

STRATA - JOINT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Tuesday 20 June 2017

Present:-

Cllr Paul Diviani (Chair)
Councillors Christophers and Edwards

Non-Voting Members
K Hassan, P Shears and M Williams

Also Present

Strata IT Director, Chief Finance Officer, Strata Board Director, Compliance and Security Manager, Business Systems Manager, Infrastructure and Support Manager, Programme & Resource Manager, Document Centre Manager and Democratic Services Manager (Committees)

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ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Diviani was elected Chair.

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APOLOGIES

No apologies for absence were received.

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MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 27 March 2017 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as correct.

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest were made.

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STRATA IT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Strata IT Director presented his report to update Members on the progress within Strata.

The Strata IT Director presented his comprehensive report providing an update on the function of the Strata organisation, the aim being to provide background to the core areas of specialisation within Strata and identifying key activities, successes and areas for improvement. He detailed a SWOT analysis developed in conjunction with the Strata Board and Strata staff and highlighted the following key areas:-

- Internal and External Communication – the first edition of the Strata Newsletter was tabled
- Supplier Management
- Projects and Business Change Requests - Workload
- Security including Cyber Threats

The Strata IT Director advised that improved management was now in place to give realistic timescales for business change requests (BCR) which would aid with the management of BCR's and the Councils would also know what they could expect.

In response to Members, the Strata IT Director clarified that the majority of issues with the Global Desk Top had been identified and that a recent survey of all Council staff had raised 11 factors including printing, taking a long time to log on, and problems with Microsoft Outlook. These issues were currently being investigated and a Global Desktop Improvement Plan had been compiled to ensure that resolutions were being worked on in a structured fashion.

Members discussed the need to ensure there was capacity to undertake BCR's and that Strata would not need to come back to the Council's for extra resources to take these forward.

The Chief Executive, East Devon District Council, raised concerns regarding the IT installation at Exmouth and that if it would be installed on time and fit for purpose.

Individual managers presented their respective areas as set out below:-

Infrastructure Projects - Adrian Smith

The Infrastructure and Support Manager advised that the issues with the data centre at Oakwood House in Marsh Barton, Exeter had been addressed by the installation of a new air conditioning system although a review would be undertaken of Oakwood House regarding its suitability as the location of the backup data centre.

As a result of the introduction of an external organisation at Teignbridge, refurbishment including IT systems was progressing rapidly and it was anticipated that Global Communication installation at Exmouth, as part of the overall relocation of the Council offices, would commence in Exmouth in late August.

Strata were currently undertaking a review of the Global Desktop environment (Global Desktop Improvement Programme) and looking at a number of issues that had been reported. The most pressing current problem with the Global Desktop was outlook crashing, other issues including wrong printer settings, blank screens, slow login and specific applications slowness including Excel. He assured Members that the problems encountered were being addressed. The current feedback satisfaction rate for the service desk was 97%. Strata was now working closely with students from Exeter College who had recently undertaken a project to redesign the Strata web site.

Strata officers clarified that the Housing and Benefits server had already been migrated to Exmouth and the file servers would be migrated in due course.

Document Centres - Martin Millmow

The Document Centre Manager reported that new printing devices would be rolled out, Ricoh having been the successful of seven tenderers and with the existing 80 printers to be reduced to 53 the new devices were equipped to cope with recent system upgrades, the roll out to commence with Exeter City Council. The Strata web design team had worked on a wide range of communication materials to support the second phase of the new East Devon District Council Waste and Recycling scheme.

The Document Centre Manager clarified that the printers would be able to use Wi-Fi and this would be rolled out in the second/third phase. Teignbridge District Council felt that this option was vital in light of staff now using laptops and mobile devices.

Programme and Resources – Steve Gammon

The Programme and Resources Manager detailed the 16 systems convergence projects being undertaken as requested by Council service managers and as agreed by the partner Councils and in the annual Strata Business Plan.

