

# Public Document Pack



Tuesday, 12 April 2022

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## CABINET

You are summoned to a meeting of the Cabinet which will be held in the Council Chamber, Woodgreen, Witney, OX28 1NB on **Wednesday, 20 April 2022 at 2.00 pm.**



Giles Hughes  
Chief Executive

To: Members of the Cabinet

Councillors: Michele Mead (Leader), David Harvey (Deputy Leader), Suzi Coul, Marilyn Davies, Jane Doughty, Jeff Haine and Norman MacRae MBE.

Recording of Proceedings – The law allows the public proceedings of Council, Cabinet, and Committee Meetings to be recorded, which includes filming as well as audio-recording. Photography is also permitted. By participating in this meeting, you are consenting to be filmed.

As a matter of courtesy, if you intend to record any part of the proceedings please let the Democratic Services officers know prior to the start of the meeting.

# AGENDA

1. **Notice of Decisions (Pages 5 - 14)**  
To receive notice of the decisions taken at the meeting held on 16 March 2022.
2. **Apologies for Absence**
3. **Declarations of Interest**  
To receive any declarations from Members of the Committee on any items to be considered at the meeting
4. **Participation of the Public**  
To receive any submissions from members of the public, in accordance with the Council's Rules of Procedure.
5. **Receipt of Announcements**  
Purpose:  
To receive any announcements from the Leader of the Council or Members of the Cabinet.
6. **Publica Business Plan (Pages 15 - 34)**  
Purpose  
To consider the Publica Business Plan 2022-25 and any comments made by the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the draft Business Plan and to recommend that the Leader (as Shareholder Representative) approves the plan, subject to any comments the Cabinet wishes to make and those made by other Shareholder Councils.  
  
Recommendation  
That – subject to any comments it makes - the Cabinet recommends the Publica Business Plan 2022-25 be approved by the Leader, as the Council's Shareholder Representative for Publica Group (Support) Ltd and subject to any minor amendments that might arise from the final stages of consultation with the Shareholder Councils and/or general editing.
7. **Ubico Business Plan (Pages 35 - 60)**  
Purpose  
To consider the Ubico Business Plan 2022-23 and any comments made by the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the draft Business Plan and to recommend that the Leader (as Shareholder Representative) approves the plan, subject to any comments the Cabinet wishes to make and those made by other Shareholder Councils.  
  
Recommendations  
That – subject to any comments it makes - the Cabinet recommends the Ubico Business Plan 2022-23 be approved by the Leader, as the Council's Shareholder Representative of Ubico Limited and subject to any minor amendments that might arise from the final stages of consultation with the other Shareholder Councils and/or general editing.

8. **Exclusion of Public and Press**

In view of the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining item of business.

9. **Investment Property - Surrender and Grant of New Lease (Pages 61 - 68)**

Purpose

To request approval to complete a surrender of the current lease of the property detailed in the report and grant a new lease to a new tenant.

Recommendation

That Cabinet,

- a) approves the proposal to agree to a surrender of the existing lease and the grant of a new lease; and
- b) grants delegated authority to the Interim Head of Legal Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and the Group Manager for Commissioning, to approve the final terms of the transactions.

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## WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet

Held in the Council Chamber at 2.00 pm on **Wednesday, 16 March 2022**

#### PRESENT

Councillors: David Harvey (Deputy Leader), Councillor Suzi Coul, Councillor Jane Doughty, Councillor Jeff Haine, Councillor David Harvey and Councillor Norman MacRae MBE.

Also present: Councillors Alaa Al-Yousuf, Julian Cooper, Duncan Enright, Andy Graham, Alex Postan, and Carl Rylett.

Officers: Janice Bamsey (Principal Planning Policy Officer), Elizabeth Griffiths (Chief Finance Officer, Deputy Chief Executive, and Section 151 Officer), Chris Hargraves (Planning Policy Manager), Giles Hughes (Chief Executive), Mark Joyce (Strategic Support Officer) and Frank Wilson (Group Finance Director – Publica).

#### **86 Notice of Decisions**

The notice of the decisions taken at the meeting held on 16 February 2022 were agreed.

#### **87 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Michele Mead and Marilyn Davies.

#### **88 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

#### **89 Participation of the Public**

Eynsham Parish Council provided a written statement regarding the West Eynsham Masterplan which was read out by the Chief Executive, Giles Hughes. The statement requested that Cabinet reject the proposed Masterplan to give the community the opportunity to comment and a revised version to be brought forward.

Councillor Graham sought clarification that the issues raised in the Eynsham Parish Council statement would be considered as part of agenda item 11 and that recommendations contained in all Cabinet decisions at this meeting would be taken to the next Council meeting.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the first item raised in the statement would be considered as part of agenda item 11. However, the recommendation was for Cabinet to approve the West Eynsham Masterplan and this was not a Council decision.

#### **90 Receipt of Announcements**

##### Carterton Leisure Centre - Ukraine Collections

Councillor MacRae addressed the meeting and stated that he was humbled and astounded at the joint efforts of the Council, the RAF, GLL, and Ubico for the setting up and operation of the collection centre. He wanted to thank everyone involved, stating that up to 1000 boxes had been collected from private individuals and local businesses. He advised that the collection would end at lunch time on Friday 18 March 2022.

##### Covid-19 Walk In Centre

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Councillor MacRae announced that Covid-19 vaccinations would be available for 5 to 11 year olds at a Walk in Centre based at the Elmfield offices, without the need for an appointment.

#### Car Park extension – Country Park

Councillor MacRae stated that plans were in place to increase parking at the above site, from 15 to 16 cars to accommodate 40 to 50 cars. He advised that this was progressing slowly but would include disabled parking bays. There was also an ambition to upgrade the play park to include equipment suitable for children with disabilities and improve the paths for better wheelchair access.

#### Great British Clean-up Week

Councillor MacRae reminded Cabinet that next week was Great British Clean-up Week. A litter picking session had been planned for that afternoon but the weather would prevent it.

#### Electric vehicles update

Councillor MacRae announced the arrival of an electric pavement sweeper, originally ordered 15 months ago, stating that it would be out on the streets very soon.

In addition, an order for three electric vans had been cancelled by the supplier as Renault were no longer making the vehicles.

#### Local Government Awards

The Deputy Leader, Councillor David Harvey, announced that the Council had been shortlisted, with its partners, in the Climate Response Category for the Net-Zero Carbon Toolkit work produced in 2021. It was hoped this would help to communicate this work to the wider development sector and the result would be known in July 2022.

### **91 Oxfordshire Plan - Feedback from Consultation**

Councillor Haine introduced the report and provided an update on the Oxfordshire Plan Statement of Community Involvement. He stated that the 2050 plan contained no specifications on housing numbers or locations which would come in regulation 19

Councillor Haine proposed that Cabinet approved adoption of the plan as per the recommendations and this was seconded by Councillor Coul.

Councillor Graham sought clarification regarding the mention of regulation 19 and questioned if Councillor Haine had meant regulation 18. In response, Councillor Haine confirmed that regulation 19 decided housing numbers and locations while regulation 18 was the lead up to that. This was also confirmed by the Chief Executive.

Councillor Graham commented that the document was trying to be everything to everyone but was concerned it might be difficult to follow through. He felt it did not show specific consultation methods that would be used for different aspects of the process and was very generic. He concluded that it would need to be monitored to ensure maximum engagement.

Having considered the report and having heard from the Members present, Cabinet

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**Resolved that**

- a) the adoption of the revised Oxfordshire Plan Statement of Community Involvement, be approved; and
- b) noted that the statement would be kept under regular review as the project continued.

**92 Response to Oxfordshire County Council's Draft Local Transport & Connectivity Plan (LTCP)**

Councillor Haine introduced the report and felt it was a very good response. He brought one paragraph in particular to Member's attention on page 35 under road safety "*whilst we support the 20mph speed limit policies (Policies 21-24) in general, we feel that this should be applied to particular streets only according to a set of criteria such as outside schools or busy pedestrian streets in a town centre rather than being applied to a wider blanket area. By focussing these areas to small 'zones', they are more likely to be observed and these should be accompanied by other speed reduction measures that are appropriate and sympathetic to the character of the area. Excessive signage should be avoided, particularly in historic areas*". He hoped that County Council members took notice of this.

Councillor Haine proposed that the report be noted and the draft response be agreed as per the recommendations. This was seconded by Councillor Doughty.

Councillor Enright thanked Councillor Haine and officers for a very full response. However, as a Councillor for Witney, he did not agree with the paragraph read by Councillor Haine except for the part about excessive signage being avoided. He felt that applying the 20mph limit to all residential streets was appropriate and was about changing attitudes and expectations of drivers.

Councillor Coul suggested that Councillor Enright's comments highlighted the disconnect that the response addressed between residential urban areas, and some of the very rural areas within the District. The rural aspect of West Oxfordshire needed to be taken into account by the County Council and she hoped they would take that from this response.

Councillor Graham suggested it would be better for road safety to define the difference between urban and rural areas that Councillor Coul had made reference to. Some villages were so small that it would not make sense to apply speed restriction to just school zones and should be applied to the whole village in some cases. He felt it was a shame the response did not elaborate more on this.

Councillor Postan spoke as a representative of a ward with a 20mph speed limit which has been agreed but yet to be implemented. Only one vehicle needed to obey the limit in rural areas with narrow roads to ensure all vehicles adhered to it. He was concerned that the document did not account for technology. The increasing cost of electricity meant that synthetic fuels would be more attractive. These were carbon neutral and re-use existing infrastructure for transport, delivery, and supply. Personal transport for rural communities was a lifeline and he felt that a strong comment on this should be made by the Council.

Councillor Al-Yousuf stated that the paragraph being discussed, as currently drafted, reflected the views of his ward and two Parish Councils. He endorsed the existing wording.

Having considered the report and having heard from the Members present, it was

**Resolved that**

- a) The report be noted; and
- b) the draft response attached at Annex A be submitted as West Oxfordshire District Council's formal representation to the draft Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP).

**93 Covid 19: Oxfordshire System Recovery and Renewal Framework**

The Group Finance Director, Frank Wilson, stated that the work over the last 2 years between the Districts, the County, the health sector, and the third Sector had been exemplary in dealing with the pandemic. The report and the framework for recovery was discussed across all of the sectors in detail and was presented for approval.

The contents of the report did not conflict with any aspect of the Council plan or the Council's Recovery Plan. The three principle recovery themes set out in the appendix aligned perfectly with the Council's priorities.

Mr Wilson concluded that this was a framework to work within and did not infringe on the sovereignty of the Council but asked that decisions were made in light of the framework.

Councillor Harvey proposed that the framework be adopted and the final revisions be delegated to the Chief Executive as per the recommendations. This was seconded by Councillor Doughty.

It was therefore,

**Resolved that**

- a) the Oxfordshire System Recovery and Renewal Framework, as set out in Annex 1, be adopted, as the key partnership document guiding joint programme planning beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic period; and
- b) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make final revisions as partnership organisations complete their engagement and decision making processes.

**94 Finance and Service Performance Report 2021-22 Quarter 3**

Councillor Coul introduced the report and was pleased to present the new layout which was more visual and user friendly. The report identified issues that needed to be addressed rather than celebrating successes. The report identified that there were some issues but on the whole the Council was doing very well.

Therefore, Councillor Coul proposed that the report be noted and this was seconded by Councillor MacRae.



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Councillor Graham advised that he liked the document but was mystified by the profile budget when compared to actual expenditure to date. He felt there were some quite large variances.

Councillor Coul explained that a budget was a “best guess” and the actual was what happened when “real life” got in the way.

The Chief Finance Officer & Deputy Chief Executive, Elizabeth Griffiths, stated that the profile budget was set at the start of the year based on the budget agreed by Council. The profiling was about the pattern of expenditure expected. The budget was set for the year but expenditure was rarely in equal quarters. She highlighted that Annex B on page 81 provided a detailed breakdown of all of the variances against the profile budget and explanations for any significant variances. She clarified that a profile budget was not a forecast.

Councillor Graham questioned the shortfall variance of approximately £94k in parking charge revenue between budget and actual.

The Chief Finance Officer & Deputy Chief Executive, explained that the budget was set last year and the pandemic had a longer lasting impact than was expected at the time. She reminded Members that the number in question was for car parking enforcement fees which had drastically reduced over historical figures.

Councillor Postan thanked Mrs Griffiths for the continuance of the work started by the Group Finance Director in communication to the Audit and General Purposes Committee. This allowed them to reach some interesting views on the performance of the Auditor, Grant Thornton, who were nearly nine months late completing the Audit budget report. He encouraged Cabinet to be firm in a comment to Grant Thornton stating that this should not happen again.

Having considered the report, it was

**Resolved** that the 2021/22 Q3 finance and service performance report be noted.

**95 Glover Review of Protected Landscapes - Consultation response to Government Report**

Councillor Haine introduced the report and proposed an alteration to the last paragraph on page 104 of the pack, to firm up the Council’s stance. The suggested new wording for this paragraph was as follows:

*“A key issue for the Cotswolds has been the suggestion in the Glover Review and previously that the Cotswolds could become a National Park. The Cotswolds is very much opposed to being part of a National Park and wishes to remain an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Government’s support of the Cotswolds remaining an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty would be very much more appreciated”*

Therefore, Councillor Haine proposed that the recommendations be supported as per the report, subject to the amended paragraph detailed above. This was seconded by Councillor Harvey.

Councillor Graham questioned why in item 19 on page 102 the suggestion that Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) teams should be made statutory consultees for development management, was being answered “NO”.

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The question was referred to the Principal Planning Policy Officer, Janice Bamsey, who stated that the opinion of the Business Manager - Development Management, Phil Shaw, had been that AONB should not be statutory consultees. Being statutory consultees would require consultation on all proposals within the AONB. Not being a statutory consultee would allow the AONB Board/team to only make representation on the developments that it chose to.

The Chief Executive stated that this was about the role that AONB teams played. Being a statutory consultee would put more pressure and work on the AONB planning team. Answering "NO" to item 19 allowed the AONB planning team to decide which planning applications they consulted on and allowed them to better manage their time and resources.

