

Public Document Pack



Friday, 12 July 2024

Tel: 01993 861000

e-mail: democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk

EXECUTIVE

You are summoned to a meeting of the Executive which will be held in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney, Oxfordshire OX28 1NB on **Monday, 22 July 2024 at 2.00 pm.**



Giles Hughes
Chief Executive

To: Members of the Executive

Councillors: Andy Graham, Duncan Enright, Lidia Arciszewska, Rizvana Poole, Andrew Prosser, Geoff Saul, Alaric Smith and Tim Sumner

Recording of Proceedings – The law allows the public proceedings of Council, Executive, 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. **Apologies for Absence**
To receive any Apologies for Absence from Members of the Executive. The quorum for the Executive is 3 Members.
2. **Declarations of Interest**
To receive any Declarations of Interest from Members of the Executive on any items to be considered at the meeting.
3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting (Pages 7 - 12)**
To approve the minutes of the previous meeting, held on Wednesday 12 June 2024.
4. **Receipt of Announcements**
To receive any announcements from the Leader of the Council, Members of the Executive or the Chief Executive.
5. **Participation of the Public**
Any member of the public, who is a registered elector in the District, is eligible to ask one question at the meeting, for up to three minutes, of the Leader of the Council, or any Member of the Executive on any issue that affects the district or its people.

Notice, together with a written copy of the question, must be provided to Democratic Services, either by email to:

democratic.services@westoxon.gov.uk

or by post to:

Democratic Services, West Oxfordshire District Council, Woodgreen, Witney OX28 1NB.

Questions are to be received no later than 2.00pm two clear working days before the meeting (e.g. for a Monday meeting, the deadline would be 2.00pm on the Thursday before).

A response may be provided at the meeting, or within three clear working days of the meeting. If the topic of the question is not within the remit of the Council, advice will be provided on where best to direct the question.

The appropriate Executive Member will either respond verbally at the meeting or provide a written response which will be included in the minutes of the meeting.

6. **Reports from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
To consider any reports or recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which meets on 17 July 2024.
7. **Matters raised by Audit and Governance Committee**
There has been no meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee since the last meeting of the Executive. The Committee's next meeting is scheduled for 27 July 2024.

8. **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Draft Charging Schedule (Pages 13 - 32)**

Purpose:

To recommend that the Council approves a new draft CIL charging schedule for the purpose of public consultation prior to submission for independent examination.

Recommendations:

That the Executive resolves to:

1. Approve the Community Infrastructure Levy Draft Charging Schedule (DCS) attached at Annex A for the purposes of a six-week period of public consultation in accordance with the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended);
2. Delegate authority to the Planning Policy Manager to make any minor factual/typographical amendments to the CIL Draft Charging Schedule (DCS) following consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Sustainable Development, prior to publication;
3. Recommend to Council to delegate authority to the Planning Policy Manager to submit the CIL charging schedule for independent examination in accordance with the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) including any minor modifications, following consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Sustainable Development, subject to there being no significant issues raised during the six-week consultation period;
4. Ensure that appropriate mechanisms are put in place to enable Town and Parish Councils to meaningfully contribute with regard to potential Section 106 planning obligations when these are being negotiated.

9. **Financial Performance Report 2023-24 Quarter Four (Pages 33 - 54)**

Purpose:

To report the financial performance of the Council in 2023/24.

Recommendations:

That the Executive resolves to:

1. Note the 2023/24 financial performance;
2. Recommend to Council to carry forward the capital budget of £4,086,328;
3. Recommend to Council to approve the transfers to and between Earmarked Reserves as detailed in the report.

10. **West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041 (Pages 55 - 74)**

Purpose:

To provide an update on the emerging West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041, and to agree a revised timetable for taking the plan through to adoption.

Recommendations:

That the Executive resolves to:

1. Note the content of the report;
2. Approve the updated Local Development Scheme (LDS) attached at Annex A, including the following key milestones for the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041:
 - Regulation 18 preferred option consultation – October 2024
 - Regulation 19 pre-submission draft publication – March 2025
 - Submission for examination – June 2025

11. **Our House Project Funding Extension 2024-2026** (Pages 75 - 96)

Purpose:

To update the Executive on the 'Our House' project since its inception, with a recommendation that funding be extended from 1 November 2024 to 31 October 2026.

