



Solutions for government

Forde House
Newton Abbot

E-mail: comsec@teignbridge.gov.uk

26 August 2022

STRATA - JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Dear Councillor

You are invited to a meeting of the above Committee which will take place on **Tuesday, 6th September, 2022** in the **East Devon Business Centre , Heathpark Way, Heathpark Industrial Estate, Honiton EX14 1SF**, at **4.00 pm**

Yours sincerely

Phil Shears
Managing Director

Distribution:

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| (1) The Members of the Strata - Joint Scrutiny Committee: | |
| Councillor Phil Twiss | East Devon District Council |
| Councillor Nick Hookway | East Devon District Council |
| Councillor Paul Knott | Exeter City Council |
| Councillor Rob Newby | Exeter City Council |
| Councillor Trish Oliver | Exeter City Council |
| Councillor Chris Clarence | Teignbridge District Council |
| Councillor Charles Nuttall | Teignbridge District Council |
| Councillor John Petherick | Teignbridge District Council |
| vacancy | vacancy EDDC |

A link to the agenda on the Council's website is emailed FOR INFORMATION (less reports (if any) containing Exempt Information referred to in Part II of the agenda), to:

- (1) All other Members of the Council
- (2) Representatives of the Press
- (3) Requesting Town and Parish Councils

If Councillors have any questions relating to predetermination or interests in items on this Agenda, please contact the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting

AGENDA

Part I

1. Apologies for absence

2. Election of Chair 2022/23

Based on the existing annual rotation for the position of Chair, the Chair is to be appointed from the East Devon District Council Members.

Previous Chairs were: Cllr Clarence - Teignbridge District Council 2021/22;
Cllr Atkinson - Exeter City Council 2020/21.

3. Minutes (Pages 5 - 8)

To approve the minutes of 12 July 2021.

4. Declarations of Interest

Councillors are reminded of the need to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests that relate to business on the agenda.

5. Questions from the Public Under Procedural Rules

A period of up to 15 minutes will be set aside to deal with questions to the Committee from members of the public.

Each individual will be restricted to speaking for a total of 3 minutes.

Where a question does not relate to an agenda item details of questions should be notified to the Proper Officer of the Relevant Council at least two working days prior to the meeting.

6. Question from Members of the Councils under Procedure Rules

To receive questions from Members of the Councils.

Where a question does not relate to an agenda item details of questions should be notified to the Proper Officer of the Relevant Council at least two working days prior to the meeting.

7. Strata Performance Report - Strata IT Director (Pages 9 - 18)

8. Strata Finance Report, budget monitoring at July 2022/23 - Strata Finance Director (Pages 19 - 24)

9. Strata Finance Report budget monitoring outturn 2021/22 - Strata Finance Director (Pages 25 - 58)

10. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 - Exclusion of Press and Public

It is not considered that the Committee would be likely to exclude the press and public during the consideration of any of the items on this agenda but, if it should wish to do so, then the following resolution should be passed: -

That, under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for particular item(s) on the grounds that it (they) involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Part II: Items suggested for discussion with the press and public excluded

NIL

Date of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting will be held on 6 January 2023, 4pm at Council Chamber, Blackdown House, Border Rd, Heathpark Industrial estate, Honiton, EX14 1EJ

If you would like this information in another format, please e-mail info@teignbridge.gov.uk

STRATA - JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 12 JULY 2021

Present:

Councillors Twiss, Atkinson, Clarence and Nuttall

Members Attendance:

Councillors

Apologies:

Councillors King, Hookway, Denning, Sparkes and J Petherick

Officers in Attendance:

Laurence Whitlock, Strata IT Director
Paul Nicholls, Company Director for STRATA
Simon Davey, Strata Board Director
Robin Barlow, Head of Security & Compliance
Peter Johns, Head of IT Solutions Delivery
Martin Millmow, Head of Document Centres
Adrian Smith, Head of Infrastructure & Support
Trish Corns, Democratic Services Officer
Christopher Morgan, Trainee Democratic Services Officer

9. ELECTION OF CHAIR 2021/2022

In accordance with the existing annual rotation for the position of Chair, Councillor Nuttall proposed that Councillor Clarence representing Teignbridge District Council be elected Chair for the 2021/22 Municipal Year. This was seconded by Councillor Twiss and

RESOLVED

Councillor Clarence be elected Chair for the 2021/22 Municipal Year.

10. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 January were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair, with the amendment of *Chair* being added to the sign off at the end of the minutes.

11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

12. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER PROCEDURAL RULES

None.

13. QUESTION FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCILS UNDER PROCEDURE RULES

None.

14. STRATA PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Strata IT Director referred to the report circulated with the agenda which updated Members on the performance of Strata since January 2021.

Whilst dealing with the increased demand in the service due to Covid and agile working and the recent return to the Council Chambers for meetings, success had included: the migration to Windows 10 and work commencing on optimising Global Desktop. Improvements would include a reduction in screen pixilation for Zoom and Teams, password synchronization, which will enable Councillors to manage their own passwords; commencement of the rollout of O365; greater levels of collaboration and document management; near completion of the replacement of Windows 2008 servers enabling Strata to gain PSN accreditation for a further 12 month period; the continued support for officers working from either the office or remotely as the lifting of Covid restrictions could see more staff working increased days at the offices; responding to new cyber challenges; the roll out of cyber awareness training to all staff; prioritising work demand for the three authorities to get back on track following prioritisation of Covid priorities; IT training services for both staff and Councillors which have been successful and widely used; support for hybrid Councillor meetings for all authorities; the Business Plan had been signed off by all three authorities; and the company had made savings of £1.051,425 for 2020/21 which was repaid to the Councils at the start of the financial year.

It was noted that there was minimal Strata staff sickness (at an average of 1.3 days per FTE) over a 12 month period which was possibly as a result of staff working remotely and not in close contact with colleagues. 500 hours of flexitime had been lost by Strata staff over the last six months which equates to free time to the three authorities.

It was noted that remote working had resulted in a significant decrease in printing across the three authorities, and a resulting decrease in costs which has a positive impact on the Climate Change agenda. However the increasing use of IT and remote working could have a negative impact on the Carbon footprint of the authorities. . Strata are currently working with Exeter University to finalise a Carbon Impact report covering the last three years.

RECOMMENDED - The report be noted.

15. STRATA FINANCE REPORT, BUDGET MONITORING AT MAY 2021

The East Devon District Council Strata Director presented the agenda report which detailed the financial position of the 2021/22 budget as at May 2021.

The Company had been given a total of £6.6 million to run the IT Services in 2021/22 along with funding for various capital projects. The Company also maintained an account for additional purchases throughout the year, which is invoiced to each Council based on actual purchases made.

Although savings of £310,000 were delivered, Strata asked for £210,000 to be used for specific service improvements. This was agreed by the three Councils and Strata reduced the payments for all Councils by £500,000 at the start of the year. In response to the challenges the Councils faced as a result of the restrictions imposed in response to Covid-19 Strata identified an additional £340,000 of one off savings on top of the £696,167. The outturn position was broadly in line with that projection.

RECOMMENDED - The report be noted.

16. STRATA FINANCE REPORT BUDGET MONITORING OUTTURN 2020/21

Consideration was given to the agenda report which advised on the financial position of Strata at the end of 2020-21 including the Statement of Accounts at Appendix B. These Statutory Accounts evidenced the true financial position of the Company and were affected by items not included in the management accounts such as the pension fund deficit and depreciation. The Accounts were approved by the Board on 28 May 2021.