Councillor Graham believed it should be looked at from the Council's perspective not the AONB team's perspective and that this should be given more thought. The AONB were stating they had spare capacity which did not align with the reasoning presented by the Chief Executive.

Councillor Haine agreed that this needed further investigation and that could be done under recommendation b) with further discussion between himself and the Chief Executive.

Councillor Coul suggested that AONB teams already gave representations when needed. Changing this answer to a "YES" could make it a bureaucratic process for the sake of it. If it worked currently then why change it. However, if the AONB team felt they were not currently sufficiently consulted then it needed to be reviewed.

Councillor Postan stated that based on his experience of Snowdonia National Park, if the AONB team was a statutory consultee they would be required to make representation on everything including factories, roads, and sewage pits for example.

Councillor Cooper asked what criteria was used to get consultation responses from the Council.

The Chief Executive advised that judgement was made based on what was most important to the Council. Also things were responded to in different ways. Officers could respond directly to low key straightforward items, relevant Cabinet members could respond on other matters, and higher profile items may need to be brought to Cabinet or Full Council.

Councillor Enright suggested that if Councillors noticed a consultation they believed the Council should respond to, they should inform the Chief Executive. He went on to state that a comment in the Response to Oxfordshire County Council's Draft Local Transport & Connectivity Plan (LTCP) should also be included in this response. This highlighted the importance of mentioning heritage alongside the natural environment. He felt that the Cotswolds were known as an AONB not just because of the natural environment but also because of the built environment and the nature of settlements within it, which give it an almost unrivalled character.

Having considered the report and having heard from Members and officers present, it was

**Resolved** that, subject to the amended paragraph detailed above:

- a) annex A be approved for submission to Government as the Council's response to the consultation on the Government response to the Glover Review; and

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b) authority is delegated to the Chief Executive to make minor alterations to the responses in Annex A, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning prior to submission.

96

### **West Eynsham Strategic Development Area (SDA) Masterplan**

Councillor Haine introduced the report and thanked the Joint Climate & Environment and Economic & Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the very detailed discussions on this topic on Monday. He felt that the concerns raised in the Eynsham Parish Council statement echoed the points brought up at that meeting. Councillor Haine stated that the main point to communicate was that this was a Masterplan and individual planning applications would take account of most of those concerns.

Councillor Haine went on to advise that one exception was regarding Sustainable Movement and Connections on pages 202 and 203 of the report. The Sustainable Charter and Sustainable Homes could not be agreed upon as the Parish Council wanted Net-Zero to be achieved now rather than in 2025. This was not possible as developers were required to build to current Government regulations. If this was imposed by the Council, developers could win at appeal. Due to the build schedule, approximately 25% of the development would be built to current standards with the remaining 75% being built to 2025 standards.

Councillor Haine therefore proposed that the recommendations be supported as per the report.

Councillor Rylett commented that the document looked like an extended brochure and put forward standards which were mandatory anyway. Unfortunately, it was not specified when the Masterplan was approved that it would be Council led. It was now developer led which has resulted in this situation. The Parish Council did not want to stop the development but wanted to improve it, however, their views were not reflected in this document. He wanted to know if the comments from Scrutiny Committee had been noted by Cabinet.

Councillor Haines confirmed that Cabinet had received and considered the comments from the Joint Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Rylett did not think Cabinet had been given sufficient time to absorb those comments and no changes were being asked for regarding this document.

Councillor Haines stated that many of the points made would be borne in mind when looking at the revision of the Local Plan. The local plan was where a lot of those points would come in. However, the current laws would mean that Council could not enforce many of things at present, such as triple glazed windows for example, until the law required it.

Councillor Rylett said he understood but was concerned that this only required the mandatory and could have gone further. He was also concerned with the level of thought given to the school layout and that the Local Centre was on the outskirts of Eynsham rather than in the centre. If only one change was made it should be to ensure construction traffic was not allowed through the Thornbury Estate as recommended by the County Council. There was little in the document about phasing and the interaction between West Eynsham and the Garden Village and there were many questions around that requiring clarity. Regarding S106 contributions, there was nothing in the draft which the Parish Council saw and had only had sight of it a few days prior to the meeting. He requested the Parish Council engagement was sought in S106 negotiations not only for this development but in general. In

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addition, there was a group of residents interested in self build, however, this appeared to miss the opportunity to provide an appropriate area.

Councillor Coul asked the Planning Policy Manager, Chris Hargraves, if this was a policy or just a framework. He confirmed it was the latter. She went on to say that as this was a framework, the issues raised could all be addressed in the Local Plan and the individual planning applications. She thoroughly supported the recommendations.

Councillor Poston suggested that developers were not stupid and neither were the buying public. If it was known that in two years' time the standards would change, they would not buy a house at the same price as if those new standards were included. He supported Councillor Haine's recommendations.

Councillor Haine responded to Councillor Rylett pointing out that most of it was a repeat of the issues raised at Monday's meeting which he believed had been answered at that time. The school layout was down to the County Council. The location of the community centre was based on developer reasons. The issue of construction traffic would be covered under construction management as part of the planning application as would the phasing. Eynsham Parish Council could put in Section 106 requests which would be given due consideration. Self-build space did not need to be specified as developers were well aware of the requirement to allow 5% for self-build.

Councillor Cooper said that he understood the developer was now responsible for this plan due to a legal opinion in Chipping Norton. If this was the case, the Council should apply to Government in advance of planning Bill in the autumn requesting that this be moved back to the District Council. He felt that the public wanted a source independent from the developer looking at it.

Councillor Harvey addressed the meeting and seconded Councillor Haine's proposal. He stated that it had been a source of considerable irritation to everyone that successive Governments had not moved more quickly to close the gap between "building homes" and "building homes for the future".

Councillor Graham suggested that Eynsham Parish Council should have been more involved, the Council was there to represent sustainable building and not developers and he was concerned that the Masterplan would have material weight in current and future applications.

Councillor Enright thanked the Planning Policy Manager and his team for a substantial achievement. The development could have been piecemeal but by completing a Masterplan negotiation with developers the Council had gained far more leverage and coherence, far better infrastructure, and a better approach altogether.

Having considered the report and having heard from the Members present, it was

**Resolved that**

- a) the content of the report be noted; and
- b) the West Eynsham SDA Masterplan, attached at Annex A, be approved as a material planning consideration for any current or future planning applications that come forward in relation to the West Eynsham SDA.

**97 Electric Vehicle Charging Point Infrastructure and Fee Setting**

Councillor Harvey introduced the report and stated that it spoke for itself, however, there were a number of uncertainties that would come back in future papers. This included a grant application that the Council had submitted and were expected to qualify for.

Councillor Harvey proposed the recommendations and this was seconded by Councillor MacRae.

Councillor Graham asked if recommendation 'c' could be quantified and queried if the income generated was included in the budget for next year.

Councillor Harvey stated this was the median of other charges and was subject to review. It would fluctuate with energy prices.

The Chief Finance Officer & Deputy Chief Executive, stated that it was the base electricity price plus a few pence to cover the installation and running costs. She advised that this would require regular review and would change constantly. It was not in next year's budget as it had not been approved when the budget was set. Any income would be negligible as it was an investment that covered its costs in order to provide a service not to make income.

Councillor Graham stated that it should be in future budgets. In response, the Chief Finance Officer & Deputy Chief Executive, stated that it would be included in future budgets, however, it was likely to be just a few hundred pounds.

It was therefore,

**Resolved** that

- a) subject to receipt of appropriate grant funding, the first phase of EVCPs, as detailed in this report, be approved, with costs of approximately £42,404;
- b) a further report will be brought to Cabinet to agree final estimated costs, once grant funding has been obtained and prior to work commencing;
- c) a standard fee per kWh is introduced based on the formula within the report, comprising revenue costs + £0.04. Based on current electricity price forecasts of £0.24per kwh, the fee to the customer would be £0.37 per kwh;
- d) authority is delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Members for Finance and Climate Change, to review and set fees between the annual renewal process, to mitigate the risk of financial losses to the Council, as costs fluctuate;
- e) amendments are made to the Parking Order, restricting vehicles from parking in charging bays unless they are charging a vehicle; and
- f) authority is delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment, to review and make a final decision following consultation feedback on the amendments to the Parking Order.

**98 Community Revenue Grant applications 2022/23**

Councillor Doughty introduced the report and provided a summary of the grant applications detailed within the report.

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Councillor Doughty proposed that the recommendations within the report be supported. In seconding the proposal, Councillor Coul thanked all Members for a budget that allowed almost £188k to be shared amongst 13 organisations within the District.

Councillor Graham congratulated Councillor Doughty but was saddened that the 'Dot Collective' had not been mentioned. He advised that this was a young dementia charity bridging the gap between young and old. The Arts Council were supporting them and he thought this was an opportunity to look at partnership funding for which he had some ideas.

Councillor Doughty asked Councillor Graham to email information and she would look at but could not make any promises.

Councillor MacRae, MBE was very pleased to hear that the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) were included as he thought they were a very important charity for many disadvantaged people across the county.

Councillor Cooper was also pleased about the CAB and stated that sometimes they were there to just get a little order back into people lives. He suggested that some of the organisations being funded could be awarded a multi-year settlement to provide stability and reduce administration costs. He asked if this could be looked at over the coming year.

Councillor Coul announced that a three year funding deal for these organisations was already being looked at and thanked Councillor Cooper for his support.


Having considered the report, it was

**Resolved that**

- a) the recommended Community Revenue Grant awards for 2022/23, as detailed in Annex 1 to the report, be approved; and
- b) officers be requested to review the Community Revenue Grant programme as part of a fundamental review of all of the Council's Community Grant schemes in time for 2023/2024 in order to address the long term security of funding for key organisations, meet the current needs of residents and encourage innovative proposals.

The Meeting closed at 15.34

CHAIRMAN

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|---|--|
| <br><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE<br/>DISTRICT COUNCIL</b> | <b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>   |
| Name and date of Committee  | <b>CABINET – 20 APRIL 2022</b>   |
| Report Number   | <b>Agenda Item 6</b>   |
| Subject   | <b>PUBLICA BUSINESS PLAN 2022-25</b>   |
| Wards affected  | All  |
| Accountable members   | Cllr Michele Mead, Leader of the Council<br>Email: Michele.mead@westoxon.gov.uk  |
| Accountable officer   | Giles Hughes, Chief Executive<br>Email: giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk   |
| Report authors  | Jan Britton, Managing Director, Publica Group (Support) Ltd<br>Email: <a href="mailto:jan.britton@publicagroup.uk">jan.britton@publicagroup.uk</a><br>Bill Oddy, Group Manager – Commercial Development<br>Email: <a href="mailto:bill.oddy@publicagroup.uk">bill.oddy@publicagroup.uk</a>   |
| Summary/Purpose   | To consider the Publica Business Plan 2022-25 and any comments made by the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the draft Business Plan and to recommend that the Leader (as Shareholder Representative) approves the plan, subject to any comments the Cabinet wishes to make and those made by other Shareholder Councils.        |
| Annex   | Annex A – Publica Business Plan 2022-25  |
| Recommendation  | That, subject to any comments it makes, the Cabinet recommends the Publica Business Plan 2022-25 be approved by the Leader, as the Council's Shareholder Representative for Publica Group (Support) Ltd and subject to any minor amendments that might arise from the final stages of consultation with the Shareholder Councils and/or general editing. |
| Corporate priorities  | Modern Council Services and Sustainable Finance: Delivering excellent modern services whilst ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council  |
| Key Decision  | NO   |
| Exempt  | NO   |
| Consultees/<br>Consultation   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publica Board and Publica Shareholder Forum (Council Leaders and Chief Executives/Heads of Paid Service)</li> <li>• Publica shareholder Councils' scrutiny committee and Cabinets</li> </ul>  |

## I. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. As part of the establishment of Publica Group (Support) Ltd. (Publica), twelve items were identified as Reserved Matters for Shareholder approval to ensure that shareholder Councils retained the necessary control over their Teckal company. The Reserved Matters were approved by the Council in October 2016 as part of the governance principles underpinning the establishment of Publica as set out in Schedule 1 of the company's Members' Agreement, signed by the Council in May 2017.
- 1.2. The Reserved Matters decisions fall to the Shareholder Representatives to determine. For each shareholder Council the Shareholder Representative is designated as the Leader of the Council.
- 1.3. "Adopting or amending the Business Plan in respect of each Financial Year" is one of the Reserved Matters. To assist the Leader in reaching her decision the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviewed the draft business plan for 2022-25 at its meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2022 and their views are set out in section 3 below.
- 1.4. The Publica Board agreed the final draft plan at its meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> March.
- 1.5. The Cabinet is invited to consider the points raised by the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee and provide any additional comments they wish to make before the plan is approved by the Leader.
- 1.6. The plan will be reviewed and approved by the Leader on an annual basis, in accordance with Publica's company governance.

## 2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1. A new, three year, Publica Business Plan (2022-25) is attached at Annex A. This business plan sets out the high level, strategic objectives and ambition for Publica over the next three years and how it will deliver both day-to-day services and the key priorities for each shareholder Council. The three year plan enables a medium term financial position to be taken as the increasingly challenging financial circumstances of the Councils will be a major driver for the focus of Publica's work. The three year horizon of the plan will also enable a sustained focus on delivering Council priorities and improving service delivery.
- 2.2. Each shareholder Council has its own delivery plans and this business plan is designed to show how Publica will operate to deliver these, complementing them by providing the flexibility to deliver different priorities in an individual way for each Council but also making the most of shared services and ambitions.
- 2.3. Three key themes are addressed in this business plan flow from the shareholder Councils' priorities and will underpin everything Publica does over the lifespan of this business plan. These are:
  - **Planet** - Tackling the climate and ecological emergency. This is the challenge of our generation and a priority for all of the shareholder Councils and Publica.
  - **People** - People are at the heart of Publica as a company, so it needs to employ and retain the right people and be a 'best in class' employer in order to deliver successfully for the shareholder Councils.
  - **Place** - Delivering great services and local priorities for the Councils' communities, residents, and businesses.



