Information Communication Technology Policy			
Last Reviewed	**March 2023**	**Next Review**	
Responsible Officer	**Chief Finance & Technology Officer**		

Policy Statement: We shall seek to provide the most cost effective and operationally effective ICT service capable of supporting our activities and to enable change in line with business strategy and operational plans.

Freebridge acknowledge that its electronic information and communication systems represent an extremely valuable asset, and we shall manage these effectively.

Freebridge will comply with all regulatory and relevant legislative requirements and shall securely protect personal data from events that may jeopardise operational activity or data integrity.

Policy Detail:

Freebridge **shall seek to:**

- Provide the most cost effective and operationally effective ICT service capable of supporting ongoing activity and enabling change in line with business strategy and operational plans
- Get the most from resources and more from existing systems to provide a "value-adding utility service"

This will be achieved through the following key themes:

- **Social and self-service/automation** including:
    - o Support digital inclusion initiatives to get people online in communities and their homes
    - o Develop multi-channel communication to keep customers up to date with enquiries (i.e. Email, SMS, web chat, social media)
    - o Support the use of the Internet of Things (IoT) i.e. smart TV and other IP enabled devices

- **Mobile** – accessibility and connectivity including controlled "Bring Your Own Device and "Bring Your Own Applications" to maximise:
    - o Capability for effective home, mobile and remote working for all (e-Enable whole workforce) including workspace transformation from static to anywhere
    - o ICT Team agility and capacity including:
        - ▪ Ability to provide support to a mobile workforce with differing devices and operating systems

- Ability to support service diversification and flexible working patterns
- Use of specialist partners to enhance service provision.
  - Flexible working:
    - Support and manage IT consumerisation to drive down hardware and communications cost of ownership and provide choice to users – empower people to be productive on any device
    - Provide devices based on individuals preferred way of working (people-centric ICT)
  - Provision ICT that supports flexible working in the office, home or anywhere.

- **Analytics** – improved reporting providing information for day to day and strategic decision making including:
  - Data analytics/reporting tools skills transfer to operational base with ICT providing a quality assurance service
  - Use our information asset analytically to make evidence based strategic and operational decisions including geographical information and trends
  - Supporting public scrutiny good governance through data and information transparency

- **Cloud** – scalable and elastic service provision (i.e. Infrastructure as a Service) and accessibility when connectivity is limited including:
  - Taking advantage of private, public and hybrid opportunities as they present themselves for data, applications, hardware and backup/disaster recovery; and
  - Information workers (creators - full access all of the time) v Kiosk workers (consumers - small amount of time accessing systems) – different service delivery models to suit each.

- **Security** – detecting and protecting against cyber crime including:
  - Building and managing a resilient private cloud infrastructure to protect business applications and data internally and externally, and provide high availability (always on, always up) services
  - Deploying services that detect cyber-attacks and protect what matters whilst making the user experience easy.

- **Attitude** – influencing the take up and use of technology within the business and community including:
  - Making a difference to the organisation by extracting value from technology by keeping pace with technological change and taking advantage of innovation opportunities as they arise
  - Encouraging and supporting employees to make the most of productivity and collaborative working tools through workshop facilitation and coaching

- o Championing organisation wide systems understanding and data ownership
- o Advocating the use of technology through digital champions in each service area
- o Identifying training and other technology support needs
- o Supporting the business through training, workshops and coaching to keep up to date with applications infrastructure i.e. Finance systems, MS Office, SharePoint, Forms, video conferencing.

Corporate Framework

We shall:

- Ensure that ICT services are aligned to Business Plans and associated Operational Plans of the organisation. It is recognised that technology underpins the business, and as the business changes so should its technology. Therefore, the ICT strategy must be flexible and reactive enough to respond to these to take advantage of opportunities as they arise.
- Recognise that mobilisation of the workforce and cloud computing can reduce cost and improve efficiencies. However, solutions will only be implemented once they have been proven externally, thus minimising risks, maintaining stability and enabling business continuity.