The company made savings of £1,051,425 through efficiencies and cost saving initiatives, this did not however impact on the overall quality of the Strata service provision.

RECOMMENDED - The report be noted.

17. EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL AND EXETER CITY COUNCIL IT SURVEY FEEDBACK

Consideration was given to the agenda report which detailed the results of a Councillor survey undertaken during late March and early April 2021. Strata and the Democratic Services Teams from East Devon District Council and Exeter City Council undertook the survey of Councillors in relation to the current and future IT requirements. The outcomes of the survey would act to inform and guide a potential redesign of the IT solution that it delivered to Councillors to enable them to perform their important role in supporting the citizens of Devon.

The report present the findings of the survey which would enable a discussion to be entered into between Strata, the authorities and representative Councillors. It was hoped that 60% of Councillors would complete the survey and this was achieved.

The conclusions of the survey were:

1) There is no single solution that will address all of the identified needs of the Councillors who responded.

- 2) That having a single device/screen for Virtual Council meetings is very challenging.
- 3) That devices need to be refreshed (replaced after a period of time) to ensure they do not go end of life, and budgets need to be set by the Councils to support this.
- 4) EDDC and ECC are not maximising or realising the benefits of ModernGov and a refresher exercise is required for Councillors.
- 5) Security restrictions need reviewing to improve usability, especially around calendar appointments, email attachments and application installs.

RECOMMENDED

The report be noted and the finding be discussed with the Client Leads and Democratic Service Leads of the two authorities being East Devon District and Exeter City Councils, to identify potential solutions to the requirements.

The conclusions of the discussions be presented to the Councillor representatives for consideration.

18. COUNCILLOR IT USER GROUP DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

The Committee considered the agenda report which proposed the setting up of a Councillor IT User Group be setup to enable focussed discussions to be held into ongoing Councillor IT provision. The aim is to identify areas where improvements could be made, to identify Councillor IT training needs and to reflect on trends in the IT industry which may be relevant to the work of Local Government.

The proposed Terms of Reference and the attendee compilation was set out at report pages 4 and 6 respectively.

RECOMMENDED

The proposed Terms of Reference and the attendee compilation as set out in the agenda report be approved with the addition of the following:

1. The Group meet every 3 months in the first year.
2. A representative from all three Councils be present at all meetings, and the representatives be authorised to appoint a substitute if unable to attend.

CLLR C CLARANCE
Chairman

**Teignbridge District Council
Strata Joint Scrutiny Committee
September 6th 2022
Part 1**

Strata Performance Report

Purpose of Report

To inform the committee of the performance, delivery and state of Strata Solutions Ltd over the period from January 1st 2022.

Recommendation(s)

The Committee is asked to note and accept the report on the current state of Strata and its performance.

Report Author

Mark Davies - Strata Director of IT & Digital Transformation
Email: mark.davies@strata.solutions

Appendix A

1. Introduction

This is the latest performance report from Strata Solutions which provides Business and IT services to the three Councils. There are some key things to note as Strata matures as an organisation such as the level of resource utilisation and the need for Strata to change its operating model and adopt improved processes, governance and move to an Agile delivery model. These things need to happen if Strata is to stay on top of the ever-increasing demand for delivering projects which meet the financial needs and objectives of its clients.

Strata also now has a different leader as the existing IT Director left in April. Mark Davies has taken over as Director of IT and Digital Transformation and has already started to make significant changes to the operation of the company.

2. Overall Performance

Strata has performed well over the last 12 months and has a great staff culture and level of retention. There have been a few more staff moving on but still much less than one would expect for a similar sized team.

There have been several reviews, audits and reports into Strata such as a report produced by the external consultants Agilisys and the annual report by Devon Audit Partnership.

The Agilisys report had a mixed reaction with the clients as it highlighted things which Strata was not initially keen to hear but were things the clients had said previously. However, in time Strata has found ways to address these issues and is making progress on them. These were issues around use of virtual desktop environment, moving systems to cloud and project delivery process, to name a few of the key things.

The clients have been kept up to date with changes within Strata and the future plans which they have welcomed and are willing to embrace new ways of working and improvements to delivery.

The Devon Audit Partnership audit of the ICT with a focus on security gave a fair and comforting assessment of Strata ICT services and gave a 'Reasonable Assurance' rating overall. Of course, improvements can always be made and especially with security as it is an ever evolving landscape and this will be an ongoing plan for improvement.

3. Technology

The pace of technology never slows and therefore it is incumbent on an organisation to stay on top of a constant improvement program of technology change.

Strata had been tasked over the previous years to make savings one of, if not the, key objective. As such some of the technology has languished in the past and whilst service has always been maintained it has left the technology behind the level it should be at. This is not just in the physical technology that needs or needed to be updated such as servers and storage systems. It is also about plans to migrate to cloud, where appropriate, and how better to deliver services already being delivered. This has meant that Strata has some outdated technology, some contracts for systems which are perhaps overdue for a refresh, upgrade or even re-procurement in some cases. The consequence of which means there have been some technology risk, the business (the client councils) cannot move in the direction they want or at the speed they would like.

Strata has now upgraded some key technology in the last few months, such as a new resilient storage system and new servers, however, there is still much to do. As such we are looking at engaging the services of a technology architect to review, plan and set a clear strategy for the technology solutions and the systems life-cycles. This will enable the teams in Strata to plan more efficiently and ensure we do not waste the precious staff resource time we have keeping old systems operating.

We need to do the same with the business applications too and not just the systems they operate on. Without modern integrated systems it makes the digital

move more complex and if, as many are, the clients wish to channel shift (get customers to self serve and use more cost effective means of communication) then we need to make the move to modernise applications and importantly consolidate across all clients where practically possible.

If each client operates only 50% the same then Strata has 200% to do (50% the same + 3 x 50% different), if each client operated 95% the same, Strata has only 115% to deliver. While over simplistic the sentiment holds true, the more we do together, the greater savings we all make the more Strata can deliver on future plans.

4. People

Over the past twelve months around five staff have departed Strata, some for their advancement and some due to internal pressures within Strata and the demands asked of it. This is to be expected however and we have already made in roads to changing the culture to ensure the staff retention remains high and employee enjoyment is excellent.

Strata had struggled to replace the Head of Infrastructure and this role had been filled on an interim basis by the Head of Security and Compliance who is holding both roles. This situation is about to change as we have recruited a permanent and exceptionally experienced individual to take the lead as Head of Infrastructure once their notice period at another public body has been worked.

Other vacancies in the Service Desk area have now also been filled. Strata recently attended the Exeter Jobs Fair to establish its presence in the available jobs market and to encourage applicants to apply for open positions and to build a list of potential applicants.

The jobs market is very challenging at present for employers as there are many more jobs in the market than people wanting to fill them. This has not impacted Strata to any significant degree as yet but may as incumbent staff are more able

to move for higher salaries and Strata would be less able to recruit due to lower public sector pay grading than that of similar in the private sector.

This should be identified as a risk to the Strata operation as it may become an issue in which case market supplements may be necessary on more roles than one might typically expect.

5. Projects

Many projects have been delivered and are in the state of delivery over the period. Some of the key projects are listed here for the benefit of the committee and to ensure they are briefed on the more important aspects of Strata delivery.

