

**Teignbridge District Council
Strata Joint Scrutiny Committee
January 5th 2023
Part i**

Strata Performance Report

Purpose of Report

To inform the committee of the performance, delivery and state of Strata Solutions Ltd over the period from September 2022 – December 2022.

Recommendation(s)

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

Report Author

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Appendix A

1. Introduction

This is the latest performance report from Strata Solutions which provides Business and IT services to the three Councils. This is the second report from the Interim Director and as such will report on progress in the development of Strata together with updates on some key projects and systems.

The move to Agile methodology has progressed well as has an organisational change program which is currently between phase one and two of a restructure.

There has been significant progress in the deployment of M365 and

2. Overall Performance

Strata has performed well since the last report and has seen a move to utilising Agile and Kanban as means for the initiation of projects and other work requests.

Significant work has been done on Strata's development and the staff seem to embrace the changes and are willing to learn more and develop in themselves. There is still lots to do and this report should give some insight into the journey but also the work being done and still yet to achieve.

The changes planned and those made so far have been done the support of the clients and the Strata staff.

3. Technology

The improvement on technology has been continuing. The migration to the new disk storage (SAN) has concluded and the old SAN is being de-commissioned at this time.

The migration to the new storage was quite a lengthy process but did allow for some old data to be removed thereby saving time and storage. Further work

should be done on removal of old data, though not this is system data and not Council business or personal data. This would contain things such as server images and backups of those images which can add up to many terabytes of data.

We have now received new on-premise servers to replace old and unsupported systems. The work on this has progressed and this allows some breathing space to ensure a graceful move to cloud without the pressures of unsupported systems running live business applications.

In the last report there was mention of looking at the line of business applications and how we can consolidate the use of those together with mapping out a life cycle for each major application. This would avoid applications continuing past their useful life, stops unnecessary extensions of contracts, and reduces overall operating costs. It is predicated on greater collaboration across all three councils however and with more shared business processes.

4. People

Following on from the previous report it was identified that an organisational change programme be put in place and as such a restructure has been underway since October. It started as an informal, union supported, consultation process and followed by a formal consultation process. That process concluded on December 13th. Following this process, two staff, at this stage have been identified as slotting in to new roles.

The intention of the restructure was to add additional functions and skills into Strata to enable it to offer a broader, more well-defined skills base and to enable more efficient processes to be adopted.

The restructure was split into a phase one and a phase two approach, with phase one looking at the overall structure and creating new roles where gaps previously existed. The phase two process, which is yet to start but will do so at the end of January, will review the Business Systems Team and examine how that team can

provide a service which is more clearly defined and is in line with the Agile approach being developed in Strata. The Business Systems Team is almost 50% of the technical resource within Strata and so has significant opportunity for change and restructuring.

The restructure is necessary as the functional skills mapping exercise which was undertaken within Strata, shows that Strata is expecting too much diverse range of skills from some staff and is lacking some skills in other areas. This means staff are doing many things which are away from their core competency and to fully develop a streamlined delivery model we need to have highly skilled staff delivering within their area of expertise.

The best and most effective processes have staff with defined skills operating in clearly defined processes and seldom stepping outside those. It allows for less task switching, which wastes time, and it allows for ease of scalability as additional capacity can 'plug-in' to the process.

It is anticipated that the additional roles within Strata will be funded in part from movement of staff and from reduction in operating costs from contracts.

5. Projects

As always Strata is continually delivering projects of varying size and complexity. The focus in the last few months has been on making all the work Strata does visible to the clients so it can be seen what work is consuming what resource. This allows the clients to prioritise the work in the order they see fit and also means projects do not sit languishing and lost from sight, as has previously happened.

The project, and in fact all work requests, are now requested through the service management tool ASM which creates a work request card on a KanBan board of all work. This is where the clients can now update, view or prioritise their work requests and gives a clear view of all that is happening.

Projects are categorised into XS, S, M, L, XL as sizing and the complexity model of Cynefin which breaks things into four levels of complexity, Clear, Complicated, Complex, Chaotic. This is a well-respected model which has been utilised internationally for over 20 years. From this approach packets of work are more easily managed, and priorities based on potential effort and time required.

