

| Strata JSC and JEC | |
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| DATE OF MEETING: | 7 June JSC and 21 June JEC |
| PUBLICATION DATE: | 25 May 2016 |
| REPORT OF: | Chris Powell |
| SUBJECT: | Strata Implementation progress |

1. PURPOSE

The JSC and JEC are asked to consider the implementation progress

2. May Summary

Global Desktop

Implementing the new IT infrastructure to provide the Global Desktop for all councils continues to be a central theme within Strata and we now have 569 users of the system. The Global Desktop has highlighted its value recently when:

- Oakwood House (an office in Exeter) had a power cut and when people logged back into their PCs all their work appeared on their screens exactly as before the power cut
- Election officers at Exeter were able, through their own Global Desktop, to access the Elections systems live from the Riverside Leisure Centre
- The PCC election count held at WestPoint near Exeter, used a Skype link set up through the Global Desktop to monitor the count on the Isles of Scilly

The two software bugs causing irritation to some users of the Global desktop will, we hope, be solved by a software update from VMWare on 31 May. Once we have tested this to ensure it works, we will update the Global Desktop for everyone. This will be just in time for the first roll out to East Devon users which has been rescheduled to start on 13th June.

Service Desk and Infrastructure

We are watching the Incident measure closely at Exeter as it has shrunk to an all time low and we are expecting (hoping!) that this is as a result of the introduction of the Global Desktop. The turn around time for requests such as “new desktop software” has also improved because of the ease of applying this to the Global Desktop.

We have spotted that we are still getting a large number of password reset requests at Exeter despite having the self service module in place –more investigation is needed to get to the bottom of this but it is likely to be a training issue.

The main causes of system outage have shifted this month. East Devon Citrix issues have largely gone as a result of work carried out with Microsoft in the month but some of the big applications, such as Academy and IDOX, have had problems with failing overnight processes.

It is now very quiet in the old Exeter data centre as the infrastructure team have turned off all the old servers and storage. Electricity costs should drop significantly as a result.

Planning and actions is continuing for implementation of the digital telecoms system later this year. There is a risk that resourcing problems may either delay the work or create an increase in costs as a result of bringing in more external help.

Other activities of the team include:

- Completing the transfer of business applications from the failing Teignbridge servers to the temporary rented hardware
- Swapping out Blackberries for iPhones at Teignbridge

Business Systems Team – very busy

A very busy month for this team, mainly due to changes to home-grown systems and upgrades needed to cope with year end. In total the team completed 74 Business Change Requests (BCRs), many of them having deadlines that could not be missed.

With awareness growing amongst customers as to what IT can do to help deliver their Services the demands on this team have been growing. This team of 20 people has a current demand of over 40 projects and 19 Business Cases in progress, a queue of over 360 BCRs with a forecast list of many more projects.

We are working on the processes around demand and change management intending to enable:

- Our customers in Councils to get a clearer and sharper view of BCR or Project deliverables and timescales
- A more robust method for funnelling the work into Strata and a clear view of the work each team member is dealing with
- Improved reporting for Strata staff and customers alike.

Security – we are still under attack

We are still managing to defend ourselves against the attacks on our systems but it is something we dare not take our eyes off. The pattern of attacks is constantly changing and the latest theme is a targeted campaign against senior managers and IT staff using cleverly worded emails containing new forms of viruses.

The government is also helping councils now by connecting us up within a Cyber-security Information Sharing Partnership which has links to groups such as GCHQ.

We have submitted the yearly PSN Code of Connection for each of the three councils and it will be interesting to see what the assessors come back to us with. We hope that the design of the new infrastructure will pass all their tests and that we will have little more to do to enable us continued connected to the DWP and other government services.

3. Cost savings for 2014/15

The revenue costs have come in better than we had forecast with £230K saved against an original target of £262K. This is despite:

- Having one extra member of staff in Compliance and Security costing approx £32K. Note: redundancy for a member of Strata has been agreed and he will leaving us on 31st August
- Temporary replacement for the Teignbridge servers and storage at £24K rental per year and about £15K in implementation costs so far. The need for the rental should finish in Dec 2016 when systems are transferred to the Exeter data centres.

The cost savings have been helped by:

- no replacements yet made for the SNN Officer from Teignbridge and the Senior Project Manager
- better than expected procurements
- first year of some maintenance contracts being included within the set up costs

4. Organisation

- Service Desk restructure is underway, with the first consultations complete and interviews for the new posts on 19 May.
- The first consultation on contracts for the Business Systems team meeting scheduled for 31 May with further consultations taking place in June.
- Office Administrator post interviews held for internal applicants. No one was appointed. Expectation is that will place an external candidate by August.
- Infrastructure Team – a serious risk is building up. Out of a team of 6 (which includes the manager) there are two people on long term sick and a third who could be scheduled for a major operation in August. The current risks have been mitigated with Mark Harrison seconded to the team until December and extra consultancy days being bought from Nexus. This will last until the end of July and so we will review the situation mid June.
- Service Desk operator has resigned and we will replace with a fixed term Service Desk Officer.
- One of the three Document Centre staff at Teignbrige has taken a job within Teignbridge Council. We will need to replace quickly.