1. Financial Management System replacement. This project is across all three clients and is intended to deliver a new system to manage finances and the income management systems that takes payments. The approach is to stage the deliver so that TDC go first in April 2023 and EDDC and ECC follow in subsequent years. The supplier of the systems and technology has been through the procurement exercise and the project is developing well. There have been some challenges at times to engage all clients to the same degree given they are going at different times.
2. M365 – Microsoft 365. This has developed over the last few months and TDC have migrated to use the majority of function within the M365 product. They have undergone training and are now working to get staff to fully embrace the new services available to them. EDDC and ECC are next with EDDC getting Teams and a full migration subsequently. ECC are going through their governance process to agree timescales. The key to success in rolling out M365 is that the staff adopt and utilise the technology to drive efficiencies. This is perhaps more challenging than having Strata roll out the technology.
3. SAN Upgrade – (SAN = Storage Area Network, which are intelligent high speed disk storage on the network and not attached to any one server.)

This project was a significant project undertaken by the infrastructure team as the existing storage was about to go end of life and out of support. That does not mean it would stop working but would pose security and reliability risks which are not acceptable to carry.

The SAN was installed by the supplier, DELL, and the data was migrated by Strata staff from the old system to the new. The old systems are still in operation and will be for a little while longer. This is to ensure all data is migrated and gives us options during the period of overlap.

4. PSTN – Public Switched Telephone Network. (Copper Phone Lines). In Exeter the phone lines are primarily provide to the council by Virgin Media who have as early adopters, decided to cease a large number of their copper telephony circuits in October 2022. This will be happening countrywide in the next few years but Virgin Media have gone early. As a consequence, Strata has had to work with many areas of ECC to identify and locate telephony circuits and determine if they are needed and if so for what purpose. Given previous low levels of documentation and understanding of what is in place this has placed a significant demand on some Strata resources. Circa 130 phones lines have been identified of which we are now planning to decommission the majority as they were not in use. The circa 20 lines that we do need to replace have now been ordered and will be commissioned before the switch off in October. There are some savings on the decommissioning of the lines of around £3000. This is a saving but is outweighed by the cost to make the savings, although this is now an ongoing saving so will recoup over time. The point here is that this is a long a laborious process and will be required for the subsequent councils over the next few years.
5. Street Cleaning App. This was built by Strata as an app for Apple iPhones to be used by Street Cleaning staff. It went live in May and has been a welcomed improvement for staff. Future developments of this are anticipated to continue the improvements.

6. St Sidwells Point. This was a project Strata were proud to part of as it is an important project for not only ECC but for the residents of Exeter. Strata designed, provided and installed the networking and technology to allow the booking, website, back office, and point of sale systems to operate in the new state of the art leisure complex.
7. Trade Waste. Another project for ECC was the development of the Trade Waste system which allowed commercial entities in Exeter to engage ECC to manage the removal of their trade waste. While not the most complex of projects its an example of how digital initiatives can drive revenue opportunities.

Over the next few weeks, the project engagement and delivery process will change. Significant Strata resources are used in validating the value of projects before they are accepted into being a project in progress. This is not the best use of time especially as not all ideas become projects and often there is little co-ordination between clients as to the value of any one project to all clients rather than just the one. Strata believes this can change so the validation of an idea, before it's a project, can be streamlined and the collaboration opportunities can be explored such that every project is potentially a multi-client project and again can add value to all and save money for all. This is obviously the ideal and should at least be the primary consideration before any project is established.

Strata will be adopting a more Agile method to project delivery, where that approach is suitable, and this will give gains in the time to deliver. The quality in delivery will be increased by changes to the project governance which will more prescriptive as to what projects need to do to move through each stage of project delivery.

6. Incidents and Performance Data

This report is presenting the data since January 1st 2022. The following shows key data indicators which show the work Strata has done or is doing in the Service Desk, Business Systems and Projects.

Type of Work	Number	Category
Incidents	4301	TOTAL
	17	Priority 1
	113	Priority 2
	877	Priority 3
	2546	Priority 4
	748	Priority 5
Service Requests	3888	TOTAL
	1428	ECC
	1058	EDDC
	847	TDC
	555	Strata

Work is being undertaken to ensure all work done by Strata is captured in one place as any packet of work be that service desk call, incident, project, service request, BCR or project takes resource time, and it makes more sense to record all these things as 'work' plus the category of work. This will allow Strata to get a clearer understanding of resource utilisation and identify where efficiencies can be made.

7. Improvements

One of the initial actions for the new IT Director to complete was an assessment of the 'state of the nation' with regards Strata, its operation, the technology, the culture and its relationship with its clients. This report had some similar and overlapping findings as the Agilisys report but also went further as to how things can be resolved over the short and medium term.

One the key issues is that Strata is under resourced. That's not to say that there are simply not enough staff as it is more complex than that. Additional staff can only help if they are slotted into a well operating machine which has good governance and clearly defined processes, alas that is not Strata. So that any

new staff member would take time to get up to speed and would have no clear processes to follow, they would therefore take more time from existing staff to shadow and learn from.

What needs to happen is Strata needs to go through an improvement plan which will help develop things not existing, improve things that are and make sure all staff operate within that governance. This is a developing plan and more details can be shared once it is fully formed.

Another action we have already implemented is to adopt agile methods. Agile is never a solution by itself as adopting agile can simply mean that one delivers low quality faster! Therefore, Strata is reviewing where time is being wasted and how quality can almost immediately be improved such by adopting agile methods projects are delivered through the pipeline faster and to higher quality. In the shorter term however, this could mean a reduction in output which will be followed by a ramping up to a higher level than today.

8. Conclusion

It is hoped that from this report the committee can see that whilst Strata has had some issues which have manifest over the previous few years due to financial constraints and focus on delivery, the future is bright. More is being done to deliver more, faster and to a higher quality and while in doing so trying to bring the clients together, where appropriate, to enable benefits for all. With scale come economies and Strata believe this is no less true in its delivery to its clients.

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**STRATA JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
STRATA JOINT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

DATE OF MEETING: 6 SEPTEMBER 2022
20 SEPTEMBER 2022

PUBLICATION DATE: 24 AUGUST 2022

REPORT OF: STRATA FINANCE

SUBJECT: STRATA BUDGET MONITORING – JULY 2022/23

1. PURPOSE

1.1 This report advises on the financial position of Strata at the end of July 2022.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Company has been given a total of £6.92 million to run the IT Services in 2022/23 along with funding for various capital projects. The Company also maintains an account for additional purchases throughout the year, which is invoiced to each Council based on actual purchases made.

3. MAIN IMPLICATIONS

Strata Budget Monitoring to 31 July 2022

3.1 Savings as per Business Plan

The 2022-23 Interim Business Plan has revised the savings profile set out in the original Business Case over the initial ten year period of the Company. The savings were split into cashable revenue savings and savings to the Councils from not having to implement specific capital projects individually.

A breakdown of the revised saving summary is set out below.

