

Were introduced as part of the implementation of our electronic document management system.

8.5. Laser Printers

Laser printers were provided to support staff who work on a hybrid basis.

9. Communications

9.1. Telephone System

The Company's Cisco IP telephone system was installed in May 2014. It is still considered fit for purpose. This will be reviewed on an annual basis.

9.2.   <u>Mobile Communications and Remote Working</u>

The company provides smart phones with email facility to members of the management team and to all staff working off site.

Members of the management team also have access to Horizon Collaborate which allows them to make and receive telephone calls via their laptops.

Remote access to the company servers is available to all office staff. All staff have access to Microsoft Teams to hold virtual meetings and can access their emails remotely.

Staff can access key mobile forms on their smartphones using Google Forms.

10. Cyber Security

10.1.   Cyber security's function is to protect our devices and services from theft or damage and to prevent unauthorised access to our data including personal information we store on these devices and online.

Security of the information on the system is paramount both to give public confidence on entering personal information on the web site but also to ensure General Data Protection Regulations and audit requirements are met.

Services where private information is critical such as financial or personal data will require the highest levels of security to verifying that the correct person is being given their own information and that appropriately qualified and authorised staff are accessing it.

The company continues to maintain Cyber Essentials accreditation. The company has also introduced two-factor authentication for staff using Microsoft Outlook 365.

11. Procurement

11.1.   The IT Officer is responsible for IT procurement. The preferred methods to ensure best value are:
    a) The Crown Commercial Service (CCS).
    b) Procurement for Housing.
    c) Scottish Procurement Alliance.
    d) Preferred suppliers.

12. Resources

12.1.   Resources fall into three categories:
    a) Staff Time (implementation and training).
    b) External Consultant.
    c) Hardware and Software Costs.

Any related costs will be provided for in the budget for the appropriate year.

13. Skills

13.1. The IT Officer and IT Assistant provide comprehensive hardware and operating system support. They also provide limited application software support to all the packages operated by the company by working with the end users.

The basic skills that exist within IT section are adequate to meet most tasks that are required. Where additional skills and/or knowledge is required, training will be provided, or support from external consultants will be sourced.

Additional server support is currently provided by Kick ICT. The contract is reviewed on an annual basis.

14. Risk Assessments

No.	Risk	Potential Implications	Controls
	Acquisition of Hardware & Software		

1	Wrong equipment acquired	• Incompatible systems.
		• Business objectives not met.
		• Waste of resources.
		• Missed opportunity to improve operational efficiency.
			• Existence of IT strategy, along with regular review.
			
			• Annual budgets prepared.
			
			• Adequate procurement process:
			  o Purchase order procedure
			  o Procurement procedure
			• Different methods of financing are investigated, and method chosen is in line with overall financial strategy.
			• A contract appraisal is undertaken, if necessary.
			• A recommendation and decision is made based on the evaluation of tenders, if required.
			• Installation programme is planned.
			• Any necessary testing is undertaken prior to acceptance.
			• Staff are adequately trained.
			• Post implementation reviews are undertaken within agreed timescales.
			• Check whether insurance cover is affected.

2	Business needs not met	• Missed opportunity to improve operational efficiency. • Disgruntled users. • Waste of resources. • Financial loss.	
3	Poor management of installation and implementation	• Ongoing problems with hardware & software operations & system functionality. • Ineffective use of staff time.	
4	Methods of financing not appropriate	• Potential budgetary problems. • Financial loss.	
5	Procurement procedures not adhered to	• Potentially poor value for money. • Challenges from companies who were unsuccessful.	