Recommendations:

That the Executive resolves to:

1. Approve a 2-year funding extension for the Our House project from 1 November 2024 to 31 October 2026;
2. Agree to continue with the current Support Provider via waiver;
3. Delegate authority to the Business Manager for Housing, in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare, to approve the delegation of any minor amendments to this funding extension;
4. Delegate authority to the Business Manager for Housing, in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare, to apply for external funding should any become available;
5. Recommend to Council that it agrees to utilise Housing Reserves as set out in section 4 of the report.

12. **Outside Body Appointments** (Pages 97 - 106)

Purpose:

To provide a list of appointments to Outside Bodies for the civic year 2024/25.

Recommendations:

That the Executive resolves to:

1. Note the appointments to outside bodies as set out in Annex A;
2. Recommend to Council to note the appointments to outside bodies as set out in Annex A;
3. Note the guidance for members who are appointed to outside bodies (Annex B).

13. **Publica Transition Plan** (Pages 107 - 158)

Purpose:

To consider the Detailed Transition Plan, to note its contents and to approve the recommendations therein.

Recommendations:

That the Executive resolves to recommend to Council to:

1. Approve the implementation of Phase I of the Publica Transition on the basis of the Detailed Transition Plan;
2. Delegate to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council the decision to deal with any final detail matters arising from the Detailed Transition Plan;
3. Delegate authority to the Director of Governance in liaison with the Leader to update the constitution by making any consequential changes required as a result of Phase I of the Publica Transition;
4. Carry out a budget re-basing for the 2026/7 financial year so that the funding provided to Publica is proportionate to the services received.

14. **One-Year Publica Business Plan (Pages 159 - 172)**

Purpose:

To consider the Draft Publica Business Plan 2024-25, produced by the Publica Board in consultation with Directors and Shareholders, and to recommend that the Leader (as Shareholder Representative) approves the plan.

Recommendations:

That the Executive resolves to:

1. Note the 2024/25 Publica Business Plan;
2. Note that the Leader of the Council, as shareholder representative, will approve the Publica Business Plan 2024-2025 in due course.

15. **Public Convenience Contract (Pages 173 - 182)**

Purpose:

To consider agree a contract award for the cleaning and maintenance of public conveniences.

Recommendation:

That the Executive resolves to:

1. Award the contract for cleaning and maintenance of public conveniences to the preferred contractor.

16. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

If the Executive wishes to exclude the press and public from the meeting during consideration of any of the items on the exempt from publication part of the agenda, it will be necessary for the Executive to pass a resolution in accordance with the provisions of the Paragraph 4(2)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 on the grounds that their presence could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in specific paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Executive may maintain the exemption if and so long as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

17. **Exempt Annex B - Public Convenience Contract - Contract Award (Pages 183 - 184)**

(END)

This page is intentionally left blank

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the
Executive.

Held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney, Oxfordshire OX28 1NB
at 2.00pm on **Wednesday 12 June 2024.**

PRESENT

Councillors: Andy Graham (Leader), Duncan Enright (Deputy Leader), Alaric Smith, Rizvana Poole, Geoff Saul, Tim Sumner and Lidia Arciszewska.

Officers: Giles Hughes (Chief Executive), Madhu Richards (Director of Finance), Andrea McCaskie (Director of Governance), Phil Martin (Assistant Director, Business Services), Andy Barge (Assistant Director, Communities), Andrew Brown (Business Manager, Democratic Services), Andrew Turner (Business Manager, Assets and Council Priorities), Jacqui Wright (Business Manager, Leisure and Wellbeing), Mandy Fathers (Business Manager, Environmental, Welfare & Revenue Services), Max Thompson (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Alison Borrett (Senior Performance Analyst), Gemma Moreing (Business Information and Performance Lead) and Christine Elsasser (Democratic Services Officer).

Other Councillors in Attendance: Michele Mead, Sandra Simpson, and David Melvin.

183 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Duncan Enright.

184 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made by members of the Executive.

185 Minutes of Previous Meeting

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, proposed that the minutes of the previous meeting, held on Wednesday 17 April 2024, be agreed by the Executive as a true and accurate record.

This was seconded by Councillor Alaric Smith, was put to a vote, and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

The Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Agree the minutes of the previous meeting, held on Wednesday 17 April 2024, as a true and accurate record.

Councillor Duncan Enright arrived at the conclusion of the agenda item.

186 Receipt of Announcements

There were no announcements made by the Executive at the meeting.

187 Participation of the Public

There was no public participation at the meeting.