		Projected Revenue Savings	Actual Revenue Savings	Variance
2015-16	Year 1	(262,098)	(232,000)	30,098
2016-17	Year 2	(20,000)	(100,000)*	(80,000)
2017-18	Year 3	(252,836)	(565,000)	(312,164)
2018-19	Year 4	(381,961)	(620,000)	(238,039)
2019-20	Year 5	(853,888)	(1,074,000)**	(219,641)
2020-21	Year 6	(696,167)	(1,051,000)***	(355,258)
2021-22	Year 7	(747,804)	(1,260,000)	(512,196)
2022-23	Year 8	(772,415)		772,415
2023-24	Year 9	(851,074)		851,074
2024-25	Year 10	(905,398)		905,398
Total		(5,743,641)	(4,902,000)	

* Although savings of £310,000 were delivered, Strata asked for £210,000 to be used for specific service improvements. This was agreed by the three Councils.

** Strata reduced the payments for the Councils by £500,000 at the start of the year.

*** In response to the challenges the Councils faced as a result of the restrictions imposed in response to Covid-19 Strata identified an additional c£340,000 of one off savings on top of the £696,167. The outturn position was broadly in line with that projection.

3.2 Key Variations from Revenue Budget

Strata is projecting a small additional surplus for the year (Appendix A). The key variations are set out below:

Expenditure Type	Projected Over / (Underspend) £	Detail
Employees	132,533	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overspend due to Managing Director consultancy costs
Supplies & Services	(148,960)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lower spend than budgeted on key Microsoft products, WAN & Telephony contracts Refund for overbilling on Telephony contract in 2021-22

Expenditure Type	Projected Over / (Underspend) £	Detail
Transport	(23,156)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Significantly lower transport costs
Income - Revenue	13,381	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Teignbridge District Council Hardware Supplies budget handback partially offset by higher Telephony recharges than Budgeted
Investment Income	(11,830)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Higher interest on cash balances than Budgeted

3.3 Council Recharge Account

The Councils also request additional equipment for which they are subsequently invoiced. This account is brought to zero at the year end.

RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 That the Joint Scrutiny Committee and Joint Executive Committee note the contents of the report.

Simon Davey Director (Finance Lead)	Contact details Tel: 01395 517490 E-mail: sdavey@eastdevon.gov.uk
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BUDGET MONITORING
31 July 2022



STRATA SERVICE SOLUTIONS - REVENUE BUDGET

	REVENUE BUDGET	ACTUAL & COMMITMENTS to 31 JULY 2022	PROJECTED 2022-23 OUTTURN	OUTTURN VARIANCE TO BUDGET
	£	£	£	£
EMPLOYEES	3,166,579	1,066,192	3,299,112	132,533
SUPPLIES & SERVICES	3,575,013	2,165,665	3,426,053	(148,960)
TRANSPORT	29,250	1,688	6,094	(23,156)
SUPPORT SERVICES	60,000	60,000	60,000	0
TAX ON INTEREST	0	749	2,248	2,248
INCOME - REVENUE	(7,103,257)	(3,544,680)	(7,089,876)	13,381
INVESTMENT INTEREST	0	(3,943)	(11,830)	(11,830)
Net (Income)/Expense	(272,415)	(254,329)	(308,198)	(35,784)

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**STRATA JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
STRATA JOINT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

DATE OF MEETING: 6 SEPTEMBER 2022
20 SEPTEMBER 2022

PUBLICATION DATE: 24 AUGUST 2022

REPORT OF: STRATA FINANCE

SUBJECT: STRATA BUDGET MONITORING OUTTURN - 2021/22

1. PURPOSE

1.1 This report advises on the financial position of Strata at the end of 2021-22.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Company has been given a total of £6.824 million to run the IT Services in 2021/22 along with funding for various capital projects. The Company also maintains an account for additional purchases throughout the year, which is invoiced to each Council based on actual purchases made.

3. MAIN IMPLICATIONS

Strata Budget Monitoring to 31 March 2022

3.1 Savings as per Business Plan

The 2021-22 Business Plan has revised the savings profile set out in the original Business Case over the initial ten year period of the Company. The savings were split into cashable revenue savings and savings to the Councils from not having to implement specific capital projects individually.

A breakdown of the revised saving summary is set out below.

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2019-20	Year 5	(853,888)	(1,074,000)**	(219,641)
2020-21	Year 6	(696,167)	(1,051,000)***	(354,833)
2021-22	Year 7	(747,804)	(1,260,111)	(512,307)
2022-23	Year 8	(701,005)		701,005
2023-24	Year 9	(825,202)		825,202
2024-25	Year 10	(908,996)		908,996
Total		(5,649,957)	(4,902,111)	

* Although savings of £310,000 were delivered, Strata asked for £210,000 to be used for specific service improvements. This was agreed by the three Councils.

** Strata reduced the payments for the Councils by £500,000 at the start of the year.

*** In response to the challenges the Councils faced as a result of the restrictions imposed in response to Covid-19 Strata identified an additional c£340,000 of one off savings on top of the £696,167. The outturn position was broadly in line with that projection.

3.2 Key Variations from Revenue Budget

Strata has delivered £1,260,111 of revenue savings in 2021-22 (Appendix A) and has refunded £760,000 (on top of the £500,000 reduction at the beginning of the year). The key variations are set out below:

Expenditure Type	Actual Over / (Underspend) £	Detail
Employees	(41,020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lower cost due to staff vacancies and reduced spend on training
Supplies & Services	(362,828)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lower spend on key contracts e.g. Microsoft products Savings on renegotiated contracts e.g. Ricoh, Virgin Media

Expenditure Type	Actual Over / (Underspend) £	Detail
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budgeted costs delayed into next financial year due to extended lead times on hardware Budgeted revenue spend substituted with capital expenditure eg Web Filtering product, Server Hosts
Transport	(23,800)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significantly lower transport costs
Income - Revenue	(82,566)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional contract income to fund Covid recovery spend Higher Document Centre and Telephony recharges than Budgeted Offset by budgeted revenue spend vired to Capital

3.3 Council Recharge Account

The Councils also request additional equipment for which they are subsequently invoiced. This account is brought to zero at the year end.

3.4 Statement of Accounts

The Statement of Accounts are shown at Appendix B. These Statutory Accounts show the true financial position of the Company and are affected by items not included in the management accounts such as the Pension Fund deficit and depreciation. The Accounts were approved by the Board on 16 June 2022.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 That the Joint Scrutiny Committee and Joint Executive Committee note the contents of the report.

Simon Davey Director (Finance Lead)	Contact details Tel: 01395 517490 E-mail: sdavey@eastdevon.gov.uk
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BUDGET MONITORING
31 MARCH 2022

STRATA SERVICE SOLUTIONS - REVENUE BUDGET

	REVENUE BUDGET	2021-22 OUTTURN	OUTTURN VARIANCE TO BUDGET
	£	£	£
EMPLOYEES	2,996,394	2,955,374	(41,020)
SUPPLIES & SERVICES	3,407,978	3,045,150	(362,828)
TRANSPORT	29,250	5,450	(23,800)
SUPPORT SERVICES	60,000	60,000	0
TAX ON INTEREST	0	491	491
INCOME - REVENUE	(6,741,426)	(6,823,992)	(82,566)
INVESTMENT INTEREST	0	(2,584)	(2,584)
Net Income	(247,804)	(760,111)	(512,307)
Savings distributed upfront	(500,000)	(500,000)	0
Total net Income 2021-22	(747,804)	(1,260,111)	(512,307)

COUNCIL RECHARGE

	ACTUAL TO DATE
	£
EMPLOYEES	0
SUPPLIES & SERVICES	1,081,550
TRANSPORT	0
INCOME	(1,081,550)
TO BE RECHARGED TO COUNCILS	0

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Strata Service Solutions Limited

**Annual Report and Financial Statements
Year Ended 31 March 2022**

Registration number: 09041662

Strata Service Solutions Limited

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Strata Service Solutions Limited

Company Information

Directors	Mr S P I Davey Mr P Nicholls Mrs J J Yelland
Registered office	Civic Centre Paris Street Exeter Devon EX1 1JN
Auditors	PKF Francis Clark Statutory Auditor Centenary House Peninsula Park Rydon Lane Exeter Devon EX2 7XE

Strata Service Solutions Limited

Strategic Report for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

The directors present their strategic report for the year ended 31 March 2022.

