SOUTH YORKSHIRE
PENSIONS AUTHORITY

ICT
Strategy
2022 to 2025

Commitment to Excellence

1. Introduction

Access to effective ICT systems and infrastructure is crucial to SYPA's ability to deliver its services successfully and to achieve improvements in the efficiency of our operations, whether that is in the administration of pension benefits, the investment of the funds money or the back-office processes required to run the organisation.

This strategy sets out what we will do over the next three years to maintain and continue to improve our technological base in a way that will support the delivery of the objectives set out in the Corporate Strategy. This builds on the significant investment in new systems and infrastructure made over the last three years, which in some areas has been accelerated by the pandemic.

Delivering for our customers is the focus of SYPA's mission statement and the focus of this strategy is about how we use technology to do that, whether that be:

- The networks and hardware we use;
- The applications and software we use and develop;

This strategy is constructed around 4 themes:

- Infrastructure and Agility
- Customer Access
- Business Processes
- Information Governance and Security

Achieving the objectives set in each area will contribute to achieving the improvements in service to our customers which we wish to see.

2. The current reality - understanding what we have now

The Authority's current ICT infrastructure is based on a resilient, secure and efficient 'on premise' datacentre comprising:

- A 1Gbps client / server hard wired network infrastructure
- Server virtualisation technology enabling server consolidation and providing improved resilience and efficiency savings.
- A Storage Area Network (SAN) infrastructure to store all virtual servers and data, thereby improving resilience and data integrity in addition to enabling more effective disaster recovery processes.
- The Mimecast Cloud Service is used for Unified Email Management and Egress Switch provides email encryption and data loss prevention.
- Security of the Infrastructure and data is paramount and performed in accordance with ISO 27002 best practices, with assurance provided by annual IT Health Checks.
- An online backup and integrated disaster recovery solution

End user computing is provided through

- All staff being provided with a laptop enabled for agile working with a minimum of a two screen set up when in the office.
- The roll out of Microsoft 365 tools which is partially complete
- Agile working provided through Wi-Fi connectivity at Oakwell House, remote VPN access using multi-factor authentication together with Microsoft 365 applications for mobile devices
- A cloud based telephone system which incorporates MS Teams integration and a unified contact centre solution

ICT services are largely provided in house with specialist services bought in as required.

The Authority's key information system is the Civica UPM Pensions Administration system which is complimented by a range of in house developed software such as DART which assists in data cleansing and EPIC which provides a comprehensive employer portal.

Back-office systems for finance and investment accounting have recently transferred to an external cloud-based solution while those for payroll and the management of attendance are externally supplied and hosted locally. There is no comprehensive HR system in place.

The Authority's web presence has recently been consolidated on one website (www.sypensions.org.uk/), with a significant modernisation of the look and feel of the site and an improvement in the quality and accessibility of the content.

An intranet is supported through SharePoint and while some parts of the organisation have made significant progress in developing use of this facility take up has not been universal. The need to work from home during the pandemic has, though accelerated the utilisation of the workflow facilities within SharePoint to support a range of new processes, accelerating the move to paperless operation.

3. What we need our technology to deliver - The future possibility

This strategy is about providing the organisation with the technological tools that will allow us to deliver the agenda set out in the Corporate Strategy. Consequently, our technology must enable the organisation to be:

- Customer Focussed
- Agile
- An effective custodian of data
- Efficient and highly productive

These qualities have equal weight in all areas of the organisation be that Pension Administration, Investment, or support areas such as finance and HR.

Over the coming years we will need to ensure that all parts of the organisation fully embrace and exploit the opportunities presented by the technologies available and that we support staff to develop their skills in the use of technology to ensure that we get the best possible return on the investment that the Authority will be making.

The overall objective of this strategy is therefore to provide SYPA with technology solutions capable of ensuring the delivery of the objectives set out in the corporate strategy.

Specifically, the ICT strategy addresses the following corporate objectives:

Customer Focus
to design our services around the needs of our customers (whether scheme members or employers).

Effective and Transparent Governance
to uphold effective governance showing prudence and propriety at all times.

Valuing and engaging our Employees
to ensure that all our employees are able to develop a career with SYPA and are actively engaged in improving our services.

The following pages set out the specific activities that will be carried out over the planning period, and these are each supported by more detailed operational plans.