He referred to the increase in the cost of the Car Park system which, nevertheless, had been put back by the delay in the system's implementation and to the increase in cost (£13,000) of a new HR and Payroll system at Teignbridge to bring it in line with legislative changes.

Business Systems – Dave Sercombe

The Business Systems Manager provided an update on staff changes.

He reported that Strata were continuing to deliver the 70 plus system implementation and business case projects currently in progress, such a high demand placing pressure on business change requests. Some of the main projects were HR and Payroll and Garden Waste Renewals for Teignbridge, Document Management and Waste and Recycling rollouts for East Devon and Car Parks for East Devon and Teignbridge, Trade Waste Management for Exeter, the latter having experienced some issues with invoices that were being resolved.

Compliance and Security – Robin Barlow

The Compliance and Security Manager enlarged on the recent cyber-attacks explaining that hackers were constantly probing systems for weaknesses with up to a million probes a day common and with 20,000 attacks since March. A table detailed the source of attacks by nation. Extra vigilance was therefore vital.

The Compliance and Security team were analysing the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations which would need to be complied with by May 2018.

General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) was now coming forward and Strata would need to consider compliance with the GDPR directives as a priority moving forward.

Strata had agreed a new Public Services Network contract and delivered a saving of £20,000 over a two year term.

In response to a Member, the Compliance and Security Manager clarified that Strata had two firewalls.

Strata Joint Scrutiny Committee considered the report at its meeting on 15 June 2017 and its comments were reported.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

STRATA BUDGET MONITORING OUT-TURN REPORT 2016/17

The Director Responsible for Finance presented the report on advising on the financial performance of Strata during 2016-17, including both revenue and capital spend.

The Director responsible for Finance reported that Strata had been set a savings target of £254,052 in the original business case. Following approval to move staff to new Strata terms and conditions, a revenue saving of only £26,964 had been projected at the start of the financial year 2016/17. However, the Strata budget had delivered £310,950 of revenue savings for 2016/17 including employee savings of £51,695 resulting from vacancies, £54,000 from the mobile telephone budget and £318,356 from income, notably Central Government funds, especially for Revenue and Benefits systems.

Members were advised that Strata had repaid £100,000 to the Councils and the Board had identified the following options for the Strata Joint Executive Committee:-

- return the additional £200,000 to the Councils; or
- following the IT Director's review, two areas of the business had been identified which would benefit from additional resource in order to strengthen the service provided to Councils and to generate further savings. The Board had recommended the appointment of two Project Managers and one Supplier Engagement Manager on fixed term contracts for two years. The cost was estimated at £132,000 a year, with the balance of funding coming from anticipated additional savings generated by the Supplier Engagement Manager.

The two Project Manager posts would support the Business Analyst teams in delivering IT projects. This would enable the Business Analysts to focus on delivery and allow for better engagement with the client services. It would also alleviate many of the problems identified in the IT Director's report in respect of the strain and excessive workload that the team was currently facing.

The Supplier Engagement Manager post would work more closely with suppliers to drive greater efficiency in contract negotiation, again removing another element of work from the team. By having dedicated experts in project management and supplier engagement, the Company would be better placed to use the skills of its team to match the requirements of the customers.

A Member raised the option of having a compensation plan if Strata did not deliver projects on time. The Executive supported a report from the Strata Board on any possible compensation penalties.

The Director Responsible for Finance clarified the budget position regarding the Council's mobile phone data provision and that any changes to projects in the convergence plan would be reflected when the plan was updated.

Strata Joint Scrutiny Committee considered the report at its meeting on 15 June 2017 and its comments were reported.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) the report be noted; and
- (2) the Board submit a report on compensation penalties for non-delivery of projects on time; and

RECOMMENDED that;-

- (3) the three Councils approve the appointment of two Project Managers and one Supplier Engagement Manager on fixed term contracts for two years. The cost is estimated at £132,000 a year, with the balance of funding coming from anticipated additional savings generated by the Supplier Engagement Manager.