188 Reports from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Leader confirmed that the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, would be considered as part of the Approval for Upgrading Public Space CCTV Provision and New Monitoring Arrangements agenda item.

189 Matters raised by Audit and Governance Committee

No matters had been raised by the Audit and Governance Committee.

190 Changes to Customer Telephone Access Times

Councillor Alaric Smith, Executive Member for Finance, introduced the report, which proposed that a trialled change to customer telephone access times became a permanent arrangement. A trial of reduced telephone access hours from 9.00am – 2.00pm to the public, had proved the concept that customers were continuing to shift to digital channels.

The Executive thanked the work of officers that brought the report to the Executive, and praised their resolve in ensuring that changes to operating models had a positive effect for both residents and staff morale within the Residents Services department.

Councillor Alaric Smith proposed that the Executive agree to the recommendation as listed on the report. This was seconded by Councillor Andy Graham, was put to a vote, and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

The Executive **Resolved** to:

- I. Agree to adopt the reduced telephone access arrangements on a permanent basis.

191 Approval For Upgrading Public Space CCTV Provision and New Monitoring Arrangements

Councillor Geoff Saul, Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare, introduced the report, which recommended upgrading the public open space CCTV cameras covering areas of Carterton and Witney to high definition digital, together with the installation of five new cameras in Chipping Norton.

The report further recommended that the Council joined the Thames Valley CCTV partnership, with an associated transfer of CCTV assets and operational responsibility to Thames Valley Police under a 'single owner' model; and move monitoring arrangements to a shared Oxfordshire hub.

The Executive Member stated that the Executive had received a recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, requesting that the priority order of the steps that would be taken to address the funding shortfall of up to £55,000 (paragraph 4.7 of the agenda report) were adjusted so that steps c) and d) were moved up to become the new a) and b). The Executive Member stated that the Executive agreed with the recommendation made by Overview and Scrutiny, and that the priority order would be adjusted to potential funding shortfall of up to £55,000.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillors Michele Mead and David Melvin, attending as non-Executive Members, queried the timeline of financial contributions associated with Carterton Town Council, and sought clarification on whether Carterton would receive any additional cameras in addition to the 4 it already had, or if locations of cameras may change.

Executive

12/June2024

Andy Barge, Assistant Director for Communities, stated that the Council had worked closely with the Clerk of Carterton Town Council and that an agreement was in place to reduce the in-year contribution to £5,000, and advised of a possibility that either two or three cameras may be relocated around the town to provide better surveillance coverage. The Assistant Director also stated that requests for further cameras would require agreement from Thames Valley Police in an evidence-base approach, in line with the Police and Crime Commissioner's code.

Councillor Geoff Saul proposed that the Executive agree to the recommendations as listed on the report. This was seconded by Councillor Andy Graham, was put to a vote, and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

The Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Endorse the continued need for public open space CCTV in Carterton and Witney and approve extending the scheme to Chipping Norton;
2. Approve use of the £255,635 in the draft capital programme Council resolved to approve in February 2024 for upgrading CCTV;
3. Note the potential funding shortfall of up to a further £55,000 and the opportunities for meeting this cost;
4. Approve joining the Thames Valley CCTV Partnership, with an associated transfer of all CCTV assets and ongoing operational responsibility to Thames Valley Police under a 'single owner' model; and a shared Oxfordshire hub, based in Abingdon, as the new monitoring control room;
5. Delegate authority to the Interim Head of Legal Services, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to execute the formal agreements needed to join the Thames Valley Police CCTV Partnership;
6. Approve the funding formula for the Thames Valley CCTV Partnership and delegate authority to the Assistant Director – Communities, in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare, to agree a new funding formula with Carterton, Chipping Norton and Witney town councils, and Marriott's Walk and Woolgate shopping centres.

192 Endorsement of The Oxfordshire Councils Charter

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, introduced the report, which sought endorsement the Oxfordshire Councils Charter.

Councillor Andy Graham proposed that the Executive agree to the recommendations as listed on the report. This was seconded by Councillor Alaric Smith, was put to a vote, and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

The Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Note the contents of the Oxfordshire Councils Charter;
2. Endorse the Oxfordshire Councils Charter;
3. Agree to be a signatory to the Oxfordshire Councils Charter.

Executive

12/June2024

193 Annual Report of the Director of Public Health

Councillor Rizvana Poole, Executive Member for Stronger, Healthy Communities, introduced the report, which highlighted the main points from Oxfordshire County Council's Director of Public Health Annual Report on climate change and health 2023/24.

