

# **STRATA - JOINT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**TUESDAY, 22 SEPTEMBER 2020**

Present:

Councillors Arnott (Chair), Bialyk and Dewhirst

Non-Voting Members:

Karime Hassan, Phil Shears, Mark Williams

Member Attendance:

Councillors Clarence

Officers in Attendance:

Robin Barlow, Head of Security & Compliance

Simon Davey, Strata Board Director

David Hodgson, Strata Finance Director

Peter Johns

Martin Millmow, Head of Document Centres

Paul Nicholls, Food Health & Safety Manager

David Sercombe, Head of Business Systems & Business Intelligence

Adrian Smith, Head of Infrastructure & Support

Laurence Whitlock, Strata IT Director

Amanda Coombes, Democratic Services Officer

**23. APOLOGIES**

None received.

**24. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**25. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

**26. QUESTION FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCILS**

In response to supplementary questions from Cllr Clarence (Teignbridge District Council) in respect of the maintenance and support of personal IT equipment and the availability of access to councillor emails and calendars on personal devices, the Strata IT Director advised that Teignbridge District Council (TDC) had not

currently taken up the option of the enhanced service, whereas East Devon District Council had. The enhanced service was a chargeable option, and this had previously been presented to the TDC Overview and Scrutiny Committee, but funding was not approved.

In respect of the maintenance, Cllr Dewhirst stated that there were no plans for Strata to maintain personal equipment, as the authority had provided an iPad for councillor use.

**27. STRATA IT DIRECTOR & MANAGER'S REPORT**

The Strata IT Director presented the report on activity from 1 May to 31 July 2020, identifying key activities, successes and areas for improvement (presentation attached to minutes).

He brought members attention to the 'Value for Money' question which he advised had required Strata to look at what they do now compared to the starting point in 2014, and to also look at associated costs now compared to 2014 costs + RPI. The outcome of this exercise would be circulated to councillors.

During discussion, members raised questions regarding the use of the software application Microsoft Teams. Strata were currently working with the three authorities and a series of workshops had been setup to explore how the authorities may benefit from MS Teams and this would then enable a set of clear requirements to be defined, and a business case potentially drawn up. It was emphasized that any early phase deployment of MS Teams would not replace the Skype for Business telephony platform or the Zoom conferencing platform.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

**28. STRATA FINANCE REPORT**

The Strata Finance Director presented the report advising on the financial position of Strata at the end of quarter 1 of the financial year 2020/2021, including both revenue and capital spend. He advised that the Company had been given a total of £6.60 million to run the IT Services in 2020/21 along with funding for various capital projects.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

**29. STRATA ICT REPORT - DEVON AUDIT PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT**

The Strata IT Director stated previous reports had highlighted the strengths of both the Strata's strategic concept and direction and, in the day to day delivery of the full range of IT services to the Partners. Work undertaken this year further

confirmed that the direction of travel remained upwards and that the appetite to continually improve remained as strong as ever.

Devon Audit Partnership (DAP) considered the Business Plan to be of a high standard and this, along with the high standard operational reporting and metrics, provided the measures from which continual service improvement can be delivered. Strata continued to perform strongly during 2019/20 and again exceeded the financial benefit targets set by the Partners. DAP advised that the authorities had Substantial Assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control framework in Strata Service Solutions Ltd.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

**30. 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 for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

**31. BUSINESS CASE FOR THE NEW FINANCE SYSTEM**

The Head of Business Systems, Strata presented the report which was undertaken into the case for a new finance system.

**RESOLVED** that the following be approved:-

- (1) the Strata Business Case for the Financial Management Convergence Project, on the basis that the tender documents would be structured to allow the procurement of a Financial Management System for one, two or three authorities. Teignbridge District Council would be the first authority to implement the system. East Devon District and Exeter City Council's retain the option of adopting the same system at a later date; and
- (2) to proceed with a formal Tender exercise for a common Financial Management System for all three authorities.

The meeting started at 4.00 pm and finished at 5.24 pm.

Chair