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STRATA TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2017/18

The report of the HR Lead for Strata on Training and Development plan was submitted.

Strata Joint Scrutiny Committee considered the report at its meeting on 15 June 2017 and its comments were reported.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

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STRATA PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE REVIEW FORM

The report of the HR Lead for Strata on the Performance Excellence Review was submitted.

Strata Joint Scrutiny Committee considered the report at its meeting on 15 June 2017 and its comments were reported.

RESOLVED that Performance Excellence Reviews be noted.

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STRATA - EMPLOYEE REFERRAL SCHEME POLICY

The report of the HR Lead for Strata for the Employee Referral Scheme Policy was submitted.

Strata Joint Scrutiny Committee considered the report at its meeting on 15 June 2017 and its comments were reported.

RESOLVED that the Employee Referral Scheme Policy be noted.

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 - EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Part I, Schedule 12A of the Act.

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UPDATE ON DISCUSSIONS WITH SOFTWARE SUPPLIER

The Strata IT Director updated Members on the discussions with Software Suppliers.

The Infrastructure Projects Manager updated Members on progress with a compensation package with a software supplier following the identification of a number of faults with the product. He advised that, unusually for a software supplier of this size, they had made a written gesture of goodwill and had offered to extend

the five year contract by 12 months and to offer professional support to assist with the upgrade.

The financial details of this offer were detailed.

Members discussed the offer and the way forward advised by the Strata Board Members present. They agreed that the financial offered should be accepted.

Strata Joint Scrutiny Committee considered the report at its meeting on 15 June 2017 and its comments were reported.

RESOLVED that the financial settlement, as advised, be agreed.

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TEIGNBRIDGE DIGITAL PLATFORM

The Business Systems Manager presented the report updating Members on changes to timescales of the Digital Platform project at Teignbridge District Council.

Members were advised that, although it had been the intention to implement a Digital Platform for either East Devon or Teignbridge in March 2018, the former had commenced the refurbishment of Forde House to accommodate an external organisation and wished to commence digital convergence by September, the aim being to streamline service delivery to customers by taking a “digital first” approach and making the customer the heart of the process. There were no resource or cost implications for Strata.

Members noted that the Strata Business Plan would be updated to reflect this change in the scheduling of the Teignbridge Digital Platform.

Strata Joint Scrutiny Committee considered the report at its meeting on 15 June 2017 and its comments were reported.

RESOLVED that the order of implementation and proposed changes to the timescales of the Teignbridge District Council Digital Platform be noted.

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VIRGIN MEDIA BUSINESS

The Strata IT Director updated Members on the position with the Virgin Media Business. He reported that significant problems had been encountered with the performance of the supplier, the implementation of a major system taking over 250 working days rather than the originally proposed lead time of 25 working days. This had meant that it had been necessary to tightly manage the project with ongoing discussions at a senior level with the company.

Members welcomed the update.

Strata Joint Scrutiny Committee considered the report at its meeting on 15 June 2017 and its comments were reported.

RESOLVED that the update on the discussion be noted.

STREET NAMING AND NUMBERING POLICY

The Strata Manager Programme and Resources submitted a report on the proposal of a common Street Name & Numbering (SNN) policy for adoption by the three councils. The proposal was that East Devon District Council and Teignbridge District Council retain, and Exeter City Council adopt, the Town Improvement Clauses Act 1847 as a single and consistent basis for providing the Street Naming and Numbering function administered on behalf of the Councils by Strata.

Strata Joint Scrutiny Committee considered the report at its meeting on 15 June 2017 and its comments were reported.

RESOLVED that the report be noted; and

RECOMMENDED that Exeter City Council approves the adoption of the common Street Name & Numbering (SNN) policy and the revised charge of £147 with effect from 1 April 2017.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 7.10 pm)

Chair