- 2.4. Detailed actions emanating from the business plan will be incorporated into individual service plans and/or addressed through Publica's project management framework to ensure delivery is closely aligned to Council priorities and reported appropriately.
- 2.5. The consultation process for the production of the new plan is quite extensive. Early discussions were held with the Chief Executives/Heads of Paid Service from the four shareholder Councils to check that the plan was evolving in line with expectations. The initial draft was also discussed with the Publica Board in mid-January 2022.
- 2.6. The Publica Shareholder Forum (comprising the Leader and Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service from each of the four shareholder Councils, together with the Publica Board Chair and Managing Director) met in late January to review the draft plan and the feedback received from the Publica Board and the Chief Executives/Heads of Paid Service.
- 2.7. Comments and additional feedback from the Shareholder Forum were incorporated in the draft plan which was then addressed by the relevant scrutiny committee at each of the four shareholder Councils in February/March.
- 2.8. The Publica Board agreed the final draft plan at its meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2022. Cabinet is now asked to consider feedback from the consultation with the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 13<sup>th</sup> April, add any comments they wish to make and recommend to the Council Leader that the plan be approved. As it is a three year plan, there will be an annual review and approval process put in place for the following two years, in line with Publica's governance.
- 2.9. The business plan will be published on the internet and shared with the shareholder Councils once it has been approved by all the Council Leaders.

### **3. FEEDBACK FROM FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

- 3.1. This will be provided verbally at the meeting at this report is published before the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 13<sup>th</sup> April.

### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from approval of the business plan.
- 4.2. The business case approved by the shareholder Councils in September/October 2016 set a target of a cumulative reduction in the Councils' base revenue budgets of £2.1m by the end of 2022/23. Publica is on track to deliver a baseline budget saving of £2.7m by the end of 2022/23 – some £0.6m ahead of target. In addition, c.£1.8m of one-off savings have also been made and returned to the Councils for reinvestment in their service priorities.
- 4.3. The new business plan acknowledges the financial challenge that all the shareholder Councils are facing over the next few years and sets out Publica's role in supporting the Councils to address this challenge.

## **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1. The Publica Business Plan has to be approved on an annual basis by the Council's Shareholder Representative (the Leader) in accordance with the Articles of Association and Members' Agreement for Publica Group (Support) Limited.

## **6. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 6.1. The People theme within the new business plan encompasses how Publica will lead, support and develop its employees, celebrating diversity and challenging inequality.

## **7. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1. Tackling the climate and ecological (biodiversity) emergencies is a key theme within the new business plan, setting out how Publica will work to embed this into all its work.

## **8. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1. The draft business plan was subject to early consultation with the Council's Chief Executive and the Leader (through the Publica Shareholder Forum) to reduce the risk that it does not meet this Council's expectations and needs.
- 8.2. If the Council's Shareholder Representative (the Leader) does not approve the plan there is a risk that Publica will not be able to commence activities that are necessary for supporting the Council to deliver against its Corporate Plan priorities and meet its financial challenges.

## **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 9.1. None.

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# Business Plan 2022 to 2025

Delivering more locally by working together

## PUBLICIA

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# The Publica partnership: Delivering more locally by working together

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Publica Business Plan 2022 to 2025

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# PUBLICA

We are proud to present to the shareholder councils the Publica Business Plan for 2022 to 2025.



Sally Walker  
Chair of the Board



Jan Britton  
Managing Director

Over the past year Publica has consolidated some of the changes that have been made since we were set up and we have demonstrated the benefits of our approach. We are very proud of our staff and their achievements, and that more than 80% of residents are happy with the customer service they receive. As we emerge from the pandemic we have an opportunity to be more ambitious and radical; to capitalise on our unique partnership model to deliver even better services for local communities, residents, and businesses. This business plan sets out the strategic approach for Publica over the next three years and how we will deliver great services every day alongside the key priorities for each shareholder council.

Each council has its own delivery plans and this business plan is designed to show how Publica will operate to deliver these council plans, complementing them by providing the flexibility to deliver different priorities in an individual way for each council but also making the most of shared services and ambitions.

We have identified three key themes for this business plan that flow from our partner councils' priorities and will underpin everything we will do over the lifespan of this plan. These are:

*Planet:* Tackling the climate and ecological emergency. It's the challenge of our generation and a priority for all of the shareholder councils and Publica.

*People:* People are at the heart of what we are as an organisation, so we need to employ and retain the right people and be a 'best in class' employer.

*Place:* Delivering great services and local priorities for communities, residents, and businesses.

The importance of our work will be heightened by the significant financial challenges facing local government over the period of this plan. Our model provides us with a unique way to respond to these challenges and build on our success since Publica was formed. In this business plan you can read about our customer-focussed operating model using a digital platform, which enables us to deliver better services in a more efficient way. It is an exciting time for Publica and the shareholder councils as we look to innovate and push boundaries with the potential for growth and scaling over the life of this plan and the potential benefits this will bring to existing partners and new ones who want to become part of a new way of delivering public services.

We will continue to learn and improve, taking what we have delivered over the past four years and building on it to make Publica a leading public sector delivery company, known for its innovation, effectiveness and results delivered on behalf of public sector providers.

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## The Publica partnership: Delivering more locally by working together

Publica is a not-for-profit Teckal company owned by Cotswold, Forest of Dean, and West Oxfordshire District Councils and Cheltenham Borough Council. The four shareholder councils and Publica work together to share skills and resources which enables us to deliver more for local communities, residents, and businesses.

Publica is a young organisation and in the first four years we have transformed the way services are delivered by the councils through our unique partnership approach.

Each of the shareholder councils and our client organisations retain their independence and identity, and by collaborating and sharing resources, we seek to maximise mutual benefit for all. We are ambitious and on a journey of continuous improvement, always looking for new ways to effectively deliver local services.

You can read about our progress and what we have delivered in the Annual Report on our website

[www.publicagroup.uk](http://www.publicagroup.uk)

### Staying true to the Publica Values

The values developed at the company's inception hold strong today and will help guide us to achieve our purpose.

#### Authentic

We act genuinely and transparently. We do the right thing for our customers, our organisation and each other.

#### Modern

We are not set in our ways. We are constantly looking to find ways to innovate and do things smarter.

#### Flexible

We are agile and we adapt how and what we do to meet the demands of our customers, our colleagues, our local communities and the needs of the modern world.

#### Thoughtful

We take pride in delivering a great service, taking the time to understand and care about the planet and the environment, as well as our customers and their needs.

## Meeting the future financial challenge

A decade of austerity, continuing local government funding uncertainty, rapidly increasing delivery costs, increased cost of living and income shortfalls during the pandemic is putting council finances under great strain. Government support during the pandemic has masked the financial problems but the budget setting over the life of this business plan is likely to be the most challenging in many years for our shareholder councils.



The scale of the challenge is very significant with the latest forecasts suggesting that our shareholder councils collectively will need to fill an emerging funding gap of £1.5m by 2026, this represents some 30% of their net revenue budget. To meet this challenge all four shareholder councils have set ambitious targets for making savings, improving efficiency and increasing income in the future to balance their budgets. These are articulated in their Medium Term Financial Strategies and Investment Strategies.

Publica has already delivered £2.5m of recurring annual savings for shareholder councils since 2017 and most major services have been reviewed and modernised; but we recognise that we must seek continuous improvement across the whole range of services we deliver so that we can offer the best possible services to residents and businesses at the best possible value for the shareholder councils. In doing this we need to recognise that we must support the shareholder councils to maintain services. To support the councils in their financial challenges, Publica will play a key role in:

### **Enhancing council income streams, identifying investment opportunities and maximising available revenues**

- Exploring and delivering opportunities to invest in green technology such as solar power and electric vehicle charging infrastructure which could provide a commercial return and deliver against the councils' climate action objectives
- Maximising opportunities for commercial return

through good asset management, investment in and development of land, property and appropriate services, where these can deliver against priorities

### **Identifying and securing sources of funding to help shareholder councils deliver against priorities**

- Bidding for funds to deliver decarbonisation projects across the councils' asset bases to enable council resources to go further and extend our ambitions. Business cases will be brought forward as new funding rounds are announced
- Raising the profile about the challenges facing rural communities and making the case for levelling up funding from the government

### **Support service transformation with the councils' other service delivery partners such as waste and leisure providers**

- Working closely with Ubico and Biffa to deliver new, more efficient and modern waste, recycling, and grounds maintenance and street cleansing services as part of the Environmental Services Innovation Programme (ESIP) as well as exploring opportunities to scale the partnership
- Working in partnership with the shareholder councils' leisure providers (GLL, SLM, and Freedom Leisure) to meet the needs of local residents and support the local health and wellbeing agenda
- Examining whether there are services that the shareholder councils currently provide through external contracts that could be provided equally well or in a way that better meets the councils' priorities by Publica

# Delivering services the Publica way

We don't want to be just a standard public service provider, we want to be so much more. Publica is not about cuts; we are about delivering modern efficient public sector services that cost less. Through harnessing the power of our partnership and our unique approach we can be more than the sum of our parts, delivering much more for residents and businesses than would otherwise be possible if the councils and other public sector service providers worked alone.

Innovating to deliver services more efficiently and effectively, sharing knowledge and experience, and providing creative modern solutions to tackling priorities for our shareholder councils and their communities, residents, and businesses.

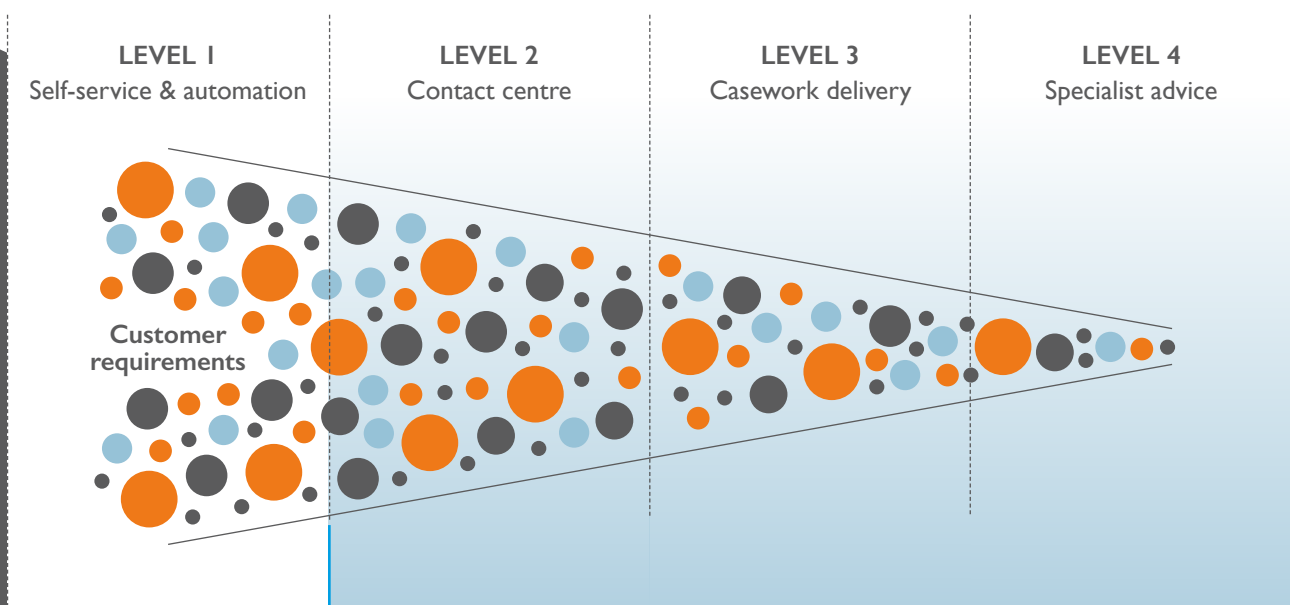
### Publica's operating model

To ensure we deliver great modern services for our shareholder councils we will continue to evolve our operating model over the course of this plan. Our customer first model uses automation and technology to deliver high-quality services that residents and businesses use every day.

We know that if we provide good quality digital products and services 24/7 this will provide not only a better customer experience but also minimise the need for customers to contact the councils to obtain information, report something, or make an application. We also know that 10% of UK residents do not use the internet and that some residents

and businesses will need to contact their council by telephone or face to face. We will continue to meet their needs through local contact centres.

The diagram below illustrates our operating model. Customer requirements for services will be met first by designing services in such a way that they are accessed by customers online where they can self-serve (Level 1). Customers that require further assistance can obtain this through our contact centres and council receptions (Level 2). This approach provides better service for customers and is more efficient for the shareholder councils. Only those enquiries or transactions that are the most complex or require professional knowledge or expertise should need to be transferred to our casework and specialist teams (Level 3/4). The benefit of this is that the shareholder councils will continue to have very high customer satisfaction and further development of the model will ensure this continues.





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We have already improved the content on the shareholder councils' websites and introduced some new digital products like the Open Portal to enable residents and businesses to complete council tax and business rates transactions 24/7 and more than 2,000 people have already signed up. We have introduced a new online process for residents to report missed waste collections and 30% of reports are now made via our website. We issue more than 80,000 garden waste licences a year and residents can now purchase and pay for these online 24/7. Each of the shareholder councils has made improvements to their reception areas enabling our staff to meet residents and businesses face to face. We have made some improvements to a number of planning service processes including reducing the validation time by almost 70%, this has improved the customer journey and experience.

