

STRATA - JOINT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Wednesday 30 March 2016

Present:-

Cllr Christophers (Chair)
Councillors Edwards and Divani

Non-Voting Members:-
Ms Bulbeck, Parkinson and Williams

Also Present

Chief Operating Officer, The Strategic Lead for Human Resources, Security and Compliance Manager, Strategic Lead Finance (EDDC) - Strata Director, The Teignbridge Strata Director, Programme & Resource Manager, Infrastructure and Support Manager and Democratic Services Manager (Committees)

1

ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Christophers was elected Chair.

2

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Chief Executive & Growth Director Exeter City Council.

3

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2015 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as correct.

4

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest were made.

5

STRATA BUDGET MONITORING QUARTER 3 2015/16

The report of the Director (Finance Lead) was submitted updating Members of the financial progress of Strata during the first nine months of 2015-16, including a project outturn assessment against the savings set out in the Business Plan

Members were advised that at the nine month stage, the Board was projecting a saving of £201,488 against the target of £262,098. The reduction was partly attributable to replacement infrastructure for Teignbridge and additional staffing costs than planned. Total Council's contribution towards the capital budget was £150,000 per annum.

Strata Joint Scrutiny Committee considered the report at its meeting on 17 March 2016 and its comments were reported.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

STRATA BUDGET 2016/17

The report of the Director (Finance Lead) was submitted seeking approval for the 2016/17 financial year budget.

Members were advised that the decisions made at the JEC on 24 November 2015 to offer Strata contracts to those staff who wished to transfer had substantially removed the projected surplus in the original Business Plan for 2016/17. The staff budgets adjustment to take account of transferring across to Strata Terms and Conditions were £125,000 with £120,000 set aside for redundancy costs although it was anticipated that not all the redundancy budget would be required. The reduction would be made up in future years to ensure the savings approved were made by the end of the ten year business plan. Any in year surplus achieved would be returned in the form of a refund to each Council in line with the agreed percentage split. The anticipated surplus for the year was approximately £27,000.

In response to a Member, the Strategic Lead Finance (EDDC) - Strata Director stated that to date only one redundancy was being considered as part of the consultation taking place. He also explained how the costs would be clawed back and they would be shown in the revised Business Plan which would be presented to the JEC later in the year.

Strata Joint Scrutiny Committee considered the report at its meeting on 17 March 2016 and its comments were reported.

RECOMMENDED that the three Councils approve the Budget for 2016/17.

STRATA IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS MARCH 2016

The report of the Chief Operating Officer was submitted to appraise Members of the progress of implementation of the Strata business plan.

Members were advised that the main elements of the new IT infrastructure - data centre, WAN and main computers - had been completed in 2015, overcoming several challenges. They had provided the foundation for the delivery of the virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) to roll out the Global Desktop to all staff members, with 419 having been globalised to date.

A major problem with software from VMWare had delayed the Desktop globalisation process - completion in Exeter would now be early April, with an expected late May start in East Devon and a September start in Teignbridge.

In response to a Member, the Chief Operating Officer commented that the Global Desk Top offered flexibility to the users enabling them to have remote access to their desktop and it also resulted in a reduction in IT support and was easier to undertake upgrades. It was anticipated that Exeter Councillors would move over to 'Office 365' towards the end of this year.

Strata Joint Scrutiny Committee considered the report at its meeting on 17 March 2016 and its comments were reported.

RESOLVED that the progress of the Implementation Plan be noted.

STRATA BOARD WORK PLAN

The report of the Strata Board on the work plan was submitted.

The Teignbridge Strata Director presented the newly adopted work plan that would be monitored by the Board over the next twelve months. He reported that considerable focus had been given to delivering the first part of the implementation plan and the new virtual desk top and supporting technologies across the three Councils. The work plan would be kept under monthly review by the Board which would be reviewing wider progress against the Company's business and organisational objectives.