Systems Resilience

ICT is critical to business continuity so the strategy will aim to provide for systems resilience by minimising single points of failure in a cost-effective manner.

We shall ensure that:

- A disaster recovery plan in support of the Business Continuity Plan is in place and updated whenever a significant change is made to the ICT infrastructure.
- In the event of business-critical ICT systems being unavailable for a significant period of time, data and systems will be recovered at a designated location and recovered from onsite and cloud backups.

Procurement

We shall:

- Utilise systems, services and devices from as wide a range of providers as possible to reduce the risk of single supplier dependency and provide value for money.
- Procure all hardware, software and related services in accordance with Freebridge's Financial Regulations and Procurement Strategy. The availability of cloud technologies for data storage, applications, hardware and backup provides opportunities for Freebridge to take advantage of "pay as you use" models of licencing and infrastructure.

Information Management and Governance

We shall:

- Identify systematic, proactive approaches to managing sensitive, confidential information. This approach encompasses people, processes and technology ensuring that information held in manual files and data held on computer records are both secure and available to authorised persons only.
- Have Internet and Telephony Acceptable Use Rules, and Mobile Device Usage Rules for staff and Board/Committee Members. These will be 'signed up' to as part of the induction information provided to staff and Board/Committee Members on appointment prior to employment commencement. Staff and Board/Committee Members will be reminded of these policies on a regular basis.
- Comply with data protection legislation.
- Appoint a Data Protection Officer to ensure compliance and provide advice on data protection issues
- Ensure, as far as practicable that information held is accurate and up to date, and will check and cleanse data, wherever possible. Where we are requested to erase or port personal data we will do so in a timely manner.
- Ensure that data is owned by operational service areas, and relevant managers will take an active role in leading in the use of existing systems, and on projects to implement new systems into their operational area.

Systems Development and Project Management

We shall:

- Maintain a Projects Portfolio that outlines service improvements made through the introduction of new or upgraded ICT systems will be managed by the ICT Steering Group made up of Freebridge's Leadership Team and the ICT Business Partner.
- Monitor projects in line with the corporate Project Management Framework and provide a mechanism for controlling and prioritising systems development ensuring that:
    - Value for money is gained on capital investment;
    - Systems are 'Fit for Purpose';
    - Projects deliver expected service improvements or financial savings.
- Seek the ICT requirements from operational teams as the basis of the Projects Portfolio and ICT Operational Plans.

Operational Management

The ICT Team **shall:**

- Deliver services that provide an infrastructure for systems users to be able to access, use and interpret business critical information so they can carry out their duties effectively and efficiently from any location using corporate or personal devices to connect to services.

- Ensure that all ICT technicians are IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) framework trained to at least Foundation level and undertake accredited training for their specialist area.
- Be given opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge, so that systems development and support can be delivered in-house as much as possible, thus minimising regular use of external consultants.
- Enable the provision of effective support to an increasingly mobile workforce with differing devices and operating systems, and to support operational diversification.

ICT Assets

We shall:

- Manage corporate assets in as effective manner as possible to provide an efficient, value for money service.

- Provide a wide range of devices (desktops, laptops, tablets and smartphones) to staff to suit individuals' preferred way of working.

- Ensure all corporate owned fixed and mobile hardware assets with a significant value will have an identification label attached to them and be assigned to individuals or teams.

  Details will be recorded in an inventory which is maintained and reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that equipment is adequately insured and accounted for.

- Business and personal mobile devices with company data on them/access to corporate systems will be passcode protected as a minimum.

  All data and access will be 'wiped' remotely if a device is lost or stolen. With personal devices some asset management responsibility passes to the individual. However, we will insist on up to date security standards and updates being applied to devices.

- Maintain a software library. Regular audits shall be undertaken to ensure that Freebridge is licensed appropriately.