## Using technology to drive service improvements across the partnership

Over the next three years, by implementing the right systems in the right areas, we can continue to make improvements to the services we deliver for shareholder councils. They include:

- Delivering more digital transactional services to support 'channel choice' for residents and businesses and reduce the volume of avoidable telephone calls including environmental services, revenues and benefits (council tax, business rates), and regulatory services
- Implementing technology to modernise our approach to recruitment, human resource management, democratic services, consultation and engagement, and planning
- Upgrading our office based systems to Microsoft 365 to support more agile and collaborative working
- Improving our cyber security. Our systems are already good but we plan to do more and will need to invest in this area. Due to the nature of cyber security we will keep it under constant review during the period of this business plan

## Options for future development and growth of the partnership

We need to look at ways the Publica business could develop over the coming years, as the national landscape for local government changes, to benefit our shareholder councils and clients in meeting the financial challenges and delivering improved services. Over the course of this business plan we will look to explore opportunities including:

- Reviewing the potential for further in-sourcing of services to deliver additional control and value to partner councils when these opportunities present themselves

- Keep open and explore opportunities for new councils to join and benefit from the partnership
- Reviewing the business model to see if different approaches might complement the opportunities that are available to grow and scale the partnership
- Collaborating further with Ubico and Biffa and their shareholder councils to exploit opportunities to grow and innovate through the Environmental Services Innovation Programme

## How we will monitor progress

The partnership has a comprehensive framework to monitor performance of the councils' plans and priorities, the Publica Business Plan and service performance, and these will be used to provide assurance and include:

- The Publica Shareholder Forum to discuss strategic issues
- The Publica Board where performance against shareholder council performance targets is monitored
- Meetings between the Publica Board and Cabinets of each Shareholder Council to discuss local priorities and performance
- Quarterly council scrutiny and Cabinet meetings at each shareholder council where council performance targets are monitored
- Audit and Scrutiny Committees at each shareholder council
- The publication of the Publica annual report
- Regular all councillor updates and briefings at each shareholder council
- Information on the councillor portals at Cotswold, Forest of Dean, and West Oxfordshire District Councils
- Reporting against agreed SLAs
- Live management information
- In the first year of this plan we will adopt specific improvement plans for development management services, human resources and democratic services

# 80,000

We issue more than 80,000 garden waste licences a year and residents can now purchase and pay for these online 24/7

## Planet: how we will tackle climate change

Tackling climate change is the challenge of our generation, and with each shareholder council declaring a climate emergency as well as an ecological/biodiversity emergency, we must make our response central to all we do. Tackling the climate emergency will become a key focus through all our activity at Publica and we will put it front and centre so it has the urgent attention it requires.

As a start we have signed up to the national "Race to Zero" climate commitment for businesses, to achieve net zero carbon by 2030 and that will be a key target for us. To achieve our commitment we will work with the shareholder councils and our clients to make fundamental and rapid changes across all services to innovate, support, challenge, propose solutions, and aid decision making for a low carbon future.

We will support our shareholder councils to demonstrate leadership in delivering their climate

ambitions, set out in their Corporate Plans and detailed in adopted climate action and ecological targets. This will be achieved by seeking external funding and exploring opportunities to engage with and support residents and businesses to reduce their carbon footprint, and using council powers and influence to instigate changes in behaviour, work practises and development. We will also look for community financing and investment opportunities in carbon reduction assets such as renewable energy generation and storage.

Working together to reach a target of net-zero carbon by

# 2030

Supporting our councils' net zero ambitions for their areas will also mean we will encourage an innovative approach to planning policy, supporting the trajectory to net zero carbon in development management and look to bring forward flagship environmental design schemes for housing and development.

### Moving Publica to net zero carbon by 2030

Publica's carbon footprint is intricately linked with that of our shareholding councils so it is vital that we play our full part in the push to net zero carbon. We will demonstrate our commitment to net zero carbon by putting the climate emergency at the heart of all that we do, ensuring all staff understand and consider

climate and ecological impacts in the services they provide and the decisions that they advise on. We will do this by:

- Rolling out formal Carbon Literacy Training to our employees, aiming to be recognised as a silver level Carbon Literate Organisation over the term of this plan, with 100 people certified as Carbon Literate
- Securing advanced climate emergency training for planning officers and other employees whose professional roles require that they have a greater understanding of issues around energy use, low emission building and transport technologies



- Promoting opportunities to use the two volunteering days that we encourage all employees to take as part of their role with Publica, to support biodiversity and carbon reduction activities - potentially providing up to 1,000 days per year
- Embedding climate, ecological and social value considerations in procurement processes to maximise the use of sustainable suppliers and support local businesses
- Making climate implications a core consideration in decision making, alongside finance, legal and risk
- Implementing our Agile Working Strategy that will reduce unnecessary business miles and staff commuting journeys as well as heating and lighting in under occupied offices
- Making use of our video-link technology as the default option for internal meetings and events,

which is already reducing business mileage dramatically. By halving our business mileage we can save the equivalent of 98 tonnes of carbon dioxide each year

- Changing vehicles to ultra low emission and electric vehicles and reviewing Publica's lease car offer to incentivise our employees to choose electric vehicles for their personal and work journeys
- Encouraging cycling and car-sharing for any essential business trips
- Encouraging our employees to follow the waste hierarchy at work and home with the aim of reducing energy use, purchasing sustainable products and minimising the use of single-use plastics
- Reporting our progress towards net zero carbon in our annual reports





## People

We will only accomplish our aims and deliver our shareholder council priorities if the very best people work for Publica. We need to use the advantages we have as a Teckal company to bring in people who are enthusiastic about change and are committed to delivering great public services.

In a challenging employment market, we will need to be innovative and adaptable to attract good candidates. We will increasingly do this by developing our own people locally, through apprenticeship schemes and great working relations with local training providers. We will also continue to recruit nationally, to attract the best talent from across the country, when we need to get the right person for a particular role.

We need to continue building our reputation as a great employer, a great place to work and somewhere people can be ambitious and fulfil their potential. Our employees need to feel well-led, supported, rewarded and empowered within a healthy workplace culture.

Our key areas for development of our people over the course of this business plan are linked with the

Investors in People framework (IIP) which will assist us in continuing to develop the right conditions for improving services and delivering services and key projects for our shareholding councils.

### Focussing on our people and modernisation

To bring leadership and focus to modernisation and improvement we will be recruiting a senior manager responsible for organisational development and modernisation. This investment will enable us to make the most of our new digital technology and to genuinely modernise and evolve our operating model.

### Leading: Develop great leaders at all levels in Publica

For Publica, 'leadership at all levels' means empowering all our employees, whatever their role, to take ownership for making positive changes and inspiring their colleagues. Having great leaders at all levels is crucial for us to be able to support the councils to set

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clear, achievable objectives we can deliver. To develop our current and future leaders we will:

- Provide an ongoing leadership programme that allows all employees to develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours to better deliver council priorities and services
- Drive a noticeable culture change, especially around increasing trust, recognition, collaborative working and building confidence at all levels
- Embed a coaching culture to support the development of others, and engage in peer coaching to support each other and problem solve
- Strengthen staff engagement, for example through holding a regular informal staff forum

**Supporting: Enhance the wellbeing of our employees, ensuring that they are supported to deliver to their full potential and that they are recognised for their achievements.**

To be a truly great place to work our people need to feel well supported to deliver their role, both in their team and also at a Publica-wide level. To achieve this we will:

- Achieve Investors in People (IIP) accreditation, to validate our progress towards becoming a great place to work
- Implement our agile working approach and ensure our people processes and policies are fit for a modern, flexible workforce, promoting good work/ life balance and support for staff at all stages of their life
- Celebrate diversity, encourage and promote positive relationships, and challenge inequality

**Improving: Deliver a comprehensive improvement programme to support the recruitment, retention, training and development of staff**

Recruiting good people and then developing them is key to Publica's ongoing success in delivering great services for our shareholder councils and our clients. We want to improve our approach to organisational development so staff can stay with Publica, improve and grow their careers, enabling us to keep good employees and deliver better services. To do this we will:

- Grow our talent from within the organisation, identifying and developing our high performers and future leaders alongside structured succession planning and more career graded posts
- Drive improvements in our human resources service, particularly to strengthen recruitment and retention, including implementation of a new Applicant Tracking System
- Provide all our people with training and development opportunities that support the ambitions and strategic priorities of the Publica partnership
- Maximise the use of our apprenticeship levy by offering employees professional qualifications to develop their careers within Publica and promote their achievements
- Aim to have 10% of our employees engaged in leadership and/or professional development training programmes
- Enhance our benefits package for employees to strengthen recruitment and retention



FOUNDATION  
LEVEL AWARD



TECHTALENT  
CHARTER:  
SIGNATORY

## Place

We are committed to providing great services to local communities, residents and businesses and delivering key projects with the shareholder councils, being flexible where we need to be and sharing resources and ideas.

Our shareholder councils share some ambitions but they also each have local needs and priorities that will deliver against their own corporate plans. During the life of this business plan we will deliver against these priorities and corporate plans for each of the councils. We will respect their individual identities, while also making the most of delivery through the partnership, achieving more together and collaborating and pushing the boundaries of what we do to showcase the very best in place-based delivery. During the life of this business plan we will support the shareholder councils develop their approach to

the government's levelling-up missions and in particular the challenges facing rural communities.

Our approach to programme and project management will continue to evolve and enable us to deliver large scale and complex work and agreed outcomes and benefits for shareholder councils and partners. We have established a portfolio board and recruited new project managers who are part of a central resource and this will help us deliver an ambitious programme of work during the life of this plan.



### Growing local economies and driving renewal and recovery

Through understanding the needs of local businesses and opportunities, we will provide support to local economies by encouraging resilience and growth and actively driving regeneration. To do this we will:

- Progress regeneration projects at key locations such as Five Acres, Coleford; Hensington Road, Woodstock; and Town Centre strategic sites in Cirencester
- Help economies grow and evolve by supporting new and existing local businesses to thrive by creating a positive business environment; supporting investment, providing business support, encouraging the transition to digital and low carbon where appropriate, and delivering effective licensing and regulatory services that support them in providing compliant and safe services and premises
- Support town centres to evolve in the face of changing shopping habits and encouraging residents to support local businesses

### Encouraging and facilitating the delivery of affordable housing

All the shareholder councils want to deliver affordable housing where the market is not delivering sufficiently to meet the needs of local people and we want to be ambitious in our delivery for the shareholder councils:

- We will continue to deliver affordable housing in partnership with developers and housing providers, seeking additional affordable units and sustainability enhancements in innovative ways
- We will push the boundaries with exemplar design to maximise the delivery of development schemes that are sustainable and align with net-zero carbon ambitions

### Helping to develop future plans for our areas that deliver for communities and protect the environment

Through the development of Local Plans for the shareholder councils, we will help shape the future of each area. They will be focussed on local priorities such as bringing about even more affordable homes,



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promoting net-zero carbon homes, growing local economies and planning for sympathetic development. This will be achieved by:

- Delivery of refreshed Local Plans and updates, exploring new ways to engage communities around the key priorities for those plans and the future of each area
- Effective engagement with town and parish councils to shape development and meet local needs
- Managing and monitoring the delivery of sustainable development in the right place at the right time to meet identified needs by raising awareness and expectations for good design and sustainable development

## Helping to build and support strong, healthy and resilient communities

Through direct engagement with residents we will look to understand community needs and then help them provide solutions that work at a local level. We want local communities to buy into solutions and work alongside their councils and other public services, charities and partners. This will be achieved by:

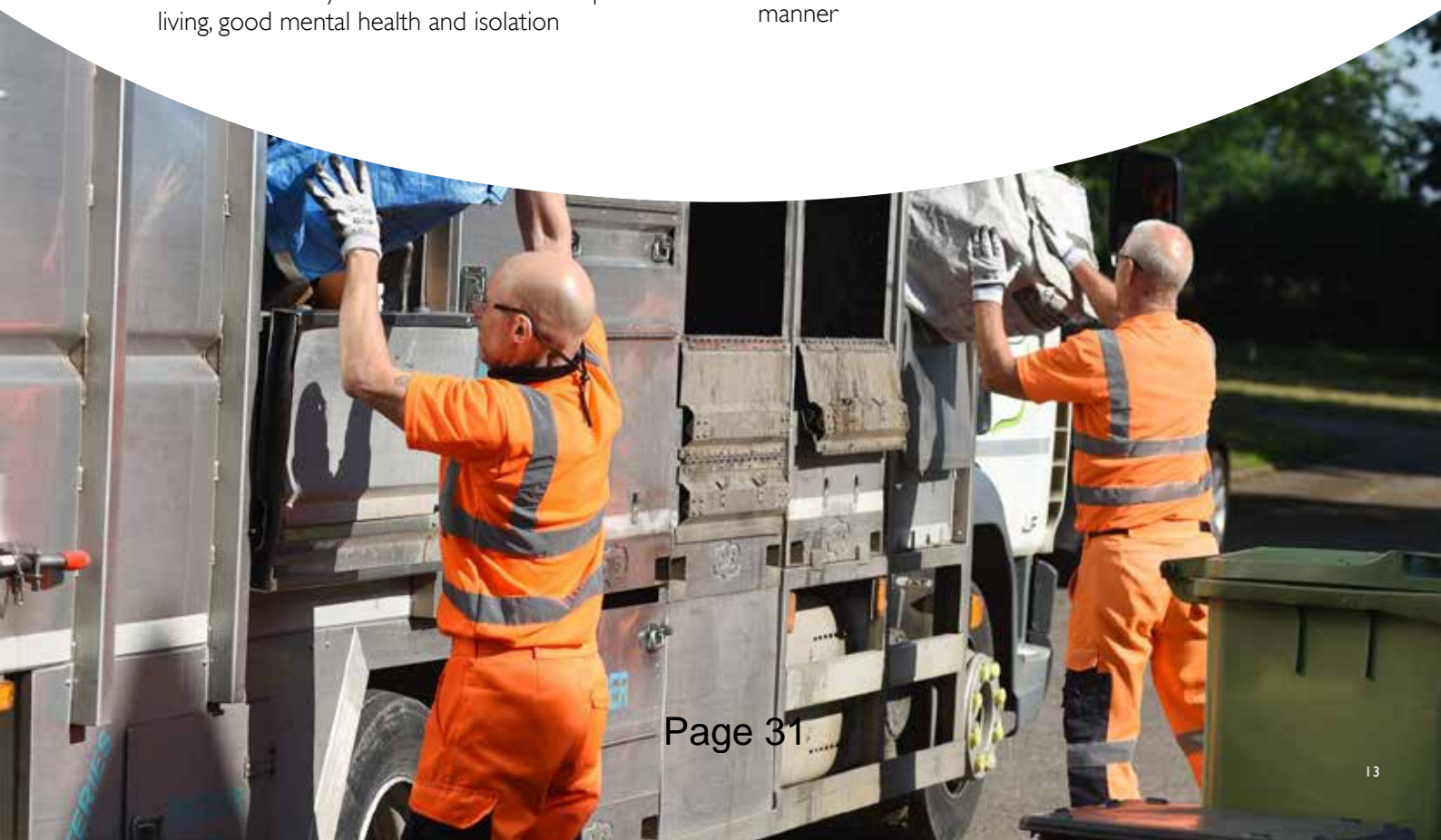
- Developing and strengthening relationships with county and district councils, the NHS and the police, leisure providers, and town and parish councils, supporting funding bids and promoting funding opportunities
- Supporting the voluntary community sector (VCS) and commissioned services (e.g. social prescribing)
- Supporting communities to provide assistance at a local level for key local issues such as independent living, good mental health and isolation