Principal activity

The principal activity of the company is the provision of information technology services to East Devon District Council, Teignbridge District Council and Exeter City Council.

Fair review of the business

Turnover for the year amounted to £7,747,366 (2021: £7,836,280) with a loss after taxation for the year of £1,110,533 (2021: loss of £499,417). Net current assets are £1,007,283 (2021: £1,186,838) but the company has net liabilities totalling £9,088,751 (2021: £9,788,218) due to the defined pension liability. In spite of the loss and net liability position, the Directors are satisfied that the guarantee provided by the three owner Council's in respect of the Pension Fund liabilities means that the Company can continue to trade and invest in the infrastructure required to grow the Company.

The Company's mutual trading status means that it only conducts business with the three owner Councils.

Performance in the year exceeded the Business Plan expectations, and resulted in delivery of a £1.260 million benefit to the Owners. A proportion of this was delivered up front in the form of reduced payments. Additional savings were achieved through renegotiating a number of contracts, principally telephone and printing contracts, lower staff costs and through lower cost realised on key contracts. The increased savings have been realised in the increased year end cash balance of £1,059,246 (2021 £863,053). Over the life of the Company, it has delivered refunds to the Councils totalling £4.902 million, well in excess of the targets set out in the original Business Plan.

Strata's operational performance is monitored by means of tracking key indicators to ensure service availability and to meet customer demand. The key indicators are based on number of requests for service, incidents occurred, requests for change and new projects, together with tracking of system uptime and outages. These metrics allow focus to be directed should one or other become out of balance with normality or is above planned expectation for the period. The business continues to manage considerable demand however high volumes of business change requests are causing a backlog and delay and therefore this process is being reviewed to ensure it operates more effectively.

The Directors draw attention to the fact that the Balance Sheet of the Company would be positive, if it were not for the Defined Pension Liability. It is a requirement of the Owners to offer this to our employees and as such it is backed by a full guarantee.

In summary, the Company has again exceeded expectations from a financial perspective, whilst continuing to deliver the other objectives required by the owners.

Strata Service Solutions Limited

Strategic Report for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

Principal risks and uncertainties

The Company is owned by three Local Authorities. Budgets are fixed and must therefore be managed tightly, to deliver the objectives set for the Company.

Due to global economic conditions Local Authorities face the risk of high inflation and uncertainties over local government funding which could mean reductions in expenditure will be required. At this stage the Councils have not indicated that they will be reducing their payments to the Company and it is not anticipated that this will happen.

The current employment market is heavily in the favour of the applicant and as such, it is anticipated new staff recruitment will be challenging and does leave Strata exposed if key staff leave. As Strata looks to move to a more digital focussed delivery model our approach and digital agenda should encourage new and existing staff to join Strata in delivering these exciting projects.

As the owners are Local Authorities, they are subject to political change, which can affect the Company. If political change does take place in one of the owners, there is still a requirement to give 18 months' notice after the end of the three year period prior to leaving the Company, which should allow for a full assessment of the Company moving forward. In reality, however, as the three Councils have merged the infrastructure on which they run their respective businesses, it would be financially challenging for one of the Councils to serve notice. A Council would have to put in place alternate infrastructure and compensate the other authorities for the additional costs that they would incur going forward. Further details are given in the accounting policies under Going Concern.

Approved by the Board on 16/6/22 and signed on its behalf by:


.....
M. S. P. Davey
Director

Strata Service Solutions Limited

Directors' Report for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

The directors present their report and the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2022.

Directors of the company

The directors who held office during the year were as follows:

Mr S P I Davey

Mr R D Hodgson (ceased 2 January 2022)

Mr P Nicholls

Mrs J J Yelland (appointed 2 January 2022)

Disclosure of information to the auditors

Each director has taken steps that they ought to have taken as a director in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the company's auditors are aware of that information. The directors confirm that there is no relevant information that they know of and of which they know the auditors are unaware.

Approved by the Board on 16/6/22 and signed on its behalf by:



Mr S P I Davey
Director

Strata Service Solutions Limited

Statement of Directors' Responsibilities

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law the directors must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company and of the profit or loss of the company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The directors are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Strata Service Solutions Limited

Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Strata Service Solutions Limited

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Strata Service Solutions Limited (the 'company') for the year ended 31 March 2022, which comprise the Profit and Loss Account, Statement of Comprehensive Income, Balance Sheet, Statement of Changes in Equity, Statement of Cash Flows, and Notes to the Financial Statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the company's affairs as at 31 March 2022 and of its loss for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the director's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the original financial statements were authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the directors with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The directors are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

Strata Service Solutions Limited

Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Strata Service Solutions Limited

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matter prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Strategic Report and Directors' Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Strategic Report and Directors' Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of our knowledge and understanding of the company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Strategic Report and the Directors' Report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of directors' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of directors

As explained more fully in the Statement of Directors' Responsibilities, set out on page 5, the directors are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the directors are responsible for assessing the company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the directors either intend to liquidate the company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

Strata Service Solutions Limited

Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Strata Service Solutions Limited

As part of our audit planning we obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework that is applicable to the company. We gained an understanding of the company and the industry in which the company operates as part of this assessment to identify the key laws and regulations affecting the company. As part of this, we reviewed the company's website for indication of any regulations and certification in place and discussed these with the relevant individuals responsible for compliance. The key regulations we identified were health and safety regulations, breaches of The General Data Protection Regulation ("GDPR") and achieving accreditation to the public services network. We also considered those laws and regulations that have a direct impact on the preparation of the financial statements such as the Companies Act 2006 and relevant tax legislation.

We discussed with management how the compliance with these laws and regulations is monitored and discussed policies and procedures in place. We also identified the individuals who have responsibility for ensuring that the company complies with laws and regulations and deals with reporting any issues if they arise. As part of our planning procedures, we assessed the risk of any non compliance with laws and regulations on the company's ability to continue trading and the risk of material misstatement to the accounts.

We also evaluated management's incentives and opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of the financial statements. The key incentive identified is to meet the targets set by the group and we determined that the principal risks were related to the overstatement of profit, either through overstating revenue, understating expenditure or management bias in accounting estimates.

Based on this understanding we designed our audit procedures to identify non-compliance with such laws and regulations. Our procedures involved the following:

- Enquiries of management regarding their knowledge of any non compliance with laws and regulations that could affect the financial statements. As part of these enquiries we also discussed with management whether there have been any known instances of fraud, of which there were none.
- Discussed with the health and safety officer if any incidents have been reported during the year under The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 ("RIDDOR").
- Review of the GDPR policy and enquiries to the Data Protection Officer as to the occurrence and outcome of any reportable breaches.
- Reviewed the most recent certificate for accreditation to the public services network.
- Reviewed legal and professional costs to identify any possible non compliance or legal costs in respect of non compliance.
- Audited the risk of management override of controls, including through testing journal entries and other adjustments for appropriateness, and evaluating the business rationale of significant transactions outside the normal course of business.
- Reviewed estimates and judgements made in the accounts for any indication of bias and challenged assumptions used by management in making the estimates.

