



ICT Strategy

Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service

2023-2026



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Staffordshire
Fire and Rescue Service
preventing • protecting • responding



The Information and Communications Technology (ICT) strategy defines how technology will support Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service in achieving the strategic priorities of:

Prevention and early intervention

Protecting Staffordshire and its communities

Public confidence

Service reform

Our strategic priorities are detailed in our Community Risk Management Plan which identifies how the organisation plans to achieve its goals.

The ICT Strategy is part of the suite of documentation which support the delivery of the Community Risk Management Plan and explains the direction of the Service in relation to digital transformation and future proofing.

Summary

In this rapidly evolving digital landscape, Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service (SFRS) is committed to embracing innovation and leveraging the power of technology to drive progress, both for communities and for our staff.

Our ICT strategy outlines a transformative approach that embraces existing and innovative technologies, and fosters a culture of continuous improvement. By adopting proven and cutting-edge solutions, we aim to enhance operational efficiency for service delivery personnel, optimise resource allocation across the organisation, and deliver exceptional value for money to our stakeholders.

As a public sector organisation, our focus on innovation and our progressive nature is vital to meeting the evolving needs of our communities and delivering efficient, transparent, and person-centric services to improve the quality of life for the people that live, work and visit Staffordshire.





Core Code of Ethics (CCoE)

The Core Code of Ethics is of paramount importance to the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) department within SFRS. This code sets out a set of guiding principles and values that uphold the integrity, professionalism, and ethical conduct of all personnel within the organisation, including the ICT team.

Firstly, the Core Code of Ethics fosters a culture of trust and accountability within the ICT function. As custodians of critical digital infrastructure and sensitive data, ICT professionals play a vital role in ensuring the smooth operation and efficiency of the entire Service. By adhering to the code, ICT personnel are reminded of their responsibility to maintain the highest standards of honesty, confidentiality, and integrity when handling sensitive information. This creates an environment where colleagues can rely on one another, enhancing teamwork and co-operation, which ultimately translates to improved service delivery.

Secondly, the code emphasises the importance of continuous professional development and upholding relevant legal and regulatory requirements. Technology is constantly evolving, and the ICT department must stay updated with the latest advancements and best practices to keep us at the cutting edge of innovation. The Core Code of Ethics encourages ICT professionals to pursue relevant training, certifications, and qualifications, thus ensuring that the department is well-equipped to tackle emerging challenges and cyber threats effectively.



Furthermore, the Core Code of Ethics fosters a sense of duty and dedication to SFRS's strategic priorities. The ICT department is an integral part of the organisation's operations, and its efficient functioning directly impacts the effectiveness of emergency response and overall public safety. By aligning their actions with the values outlined in the code, ICT personnel are motivated to perform their duties diligently and prioritise service delivery to its customers, reinforcing the organisation's commitment to saving lives and protecting communities.

Additionally, the Core Code of Ethics highlights the significance of confidentiality and data protection in the ICT department. As the custodians of sensitive and personal information, ICT professionals must exercise utmost care and diligence in safeguarding data against unauthorised access or breaches. Adhering to the code ensures that personnel follow strict data security protocols, minimising the risk of data leaks and preserving trust in the Fire and Rescue Service aligned to the 'Public Confidence' strategic priority.

The Core Code of Ethics plays a crucial role in guiding the ethical conduct and professional behaviour of the ICT department. By promoting trust, accountability, continuous professional development, and data protection, the code ensures that the ICT team operates at the highest ethical standards, ultimately contributing to our successes in fulfilling our commitments to protecting its communities.





Introduction

In today's digital age, being at the forefront of technological advancements is paramount to our successes.

Our ICT strategy sets the stage for innovative and transformational practices aligned to our strategic priority of 'Service Reform'. We will look to harness the potential of cloud-based technologies to revolutionise our business processes, enhance collaboration opportunities, and enable agile decision-making for our personnel working remotely in the communities of Staffordshire.

By aligning ICT with our Digital and Data Strategy, we will unlock new opportunities, drive growth, and consolidate the Services position at the forefront of the Fire & Rescue sector.

As a public sector organisation, our commitment to innovation takes on added significance as we strive to deliver services that improve the lives of our communities, and upholds the principles of sound governance, accountability and value for money service delivery.

Strategic Vision

Our vision for ICT over the next 4 years is to be a catalyst for innovation, empowering personnel within the organisation to deliver excellent performance. By exercising modern technologies, the organisation will strive to build a dynamic, adaptable, and future-proofed ICT ecosystem that supports in delivering exceptional products and services, fostering customer satisfaction within communities, and driving sustainable organisational growth in an ever-changing digital landscape.

As a public sector organisation, the vision for ICT encompass delivering community centric services, promoting and maximising the social impact that our interventions can make, and ensuring the effective and responsible use of public resources, in both finances and personnel.