- Developing our approach to digital engagement with communities, particularly those that are hard to reach, using digital engagement platforms
- Work in partnership to provide effective response, prevention and preparation for flood events and other major incidents that impact on communities, residents and businesses in the Cotswolds, Forest of Dean, and West Oxfordshire
- Working closely with partners, including the shareholder councils' leisure providers, to develop healthy communities, enabling inclusive sustainable leisure, sports and recreation facilities, green infrastructure and access to places to walk, run and cycle

## Looking after our local environment

Each of the shareholder councils covers landscapes nationally regarded for their outstanding beauty and heritage. Maintaining these areas so they are clean and well kept is important across the partnership. We will deliver high quality services in the areas we are responsible for, as well as work in partnership, and to achieve this we will:

- Continue to work with our partners Ubico and Biffa to operate great waste collection and recycling services as well as tackling fly-tipping and environmental crime
- Operate our regulatory services such as development management, environmental health and licensing in a way that supports businesses to succeed and reduces the environmental impact of their activities, rather than acting in an adversarial manner



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## Continued improvement of our Development Management Service

Development Management is one of the key services Publica provides to the shareholder councils and plays an important role in shaping local areas. Nationally the sector is facing challenges including increased demand and greater expectations to deliver against local and national policies and priorities and we have not escaped that.

Our aim is to provide 'best in class' planning services for our shareholder councils and we are committed to this. A review of the service was initiated in 2021, focussing on three key areas: resources, processes, and communication with customers, stakeholders, and councillors. We have already turned the corner and the service has improved, however, we recognise that more work needs to be done.

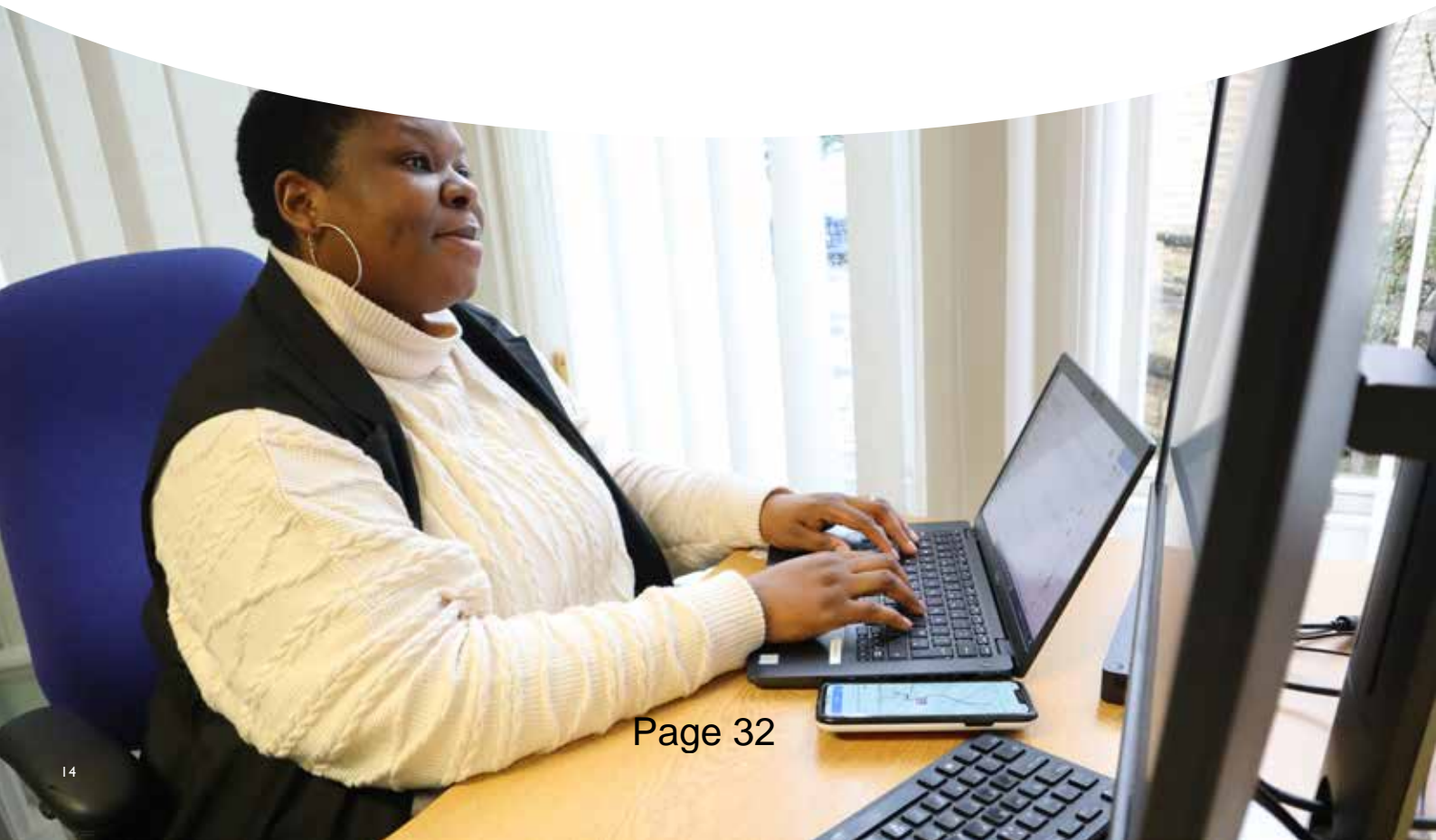
Below is a set of ambitious priorities that we are committed to delivering over the period of this business plan:

- Ensure we determine 80% of planning applications within 8 weeks
- Introduction of a modern pre-application service
- All senior managers responsible for planning will be part of a leadership development programme
- Introduction of all Member updates and a data dashboard
- Improving our user research approach to inform future service development

- Engaging the services of the Planning Advisory Service to provide some objective advice to assist us in moving to the next level
- Development of customer service standards. We will be publishing our standards so that customers have clarity on what levels of service to expect
- A review of the planning enforcement service. This will incorporate a review of the current caseload but also how we triage cases and whether a more collaborative approach to investigation would benefit the shareholder councils and local communities
- A review of the other services impacted by the increased demand in Development Management. Priority areas being the 'Heritage, Design and Sustainability Service' and the 'Flooding and Drainage Service'

# 80%

Further performance and service design development work ensuring we determine 80% of planning application within 8 weeks





## Our Financial landscape

As a 'Teckal' company Publica has a special relationship with its shareholding councils. Given the financial challenges they face, it is imperative that Publica delivers the services they have commissioned within the agreed budget envelope.

| THREE YEAR BUDGET PLAN             | 2022/23 (£) | 2023/24 (£) | 2024/25 (£) |
|------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>SALES</b>                       |             |             |             |
| Contract income                    | 29,094      | 29,133      | 29,635      |
| <b>DIRECT COSTS:</b>               |             |             |             |
| Salaries (Inc. on-costs)           | (24,855)    | (24,835)    | (25,262)    |
| Agency costs                       | (30)        | (31)        | (31)        |
| Contractor costs                   | (65)        | (67)        | (68)        |
| Employee transport and travel      | (300)       | (300)       | (300)       |
| Other staff costs                  | (511)       | (524)       | (534)       |
| Gross surplus                      | 3,333       | 3,376       | 3,439       |
| Administration expenses            | (1,930)     | (1,988)     | (2,028)     |
| Other operating expenses           | (4)         | (4)         | (4)         |
| Operating surplus                  | 1,399       | 1,384       | 1,407       |
| Net interest (payable)/ receivable | 2           | 3           | 4           |
| Surplus                            | 1,401       | 1,387       | 1,411       |
| Tax                                | 0           | 0           | 0           |
| Contract fee refund                | (1,385)     | (1,371)     | (1,395)     |
| Retained surplus                   | 16          | 16          | 16          |

Given the short term funding streams the councils are receiving, there are an increasing number of roles that are funded on a fixed term basis. This makes longer term forecasting difficult and adds to the challenge of recruitment and retention.

Notwithstanding this, the table below sets out the projected three year business plan financial estimates. The plan assumes that current short term funded posts are discontinued from April 2023 and at this stage additional savings targets are based around the original business case. This will need to be reviewed over the next year as we plan to meet the additional pressures facing the shareholding councils.

Over the last decade downward national public sector pay pressures have exacerbated recruitment and retention issues for Publica and the wider public sector in general. We find ourselves struggling to compete for some roles, particularly where they are either highly local government specialised or in sectors with extremely high commercial demand. To try to counter this challenge the three year business

plan includes additional resources to:

- Accelerate our drive for equal pay within our pay and grading structure, resolving legacy pay issues
- We want to develop a 'grow your own' culture so staff, and in particular apprentices, can stay with Publica, improve and grow their careers, enabling us to keep good employees and deliver better services
- Offer enhancements to our pension scheme to improve the reward package we offer and seek pension quality mark accreditation ([www.pensionqualitymark.org.uk](http://www.pensionqualitymark.org.uk))
- Provide funding to support cost pressures in the non-pay benefits of staff across the partnership

We want to develop a 'grow your own' culture so staff, and in particular apprentices, can stay with Publica, improve and grow their careers

**DRAFT**


## Our Priorities for 2022 to 2023

This Business Plan has set out our strategic priorities for a three year period up to 2025. We will be working on all of the activity outlined in this plan from the outset, however, there are a number of areas in the plan we will be focused on delivering over the first year.

**During the first year of the business plan our priorities will be to:**

- Make our response to climate change central to all we do
- Support our shareholder councils to deliver their medium term financial strategies and investment strategies to fill the emerging funding gaps they have of £15m by 2026
- Continue to evolve and develop the Publica operating model and channel choice to improve services for residents and businesses
  - Achieve Investors in People (IIP) accreditation
- Modernisation of our development management service and our shareholder councils waste services in partnership with Ubico



|   |  |
|---|--|
|  <p><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE<br/>DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p> | <p><b>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>  |
| <p>Name and date of Committee</p>   | <p><b>CABINET – 20 April 2022</b></p>  |
| <p>Report Number</p>  | <p><b>Agenda Item 7</b></p>  |
| <p>Subject</p>  | <p><b>UBICO BUSINESS PLAN 2022-23</b></p>  |
| <p>Wards affected</p>   | <p>All</p>   |
| <p>Accountable member</p>   | <p>Cllr Michele Mead, Leader of the Council<br/>Email: Michele.mead@westoxon.gov.uk</p>  |
| <p>Accountable officer</p>  | <p>Giles Hughes, Chief Executive<br/>Email: giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk</p>   |
| <p>Report author</p>  | <p>Bill Oddy, Group Manager – Commercial Development<br/>Email: <a href="mailto:bill.oddy@publicagroup.uk">bill.oddy@publicagroup.uk</a></p>   |
| <p>Summary/Purpose</p>  | <p>To consider the Ubico Business Plan 2022-23 and any comments made by the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the draft Business Plan and to recommend that the Leader (as Shareholder Representative) approves the plan, subject to any comments the Cabinet wishes to make and those made by other Shareholder Councils.</p>         |
| <p>Annexes</p>  | <p>Annex A - Ubico Business Plan 2022-23</p>   |
| <p>Recommendation/s</p>   | <p>That, subject to any comments it makes, the Cabinet recommends the Ubico Business Plan 2022-23 be approved by the Leader, as the Council's Shareholder Representative of Ubico Limited and subject to any minor amendments that might arise from the final stages of consultation with the other Shareholder Councils and/or general editing.</p>   |
| <p>Corporate priorities</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leading the way in protecting and enhancing the environment by taking action locally on climate change and biodiversity</li> <li>• Delivering excellent modern services whilst ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Key Decision</p>   | <p>NO</p>  |
| <p>Exempt</p>   | <p>NO</p>  |
| <p>Consultees/<br/>Consultation</p>   | <p>The following people have all been consulted on this report and the detail contained within:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillor Michele Mead</li> <li>• Councillor Norman MacRae</li> <li>• Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee</li> <li>• Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee</li> <li>• Senior Council Officers</li> <li>• Senior Publica Officers</li> </ul> |

## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC), is a shareholder of Ubico Limited, a teckal company designed to deliver environmental services, offering better value for money than commercial contracts.
- 1.2. The teckal model enables councils to commission services without the costs associated with an EU procurement process. Ubico delivers environmental services on behalf of the council at a price which reflects the actual cost of service provision, but in doing so holds no assets, and so the depot it operates from, the vehicles it uses to perform the services and the waste and recycling containers which are provided to residents, are all owned by the authority. This ensures that the shareholders have full control over high value expenditure.
- 1.3. As part of the establishment of Ubico, a number of items were identified as reserved matters for council approval to ensure that shareholder councils retained an element of control over their company.
- 1.4. The reserved matters decisions fall to the shareholder representatives to determine. For each partner council this is the Leader of the Council. To assist the Leader in reaching her decision the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee have reviewed the Draft Business Plan. Feedback from the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 3<sup>rd</sup> February has been incorporated into the final draft. The Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee meet on the 13<sup>th</sup> April and their comments will be verbally given to the Cabinet at the meeting.