No.	Risk	Potential Implications	Controls
Network Security			
1	Sporadic network development	• Incompatible systems being introduced. • Network not meeting users expectations. • Waste of resources. • Lack of standardisation may lead to over-reliance on certain technical skills.	**Appropriate Management Controls over Network** • Network users are adequately trained. • Technical standards and configuration information will be documented. • Network activity is monitored to ensure that performance is optimised.
2	Poor network performance	• Lack of confidence in network. • Inefficient working practices. • Unable to support business processes.	**Only authorised users are permitted access to network** • There is formal registration and de-registration procedure in place to ensure only authorised users are permitted to access network. • Passwords are changed on a regular basis.
3	Unauthorised access to systems and/or data	• Financial loss. • Loss or disclosure of confidential or sensitive data. • Fraud. • Breach of legislation, e.g. Data Protection. • Bad publicity and reputational damage. • Notifiable Event to be reported to the Scottish Housing Regulator.	• Check for number of unsuccessful login attempts and investigate possible intrusion attempts. • Dial up access to network is secure, with remote users being suitably identified. • Recognised firewall system in place, with firewall activity logs regularly reviewed. • Encryption is used to prevent unauthorised access to data transmitted over network (internet).
4	Virus infection	• Loss of data and/or systems. • Cost to clear up infection.	**Minimise network failure through:** • Support and maintenance agreements in place.
5	Network failure	• Interruption to the day-to-day operations . • Financial loss. • Bad publicity and reputational damage.	• Cloud-based backups in place. • All data is regularly backed up. • Anti-virus software is installed, and is up to date. Disaster recovery process in place in line with Business Recovery Continuity Plan.

No.	Risk	Potential Implications	Controls
System Development			
1	No standards for system development	• System may not be delivered on time or within budget, or to the required standard.	• Project manager is appointed.
2	User requirements not well documented and clearly stated	• System does not meet organisations' needs.	• Development methodology is produced. • Specification is produced. • Users are included in the implementation of system.
3	No feasibility study carried out	• Poor systems analysis and design.	• Project plan is prepared and maintained. • Risk analysis prepared for project.
4	No risk analysis carried out	• Failure to identify significant risks.	• Monitoring and control of costs/resources against system specification and project plan. • System test plan is prepared.
5	Inadequate resources	• Project may not be accomplished successfully. • Project may run into difficulties.	• All plans are updated timeously. • Tests are documented and reviewed regularly. • Regular update reports prepared for Management and Board.
6	Inadequate testing	• Implementation of system which is not robust. • System does not meet orgnaisation requirements. • Errors and problems.	• Management to identify training needs and draft programme (via appraisals). • Internal Software Reviews. • IT Assistant appointed to provide software support to end users.
7	Staff have inadequate IT Skills	• Failure to utilise software. • Inefficient processing. • Failure to develop systems. • Failure to adequately train staff.	

15. Summary and Action Plan

Item	2024	2025 to 2029
WEBSITE / INTERNET	• To enhance and develop website content.	• To consider full redesign of website. • To enhance and develop website content.
SOCIAL MEDIA	• Develop social media tools such as X (Twitter) and Facebook.	• Develop social media tools such as X(Twitter) and Facebook.
CAPITA SYSTEMS	• Consider cost/benefits of online self-service portals. • Monitor marketplace for cost effective integrated mobile working / works planning solutions which interface with Open Housing and consider suitability for use by the company.	• Upgrade from Capita Open Housing to Capita One. • Evaluate cloud-based solutions for Capita. • Ongoing development of Planned Maintenance module. • Ongoing review and development of system. • Develop and implement a training plan to improve the skills of Open Housing users.
OTHER SYSTEMS	• Continually under review. • Develop Brixx Housing. • Develop Filestream.	• Continually under review. • Consider integrated HR & Payroll system.
SUPPORTING SOFTWARE	• Continually under review • All Computers/laptops run Microsoft Windows 10 or Windows 11.	• Continually under review • Evaluate Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and Content Management Systems (CMS)

Summary and Action Plan (Continued)

Item	2024	2025 to 2029
ICT HARDWARE	• Continually under review / replace as necessary	• Continually under review / replace as necessary
MFDs	• Continually under review	• Continually under review
TELEPHONE SYSTEM	• Continually under review	• Continually under review
MOBILE COMMUNICATIONS	• Continually under review and replace as necessary	• Continually under review and replace as necessary
BACKUPS	• Continually under review	• Continually under review
SECURITY	• Continually under review • Annual check by Kick ICT	• Continually under review • Annual check by Kick ICT