Pre-Strategy Position

As we embark on this progressive journey of reformation, it is crucial to assess its current ICT landscape with regular annual reviews of direction and progress towards goals. By conducting a comprehensive analysis of our existing infrastructure, systems, and processes, we can identify areas of improvement and capitalise on opportunities for innovation, prioritising as appropriate.

These assessments serve as the foundation for the transformational roadmap of the Service, empowering us to strategically migrate towards improved technologies that offer scalability, flexibility, and cost-efficiency. Being a public sector organisation, these ongoing assessments also include a thorough evaluation of existing service delivery methods, community or stakeholder impact analysis, and opportunities for enhancing transparency and efficiency in all operations.

Our assessments reveal that there are opportunities for enhancing our operations, improving the accessibility for staff with diverse requirements, and augmenting the quality of our services we deliver.

By placing our strategic direction on the continued migration to cloud first based solutions, we can reduce internal infrastructure costs and ensure reliable data storage and backup solutions are maintained. Cloud first means that we look at all appropriate technologies, but where cloud can deliver the service, we choose that first.

Additionally, cloud-based solutions offer enhanced co-operative capabilities with a range of partners, and also with the shared services that we operate in collaboration with Staffordshire Police. This will enable seamless communication and information sharing among our teams, departments, and external stakeholders.

By leveraging these technologies, we can create a more connected and efficient public sector ecosystem, enhancing the user experience and empowering our workforce to deliver on the organisation's strategic priorities. To leverage digital and data effectively, we must align our initiatives with strategic objectives and enhance collaboration among departments, stakeholders, and data users to ensure responsible governance and public trust.





Goals and Objectives

Our ICT strategy 2023-2026 establishes ambitious goals and objectives that embrace innovation and promote progressive thinking. We aim to enhance our agility, streamline operations, and help to foster a culture of innovation across all levels of the organisation.

These dynamic goals will guide our initiatives, ensuring that our ICT investments deliver tangible business outcomes and consolidate our position within the sector. As a public sector organisation, these goals will help to deliver efficient, accessible, and person-centric services while upholding the principles of transparency, accountability, and making a positive social impact.



Our ICT strategic objectives include:

1. Enhancing Service Delivery:

Optimise service delivery processes across Prevention, Protection & Response departments, reducing maintenance requirements, enhancing accessibility for our diverse workforce and their bespoke needs, and ensuring a seamless experience for our stakeholders. We will look to procure off the shelf solutions, externally supported by software developers to minimise the amount of time spent maintaining software by in house personnel.

These activities will help us to support the strategic priority of 'Protecting Staffordshire and its Communities' by improving the delivery of services.

2. Improving Data Security & Privacy:

Cloud-based data management provides robust security measures, protecting sensitive data and ensuring compliance with privacy regulations. Where possible we will minimise the requirements for the maintenance of hardware within Staffordshire Fire & rescue premises. We will strengthen its data security framework and identify options for external accreditation.

This will aid in safeguarding organisational information and maintain trust in our operations for stakeholders internal and external, in line with our strategic priority of 'Public Confidence'.





3. Promoting Collaboration & Knowledge Sharing:

Collaboration tools will facilitate efficient communication and foster cohesive activities amongst teams both internally and externally, enabling knowledge sharing, idea generation, and cross-departmental cooperation.

Using Microsoft 365 to its potential through increased reliance on software such as SharePoint, Teams and PowerBI will aid in the delivery of services across a multi-site, multi-faceted organisation supporting remote working and operational response capabilities linked to our strategic priority of 'Prevention and Early Intervention'.

4. Driving Innovation:

Through the adoption of emerging technologies platforms, we will create an environment that fosters innovation, encouraging our workforce to think creatively, experiment with new ideas, and implement innovative solutions.

We will continue to horizon scan for upcoming innovation within the Fire & Rescue sector through collaboration with other Services and through ongoing engagement with the National Fire Chiefs Council, adopting new technologies as appropriate for the organisation and collaborating with partners to gain mutually beneficial efficiencies.

We will actively participate in and attend industry wide engagement with local and national forums, trade shows and understand innovative changes within infrastructure to ensure that opportunities can be exploited to maximise the effectiveness of the organisation in line with the 'Service Reform' strategic priority.

5. Enhancing User Engagement:

Digital solutions will enable us to develop user-friendly online portals, interactive communication channels, and personalised services, enhancing staff engagement, agile working opportunities and improved job satisfaction for staff.

Ensuring we engage with staff and stakeholders to understand their requirements, we can guarantee that expectations are managed in relation to availability of solutions, how they will integrate into existing systems and processes and how this may or may not be action when balanced with Service-wide work prioritisation.

Building and maintaining these relationships will be key to improving user engagement and offering the best solutions within resource requirements.

By pursuing these five objectives, we will position ourselves as a progressive and user-focused public sector organisation that delivers efficient, transparent, effective and innovative services to its staff and its communities. This direction will drive digital transformation, improve collaboration, and empower the workforce to be more productive, creative, and customer-focused, all derived from our strategic priorities as detailed in the Community Risk Management Plan.





