

STRATA JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday 28 May 2015

Present:-

Councillors Baldwin, Bialyk, Chapman, Dent, Dewhurst, Haines, Jung, Raybould and Prowse

Also Present:-

Chief Operating Officer, Strategic Lead Finance EDDC, Business Lead for Corporate Services & Transformation TDC and STRATA Finance Lead, ECC.

8 TO CONFIRM THE APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIR

Councillor Prowse of Teignbridge District Council was confirmed as Chair for the next 12 months.

9 APOLOGIES

These were received from Duncan Moors, Solicitor to Teignbridge District Council.

10 MINUTES

Subject to the insertion of the word "Transformation" in place of "Technology" in the third paragraph of Min. No. 5, the minutes of the meeting of 12 March 2015 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as correct.

11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

12 PROGRESS REPORT ON STRATA IMPLEMENTATION PLAN - APRIL 2015

The Chief Operating Officer provided an update on the progress with the implementation plan.

- New infrastructure is on target both in terms of time and cost, helped by the government grant. Each authority will see the benefit of faster internet connection from July; Exeter users will see impact from August as new software s to be phased in to use;
- Organisational progress outlined management structure on schedule, with posts filled and 2 apprentices planned, a further apprentice being sought. ;
- Engagement working well with all authorities, talking with users and management levels of each council;
- Risks identified and being managed.
- Opportunities from the project had arisen including consolidating website design. An example of the in-cab technology used by Exeter City Council was given, which following negotiation on price was in progress for roll-out at Teignbridge and being considered by East Devon.
- Public Services Network (PSN) rules had been amended again, allowing more flexibility. The team needed to review the change in rules and reflect how to take advantage of the new flexibility.

He responded as follows to Members' queries:-

- A phased approach to the changes in software was in place to mitigate the risk of overloading users with multiple software changes – some users needed more time and training than others;
- The Lync system was explained to the Committee as a similar system to Skype, but provided by Microsoft. This system would allow users to see who was online and what they were doing eg in a meeting or on a telephone call... The potential of the system was large and could, in the future, enable virtual conferencing. In response to security concerns, he confirmed that it was secure and that training would be given to all to understand how the Lync system should be used.
- The term "channel shift" was explained as shifting the requests of service to the council to the cheapest option for dealing with the query – in most cases by taking the request online. It was acknowledged that not everyone had the capability or facilities to use online services, but many agencies operating to help such people could use the online services on their behalf. It was summed up as enabling everyone who could access online services to do so, freeing up staff resource to help those people who needed a face to face service.
- Some software systems are in common with Devon County Council and contact is maintained with the county;
- Virgin Media Business handles dealing with BT Openreach on issues, but there are no concerns currently on the joining of all the council's networks;
- The resilience level of backup is much higher than other councils and will cover the running of essential services.

Strata Joint Scrutiny Committee noted the progress of the implementation plan.

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SHARED PROJECT PROCESS

The Chief Operating Officer reported on a process for investigating joint "opportunities for new ways of working". The intention was to funnel all the likely triggers for starting reviews of potential sharing opportunities, including the Application Convergence plans, into a single transparent and consultative process which can be owned and managed by the JEC and JSC.

As the previously planned JEC meeting had not taken place, the Chief Operating Officer had agreed with the Chief Executives to start on this project. A meeting between the Chief Executives and Human Resources of each council will take place to discuss the use of single IT systems and how that impacts on back offices systems.

In light of this the Chairman recommended that the report be brought back to the Panel after that meeting had taken place, with an update before approving the report listed on the agenda papers.

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PROGRESS REPORT ON POST COMMENCEMENT TASKS

The Business Lead for Corporate Services & Transformation of Teignbridge District Council presented the report advising of the progress that Strata had made in relation to the post-commencement tasks that are identified in the Business Plan, the Shareholder Agreement and the Service Contracts

He highlighted that the data centre will be established by the end of July, not June as stated in the report but the slippage was still within the overall project. The building designated as the disaster recovery centre had some issues to

resolve including some soundproofing, but this was still within the financial limits of the project.

He also reported that meetings between service managers and Steve Gammon, STRATA Programme Resources Manager, were well received, productive and positive. This work helped identify existing and new projects within services that will form the components of a Service Plan.

Insurance cover was now in place for public liability, employer's liability, professional negligence, directors and fidelity guarantee.

Due to recruitment issues the Information Security Policy was not yet in place, but now that Robin Barlow was appointed as Compliance and Security Manager, consulting with all three authorities, the policy was expected to be before each Council for review in August.

Strata Joint Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

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STRATA PERFORMANCE INDICATORS PROGRESS REPORT

The Chief Operating Officer presented the initial suite of performance indicators that Strata would be using to manage its business and to show stakeholders how Strata is performing. The indicators would be added to as the need arose.

The committee flagged up the need for clarity on the performance indicators, citing as an example, how an "incident" was defined. The report showed a considerable difference in the incidents logged by ECC as compared to the other authorities. The Chief Operating Officer outlined that the incorrect logging of incidents had been the main cause of the difference, which had now been remedied.

As this report showed a first taste of results, the Committee felt it would be better to compare it to the next report to show trends clearly. An explanation of terms and acronyms would also be needed to accompany the report so that the Committee became familiar with the performance indicator measurements.

Strata Joint Scrutiny Committee approved the report.

Councillor Dent suggested that it would be beneficial for the Committee to receive case examples that would demonstrate the implementation of the STRATA project. Talking with end users and customers would give a clear picture to the Committee of the benefits of the introduction of new software and technology.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 6.40 pm)

Chair