Strata Service Solutions Limited

Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Strata Service Solutions Limited

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements. This risk increases the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations is from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements as we are less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error, as fraud may involve deliberate concealment, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities is available on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the company and the company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



Stephanie Henshaw (Senior Statutory Auditor)
PKF Francis Clark, Statutory Auditor

Centenary House
Peninsula Park
Rydon Lane
Exeter
Devon
EX2 7XE

Date: 26/7/22

Strata Service Solutions Limited

Profit and Loss Account

Year Ended 31 March 2022

	Note	2022 £	2021 £
Turnover	3	7,747,366	7,836,280
Cost of sales		<u>(3,807,831)</u>	<u>(3,405,661)</u>
Gross profit		3,939,535	4,430,619
Administrative expenses		(4,843,161)	(4,801,574)
Other operating income	4	<u>-</u>	<u>6,538</u>
Operating loss	5	(903,626)	(364,417)
Other interest receivable and similar income		2,584	-
Interest payable and similar charges	8	<u>(209,000)</u>	<u>(135,000)</u>
Loss before tax		(1,110,042)	(499,417)
Taxation	9	<u>(491)</u>	<u>-</u>
Loss for the financial year		<u><u>(1,110,533)</u></u>	<u><u>(499,417)</u></u>

The notes on pages 15 to 26 form an integral part of these financial statements.
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Strata Service Solutions Limited

Statement of Comprehensive Income

Year Ended 31 March 2022

	Note	2022 £	2021 £
Loss for the year		(1,110,533)	(499,417)
Remeasurement (loss)/gain on defined benefit pension schemes	15	<u>1,810,000</u>	<u>(3,928,000)</u>
Total comprehensive income for the year		<u><u>699,467</u></u>	<u><u>(4,427,417)</u></u>

The notes on pages 15 to 26 form an integral part of these financial statements.
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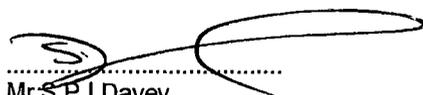
Strata Service Solutions Limited

Balance Sheet

31 March 2022

	Note	2022 £	2021 £
Fixed assets			
Intangible assets	10	1,245,956	1,475,407
Tangible assets	11	<u>715,305</u>	<u>457,630</u>
		<u>1,961,261</u>	<u>1,933,037</u>
Current assets			
Stocks		11,269	9,775
Debtors	12	1,731,485	1,783,368
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>1,059,246</u>	<u>863,053</u>
		2,802,000	2,656,196
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	13	<u>(1,794,717)</u>	<u>(1,469,358)</u>
Net current assets		<u>1,007,283</u>	<u>1,186,838</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		2,968,544	3,119,875
Deferred income	13	<u>(2,407,295)</u>	<u>(2,515,093)</u>
Net assets excluding pension liability		561,249	604,782
Net pension liability	15	<u>(9,650,000)</u>	<u>(10,393,000)</u>
Net liabilities		<u>(9,088,751)</u>	<u>(9,788,218)</u>
Capital and reserves			
Called up share capital	16	3	3
Profit and loss account		<u>(9,088,754)</u>	<u>(9,788,221)</u>
Total equity		<u>(9,088,751)</u>	<u>(9,788,218)</u>

Approved and authorised by the Board on 16/6/22 and signed on its behalf by:


.....
Mr S P I Davey
Director

Company Registration Number: 09041662

Strata Service Solutions Limited

Statement of Changes in Equity

Year Ended 31 March 2022

	Share capital £	Profit and loss account £	Total £
At 1 April 2021	3	(9,788,221)	(9,788,218)
Loss for the year	-	(1,110,533)	(1,110,533)
Other comprehensive income	-	1,810,000	1,810,000
Total comprehensive income	-	699,467	699,467
At 31 March 2022	3	(9,088,754)	(9,088,751)

	Share capital £	Profit and loss account £	Total £
At 1 April 2020	3	(5,360,804)	(5,360,801)
Loss for the period	-	(499,417)	(499,417)
Other comprehensive income	-	(3,928,000)	(3,928,000)
Total comprehensive income	-	(4,427,417)	(4,427,417)
At 31 March 2021	3	(9,788,221)	(9,788,218)

The notes on pages 15 to 26 form an integral part of these financial statements.
Page 13

Strata Service Solutions Limited

Statement of Cash Flows

Year Ended 31 March 2022

	Note	2022 £	2021 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Loss for the year		(1,110,533)	(499,417)
Adjustments to cash flows from non-cash items			
Depreciation and amortisation	5	642,469	624,422
Loss on disposal of tangible assets		-	218,724
Finance income		(2,584)	-
Finance costs	8	209,000	135,000
Corporation tax	9	491	-
		<u>(261,157)</u>	<u>478,729</u>
Working capital adjustments			
Net pension movement	15	858,000	405,000
Increase in stocks		(1,494)	(556)
Decrease in trade debtors	12	51,883	176,086
Increase in trade creditors	13	324,868	294,545
Decrease in deferred income		<u>(107,798)</u>	<u>(135,587)</u>
Cash generated from operations		864,302	1,218,217
Corporation tax paid		<u>-</u>	<u>(2,063)</u>
Net cash flow from operating activities		<u>864,302</u>	<u>1,216,154</u>
Cash flows from investing activities			
Interest received		2,584	-
Acquisitions of tangible assets		(429,118)	(187,123)
Acquisition of intangible assets		<u>(241,575)</u>	<u>(437,237)</u>
Net cash flows from investing activities		<u>(668,109)</u>	<u>(624,360)</u>
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents		196,193	591,794
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 April		<u>863,053</u>	<u>271,259</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 March		<u><u>1,059,246</u></u>	<u><u>863,053</u></u>

The notes on pages 15 to 26 form an integral part of these financial statements.
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Strata Service Solutions Limited

Notes to the Financial Statements

Year Ended 31 March 2022

1 General information

The company is a private company limited by share capital, incorporated in England and Wales.

The address of its principal place of business and registered office is:

Civic Centre
Paris Street
Exeter
Devon
EX1 1JN

2 Accounting policies

Summary of significant accounting policies and key accounting estimates

The principal accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

Basis of accounting and statement of compliance

The company's financial statements have been prepared in accordance with FRS 102 - the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland.

There are no material departures from FRS 102.

The functional currency of Strata Service Solutions Limited is considered to be pounds sterling because that is the currency of the economic environment in which the company operates.

Going concern

Each year the Company produces a Business Plan, setting out projected financial returns for the following period (latest four years) based on the agreed funding mechanism. The latest Business Plan runs to 2024-25 and projects a positive financial position in each year. This is based on known cost pressures and income increases in line with inflation. As the Company is set up to deliver savings to the Owners there is a significant buffer of income in excess of £0.5 million in each year of the plan, which will protect the Company from risks to its going concern status.