## 2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1. The Business Plan provides the vehicle to carry forward and address the issues identified by the Ubico Shareholder Councils. The 5 year vision developed by the Ubico Board of Directors in 2020 identifies the following priorities:
  - Leveraging synergies and economies of scale
  - Harnessing opportunities to deliver value back to our partners
  - Using technology to drive operational efficiency
  - Understanding our communities' needs
  - Inspiring our workforce to be committed to providing value for money and carbon neutral services
- 2.2. Ubico's 2022/23 business plan and 5-year vision is built around four key pillars:

### People

We will have a well-trained, supported and engaged workforce who live our values and are proud to work for Ubico.

### Operations

We will deliver high quality services, which remain safe and compliant, seeking continuous improvement in productivity, value and service excellence. We will harness innovation where appropriate and will explore synergies and opportunities for partnership and cross boundary working.

### Climate

We will minimise our environmental impact and support our shareholders to meet their carbon neutral targets, integrating carbon reduction opportunities wherever reasonably possible in both our fleet and non-fleet activities.

### Business Development

We will build business development capability which enhances our partnerships and allows for effective identification, analysis and presentation to shareholders of potential new business opportunities. We will explore opportunities that aren't simply about profit, including those that would deliver greater value, help our communities or improve services.

2.3 In support of the councils service related and financial priorities, Ubico is working in partnership with Publica and the Council as part of the Environmental Services Innovation Program (ESIP) which is bringing forward opportunities to deliver better services to residents, reduce the effect services have on the climate and environment, and capture efficiency and financial savings for all partners. This will therefore further support the business plan. During the last year ESIP has delivered the following:

- In-cab technology that has helped maintain a high performing waste and recycling service (Over 99% collection rate) and makes it easier for residents to report missed collections
- A new process for residents to purchase green waste licences of which 90% are now procured on-line
- Community recycling sites removed, reducing the level of fly tipping
- Litter bin review and replacement programme completed and every parish and town has new dual waste bins
- Purchase of a new electric road sweeper to support the council's climate change strategy

2.4 One of the Directors will attend the Cabinet meeting and be able to answer and questions.

## **3. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

3.1. To meet the company's Members' Agreement to approve the business plan.

## **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 There are no additional financial implications associated with the Ubico Business Plan as the budget has already been approved. Ubico has committed to supporting the council deliver savings through the Environmental Services Innovation Program (ESIP) to support its Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

## **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 This Business Plan has to be adopted in accordance with The Members' Agreement for Ubico Limited.

**6. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 6.1. There are no specific risks in adopting the Ubico business plan. The council is a shareholder of the company and has already committed to a 5 year contract extension (with a break clause at 2 years) which begins on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022, and which reaffirms its commitment to Ubico.
- 6.2. If the Council does not approve the plan there is a risk that the company will not be able to support some of the activities necessary to deliver the savings set out in the council's MTFs or its corporate priorities.

**7. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 7.1. The Cabinet is free to make comments in relation to the plan, but proposed amendments will need to be agreed by the other shareholder councils.

**8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 8.1. None



# **2022/23 Business Plan**

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# 1. Business Overview

## 1.1. Who we are

Ubico is a local authority owned company operating across Gloucestershire and West Oxfordshire. We deliver high quality, front line environmental services which support and improve our local communities to remain clean, green and pleasant places to live and work.

In 2022 Ubico will celebrate its tenth anniversary. The company has grown quickly in this time, achieving significant successes whilst facing the challenge of swift expansion, learning and developing and building to the company it is today, delivering reliable, efficient services to our shareholder partners. Our resilient and effective response to the coronavirus pandemic has cemented our reputation as a successful provider of environmental services, and we would like to thank all our shareholders for their support over this challenging time.

We are delighted to be continuing our relationships with our existing shareholder partners into the future, with all our partnership agreements having been extended or renewed beyond 2022. We also welcome Gloucester City as our eighth shareholder and will start delivering services for them from April 2022. We look forward to building the sound relationship that has begun during the preparation work for mobilisation of these services.

Our shareholding authorities continue to face the challenge of delivering high quality services against a backdrop of stretched finances, and this is exacerbated by the financial challenges brought about by the coronavirus pandemic. In 2022/23 we will continue to work closely with our shareholder partners to support them in meeting these challenges, exploring opportunities to deliver greater value through efficiencies, wider partnership working and development opportunities. All of our shareholder partners have declared a climate emergency and we are committing to supporting them in reducing carbon emissions. We will continue to reduce the carbon impact from our fleet activities through improved driving performance, best use of available technology, and using cleaner, greener vehicles in our service delivery.

In 2022/23 we move into the second year of the delivery of our five year vision, delivered through four strategic pillars, People, Operational Excellence, Climate and Business Development. The year will see a key area of focus around our People pillar. Building on our strong foundations to improve our offering to our staff, be it through strong engagement, support, training or technology, is fundamental to the successful delivery of our other

strategic pillars. We will seek to drive improvements in these areas in order that we can continue to deliver successful, efficient services. As a company who relies on the availability of professional drivers, we must also look to mitigate the risks from the national shortage wherever possible. We will continue to deploy our driver shortage mitigation strategy to ensure that we retain our excellent driving staff, and also remain attractive to potential new candidates.

## 1.2. Quality and safety at our core

Health, safety and compliance remain our number one priority and we are committed to driving continuous improvement in these areas. This is demonstrated through our ongoing achievement of industry-recognised accreditations, including ISO 45001 and ISO 14001 for our Health and Safety Management and Environmental Management Systems respectively.

In 2021 our health and safety support function was brought entirely in-house, consolidating the team and offering greater flexibility to adapt our provision to changing needs. Our internal compliance team, now in its third full year, also expanded its capability to include internal auditing for our ISO accreditations. This not only delivers financial efficiencies, but improves the company's internal expertise, our resilience and the support offered to our colleagues

## 1.3. Our shareholders



## 1.4. Our core services



Refuse collections



Food waste collections



Garden waste collections



Recycling collections



Trade waste and recycling collections



Recycling centre management



Recycling and bulking transfer



Street cleansing



Building and public convenience cleaning



Grounds maintenance



Fleet management and maintenance



MOT and taxi testing

## 1.5. Our values

**deliver quality**  
**be safe**  
**do the right thing**  
**care for our environment**  
**work together**

## 1.6. Our approach to risk

Risk management is one of the key principles of effective corporate governance and is also a key contributor to a sound internal control environment.

Ubico continues to seek and adopt recognised best practice in the identification, evaluation and cost effective control of risks and opportunities to ensure that these are managed at acceptable levels. Risk management within Ubico is about managing our threats and opportunities and striving to create an environment of 'no surprises'. By managing our threats effectively, we will be in a stronger position to deliver our business objectives. By managing our opportunities, we will be in a better position to demonstrate improved services and value for money.

Our Strategic Risk Management Objectives:

- Maintain a strategic approach to risk management to make better informed decisions
- Board and Senior Management set a 'tone from the top' on the level of risk we are prepared to accept - our 'risk appetite'
- Use risk management to enable consistent appraisal of options and improved flexibility/agility in delivering change
- Develop leadership capacity and skills to ensure understanding of the risks facing the company and how we manage them.
- Integrate risk management into how we run Ubico business/services.
- Develop a culture of well-measured risk taking throughout Ubico, including strategic, programme, partnership, project and operational.

### The Three Lines of Assurance

In order to provide assurance that Ubico has identified and enacted effective controls to mitigate its risks, we have adopted the 'Three Lines of Assurance' model. This model identifies three key sources of assurance, as follows:

- The **First Line** are the functions that own, manage and control risks - these are our managers and supervisors
- The **Second Line** are the functions that oversee risk and ensure compliance - this is our Compliance function
- The **Third Line** are the functions that provide independent assurance on the management of risks. These are our partners who provide our Internal Audit services, our external auditors and the Regulators.

## 1.7. 2021 Headline Performance

### Performance Scorecard

| Pillar                 | Measure  | 2021 Goal                     | 2021 Achievement  | 2026   |
|------------------------|--|-------------------------------|---|--|
| People                 | Vacancy fill rate<br>(advertisement closed to acceptance)    | <1 month                      | 84.08% fill rate<br>Time to hire 2.4 months   | <1 month   |
|                        | Annual training budget utilisation                           | 80% of annual training budget | 80.08% (Apr to Dec)   | 100% of annual training budget   |
|                        | Conformance to mandatory training to schedule                | >90%                          | New starters >95%   | >95%   |
|                        | Staff turnover   | <14% attrition                | 9.62% (20/21)   | <10% attrition   |
| Operational Excellence | Service KPIs - Missed bins (per 100,000 collections)         | <0.05 %                       | 0.073%  | <0.05 %  |
|                        | Service complaints & compliments                             | Maintain & improve            | Data will be presented from 2022  | Targets established by empirical data  |
|                        | Fleet compliance   | Fleet Audit Scores >90%       | 92.37% average  | Fleet Audit Scores >95%  |
|                        | RIDDOR occurrence  | <12 per year                  | 6   | <9 per year  |
|                        | Deliver to set budget  | Within 5% set budget          | -6.4% (20/21)   | Within 3% set budget   |
| Climate                | Reduced carbon emissions                                     | Benchmark in 2021/22          | Carbon reduction strategy in place<br>Baseline work in progress (consultant engaged to advise on methodology) | Sophisticated measures in place across transport, buildings and key activities |
| Business Development   | % Service coverage of core services to existing shareholders |                               | 82.61%  | 95%  |

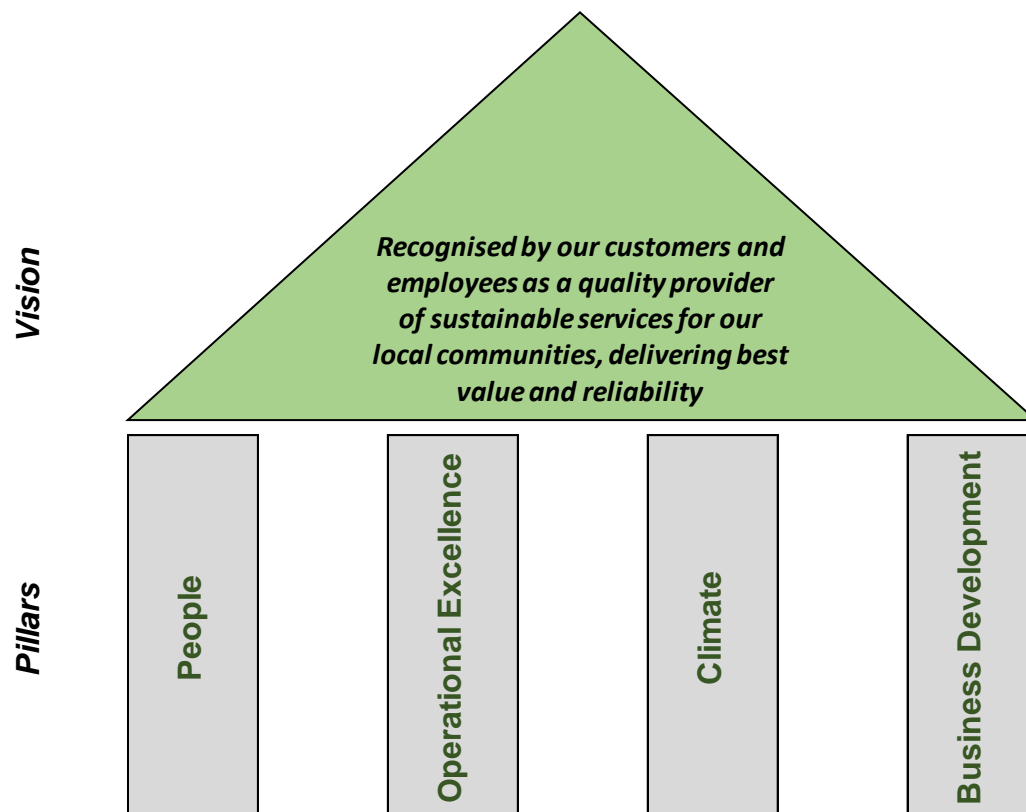
## 1.8. Our five-year vision (2021-2026)

*Recognised by our customers and employees as a quality provider of sustainable services for our local communities, delivering best value and reliability*

Through:

- Leveraging synergies and economies of scale
- Harnessing opportunities to deliver value back to our partners
- Using technology to drive operational efficiency
- Understanding our communities' needs
- Inspiring our workforce to be committed to providing value for money and carbon neutral services