Currently there are 63 projects in flight, with 73 ready to go once capacity becomes available and another 300 uncategorised behind those.

The following is an update on some of the projects currently underway or being started.

1. Financial Management System replacement. This has been ongoing for some time now and was planned to migrate TDC in April 2023. Due to some complexities, it is looking more likely this will be moved back to later in the year. The General ledger structure has been agreed and the product is being built and configured by the vendor. It is expected that the test system will be delivered in early 2023. As this project is across all three councils any does have a knock on effect to other councils. Os its imperative that this project is given the support and focus required to meet the best outcome for all.
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 (have done comms to staff and are planned to move soon to have cloud based email but not use of SharePoint at this stage. Exter are not yet making the move but have initiated a project with the RAMM who will plan their approach and work with a 3rd party to establish that. The adoption of Teams continues but it is still not 100% across all councils.
3. SAN Upgrade – (SAN = Storage Area Network, which are intelligent high speed disk storage on the network and not attached to any one server.) was mentioned in the previous report and has now concluded. It was possible to

remove some data and so not all had to be migrated, saving time and effort. The old SAN is in the process of being decommissioned and this will release space in the racks withing the server rooms.

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 work progressed with some delays due to suppliers and Virgin did extend their date of cessation but finally all lines have been moved. This has been a good process for learning what issues can occur and make us more prepared for the national switch off of copper lines in 2025.
5. We have been looking at how to put in place more rigour and control around Data Governance. This is part of a wider data strategy approach. This will address what data is stored, where, how it should be categorised across all three councils etc. This is with the intention of making the data more accurate, understood, ready to move to the cloud and to allow easier migration to single instance of data leading to single views of customer.
6. Intelligent routing planning for Exeter waste collections is a project that has been started to give greater efficiency in routing of waste collections. This is being delivered using an agile approach and has an anticipated go live in Q2 2023.
7. The decarbonisation of Forde House. This is an ongoing project which will require a significant effort from Strata as it will in effect be like commissioning a new building and fitting it out with the necessary IT equipment on all desks, offices and meeting rooms. This has had its own delays but is getting closer to the time when Strata will have to engage several temporary staff to help deliver this in the timescales.

6. Incidents and Performance Data

This report is presenting the data from September 2022 to December 20th 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	2281	TOTAL
	7	Priority 1
	24	Priority 2
	270	Priority 3
	892	Priority 4
	1088	Priority 5
Service Requests	957	TOTAL
	293	ECC
	330	EDDC
	149	TDC
	185	Strata

7. Improvements

As was mentioned in the previous report work has been identified to improve the structure and delivery model of Strata, This has manifested as a restructure and the adoption of Agile and use of tools such as KanBan.

Much more work is needed and the Phase two of the restructure will bring additional benefits as it will allow the new roles to be filled with much needed skills and functions, functions that are missing in the current Strata model.

The Councils have given back some of the savings from 22/23 and these have been put to use on interim resources to not only fill the gaps identified until the restructure takes place but also to establish what good looks like in these roles. This has been accomplished and often praised by the clients, in the Business

Relationship Management role and with the Agile coach role. Whilst the latter is a temporary role to establish an essential core of Agile understanding the function has allowed 13 Strata staff to become trained and certified as Scrum Master or Product Owner. There has also been some coaching in the client Councils but this is slower to progress.

The benefits of having Strata and the councils trained in the same disciplines means we all speak the same language and ambiguity due to poor understanding of approach is minimised thereby increasing quality and output.

There is one more role to establish at this stage and that is the role of lead Architect. This will allow for greater planning around strategy in line of business applications together with infrastructure and the move to cloud, which is a necessary path to follow.

8. Conclusion

There has been much happening within Strata and not just with the business-as-usual project delivery and day to day support but also with significant activity in the development and improvement of Strata.

As we move into the new year the progress on finding a new permanent director is getting closer to its conclusion. This does not draw and end to the changes though.

It is envisaged that the Phase 2 restructure will conclude in March and changes to the operating model and culture also need to be developed and bed in. This is work the new director will continue well into Q2 and Q3 2023. The restructure is the easy part, the changes to hearts and minds take a little longer but are the most important part to the success of building a better Strata.