

STRATA JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday 30 November 2017

Present:-

Councillor Lyons (Chair)
Councillors Dewhirst, Wood, Dent and Jung

Also Present

Strata IT Director, Compliance and Security Manager, Strata Board Director, Programme & Resource Manager, Chief Finance Officer, Business Systems Manager, Infrastructure and Support Manager, Document Centre Manager and Democratic Services Officer (Committees) (HB)

49

APOLOGIES

These were received from Councillors Haines, Leadbetter and Prowse.

50

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2017 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as correct.

51

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of pecuniary interest were made.

52

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER PROCEDURAL RULES

None.

53

QUESTION FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCILS UNDER PROCEDURE RULES

None.

54

STRATA IT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Strata IT Director presented the quarterly report on the functioning of the Strata organisation, the aim being to provide background to the core areas of specialisation within Strata and identifying key activities, successes and areas for improvement. The report gave examples of the progress Strata had made against the core objectives of cost reduction, risk reduction and increasing capability for change and included a SWOT analysis and updated key performance indicators.

Strata had continued to make progress and was delivering a good service to the three authorities again confirmed by the Devon Audit Partnership (DAP), the main challenge being the major systems outage on 13th September which had occurred in the Dell Storage Area Network (SAN). Strata had engaged with both ComputerWorld who had designed the SAN solution and Dell who manufactured it and advanced technical training for two of the Strata Infrastructure engineers was

in place. It was explained that all critical systems were recovered via the Oakwood backup and that the outage had enabled Strata to review the capability of the Oakwood secondary data centre location, options for improving the Oakwood DC being investigated to be reported to this Committee and the Strata Joint Executive Committee in due course.

Members recognised that, apart from niche areas, where smaller suppliers could offer services, increasingly it was only possible to invite the larger companies to tender where leverage for negotiation was not as great, as was the case with the recent Outlook crash where Microsoft had advised that the likely cost of a fix was prohibitively expensive and that the option to upgrade to Outlook 2016 was advisable.

He highlighted the following key areas:-

- the Exmouth Town Hall relocation project for East Devon District Council had been delivered on time and budget with work now on the move to Honiton. The IT Director praised Sue Langston in particular and Robin Barlow for their hard work on this project;
- three new apprentices joined in September and Strata was engaging with Exeter University regarding offering a degree programme;
- positive results from a Staff Engagement Survey;
- a high level of project work with demands made upon the Business Analysts with interruptions to resolve Service incidents. Strata intended to introduce a new third line support function which would be cost neutral.;
- effective recruitment with high calibre staff being recruited;
- an Out of Hours service had been launched on 6 November;
- successful roll out of new Multi Function Devices - printers;
- the Strata Security and Compliance team had continued to make good progress in protecting the three authorities against cyber threats;
- engaging with each authority to perform a review of all current projects with all asked to prioritise their projects as High, Medium and Low;
- risk monitoring was in place and shared with DAP; and
- financial monitoring had been increased with financial reporting across service teams.

The following responses were given to Members' queries:-

- the new Global Communication platform was proving effective with a view to having all three authorities migrated to the new platform by mid-2019;
- the extensive programme of server migrations from Windows 2003 to 2008 had resulted in the Public Service Network (PSN) accreditation with a further migration in 2019 to move from a Windows 2008 to a Windows 2010 environment;
- the two particular areas highlighted by staff in the survey were the high workload and pay;
- the main functions of the new printers were printing, copying and scanning with a balanced distribution of those with stapling features and purchase of consumables was very competitive; and
- concern remained with performance of a number of key suppliers. Effective supplier management had been introduced with VirginMedia Business five months ago and would be introduced to other suppliers.

Individual managers presented their respective areas as set out below:-

Infrastructure Projects – Adrian Smith

The Global Desktop programme had been completed and all users migrated from legacy systems into the Global Desktop environment. A Global Desktop Improvement Programme (GDIP) was running with the aim of addressing reported issues. Outlook and Microsoft had advised that, even though it was their product at fault, they would not be resolving the issue. Their suggestion to migrate to an Office 2016 environment was not acceptable and Strata had escalated the matter with Microsoft.

The Global Communications project had made an excellent start and was now fully functioning at the new Exmouth Town Hall location. The Strata Joint Executive Committee were being asked to agree the roll out schedule. Service desks across three authorities were fully staffed with an apprentice at each site. Positive customer satisfaction remained above 96%.

A new Devon Wide Area Network (WAN) was being installed to replace Devon WAN, the new WAN being cost neutral. To remain with the existing supplier (Updata) would have seen an eight fold increase in the cost of the WAN as Devon County Council had subsidised the original WAN, the impact being a potential £70,000 increase in costs.

The East Devon office move to Exmouth had been completed on time with no issues with doors opening at 8.30am on 13 November. Excellent feed-back was also received on the office refurbishment.

Compliance and Security – Robin Barlow

PSN Coco compliance certificates had been gained for East Devon and Exeter after already receiving the compliance for Teignbridge but was dependent on the removal of the three Windows 2003 servers which need to be completed by the end of November. The second Business Continuity Planning workshop had been held with the three councils where key systems had been agreed and initial recovery time requirements recorded. A Strata internal workshop had been held with the Strata General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) accredited practitioner (Tracy White) and engagement with the council teams responsible for GDPR and a Strata asset information audit planned along with standard Data Privacy Impact Assessment forms.

