

STRATA JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE & STRATA JOINT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Note: This report will be considered at both meetings and a verbal update will be given on any recommendation comments arising from the Overview & Scrutiny meeting.

DATE OF MEETING: 17 MARCH 2016 & 30 MARCH 2016

PUBLICATION DATE: 9 MARCH 2016

REPORT OF: Chief Operating Officer

SUBJECT: STRATA Implementation Progress March 2016

1. PURPOSE

To appraise the JSC of the progress of implementation of the Strata business plan.

2. BACKGROUND

The Strata plan was created in early 2014 and approved in August 2014. Since then a great deal of work has been carried out to implement the vision of a single IT organisation delivering IT services from a single data centre using the latest virtual desktop infrastructure.

3. PROGRESS

Summary

The high level plan included in the original business case is shown in Fig 1 and is updated to show progress against each of the key elements.

The main infrastructure elements of the new IT infrastructure (data centre, WAN, main computers) were completed last year overcoming several challenges in the process that introduced some delay to the subsequent stages.

These elements provided the foundations for delivery of the virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) which in turn delivers the Global Desktop to each member of staff in the Councils. Numerous challenges, but especially software bugs in the main VDI product, have caused a delay in the roll out resulting in the need to replan the delivery.

As of today 419 staff have received the Global Desktop and feedback from users is good.

Key Technical Areas In Progress

Security Systems

The main systems are implemented but in a raw format and need tuning to enable efficient operation of the systems and for the reports to be understood by staff. This delay came about as the security staff were heavily involved in the crisis management of the old Teignbridge infrastructure and its temporary move to new infrastructure.

Since December we have had to respond rapidly to several new security threats requiring reconfiguration of the many security systems in place and, in one case, a major data recovery exercise. This tuning of systems will continue.

Telecomms Contract

The transfer of the various suppliers over to the Virgin Media Business (VMB) contract is underway. The process had a setback in December when a line transfer failed causing significant issues for the Exeter Homecall service. The transfer was stopped while VMB investigated and modified their processes and has recently restarted.

Moving onto a single contract is the first step in migrating to a modern digital telecoms platform called SIP. This is planned for August 2016.

Once SIP is in place then telephony can be added to the Global Desktop starting at East Devon.

Virtualise the Software Applications

This has been the most troublesome workstream of the implementation project so far. After a slow start due to difficult-to-use software was changed for a new product, speedy progress was made and the Global Desktop started being rolled out to users in Exeter.

In early January we reached 150 users and from this point a series of problems emerged which caused users to complain and we stopped the roll out. The issues were escalated to our partner, Computercentre, and the main supplier, VMWare. After extensive checks and continuous testing of attempted "fixes" the problems have been identified inside the VMWare product.

A fix has been implemented and the roll out continued in late February. We have now reached 419 users and expect to complete in Exeter in early April.

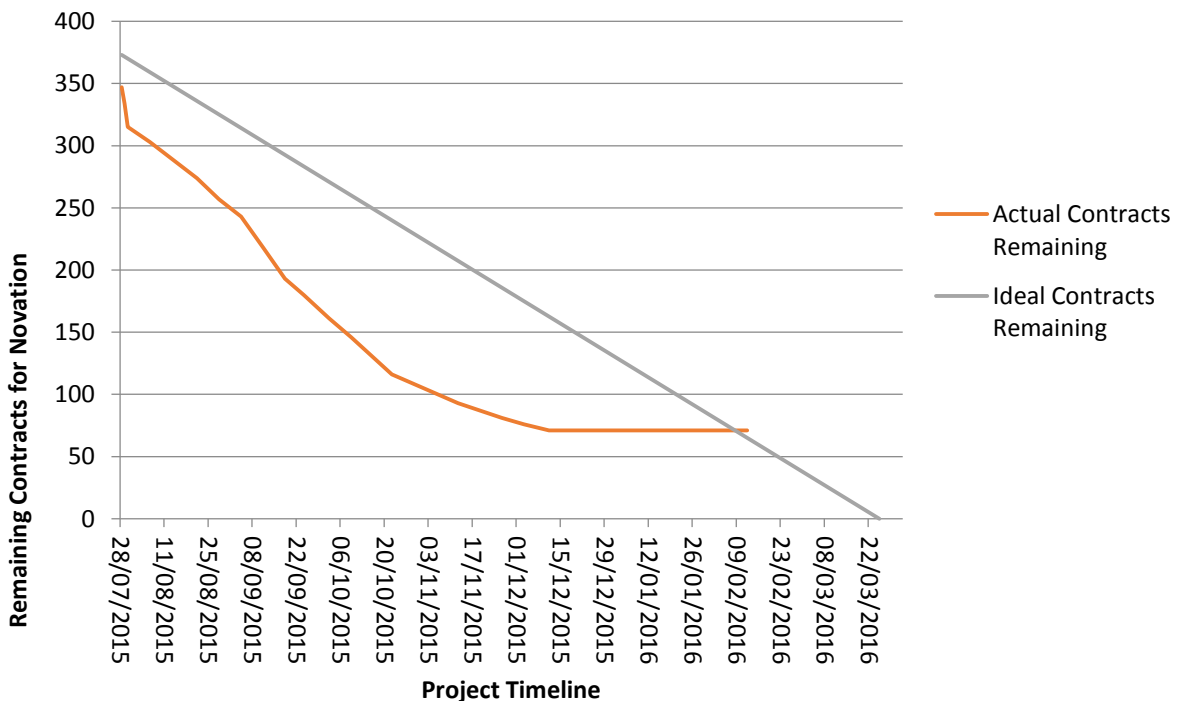
The consequences of this delay is a knock-on effect to East Devon and Teignbridge with an expected start in East Devon in late May and at Teignbridge in September.

Other Implementation Areas

Contract Novation and Negotiation

A second major part of the business case was the migration over a period of years towards single versions of business software. This was intended to begin in earnest once the Strata IT infrastructure was in place with some supplier negotiations taking place in the first year while contract novations took place.

Novations have been trickier than expected with some suppliers eg Oracle and OpenText either refusing to novate or placing heavy costs on the move.



Current progress shows us achieving £57K saving from novation negotiation against a target of £84K saving per year. It is anticipated this will be recovered through the business plan process to meet the original savings target.

Convergence of Business Applications

We have several agreements on migration of applications and projects have begun. This is, by its nature, a longer term objective but vital in freeing up capacity amongst the Business Solution team to use for transformation.

The projects agreed and started are:

- Exeter move onto IDOX Uniform – major project covering Building Control, Development Control, Land Charges, Licensing, Environmental Health

- HR Project – covers the payroll, HR, time and attendance and door lock systems.

Other work that is leading towards common systems is:

- All councils have agreed to use Umbraco for web content management and, as far as possible, to share a website design.
- Exeter selecting the “portal” product that will provide a modern digital delivery platform to be in place across the three councils should they wish it.

The Convergence Plan is issued yearly as it needs to adapt to the changing council environments. The latest Plan is being presented to Board in March.

Organisation

The details of the complete organisation have been completed and we are now in the process of evaluating the jobs and working out strategies for offering Strata contracts with minimum amount of disruption to staff.

Staff are continuing to work across all three major sites and the Global Desktop roll out has been a particular success.

March 2016 is when all contract staff will leave us.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Joint Scrutiny Committee comments on the report for the Joint Executive.

Chris Powell
Chief Operations Officer