The continuing impact of Covid 19 on the business has been considered. The company is continuing to trade as usual, subject to social distancing requirements, and this is expected to continue to be the case as the councils continue to operate and require support. Further, there has been no change to the support from the three councils as detailed above. Whilst the restrictions put in place continue to have a significant impact on the owners' income, the continuing provision of an effective IT support system is critical to Council's operational and strategic response. Whilst some additional reduction in costs may be required, the Directors and management team have identified a number of options which will not impact on the operational or financial performance of the Company. The directors therefore do not believe that Covid 19 will have an impact on the company's ability to continue trading.

On this basis, the directors have prepared the financial statements on a going concern basis.

Strata Service Solutions Limited

Notes to the Financial Statements

Year Ended 31 March 2022

Key sources of estimation uncertainty

The directors have considered the judgements and estimation uncertainties included in these financial statements and the accounting policies applied and concluded that these do not have a significant effect on the amounts recognised in the financial statements or lead to a risk of causing a material misstatement of the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year. Estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an on-going basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised if the revision affects that period only, or in the period of revision and future periods if the revision affects both current and future periods.

The items in the financial statement where these judgements and estimates have been made include:

Due to advancements in technology the estimation of the useful economic life of intangible assets, which predominately are made up of software, is deemed to be a key estimate. The carrying amount is £1,264,094 (2021 - £1,475,407).

Due to advancements in technology the estimation of the useful economic life of tangible assets, which predominately are made up of computer equipment, is deemed to be a key estimate. The carrying amount is £715,305 (2021 - £457,630).

Defined benefit pension liability - assumptions surrounding the discount rate, future salary increases, inflation and future pension increased are considered key estimates. The carrying amount is £(10,393,000) (2021 - £(10,393,000)).

Revenue recognition

Turnover comprises the fair value of the consideration received or receivable for the provision of information technology services to the relevant councils. Turnover is shown net of value added tax, returns, rebates and discounts. Fees are invoiced quarterly and recognised in the period to which they relate. Revenue is accrued or deferred as appropriate.

Government grants

Government grants relating to fixed assets are treated as deferred income and released to the profit and loss account over the expected useful lives of the assets concerned. Other grants are credited to the profit and loss account as the expenditure is incurred.

During the prior year the company recognised Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme ("CJRS") grant income from the Government designed to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. The company has elected to account for such grants under the accruals model as permitted by FRS102. Grants of a revenue nature are recognised in "other income" within profit or loss in the same period as the related expenditure.

Tax

Tax is recognised in profit or loss, except that a change attributable to an item of income or expense recognised as other comprehensive income is also recognised directly in other comprehensive income.

The current corporation tax charge is calculated on the basis of tax rates and laws that have been enacted or substantively enacted by the reporting date in the countries where the company operates and generates taxable income.

Strata Service Solutions Limited

Notes to the Financial Statements

Year Ended 31 March 2022

Tangible assets

Tangible assets are stated in the balance sheet at cost, less any subsequent accumulated depreciation and subsequent accumulated impairment losses.

The cost of tangible assets includes directly attributable incremental costs incurred in their acquisition and installation.

Depreciation

Depreciation is charged so as to write off the cost of assets, other than land and properties under construction over their estimated useful lives, as follows:

Asset class	Depreciation method and rate
Computer equipment	5-10 years straight line

Intangible assets

Intangible assets are stated in the balance sheet at cost, less any subsequent accumulated amortisation and subsequent accumulated impairment losses.

Amortisation

Amortisation is provided on intangible assets so as to write off the cost over their useful life as follows:

Asset class	Amortisation method and rate
Software	5 years straight line

Stocks

Stocks represent consumable stock and are carried at cost less provision for impairment.

Leases

Leases in which substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership are retained by the lessor are classified as operating leases. Payments made under operating leases are charged to profit or loss on a straight-line basis over the period of the lease.

Defined benefit pension obligation

The liability recognised in the balance sheet in respect of defined benefit pension plans is the present value of the defined benefit obligation at the reporting date minus the fair value of plan assets. The defined benefit obligation is measured using the projected unit credit method. The present value of the defined benefit obligation is determined by discounting the estimated future payments by reference to market yields at the reporting date on high-quality corporate bonds that are denominated in the currency in which the benefits will be paid, and that have terms to maturity approximating to the terms of the related pension liability.

Actuarial gains and losses are charged or credited to other comprehensive income in the period in which they arise.

Strata Service Solutions Limited

Notes to the Financial Statements

Year Ended 31 March 2022

Financial Instruments

Financial instruments are recognised when the company becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument and derecognised when in the case of assets, the contractual rights to cash flows from the assets expire or substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership are transferred to another party, or in the case of liabilities, when the company's obligations are discharged, expire or are cancelled.

The company holds the following basic financial instruments:

- Short term trade and other debtors and creditors

These instruments are initially measured at transaction price, including transaction costs, and are subsequently carried at the undiscounted amount of the cash or other consideration expected to be paid or received, after taking account of impairment adjustments.

3 Revenue

The analysis of the company's revenue for the year from continuing operations, all of which is attributable to the United Kingdom, is as follows:

	2022	2021
	£	£
Fee income	7,145,542	6,904,881
Grant income	<u>601,824</u>	<u>931,399</u>
	<u><u>7,747,366</u></u>	<u><u>7,836,280</u></u>

4 Other operating income

The analysis of the company's other operating income for the year is as follows:

	2022	2021
	£	£
Miscellaneous other operating income	<u>-</u>	<u>6,538</u>

5 Operating loss

Arrived at after charging

	2022	2021
	£	£
Depreciation expense	171,443	233,606
Amortisation expense	471,026	390,816
Loss on disposal of property, plant and equipment	<u>-</u>	<u>218,724</u>

Strata Service Solutions Limited

Notes to the Financial Statements

Year Ended 31 March 2022

6 Staff costs

The aggregate payroll costs (including directors' remuneration) were as follows:

	2022	2021
	£	£
Wages and salaries	2,312,782	2,303,127
Social security costs	235,336	229,561
Pension costs, defined benefit scheme	1,248,000	810,000
	<u>3,796,118</u>	<u>3,342,688</u>

The average number of persons employed by the company (including directors) during the year, analysed by category was as follows:

	2022	2021
	No.	No.
Administration and support	<u>73</u>	<u>74</u>

7 Auditor's remuneration

	2022	2021
	£	£
Audit of the financial statements	<u>6,785</u>	<u>6,914</u>

8 Interest payable and similar expenses

	2022	2021
	£	£
Net finance costs in respect of defined benefit pension scheme	<u>209,000</u>	<u>135,000</u>

Strata Service Solutions Limited

Notes to the Financial Statements

Year Ended 31 March 2022

9 Taxation

Tax charged in the profit and loss account

	2022 £
Current taxation	
UK corporation tax	<u>491</u>

The tax on profit before tax for the year is lower than the standard rate of corporation tax in the UK (2021 - lower than the standard rate of corporation tax in the UK) of 19% (2021 - 19%).

The differences are reconciled below:

	2022 £	2021 £
Loss before tax	<u>(1,110,042)</u>	<u>(499,417)</u>
Corporation tax at standard rate	(210,908)	(94,889)
Effect of expense not deductible in determining taxable profit (tax loss)	<u>211,399</u>	<u>94,889</u>
Total tax charge	<u>491</u>	<u>-</u>

By virtue of its members, the company has been set up as a mutual trading company and as such the tax charge for the year is only applied to its external investment income.