The work plan also aimed to provide the delivery of relevant and timely information to the Scrutiny Committee and Executive. It was also intended to provide a framework for the management of the company's business and service delivery objectives against the approved business plan which would be revised later this year.

The Teignbridge Strata Director advised that the Scrutiny Committee had welcomed progress on the Plan but had also suggested that the availability of Board minutes would be helpful to give a full understanding of the operation of the Company and fulfil their representative roles on behalf of the public. They also had a further issue regarding Members general understanding across the three Authorities of the operation of Strata.

Members discussed the request from the Scrutiny Committee regarding the availability of the Board Minutes.

The Chair stated that some work was still to be done to increase Members awareness and understanding of Strata.

Strata Joint Scrutiny Committee considered the report at its meeting on 17 March 2016 and its comments were reported including an additional recommendation that the Teignbridge Strata Director to report to the next Scrutiny Committee meeting on mechanisms for increasing the transparency of Board business.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) the noted the report; and
- (2) the Teignbridge Strata Director be requested to report to the next Strata Joint Scrutiny Committee meeting on mechanisms for increasing the transparency of Board business.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT OF THE CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

The report of the Strata Board was submitted outlining arrangements adopted by the Board for the performance management approach for Chief Operating Officer.

Strata Joint Scrutiny Committee considered the report at its meeting on 17 March 2016 and its comments were reported.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) the report be noted; and
- (2) a 'two tier' approach be used for the performance management for the Chief Operating Officer:

- Performance assessment – carried out by the Board collectively
- Performance management – carried out by one Board member.

10

FAMILY FRIENDLY POLICIES

The report of the Strata Board was submitted advising Members of the family friendly policies which have been adopted by the Board in principle. These policies have been produced to ensure that legislation is adhered to. The provisions in these policies reflect statutory entitlements as opposed to the usual more enhanced provisions adopted by the public sector.

Strata Joint Scrutiny Committee considered the report at its meeting on 17 March 2016 and its comments were reported.

RESOLVED that the action of the Board be supported in agreeing these policies, in principle, so that they can be discussed and agreed with UNISON at the next Staff Joint Forum.

11

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 items on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 of Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Act.

13

STAFF ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

The report of the Strata Board was submitted updating Members on the recent staff engagement exercise. It was the first staff engagement survey undertaken by Human Resources on behalf of Strata suggested for completion on Strata's first year anniversary.

Members were advised that it was anticipated that staff response would increase in future years, a target in excess of 90% was the goal and, ultimately, it was intended to seek Investors In People accreditation. It was proposed that the Chief Operating Officer and management team, together with Human Resources, produce an Action Plan, the results to be published on the intranet. It was also the intention for Human Resources surgeries to be held at all sites.

Members welcomed the approach of the Human Resources surgeries and the aspiration to work towards Investors In People accreditation.

The Strategic Lead for Human Resources clarified that it was anticipated that Strata would seek the Investors In People accreditation towards the end of the second year.

Strata Joint Scrutiny Committee considered the report at its meeting on 17 March 2016 and its comments were reported.

RESOLVED that the actions approved by the Board be noted.

SECURITY STATUS OVERVIEW

The report of the Strata Board was submitted updating Members on changing cyber threats and Strata's response, in the light of recent security incidents.

The Security and Compliance Manager updated Members on the details of recent attacks and on-going work to combat loss of data systems through a cyber-attack. These threats were increasing, such activity now practically organised on a commercial basis. All three sites were protected by daily backup with the new Strata systems which now included the City Council systems backed up at Oakwood. East Devon was backed up at Honiton and initial tests for Teignbridge to be backed up at Oakwood had been successful.

Members discussed the need for staff and Members awareness with regards to 'Ransomware' attacks via emails and the internet and the backup systems that Strata had in place.

Strata Joint Scrutiny Committee considered the report at its meeting on 17 March 2016 and its comments were reported.

RESOLVED that the actions approved by the Board be noted.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 6.25 pm)

Chair