

STRATA – JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 5 JANUARY 2023 AT 4PM

AT BLACKDOWN HOUSE, HONITON

Present:

Councillors Hookway (Chair), Knott, Oliver, Tume

Members Attendance:

Councillors Clarence, Loudoun

Apologies:

Councillor Newby

Officers in Attendance:

Mark Davies, Director of IT and Digital Transformation Strata (Interim) – via Zoom

Simon Davey, Strata Board Director

Paul Nicholls, Strata Board Director

Sarah Jenkins, Democratic Services Officer

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Rob Newby.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6 SEPTEMBER 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2022 were approved as a correct record.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER PROCEDURAL RULES

There were no questions from the public.

5. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCILS UNDER PROCEDURE RULES

There were no questions from Members of the Councils.

6. STRATA PERFORMANCE REPORT – STRATA IT DIRECTOR

The Strata IT Director attended the meeting remotely via Zoom and presented his report. The report was the second report from the IT Director and covered

the period September to December 2022. The following points were highlighted:

- The move to Agile methodology was progressing well and significant progress has been made with the move to Microsoft 365.
- Strata has performed well since the last report and staff are in support of the changes being made.
- Migration to the new Storage Area Network (SAN) has been lengthy due to the amount of data, but has now been completed and the old SAN is being decommissioned.
- Staff restructuring has been underway since October with phase one now completed. Phase two would start at the end of January and will review the Business Systems Teams.
- Additional roles following the restructuring would be funded in part from movement of staff or by getting better value through contract management.
- Regarding projects since the previous report, the focus has been to make all the work visible to clients and to allow clients to prioritise work themselves. Projects are categorised according to size and complexity.
- Projects currently underway or being started since the last report include: financial management system replacement; migration to Microsoft 365; SAN upgrade; decommissioning of Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN); improved data governance; intelligent route planning for Exeter waste collections; decarbonisation of Forde House.
- Councils have returned some of the savings from 2022/23 which have been put to interim uses to fill identified gaps until the restructuring is complete.

Responses to questions and comments from Councillors included the following:

- The current restructuring was initiated by the interim Director of IT and Digital Transformation following the request for a report from the Strata Board. It was acknowledged that the new permanent Director may want to make further changes according to best practice, but hoped that they would wish to continue to take Strata in the same direction.
- With regard to the decommissioning of the PSTN lines, Councillors were advised that it had taken a long time to locate and identify users before lines could be taken out. It is anticipated that there will be a huge demand for this work prior to the deadline for decommissioning in 2025 and it is therefore important to progress the work well in advance.
- Formation of a Digital Collaboration Group would enable both Strata and the Councils to transform work, however, it was important to identify the right people to be part of the Group. Ideally the Group would meet weekly and comprise digital leads and business relationship managers.

- In response to a question about security, Mark Davies advised that Cloud security is complex to set up but straightforward when in place. Security is key but should not obstruct business need.

The report was accepted and noted.

7. STRATA FINANCE REPORT, BUDGET MONITORING AT DECEMBER 2022/23

The report was presented by Simon Davey.

Key variations from revenue budget, as set out in the report, were highlighted.

There were no questions from Councillors.

The report was accepted and noted.

8. STRATA FINANCE REPORT, BUDGET MONITORING OUTTURN 2021/22

The report was presented by Simon Davey.

There were no questions from Councillors.

The report was accepted and noted.

The Chair thanked Mark Davies and Members for attending.

The meeting closed at 4.55pm.

Councillor Nick Hookway

Chair..... Date