10 Intangible assets

	Software £	Total £
Cost or valuation		
At 1 April 2021	4,995,819	4,995,819
Additions	<u>241,575</u>	<u>241,575</u>
At 31 March 2022	<u>5,237,394</u>	<u>5,237,394</u>
Amortisation		
At 1 April 2021	3,520,412	3,520,412
Amortisation charge	<u>471,026</u>	<u>471,026</u>
At 31 March 2022	<u>3,991,438</u>	<u>3,991,438</u>
Carrying amount		
At 31 March 2022	<u>1,245,956</u>	<u>1,245,956</u>
At 31 March 2021	<u>1,475,407</u>	<u>1,475,407</u>

Strata Service Solutions Limited

Notes to the Financial Statements

Year Ended 31 March 2022

11 Tangible assets

	Computer equipment £	Total £
Cost or valuation		
At 1 April 2021	2,007,756	2,007,756
Additions	429,118	429,118
At 31 March 2022	<u>2,436,874</u>	<u>2,436,874</u>
Depreciation		
At 1 April 2021	1,550,126	1,550,126
Charge for the year	171,443	171,443
At 31 March 2022	<u>1,721,569</u>	<u>1,721,569</u>
Carrying amount		
At 31 March 2022	<u>715,305</u>	<u>715,305</u>
At 31 March 2021	<u>457,630</u>	<u>457,630</u>

12 Debtors

	2022 £	2021 £
Trade debtors	99,443	129,196
Other debtors	6,148	10,656
Prepayments and accrued income	1,625,894	1,643,516
	<u>1,731,485</u>	<u>1,783,368</u>

Strata Service Solutions Limited

Notes to the Financial Statements

Year Ended 31 March 2022

13 Creditors

	2022 £	2021 £
Due within one year		
Corporation tax	491	-
Social security and other taxes	118,062	171,345
Other creditors	2,673	2,672
Accrued expenses	<u>1,673,491</u>	<u>1,295,341</u>
	<u>1,794,717</u>	<u>1,469,358</u>
Deferred income		
Government grants	<u>2,407,295</u>	<u>2,515,093</u>

14 Obligations under leases and hire purchase contracts

Operating leases

The total of future minimum lease payments is as follows:

	2022 £	2021 £
Not later than one year	71,103	87,889
Later than one year and not later than five years	<u>183,683</u>	<u>79,843</u>
	<u>254,786</u>	<u>167,732</u>

Lease payments recognised as an expense in the year were £84,519 (2021: £86,110).

Strata Service Solutions Limited

Notes to the Financial Statements

Year Ended 31 March 2022

15 Pension and other schemes

Defined benefit pension schemes Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)

The assets and liabilities of the scheme were transferred to the company on 1 November 2014 when the employees, who are members of the scheme, were transferred to the company from East Devon District Council, Teignbridge District Council and Exeter City Council. As part of the arrangements for the transfer, the Councils have provided guarantees to meet their share of their respective liabilities to the scheme in the event of the insolvency of the company.

The date of the most recent comprehensive actuarial valuation was 31 March 2022. Contributions are set every three years as a result of the actuarial valuation of the Fund required by the Regulations. The next actuarial valuation of the Fund will be carried out as at 31 March 2026 and will set contributions for the period 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2029. There are no minimum funding requirements in the LGPS but the contributions are generally set to target a funding level of 100% using the actuarial valuation assumptions.

The total cost relating to defined benefit schemes for the year recognised in profit or loss as an expense was £1,463,000 (2021 - £951,000).

Reconciliation of scheme assets and liabilities to assets and liabilities recognised

The amounts recognised in the statement of financial position are as follows:

	2022 £	2021 £
Fair value of scheme assets	11,678,000	10,395,000
Present value of defined benefit obligation	<u>(21,328,000)</u>	<u>(20,788,000)</u>
Defined benefit pension scheme deficit	<u>(9,650,000)</u>	<u>(10,393,000)</u>

Defined benefit obligation

Changes in the defined benefit obligation are as follows:

	2022 £
Present value at start of year	20,788,000
Current service cost	1,229,000
Past service cost	19,000
Interest cost	427,000
Benefits paid net of transfers in	(89,000)
Contributions by scheme participants	155,000
Liabilities extinguished on settlements	35,000
Change in financial assumptions	<u>(1,236,000)</u>
Present value at end of year	<u>21,328,000</u>

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Notes to the Financial Statements

Year Ended 31 March 2022

Past service costs relate to the estimate impact of the McCloud judgement.

Fair value of scheme assets

Changes in the fair value of scheme assets are as follows:

	2022 £
Fair value at start of year	10,395,000
Interest income	218,000
Return on plan assets, excluding amounts included in interest income/(expense)	609,000
Employer contributions	396,000
Contributions by scheme participants	155,000
Benefits paid	(89,000)
Administrative expenses	(6,000)
Fair value at end of year	<u>11,678,000</u>

Analysis of assets

The major categories of scheme assets are as follows:

	2022 £	2021 £
Cash and cash equivalents	138,000	107,000
Equity instruments	8,652,000	7,498,000
Debt instruments	1,793,000	820,000
Property	1,100,000	835,000
Other assets	(5,000)	1,135,000
	<u>11,678,000</u>	<u>10,395,000</u>

Return on scheme assets

	2022 £	2021 £
Return on scheme assets	<u>8,270,000</u>	<u>2,078,000</u>

The pension scheme has not invested in any of the company's own financial instruments or in properties or other assets used by the company.

The overall expected return on assets assumption is derived as the weighted average of the expected returns from each of the main asset classes.

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Notes to the Financial Statements

Year Ended 31 March 2022

Principal actuarial assumptions

The principal actuarial assumptions at the statement of financial position date are as follows:

	2022	2021
	%	%
Discount rate	2.60	2.05
Future salary increases	4.20	3.85
Future pension increases	3.20	2.85
Inflation	3.45	3.50

Post retirement mortality assumptions

	2022	2021
	Years	Years
Current UK pensioners at retirement age - male	23.00	23.00
Current UK pensioners at retirement age - female	24.00	24.00
Future UK pensioners at retirement age - male	24.00	24.00
Future UK pensioners at retirement age - female	25.00	25.00

16 Share capital

Allotted, called up and fully paid shares

	No.	2022	No.	2021
		£		£
Ordinary shares of £1 each	3	3	3	3

17 Commitments

Capital commitments

The Company entered into one commitment at the year end relating to the replacement income management software.

The total amount contracted for but not provided in the financial statements was £84,144 (2021 - £Nil).

Strata Service Solutions Limited

Notes to the Financial Statements

Year Ended 31 March 2022

18 Related party transactions

Key management personnel

The directors are not remunerated from this company, other key management remuneration is as follows:

Key management compensation

	2022	2021
	£	£
Salaries and other short term employee benefits	85,521	85,521
Post-employment benefits	14,282	14,282
	<u>99,803</u>	<u>99,803</u>

Summary of transactions with other related parties

Entities with joint control over the company

The company recognised turnover of £7,736,235 (2021: £7,594,179) to the Councils which jointly control it. At the year end £94,602 (2021: £129,196) was owed to the company by the Councils.

Entities under common control

During the year an entity under common control received services from the company to the value of £13,160 (2021: £12,105). At the year end £nil (2021: £nil) was owed to the company by the company under common control.