4. Developing and maintaining our ICT infrastructure to meet the needs of an increasingly agile organisation

A sound ICT infrastructure is the key foundation for anything else that we as an organisation might want to do using technology. It would, for example, be pointless investing significantly in a piece of software if the network was unable to support it. Getting this supposedly "boring" stuff right will mean that we are able to deliver all the other parts of this strategy more easily. Over the coming years we need to:

- *Review and implement the hardware replacement strategy to reflect the fundamental changes in the hardware estate brought about by the move to agile working. (By April 2023)*
- *Complete the roll out of Microsoft 365 to support the Authority's core desktop requirements including integration with telephony (By Sept 2022)*
- *Maintain fully compliant Microsoft licensing (ongoing)*
- *Conduct a rolling review of ICT policies in the light of the changing needs of the organisation, initially prioritising password management (Ongoing throughout the strategy period)*

Measuring success
Success in this area will be measured through network reliability and the "total cost of ownership" for a desktop device. Each project will also have their own individual success criteria.

5. Using technology to support a step change in the way customers access our services

Fundamental to the Corporate Strategy continues to be a new approach to customer access. While in part this is about reorganising how we provide some of our services this will only happen if we deliver a number of new technological solutions and develop some existing ones so that customers can access services in the most convenient way possible. This involves

- *Deployment of integration between the new VOIP telephone system and the customer relationship management facilities within UPM (Ongoing throughout the strategy period)*
- *Deployment of the mypension dynamic homepage (by March 2022) and improvements to the user registration and log on experience (Ongoing throughout the strategy period)*
- *Deliver improvements to the employer experience (by March 2023)*
- *Increasing the number of transactions that scheme members and employers can complete online and working to eliminate the need for paper (Ongoing throughout the strategy period)*

Measuring success

Each project will have their own success criteria but overall success will be measured through customer satisfaction levels and the increased take up of on line services.

6. Using technology to deliver efficient business processes

The Authority has in recent years invested significantly in its core pension administration systems and will continue to do so. However, the introduction of investment pooling fundamentally changes the requirements for some elements of the core business systems and others are now overdue for review, or, as in the case of HR there are gaps which should be filled. This requires a programme of work over the coming years comprising

- *The identification and implementation of an integrated HR, Payroll and Time and Attendance, system to complete the renewal of the core business systems (By March 2023)*
- *Ongoing review of supplier delivery of the undertakings within the Pension Administration Systems contract and escalation where delivery does not occur (Ongoing throughout the strategy period)*
- *Transfer existing SharePoint site to the 365 platform and further development and exploitation of capabilities (Ongoing throughout the strategy period).*
- *Implementation of Power BI and other reporting tools to provide more accessible management reporting across all aspects of the organisation. (Ongoing throughout the strategy period)*
- *Continuing to develop for our own use and sell to other LGPS funds our in house developed software suite. (Ongoing throughout the strategy period).*

Measuring success
Each project will have its own success criteria and the business case for each investment will need to show an appropriate return on investment.

7. Keeping data safe and secure

Data is fundamental to every aspect of the Authority's work, and the vast majority of the data which we handle is personal data of one sort or another. Consequently it is vital that we both maintain the integrity and security of this data and have systems in processes in place that prevent breaches of data protection rules. Over the next few years our focus in this area will be on:

- *Continuing to build and strengthen our cyber/information security capabilities, for example through annual IT Health Checks, training for IT staff, and the promotion of user awareness through mandatory training.(Annual exercises throughout the strategy period)*

- *Obtaining formal certification for our management arrangements in this area (e.g. ITIL and Cyber Essentials Plus). (Annual exercises throughout the strategy period).*

- *Demonstrating compliance with the new TPR Single Code of Practice in relation to Maintenance of IT Systems and Cyber Controls (Ongoing from Sept 2022)*

Measuring success
The measure of success in this area will be through the number of data breaches identified and the achievement and maintenance of the relevant accreditations.

8. Resourcing the Strategy

The resources available to deliver this strategy, including licensing costs, are as shown in the table below:

	2022/23 £	2022/23 £	2022/23 £
ICT Team	312,210	318,460	324,800
Corporate ICT Costs	146,990	151,400	155,940
Hardware Replacement Programme	35,000	35,000	35,000
Pensions Administration System	278,300	207,235	207,235
Finance System	44,630	37,400	38,500
Investment System	8,700	9,000	9,300
HR and Payroll Systems	4,880	20,000	20,000
Income from provision of services to other organisations	(62,000)	(62,000)	(62,000)
Total	**768,710**	**716,495**	**728,775**

The ICT Team has an establishment of 8.3 FTE, which includes additional resource to support the delivery of greater integration between systems and improve reporting from systems.

The actual expenditure on hardware replacement is uneven between years and this is managed through the ICT Strategy Reserve which also holds income from the sale of software to other organisations, which is reinvested in further improvements to infrastructure and systems.

There are a number of areas where additional investment may well be needed over the coming years in order to deliver the wider objectives of this strategy, in particular the ongoing upgrading of network infrastructure and the replacement of core business systems. These investments will be considered on a business case basis and approved as part of the annual budget process, and will undoubtedly lead to changes in the level of licence fees payable identified within the above figures.