## 1.9. Strategic Pillars of our vision



## 2. Business Plan 2022/23

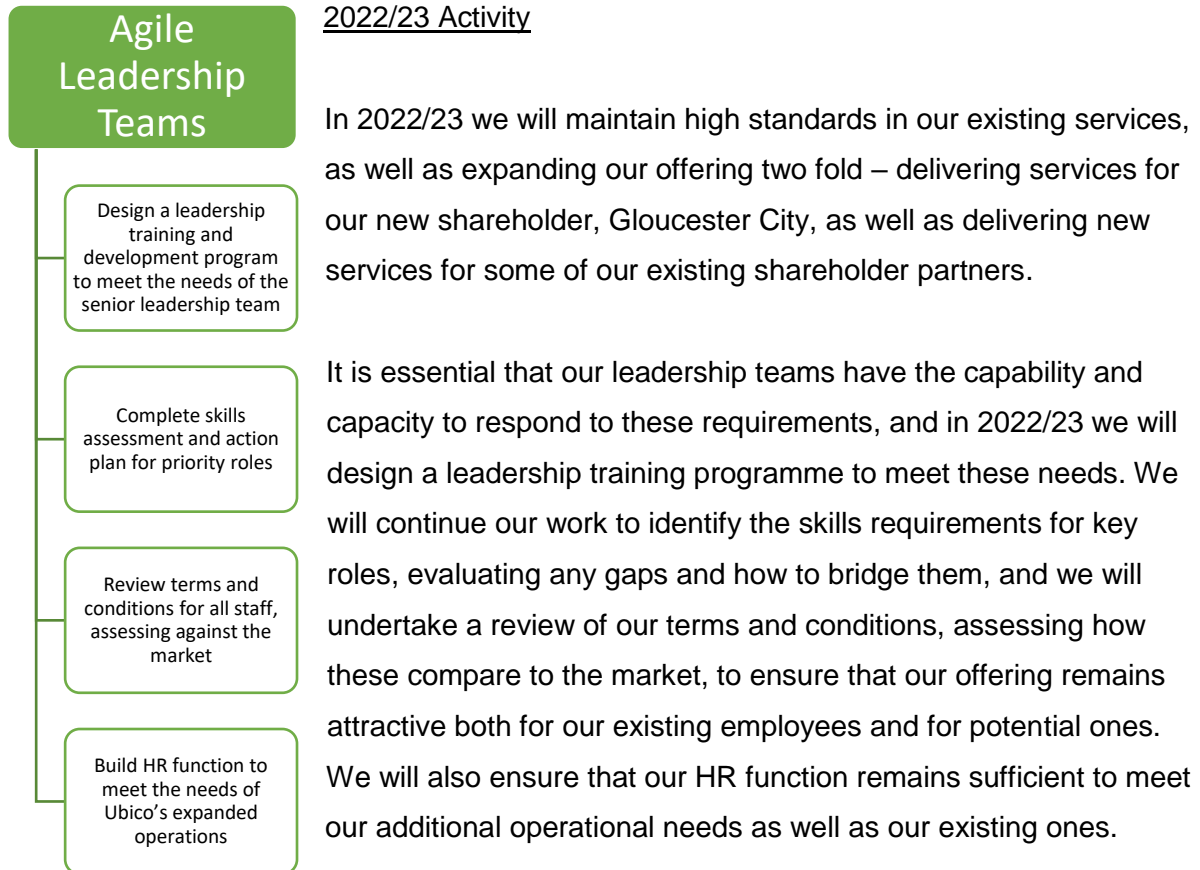
Ubico's 2022/23 business plan is built around our four key pillars:

| People   | Operations   | Climate   | Business Development   |
|--|--|---|--|
| <p>We will have a well-trained, supported and engaged workforce who live our values and are proud to work for Ubico.</p> | <p>We will deliver high quality services which remain safe and compliant, seeking continuous improvement in productivity, value and service excellence.</p> <p>We will harness innovation where appropriate and will explore synergies and opportunities for partnership and cross boundary working.</p> | <p>We will minimise our environmental impact and support our shareholders to meet their carbon neutral targets, integrating carbon reduction opportunities wherever reasonably possible in both our fleet and non-fleet activities.</p> | <p>We will build business development capability which enhances our partnerships and allows for effective identification, analysis and presentation to shareholders of potential new business opportunities.</p> <p>We will explore opportunities that aren't simply about profit, including those that would deliver greater value, help our communities or improve services.</p> |

Each of our four pillars is divided into sub-pillars which contain our high level objectives. The 2022/23 business plan objectives for each sub pillar, and the associated risks and mitigations, are outlined on the following pages.

## 2.1. People Pillar

### 2.1.1. People: Agile Leadership Teams

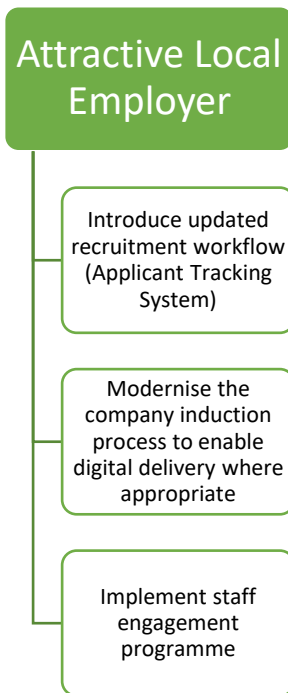


### Risks and Mitigations

| Risk   | Mitigation   |
|--|--|
| We are unable to create packages that are competitive in the marketplace | Continue to improve reward and recognition schemes, staff engagement and the support we provide. Assess market conditions and review with shareholders as required   |
| Ongoing impact of COVID  | Agile working policy in place, hot-desking available at all depots, mitigation measures remain in place as long as is necessary, continue to work to WISH guidelines |
| Succession planning  | Development of the learning and training functions, skills assessments in place for priority roles, leadership training and development program in place             |



### 2.1.2. People: Attractive Local Employer



#### 2022/23 Activity

In order to attract and retain candidates with the right skills and experience, Ubico must be an attractive employer. Our employees must feel valued and supported and should be proud to work for Ubico.

Key activities for 2022/23 aim to bring improvements in the employee experience at all points in their journey. This starts with attracting the right candidates, which we will enhance by improving our market presence and reputation through our marketing activity (see the Operational Excellence pillar). We will improve the applicant experience through the use of an application tracking system. As well as streamlining the candidate application experience, this will also provide us with better data and reporting

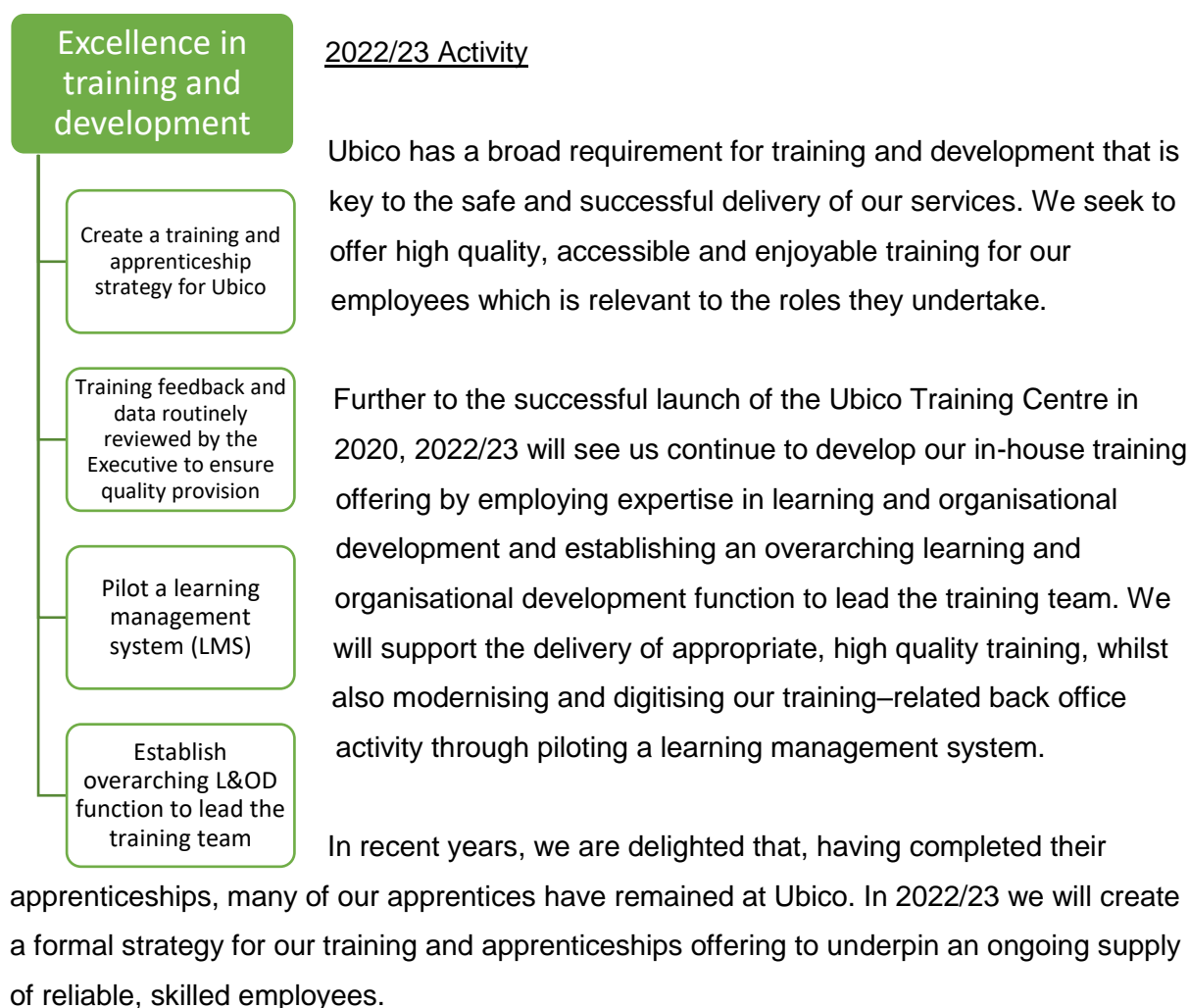
on applicants and their experience which we can use to assess and further improve our processes.

We will continue our journey of improvements in our new staff inductions, modernising them to start to enable digital delivery where appropriate. Our strong provision of support and promotion for good mental health and wellbeing will continue, and we will enhance our communication and engagement, and enable access to employee rewards, through the implementation of an employee engagement platform.

#### Risks and Mitigations

| Risk                     | Mitigation  |
|--------------------------|---|
| National Driver Shortage | Implement the action plan from our Driver Shortage Strategy   |
| Reliance on agency staff | Re-build 'pool' staff where these have depleted<br>Monitor interest in vacancies, vacancy fill rate, attrition rate |

### 2.1.3. People: Excellence in training and development



#### Risks and Mitigations

| Risk   | Mitigation  |
|--|---|
| Inadequate expertise in in-house trainers                                    | Overarching learning and organisational function leads the training team, in-house trainers recruited and retained, train the trainer training programme in place                                       |
| COVID 19 prevents training that requires 'close contact' (e.g. in a vehicle) | Continue to provide such training in the best way possible to achieve the same outcomes. Utilise outdoor spaces wherever appropriate. Maximise 'on the job' training opportunities within crew bubbles. |

## 2.2. Operational Excellence Pillar

### 2.2.1. Operational Excellence: Delivering Quality

#### Delivering Quality

Execute Gloucester city services

Embed the company-wide use of the fleet management system

#### 2022/23 Activity

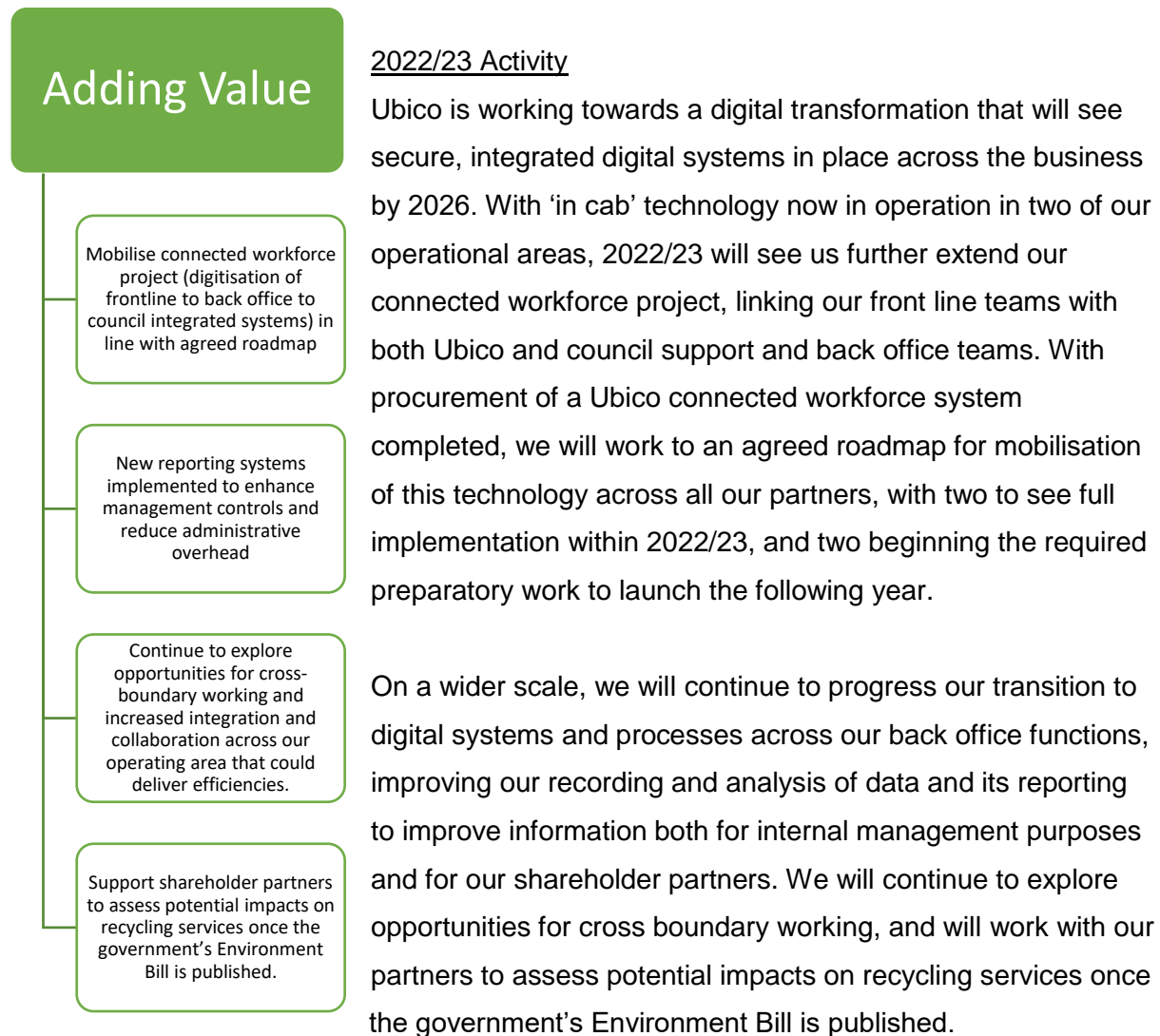
In April 2022 we will commence service delivery for our latest shareholder, Gloucester City. The services we will deliver for Gloucester are synergistic to those we deliver for our existing partners, and will increase the scale of our activities by just under 20%. It is crucial that we embed the delivery of these services effectively and in a timely manner, and to the specification agreed with the council. We will ensure that the services meet our required and expected standards in health and safety and

compliance from the outset, and will introduce alignment with our standard company processes and procedures throughout the year. We will also leverage the benefits of our fleet management system to standardise internal fleet processes, maintain high compliance standards and improve reporting.