5. Global Desktop and other Strata implementation elements

- VMWare – the software fix for the Global Desktop is expected on 31st May. We will then test to ensure it works on all our applications which will take at least a week. Crossed fingers that it works otherwise the roll out to EDDC could be delayed.
- WAN – the fail-over testing has been successful for the two internet connections – 400meg at Civic and 100 meg at Oakwood. The dual connections for EDDC and TDC are next to be set up and tested.
- WAN – organising changes to the Siemens network connections for EDDC remote offices to ensure the connections work with the Virgin network is taking longer than expected and is being closely watched.
- User Acceptance Testing – testing of EDDC's business software with users has begun on schedule.
- Telecoms migration – work is suffering due to absence of a key staff member. Project has been passed to another member of the team. Mitigation actions continue and no delay in end dates is expected at present.
- PSN Code of Connection has been submitted for all three councils - remedial work was needed after latest security scans on EDDC and TDC systems. We have mitigated to what we think is an appropriate level and we now await the feedback from the PSN assessors.

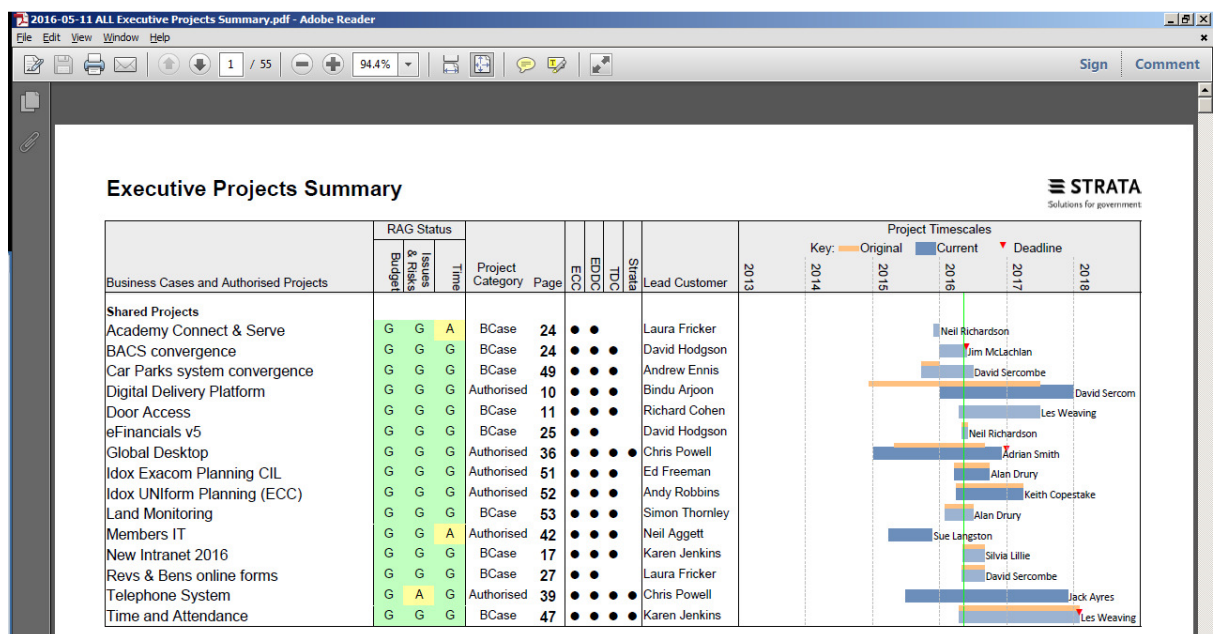
6. Convergence and other Business Systems

The Strata infrastructure is well on its way to being implemented and the Global Desktop, with all its complexities, has been proved to work well so far. With TDC expected to be fully migrated by the end of December the attention now begins to focus on the convergence onto common business applications.

The two decisions that have been brought to JEC are:

- HR/payroll/T&A/ door security suite of systems
- Migration to the IDOX system, Uniform, at Exeter.

Both of these projects are in progress. There are a number of other convergence projects that have come about opportunistically, as shown in the image below (a screen shot of the projects reporting system). These projects may have arisen from new work being requested by councils, or where contracts are being renewed, or where external agencies demand a change eg BACS.



The resources of the Business Systems Team are limited to what the 20 people can deliver and we now have a “chicken and egg” situation developing. We cannot deliver the third arm of the Strata business case – to create increased capacity and capability for business change activities - until convergence is achieved and it is looking increasingly likely that most of the resources could be used up with individual council transformation or improvement projects rather than convergence.

We are still considering options and will be a position to present to the next JEC.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Joint Scrutiny Committee and Joint Executive Committee note the progress set out within the report.