



Drumchapel Housing

Co-operative Limited

Information and communication technology (ICT) Strategy 2022 - 2025

Reviewed
Approved by Board

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Contents

1. Introduction
2. Factors shaping our ICT strategy
3. Legislative and regulatory requirements
4. Data management
5. Emerging technology
6. Digital inclusion and enablement
7. Current ICT environment
8. Risk management and security
9. Strategy review

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Co-operative has invested considerably in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) which has become an integral part of the Co-operative's day-to-day operations. However, the ICT environment is constantly evolving, presenting both new opportunities and new threats.
- 1.2 An ICT strategy is essential to ensure that the Co-operative:
- meets its legislative requirements
 - manages data effectively
 - embraces emerging technology to meet the changing needs and aspirations of tenants and staff
 - supports and enables tenants with digital technology
 - effectively reviews and maintains its ITC systems, including hardware and software
 - preserves effective security arrangements to protect data, systems and networks from attacks and unauthorised access
- 1.3 In doing all of the above, the Co-operative will ensure that it continues to provide effective, high-quality services that represent value for money.

2. Factors shaping our ICT strategy

- 2.1 A range of factors have influenced our ICT strategy, including:
- a) **Development of cloud-based applications and software** – providing greater flexibility, reducing down time and improving secure data storage and back up arrangements.
 - b) **Development of smart technology** – allowing users to activate appliances remotely or communicate faults remotely, reducing costs and improving efficiency. This is likely to provide an expanding range of possibilities for housing organisations and tenants in the future.
 - c) **Self-service** – the increased expectancy that tenants can access services remotely using mobile applications and update their own information, choices and options via simple, secure applications.
 - d) **Security and cybercrime** – increased threat of data theft, fraud and ransom ware.
 - e) **Data protection** – appropriate measures are taken to prevent loss of personal data or unlawful processing and data is not retained for longer than is necessary.

- f) **Digital agenda and access to systems** – increasing interaction with government departments, agencies and contractors is via the use of digital platforms. Welfare Reform and the future need for tenants to apply for benefits on-line is a key example.
- g) **Varying degrees ICT skill & knowledge within staff team** – a range of ability and knowledge exists within the Co-operative.
- h) **Mobile technology** – opportunities to embrace mobile technology to improve efficiency and accommodate greater flexibility and improved service delivery.

3. Legislative and regulatory requirements

3.1 Standard 4.3 of the Scottish Housing Regulator’s Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management states “the governing body identifies risks that might prevent it from achieving the RSL’s purpose and has effective strategies and systems for risk management and mitigation, internal control and audit.”

3.2 The UK General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 1998 relates to the management of personal information and specifies key principles that organisations must adhere to when obtaining, holding or disclosing such information. In particular, information must be:

- i) processed lawfully, fairly and transparently
- ii) processed for limited purposes
- iii) adequate, relevant and not excessive
- iv) accurate and up to date
- v) not kept for longer than is necessary
- vi) processed securely to protect integrity and confidentiality

3.3 The Equality Act 2010 provides a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation.

4. Data management

4.1 Although it has expanded in recent years, the quantity of data that the Co-operative has is relatively modest. Information is stored locally and replicated to the cloud, all files are encrypted locally and cloud, cloud access is restricted to IP secure users with 2FA.

- 4.2 The Co-operative's data retention policy determines how long various types of information should be retained within our systems.
- 4.3 Data protection training is provided for all staff and the use of passwords is strictly adhered to, restricting access to files and folders in accordance with permissions.
- 4.4 All staff are aware of their responsibility with regards to the use of ICT and participate in the policy review process.
- 4.5 The move to cloud-based applications such as Microsoft 365 and file storage on one drive has already been implemented. A further plan is to go full cloud, this is currently limited by the housing management software currently used by the Co-operative. The Co-operative has completed a partial cloud migration with a full roadmap to be reviewed when the housing management software can migrate to cloud based and/or the move to a new housing management software system.

5. Emerging technology

- 5.1 Advancements in technology have led to equipment being supplied with built in sensors or remote operating capability. For example, some applications allow you to control your central heating system from a smart phone and other appliances can inform a manufacturer when performance is sub optimal, allowing action to be taken before the appliance fails. As Wi-Fi is commonplace, these technologies have, and will continue to expand in the future.
- 5.2 Embracing this technology at the right time and in the right way will provide enhanced services to tenants and improve efficiency savings by streamlining processes and extending appliance replacement timescales.
- 5.3 The increased use of smart phones and social media by tenants, together with the emergence of a new generation who have grown up with technology, increases expectations in relation to communications and the way in which services are delivered. To embrace this, the Co-operative should explore opportunities to enhance its interactive communications via App development and online video conferencing. Opportunities also exist to create videos to assist tenants or members with simple tasks or address frequently asked questions.