The report also called for action to ensure that collectively there is acceleration and facilitation of more positive health benefits by taking action to address our changing climate.

The Executive highlighted the importance of the report and the importance of keeping public health in mind when it came to implementing policy and new Council plans.

Councillor Rizvana Poole proposed that the Executive agree to the recommendation as listed on the report. This was seconded by Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, was put to a vote, and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

The Executive **Resolved** to:

- I. Note the contents of the report.

194 Service Performance Report 2023-24 Quarter Four

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, introduced the report, which provided details of the Council's operational performance at the end of 2023-24 Quarter Four (Q4).

At the invitation of the Leader, Alison Borrett, Senior Performance Analyst, gave a detailed overview of the report, stating that the Council had an overall successful quarter (January 2024 to March 2024), and highlighted notable achievements including the adoption by the Executive of an updated Carbon Action Plan, applications for development being determined ahead of agreed timescales and improved processing of new Council Tax support claims.

The Senior Performance Analyst also provided an overview of steps being taken to address a small number of improvements across the Council, including collection of Non-Domestic Rates and delivery of affordable homes across the district.

In debate, the Executive highlighted and thanked the work of Officers in bringing an improved, more detailed and comprehensive service report to the Executive, adding that the reports and detail contained within, was of a much more understandable format and easier to take heed of.

Councillor Andy Graham proposed that the Executive agree to the recommendation as listed on the report. This was seconded by Councillor Alaric Smith, was put to a vote, and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

The Executive **Resolved** to:

- I. Note the 2023/24 Q4 Service Performance Report.

195 Salt Cross Garden Village Area Action Plan (AAP)

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, introduced the report, which provided an update on the Salt Cross Garden Village Area Action Plan (AAP).

At the invitation of the Leader, Giles Hughes, Chief Executive, gave an overview of the report and the timeline which would allow the Council to consider and adopt the Action Plan in early 2025.

Executive

12/June2024

Councillor Andy Graham proposed that the Executive agree to the recommendation as listed on the report. This was seconded by Councillor Lidia Arciszewska, was put to a vote, and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

The Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Note the contents of the report.

196 West Oxfordshire District Council Productivity Plan 2024

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, introduced the report, which outlined the proposed approach to adopting the Council's Productivity Plan 2024.

At the invitation of the Leader, Giles Hughes, Chief Executive, gave an overview of the report and requirements of central Government for the Council to prepare a productivity plan. The Chief Executive highlighted the rationale of recommendation 2 of the report, whereby delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to adopt the Productivity Plan and submit it to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities ahead of a 19 July 2024 deadline.

Councillor Andy Graham proposed that the Executive agree to the recommendations as listed on the report. This was seconded by Councillor Duncan Enright, was put to a vote, and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

The Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Note the requirement from the Government, outlined in the letter from the Local Government Minister at Annex A, for the Council to adopt a Productivity Plan;
2. Agree to delegate the decision to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to adopt the Productivity Plan and submit it to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities by the 19 July 2024 deadline.

197 Exclusion of Press and Public

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of the Council, proposed that Executive agree to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the remaining exempt items of business, on the basis that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

This was seconded by Councillor Duncan Enright, was put to a vote, and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

The Executive **Resolved** in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 4(2)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 to:

1. Exclude the press and public from the meeting on the grounds that their presence could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs 1 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, with the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighing the public interest in disclosing the exempt information.

198 Letting of Unit at Marriott's Walk

Councillor Duncan Enright, Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Economic Development, introduced the report, which requested approval of the lease terms proposed for Unit 6 Marriott's Walk and requested that Council approved the allocation of capital funding for Landlord's works.

In debate, the Executive highlighted the wider, positive benefits that the letting of the unit would bring to Witney and the surrounding area, including increased social interaction, higher levels of local employment and an increased offering of apprenticeships. The Executive also highlighted the benefits of increased revenue generation for the Council, and improve overall footfall and business activity across Witney.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillor Michele Mead, attending as a non-Executive Member, queried if the stated figure contained within the original report was a final figure the full allocation of capital funding for landlord's works, and if there were plans for the remaining empty units within Marriott's Walk.

Andrew Turner, Business Manager for Assets and Council Priorities, confirmed that the figure stated was correct, and that it contained a small amount of contingency funding for any associated works.