Deliverables

To realise our vision, we will embark on a series of strategic initiatives that push the boundaries and reform previous direction.

We will undertake projects such as migrating critical systems to the cloud, implementing a scalable infrastructure, and exploring emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and machine learning.

Specific strategic initiatives include:

1. Cloud Migration:

We will assess our existing systems and prioritise the migration of critical applications, databases, and infrastructure to secure and scalable cloud platforms. This will enhance our operational efficiency, reduce costs, and provide greater flexibility for future growth.

2. Data Analytics and Insights:

By harnessing analytics tools, we will unlock the value of our data, gaining actionable insights that drive evidence-based decision-making and support policy formulation and program evaluation.

3. Emerging Technologies:

We will explore the potential of emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, machine learning, and Internet of Things to develop innovative solutions that enhance service delivery, optimise resource allocation, and improve community engagements.

4. Digital Transformation:

We will develop and implement digital transformation strategies that leverage cloud-based technologies to digitise and automate our processes, reducing administrative burdens, and enabling self-service options for users, minimising ICT staff interactions and freeing them up to continue developing innovative solutions.

5. Cybersecurity and Privacy:

As we adopt cloud-based solutions, we will prioritise the implementation of robust cybersecurity measures, ensuring the protection of our data and compliance with relevant privacy regulations. We will use internal and external partners to ascertain the successes of these initiatives.

By pursuing these strategic initiatives, we will position the organisation as a forward-thinking, digitally-enabled public sector organisation that harnesses the power of emerging technologies to drive innovation, enhance service delivery, and create a positive impact on the lives of our communities.

Our strategic initiatives will maintain focus on improving service delivery, enhancing engagement, and promoting the efficient use of public resources.





Governance and Organisational Structure

To foster a culture of innovation and progressiveness, our ICT strategy encompasses a robust governance framework and an adaptive organisational structure. This structure will empower cross-functional teams to collaborate seamlessly, break down silos, and drive innovation throughout the organisation. Through effective governance, we will ensure that our cloud-based initiatives are aligned with business objectives, adhere to best practices, and deliver sustainable value. As a public sector organisation, our governance and organisational structure will also prioritise transparency, accountability, and compliance with regulatory requirements.

Specific aspects of our governance and organisational structure include:

1. Leadership and Accountability:

We will assign clear roles and responsibilities for overseeing the implementation of our ICT strategy, ensuring that leaders are accountable for driving innovation and projects, managing risks, and delivering results.

2. Cross-Functional Collaboration:

We will establish multidisciplinary teams comprising representatives from different departments and stakeholders, fostering collaboration, knowledge sharing with various organisations, and the exchange of best practices locally, regionally and nationally.

3. Stakeholder Engagement:

We will actively engage with our customers, soliciting their input, feedback, and ideas to inform our ICT initiatives, and ensure that our services align with their needs and appropriately manage expectations.

4. Compliance and Risk Management:

Our governance framework will include robust mechanisms for ensuring compliance with relevant regulations, standards, and policies related to data security, privacy, and financial management. We will also implement risk management processes to proactively identify and address potential risks associated with our day to day activities and align them to organisational risk.

5. Continuous Improvement:

We will establish mechanisms for monitoring, evaluating, and continuously improving our ICT initiatives. Regular assessments, performance reviews, and feedback loops will enable us to adapt to changing circumstances, seize emerging opportunities, and deliver ongoing value to our consumers.

By adopting an effective governance framework and an adaptive organisational structure, we will create an environment that nurtures innovation, promotes progressive thinking, and ensures the successful implementation of our range of ICT initiatives.





Implementation Plan

To translate our ICT strategy into action, we will develop annually a comprehensive implementation plan that outlines the specific steps, timelines, resource requirements, and key performance indicators for our strategic intentions. This plan will prioritise initiatives based on their potential impact, feasibility, and alignment with our organisational goals. We will establish a dedicated project management officer and allocate the necessary resources to execute the plan effectively and deliver on time and within external constraints.

Continuous monitoring and periodic reviews will enable us to track progress, address challenges, and make necessary adjustments to ensure successful implementation.

Monitoring and Evaluation

To ensure the effectiveness of our ICT strategy and its alignment with our objectives, we will establish robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Regular reporting, stakeholder feedback, and independent audits will enable us to measure the impact of our initiatives, identify areas for improvement and demonstrate value for money. As a public sector organisation, our monitoring and evaluation processes will prioritise transparency, accountability, and customer satisfaction, providing insights that inform our decision-making and drive continuous improvement both locally within the directorate and informing the wider organisation.

By incorporating these narrative additions, the ICT strategy document showcases our commitment to innovation, progressiveness, and using cloud-based technologies, while highlighting the unique considerations and responsibilities of being a public sector organisation.





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