6. Digital inclusion and enablement

- 6.1 In accordance with the Government's digital agenda, the majority of interaction with departments and agencies occurs on-line.
- 6.2 It is widely recognised that there are huge advantages to obtaining services online. Access to goods and services is vast and generally cheaper, easier and more convenient to obtain than through traditional channels. In addition, social media has exploded in popularity, becoming the medium of choice and offering a range of opportunities to communicate and reconnect with friends and family.
- 6.3 Whilst the digital age is welcomed and embraced by the majority of tenants, it is likely that some of the most vulnerable groups, such as tenants on low incomes, those with disabilities and/or the elderly may be materially disadvantaged.
- 6.4 To address this, the Co-operative will engage with local partners and agencies to help ensure that tenants have access to:
- computers and broadband
 - training and support to get online and stay safe
 - support to set up accounts for social media, assisting social inclusion
 - support with other digital services, such as, switching utility suppliers, maximising income, and reducing fuel poverty
 - support with the current cost of living challenges and pandemics such as the Covid-19 pandemic

7. Current ICT environment

- 7.1 The following operational equipment and software is utilised by the Co-operative as part of its day-to-day business

Network hardware and software

- i) Each year the Co-operative liaises with our ICT contractor to assess the maintenance requirements for the network, taking account of requirements included within the ICT Asset Register. This includes anti-virus software, the effectiveness of which is monitored by our ICT contractor. Our ICT contractor also provides maintenance, support and security for our Microsoft 365 environment therefore the Co-operative meets the standard requirements currently.

- ii) All cost incurred in the replacement of ICT equipment or provision of services will be carried out in accordance with the Co-operative's financial regulations and procurement policy.

Housing management and maintenance software – SDM

- i) The SDM system is used for both housing management and maintenance functions and has a range of modules, including complaints. These are monitored and maintained by SDM. Whilst these systems are stored on the server, only SDM has permissions for remote access to rectify any issues that arise.
- ii) The cost for SDM is based on a small or large package with the Co-operative currently on the small package.

Finance software – Pegasus OPERA 3

- i) Pegasus software is used for Finance purpose and accommodates the Co-operative's bank accounts, purchase ledger, nominal ledger and salaries.

Time management – Kelio

- i) Kelio is utilised for absence recording and time management.

Copying equipment

- i) The Co-operative has a maintenance agreement for the upkeep of one of its photo copiers which is used as a network printer by the majority of staff.

Website

- i) The website is hosted by Scottish Housing Connections who administer and maintain the site for an annual fee. Staff members also have access to the site and can add information and documents to ensure that it is kept up to date.

Allpay

- i) This system is in place to enable residents to pay their rent at various payment outlets, online or via an app. There was a one-off fee for the installation of the Allpay system and further fees are incurred in accordance with the number of transactions and users.

Real asset management (RAM)

- This system is used for the accounting, management and maintenance of the Co-operative's stock and incurs an annual licence fee.

8. Risk management and security

8.1 Security of ICT systems encompasses the protection of information, data, systems and networks from attacks and unauthorised access.

8.2 Cyber-attacks and intrusions have increased dramatically in recent years. Whilst the Co-operative is a small target and may not be worth deliberately targeting, we can easily be exposed to any number of automated attacks by malware, including ransom ware, social engineering/phishing attacks.

8.3 Cyber-attacks have the potential to:

- Expose sensitive client data
- Steal valuable data relating to tenants, the organisation or third parties
- Disrupt the operations of the business, causing reputational damage
- Use the Co-operative's systems as a route to accessing data in other providers' systems where we share access privileges

8.4 While additional security measures can be introduced, the Co-operative cannot block every email and some form of malware could potentially get through to users, compromising the system. Education of staff therefore remains critical to ensure that the Co-operative's systems and data is protected.

8.5 The provision of secure services requires resilient infrastructure and an organisational culture which embraces information security awareness. The Co-operative will help to achieve this by:

- Ensuring all the basics of good technically based ICT security practice are undertaken on a regular basis
- Installing and maintaining software that can block ransom attacks
- Conducting regular security penetration test of our ICT environment
- Providing regular staff training in relation to ICT security and ensure that it is made available to new staff as part of their induction

9. Review

- 9.1 The Strategy should be reviewed every three years, or earlier in line with legal, regulatory, best practice or organisational requirements. The next review will take place no later than January 2025.

10. UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR) Privacy Statement

- 10.1 The Co-operative will gather and use certain information about individuals in accordance with UK GDPR. Staff members have a responsibility to ensure compliance with the terms of the privacy policy and to collect, handle and store personal information in accordance with relevant legislation. The Fair Processing Notice (FPN) details how personal data is held and processed with third parties in accordance with relevant policies and procedures.