Strata were also looking to run an event in February at East Devon in conjunction with the Federation of Small Businesses to look at how the authority could better protect itself. In terms of the security position, the level has remained at Medium as the attack from email campaigns had abated. A recent incident had resulted in spam emails being routed via the Strata email system due to technical misconfiguration. This had been resolved with further controls put in place to prevent and detect.

Document Centres - Martin Millmow

During October, consultations on the rollout of new Ricoh printers had been held at Teignbridge with stakeholders invited to contribute to the final configuration. The roll out of the new Ricoh devices would commence in December 2017. At East Devon, the new devices for the Exmouth office were confirmed with installation in the first week of November. An additional Ricoh device has been setup at the Knowle to support staff working at both the Exmouth and Knowle offices.

All had 'Follow Me printing' technology, so that prints could be retrieved from any MFD with increased data protection and management reports. A new part time designer was working alongside the team at East Devon and the existing vacancy in the Teignbridge document centre filled.

Business Systems – Dave Sercombe

The Business Change Request (BCR) queue continued to reduce with further visits to BCR owners to assess the older BCRs to provide a more accurate picture of the BCR workload. Exeter had advised that a number could be closed as they were not required or did not reflect the Council direction. Other projects included:-

- Firmstep in Exeter - the first batch of forms had gone live. The Graffiti form was a completely end to end process with report from customers going to a mobile device for operatives to resolve. The operatives then close the call whilst in the field sending an immediate response back to the customer;
- Firmstep in Teignbridge - work had begun on the Firmstep project in Teignbridge. Both Exeter and Teignbridge would benefit from this common software as the knowledge and skills gained in both authorities could be shared with early work underway to review its potential benefits for East Devon;
- Door Access systems had been installed at Exmouth and Teignbridge and the work to configure the software to manage these was progressing; and
- New HR and Payroll system continued in Teignbridge and Exeter; and
- planning, building control and land charges systems had gone live in July 2017;

Responding to Members, who detailed the many difficulties experienced by Town Councils in viewing electronic planning applications, particularly applicants' plans, which hindered their responses to the District Councils Business Systems Manager undertook to examine options for improvements be introduced.

Programme and Resources – Steve Gammon

The Programme and Resources Manager detailed the projects being undertaken as requested by Council service managers and as agreed by the partner Councils and set out in the annual Strata Business Plan. The current number of scheduled projects in 2017/18 and 2018/19 were 1613 Active Convergence Projects and 5516 Active Service Projects. Experience showed that there would be other, as yet, unknown projects requested by service managers through the remainder of 2017/18. Also presented were detailed tables of project demand for 2017/18 and 2018/19 and a chart of project schedule convergence projects. An indicator and performance graphic covered movements in incidents, service-requests, business change requests, system outages and satisfaction on completed jobs.

Strata Joint Scrutiny Committee noted the report and thanked the Strata staff for their hard work and the significant progress made.

PROPOSED "GLOBAL COMMS" ROLL OUT SCHEDULE

The Infrastructure and Support Manager presented the report setting out the proposed roll out schedule for the new Global Comms platform, made up by two key products, Skype for Business as the telephone system and Anywhere365 as the new contact centre.

It was proposed to roll out East Devon over March to May 2018, Exeter August to October, Teignbridge February to April 2019 and satellite sites May to November 2019 with the reasons for the prioritisation set out in the report.

Strata Joint Scrutiny Committee noted and supported the report.

56

STAFF ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

The Strata IT Director presented the report setting out the results of the staff engagement survey for 2017. An action plan would be drawn up by the Strata management team and human resources to be discussed with Unison. The survey was being sent out annually to facilitate year on comparisons.

In summary, 73% of the workforce had responded and there had been an improvement in every area compared with 2016. 88% of the 49 respondents to this particular question would recommend Strata as a place to work, compared with 87% in 2015 and 68% in 2016.

57

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 during consideration of the following item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I, Schedule 12A of the Act.

58

STRATA BUDGET MONITORING QUARTER II - 2016/17

The Director responsible for Finance reported that Strata had been given a total of £6,104,000 to run the IT Services in 2017/18 along with funding for various capital projects. The 2017/18 Business Plan had revised the savings profile set out in the original Business Cases over the initial ten year period of the Company.

The Strata budget was on track to deliver around £260,000 of revenue savings for the Councils in 2017/18 with the key variations set out in the report.

At the six month stage the Board was projecting a savings of £259,777 against the total original target of £252,836.

The report set out variations in the capital budget and it was noted that there had been some additional expenditure on the data centre.

The report set out a suggested change to the original method of funding agreed at the inception of the company and the pros and cons of this new system compared with the existing were set out. At this stage, the Strata Board wished to focus on improving service further rather than implementing a new charging system and the Scrutiny Committee supported this proposal

Strata Joint Scrutiny Committee noted and supported the report, requesting the Strata Joint Executive Committee to also support the Strata Board's suggestion of not introducing a new charging policy at this stage.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 7.30 pm)

Chair