#### Risks and Mitigations

| Risk   | Mitigation   |
|--|--|
| Front line capacity is insufficient to meet demand | Work in partnership with commissioners to maintain up to date Business Continuity Plans to identify priority services, and to identify and plan for growth as necessary.   |
| Inflationary cost pressures                        | Highlight potential areas of cost pressure as early as possible in both budget setting processes and monthly forecasting reports.<br>Ensure partners are aware that Ubico do not hold contingency funding.   |
| Gloucester City mobilisation does not meet plan    | Program structure enables progress monitoring at appropriate levels, allowing early identification and escalation of risks, and intervention to mitigate.<br>Detailed project plan in place, required resource in place and fully funded, and has appropriate skills to deliver to requirements. |

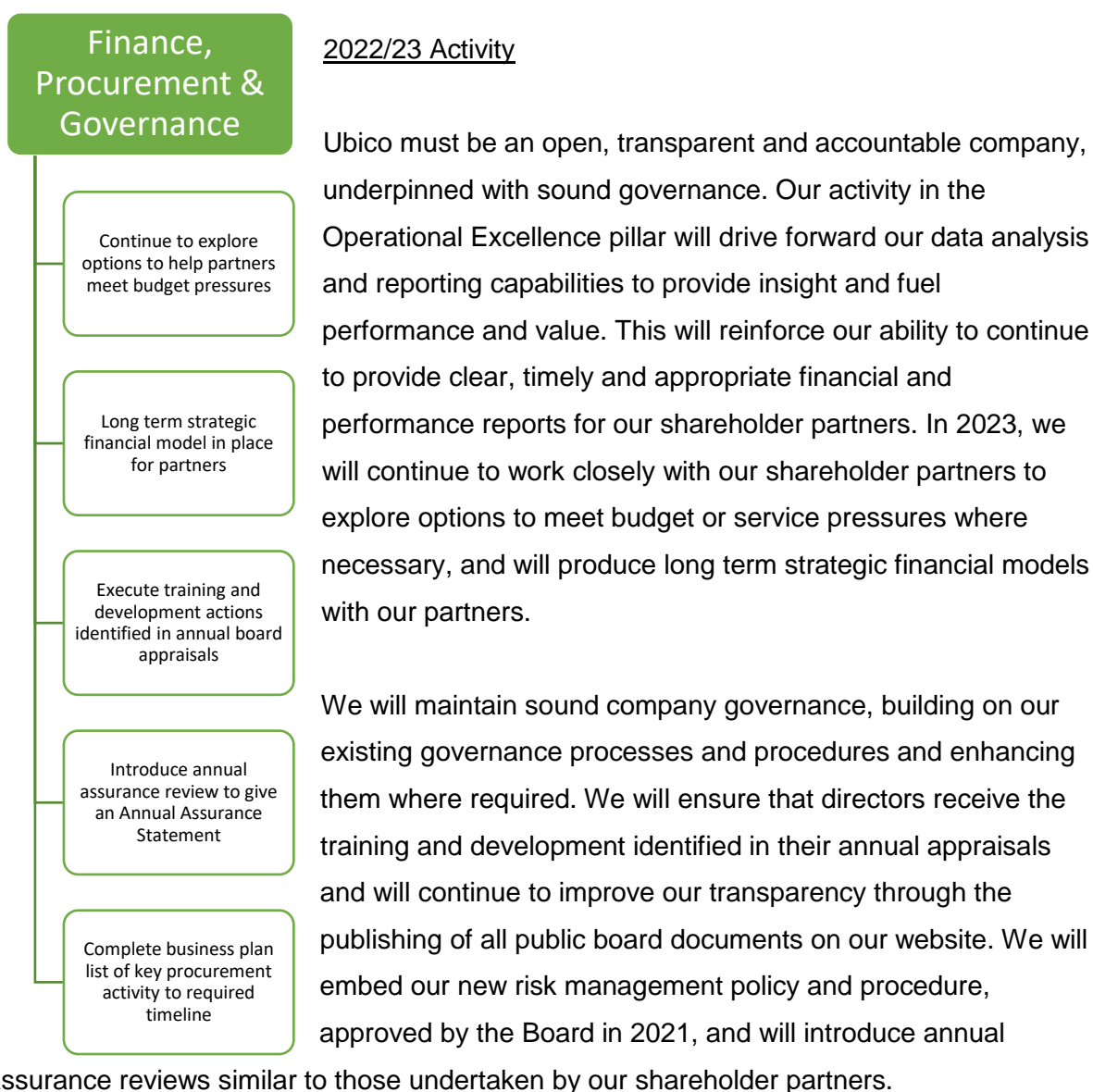
## 2.2.2. Operational Excellence: Adding Value



### Risks and Mitigations

| Risk                                 | Mitigation   |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Procurement                          | Sufficient procurement support in place, shareholder partner involvement in tender design and evaluation, sufficient time allowed for procurement activity to be completed |
| Functionality                        | Carefully considered specification drawn up with shareholder partner involvement to meet both current and known future needs   |
| A partner requests a bespoke package | Business case articulates benefits of joint package. If still requested, clarify costs of divergence / missed opportunity and ring-fence to partner.                       |

### 2.2.3. Operational Excellence: Finance, Procurement and Governance



In 2022/23 we will deliver procurement activity as outlined in section 2.2.4.

#### Risks and Mitigations

| Risk                                     | Mitigation  |
|--|---|
| Procurement activity not fully completed | Sufficient procurement support in place, subject matter experts involved in process as required, clear project timelines and requirements set out, understood and met |

#### 2.2.4. Procurement 2022/23

Planned 2022/23 procurement activity:

- Refuse Vehicle Framework
- Vehicle Hire Framework
- Agency Staff Contract
- Vehicle Maintenance
- Hooklift vehicle provision (HRC's)
- External Audit
- PPE and Uniform
- Occupational Health
- Permanent Recruitment Framework
- Office Stationery
- CPC training
- Fuel Cards
- Static Compactors
- Learning Management System
- Cleaning and Grounds Products
- Site Fire and Security

## 2.2.5. Operational Excellence: Marketing



### Risks and Mitigations

| Risk   | Mitigation  |
|--|---|
| Duplication of shareholder communications                                | Any communications which relate to specific partner(s) signed off by their communications teams.  |
| Perception of moving to separate ourselves from our shareholder partners | Communications strategy designed with the support of a partner's communications team.<br>Partnership working and initiatives celebrated jointly |



## 2.3. Climate Pillar

### 2.3.1. Climate: Strategy

# Strategy

- Shareholder climate activities
- Determine roles and responsibilities
  - Use our subject matter expertise to create a list of carbon reduction opportunities to input into shareholder considerations
  - Work with partners to deliver partner selected priority projects

- Ubico activity
- Gap analysis of Ubico's climate reduction opportunities to determine priorities
  - Review external support available for carbon reduction initiatives and integrate into Ubico strategy

#### 2022/23 Activity

In 2021/22, Ubico produced its first carbon reduction strategy. The strategy recognises two strands of activity in this area

1. Ubico owned carbon reduction activities that are within the gift of the company to deliver
2. Shareholder sponsored activity which requires approval and funding from our shareholders.

For activity reliant on shareholder partnership and commitment, we will work with our partners to determine roles and responsibilities, create a list of carbon reduction opportunities to input into shareholder considerations, and work with partners to deliver selected priority projects. For activity that is within Ubico's own remit, we already have a number of initiatives which are integrated into our new strategy and will continue. In addition, we will undertake a gap analysis of further climate reduction opportunities and will determine priorities. We will also review the external support available for carbon reduction initiatives and integrate these within our strategy and action plan.

#### Risks and Mitigations

| Risk   | Mitigation   |
|--|--|
| Unfunded expectations from shareholder partners or stakeholders  | Clarity on funding model for initiatives must be achieved prior to commencement.   |
| Continued disruption to steady state business model and services by Covid, Brexit or supply chain issues affect carbon education initiatives | Improved internal reporting mechanisms give early warning and data to evidence the impact of ongoing increases in service demand or service disruption. Early and ongoing communication with shareholder partners. |

### 2.3.2. Climate: Ubico owned carbon reduction activity

#### Compliance & Performance

Roll out carbon reduction driver training to all professional drivers where technology permits

Create baseline KPI's to underpin progress reporting for carbon strategy plan

#### 2022/23 Activity

Ubico is already underway with a number of carbon reduction initiatives including around fleet, driver training and biodiversity work with partners. These existing initiatives are folded into our new strategy and our gap analysis will identify further opportunities within key business areas (fleet, buildings, people, policies etc) to provide a prioritised list for design and, subject to funding, deployment.

As part of the gap analysis exercise to identify additional carbon reduction opportunities, we will review how we can quantify and record key carbon impacts so that we can make informed decisions about required areas of activity or improvement, and measure our performance.

#### Risks and Mitigations

| Risk                             | Mitigation   |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Driver turnover – loss of skills | New drivers routinely trained as part of induction   |
| Ageing fleet increases emissions | Close partnership working with shareholder partners to maintain an up to date fleet replacement programme that is delivered on schedule. Alternative fuel vehicle options identified on fleet replacement programmes, replacement strategy agreed with partners. |

### 2.3.3. Climate: Partnership Working

#### Partnership Working

Work with our partners to evaluate the journey to net zero on our fleet

Develop high level options for strategic depot locations to inform shareholder partner decision making, where necessary

#### 2022/23 Activity

In 2022/23 we will continue to work in close partnership with our shareholder partners to deliver carbon reduction and climate beneficial initiatives. We will evaluate the opportunities identified in our gap analysis which require shareholder partnership and commitment, and work with them to deliver selected priority projects. In addition, we will continue our work with our partners when evaluating options for fleet replacements and the journey to net zero. We will develop high level options for strategic depot locations across our operational areas to inform partner decision making, where necessary.

#### Risks and Mitigations

| Risk  | Mitigation  |
|---|---|
| Ubico is not consulted on decisions which could impact carbon emissions, or the success of our carbon reduction initiatives | Ubico invited to attend key meetings, both with individual partners and in wider partnership forums to ensure our input or impact on our activities is considered |

## 2.4. Business Development Pillar

### 2.4.1. Business Development: Increased Operational Services for Shareholders

Increased operational services for Shareholders

2022/23 Activity

Ubico delivers operational environmental services and our vision sees us delivering as many of our core services as possible for our current shareholder partners. At the current time, each shareholder takes a slightly different list of services and in 2022/23 we will continue to evaluate the ‘gaps’ - where a partner does not take one of Ubico’s core services – to determine if Ubico could offer a better value option for that service.

We will also continue to explore opportunities for delivering services to shareholder partners which build on our existing capabilities. The first area of focus will be recycle reprocessing, where a feasibility exercise will be undertaken to explore the options and benefits of Ubico extending its activities beyond recycle handling and bulking and into the downstream haulage or reprocessing activity. The second area of focus will be facilities management where we will explore the feasibility of increasing our offering.

Explore expansion of services offered to current shareholders

Explore the feasibility and potential benefits of developing a wider facilities management offering

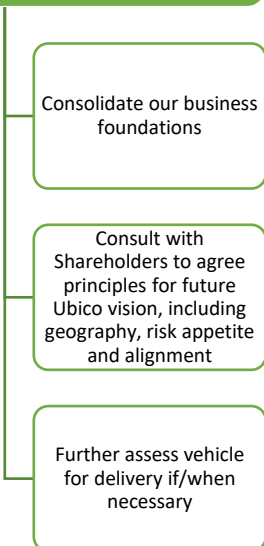
Explore the feasibility and potential benefits of extending our in-house recycle reprocessing offer

#### Risks and Mitigations

| Risk   | Mitigation   |
|--|--|
| Leadership capacity to manage expanding portfolio    | Focus on core environmental services where we are skilled and experienced  |
| Entering new field and competitive landscape changes | Full risk analysis included in each business proposal presented to shareholder partners to enable informed decisions. Funding mechanisms clearly agreed ahead of commencement. |

## 2.4.2. Business Development: 'Future Ubico'

### Future Ubico



#### 2022/23 Activity

Proactive commercial tendering is often cited as a significant area of potential opportunity, growth, and return for Ubico, however the company does not have a commercial bidding team nor the funds to introduce one. As a result, Ubico currently only undertakes a small amount of 'commercial' work (work outside that which it provides to its shareholder partners) and the securing of this work has been opportunistic rather than targeted. However, Ubico has seen significant growth in 2021 with the addition of its eighth shareholder, Gloucester City Council, which will see the company grow by just under 20% in 2022/23.

Within our current 5 year vision, we will consolidate our business foundations in order to maximise the efficiency and scalability of our core operations for our current shareholders. We will engage with our shareholder partners in 22/23 to understand their priorities and vision for Ubico for the next five years. This will determine a future pathway which will be built into our next five year strategy.

#### Risks and Mitigations

| Risk   | Mitigation   |
|--|--|
| Gloucester City mobilisation does not meet plan                            | Program structure enables progress monitoring at appropriate levels, allowing early identification and escalation of risks, and intervention to mitigate.<br>Detailed project plan in place, required resource in place and fully funded, and has appropriate skills to deliver to requirements. |
| Gloucester City costs increase due to changing economic environment        | Early warning of budgetary pressures presented to Gloucester as with our other partners, through both budget setting processes and monthly forecasting reports.  |
| Expectation of expanding commercially without requisite skills or capacity | Detailed shareholder consultation and full understanding of shareholder risk appetite and commitment ahead of commencement of any commercial project   |

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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