

STRATA JOINT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Tuesday 25 September 2018

Present:-

Councillor Peter Edwards (Chair)
Councillors Clemens and Skinner
Managing Director Teignbridge District Council, Chief Executive Exeter City Council, and
Chief Executive East Devon District Council

Also Present

Strata IT Director, Director with Responsibility for Finance, Strategic Lead Finance (East Devon District Council), Teignbridge Strata Director, Compliance and Security Manager, Infrastructure and Support Manager, Document Centre Manager, Business Systems Manager, Democratic Services Manager and Democratic Services Officer (SLS)

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APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence at the meeting were received from Councillors Christophers and Thomas.

(Councillor Thomas took part in the meeting via a video link.)

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MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 11 June 2018 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as correct.

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest were made.

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QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER PROCEDURAL RULES

None.

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QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCILS UNDER PROCEDURAL RULES

The following question was put by Councillor Clarence in relation to IT support:-

Will the Executive confirm please the IT managers intentions that council members from the three authorities will receive a measure of IT support, with laptops or whatever equipment they may choose to use, to for fill their roles as councillors, on the understanding that they may not be helped immediately if more pressing crisis matters are ongoing; also if such councillors IT equipment is simply too old to receive attention that a measure of help will be forthcoming with purchasing and setting up of new equipment to allow a councillor to for fill his/her role?

A copy of the question and reply was appended to the Minutes.

STRATA IT DIRECTORS REPORT - OVERVIEW OF STRATA PERFORMANCE

The Strata IT Director presented the report and presentation on the last four months of activity by Strata and provided an update on the current operation and performance, which included identified key activities, successes and areas for further improvement. He set out the important focus on the core objectives of cost and risk reduction and increasing the capability for change. He referred to the increasingly important Customer Centric ethos and better understanding of the business value of the work. A copy of the presentation was attached to the minutes.

Members were advised that a new Strata Business Plan would be developed to ensure a better alignment with the priorities of the three authorities. He set out a number of objectives, identified as part of the company's goal to become an 'Agent for Change', which included:-

- meetings of the Scrutiny Joint Committee and Scrutiny Joint Executive to be held half yearly - the Joint IT Steering Group to meet quarterly and an Annual Forum to be introduced to provide an opportunity to discuss the Transformation Strategy of each authority to discuss IT trends in local government;
- resetting the existing objectives of reducing risk and costs and developing capability and capacity to a set of objectives more focused on a Customer Centric service delivery model;
- transitioning from 'Business As Usual' to Transformational Value' – currently a 85% / 15% split;
- revising the Governance Framework to better empower the authorities;
- adapting the funding model;
- commercialisation of the operation, and
- consideration of creating a longer term agreement.

The Board welcomed the opportunity for more commercialisation, but considered it was important to remain focused on Strata's core activities. It was acknowledged that income generation would be a vital approach in the coming years, but more speculative work such as the development of IT applications, rather than a support role would be a practical way forward. The suggestion of a non-Executive Director joining the Board would also provide additional support and more informal 'policing'.

The Director with responsibility for Finance welcomed the Board's steer and would present a Business Plan, which would include the identified objectives, to the January meetings of the Strata Joint Scrutiny and Strata Joint Executive Committees, so that all three Councils would be able to take the proposed Plan to their respective Councils for consideration and approval.

The Chief Executive Exeter City Council congratulated the team on their success and effort.

Strata Joint Scrutiny Committee had considered the report at its meeting on 24 September 2018 and its comments were reported.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and a Business Plan, including the objectives set out above be presented to the respective meetings of the Strata Joint Scrutiny and Executive Committees in January 2019.

STRATA@4 UPDATE

The Strata IT Director reported that Dr Tim Gibson had met with the two Chief Executives and one Managing Director of the three authorities and had provided an independent report on the development of the Strata organisation over the last four years. The report would be shared with Members at the end of October, and would be released to coincide with the launch of the draft Strata Business Plan.

The Board requested the details of the report be shared as widely as possible with Members and staff in the three authorities.

Strata Joint Scrutiny Committee had considered a verbal report at its meeting on 24 September 2018.

RESOLVED that the verbal report be noted.

STRATA BUDGETING MONITORING QUARTER 1: 2018/19

The Director responsible for Finance presented the report on the financial progress of Strata during the first three months of 2018/19, including a projected outturn assessment against the savings set out in the Business Plan. He stated that the Strata budget was on track to deliver approximately £420,000 of revenue savings for the three authorities in 2018/19. The report also set out the variations in the capital budget.

The final, audited, Statement of Accounts for Strata Service Solution were included in the report, and the position had not changed from the draft accounts. The refund of £565,000 provided to the owners was deemed correct.

The Director responsible for Finance responded to questions on Strata's change in the current financial arrangement and stated that Strata would identify costs savings at the beginning of the financial year and therefore request a lower amount from the three authorities, which would be a more efficient approach.

Strata Joint Scrutiny Committee had considered the report at its meeting on 24 September 2018 and its comments were reported.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

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 items 10 and 11 on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part I, Schedule 12A of the Act.

PEOPLE DATA REPORT - 2017 TO 2018

The Strata IT Director presented the report, providing important workforce management information and analysis to the Strata Board and Management Team as well as the Joint Executive Committee and Joint Scrutiny Committee. The report covered a number of staffing matters including headcount, age profile, absences, turnover and recruitment including apprentices. The report for 2017/2018 was the third complete year of reporting key people data. He proposed working towards achieving the Investors in People Accreditation for Strata.

Strata Joint Scrutiny Committee had considered the report at its meeting on 24 September 2018 and its comments were reported.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

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TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS REPORT

The Strata IT Director presented the report on the Training Need Gap Analysis report which was commissioned to look at the ICT skills requirements of all three Authorities. There was currently no dedicated ICT training/support mechanism in place for Councillors in East Devon or Teignbridge District Councils.

The report set out a number of recommendations for the training of staff as well as an increase in the overall training budget or a dedicated support allocation to Strata for a high level of ICT support for Councillors.

The Board supported the training proposals, and recognised it was also desirable to ensure there was a good level of ICT skills competency for all staff.

Strata Joint Scrutiny Committee had considered the report at its meeting on 24 September 2018 and its comments were reported.

RESOLVED that that the report be noted and the budget spend and delivery of a Strata provided IT training service for end users, including Councillors and officers across the three authorities would be funded by Strata for the first year.

(The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 7.20 pm)

Chair