Councillor Duncan Enright, Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Economic Development, affirmed that negotiations were ongoing regarding every single unit within Marriott's Walk being occupied, and that a wider project was underway to ensure that empty units across the town were not empty for a moment longer than necessary.


Councillor Duncan Enright proposed that the Executive agree to the recommendations as listed on the report. This was seconded by Councillor Alaric Smith, was put to a vote, and was unanimously agreed by the Executive.

The Executive **Resolved** to:

1. Approve the terms of the lease for Unit 6 Marriott's Walk;
2. Delegate authority to the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and the Executive Member for Finance to approve any changes to the final terms of the lease;
3. Recommend to Council to approve the addition of the capital programme for the landlord's fitout works.

The Meeting closed at 2.45pm.

CHAIR

 <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>	<p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>
<p>Name and Date of Committee</p>	<p>EXECUTIVE – 22 JULY 2024</p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p>COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) DRAFT CHARGING SCHEDULE</p>
<p>Wards Affected</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Accountable Member</p>	<p>Councillor Andy Graham – Leader of the Council. Email: andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Accountable Officer</p>	<p>Chris Hargraves – Planning Policy Manager. Email: chris.hargraves@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Report Author</p>	<p>Chris Hargraves – Planning Policy Manager. Email: chris.hargraves@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Purpose</p>	<p>To recommend that the Council approves a new draft CIL charging schedule for the purpose of public consultation prior to submission for independent examination.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Annex A – Draft CIL Charging Schedule (June 2024) Annex B – CIL Viability Report (June 2024) (PUBLISHED SEPARATELY)</p>
<p>Recommendations</p>	<p>That the Executive resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the Community Infrastructure Levy Draft Charging Schedule (DCS) attached at Annex A for the purposes of a six-week period of public consultation in accordance with the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended); 2. Delegate authority to the Planning Policy Manager to make any minor factual/typographical amendments to the CIL Draft Charging Schedule (DCS) following consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Sustainable Development, prior to publication;

	<p>3. Recommend to Council to delegate authority to the Planning Policy Manager to submit the CIL charging schedule for independent examination in accordance with the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) including any minor modifications, following consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Sustainable Development, subject to there being no significant issues raised during the six-week consultation period; and</p> <p>4. Ensure that appropriate mechanisms are put in place to enable Town and Parish Councils to meaningfully contribute with regard to potential Section 106 planning obligations when these are being negotiated.</p>
Corporate Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting Residents First • A Good Quality of Life for All • A Better Environment for People and Wildlife • Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency • Working Together for West Oxfordshire
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Subject to the approval of Members, the draft CIL charging schedule attached at Annex A will be published for a 6-week period of public consultation.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** Members will be aware that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge that may be levied on most forms of development to help fund infrastructure.
- 1.2** Despite several previous public consultations, CIL has not been adopted in West Oxfordshire and so last year, Members agreed that fresh viability evidence should be commissioned with a view to public consultation taking place on a new CIL draft charging schedule.
- 1.3** That viability evidence has now been completed and a new draft charging schedule has been prepared.
- 1.4** The purpose of this report is to summarise the main outcomes of the viability work and to agree that the new draft CIL charging schedule is published for consultation.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge that can be levied on most forms of development to help fund the infrastructure that is needed to support the future growth of an area. CIL is intended to complement and 'co-exist' alongside the current system of Section 106 planning obligations.
- 2.2** Whereas S106 agreements focus on site-specific matters and are agreed through a process of negotiation, CIL is effectively a fixed charge that can be spent on new and enhanced infrastructure across the whole District.
- 2.3** Section 106 agreements will remain a matter for negotiation based on site specific and local considerations and it therefore important that key stakeholders, in particular Town and Parish Councils, are given the opportunity to input into such discussions. This is reflected in the report recommendation 4).
- 2.4** The key advantage of CIL is that, unlike Section 106 agreements, which tend to apply to larger developments only, CIL can be charged on much smaller scales of development, thus ensuring that the cumulative impact of such development can be addressed through new and improved infrastructure provision.
- 2.5** Specifically, subject to certain exceptions, CIL is generally payable on all new dwellings and on other forms of development which involve the creation of more than 100m² net additional floorspace. The amount charged through CIL must be based on evidence of viability to ensure that it does not hinder development from coming forward.
- 2.6** CIL rates must be set out in a document called a 'Charging Schedule' which explains what types of development are liable for CIL and the relevant rates that apply. Rates are expressed as pounds (£) per square metre.
- 2.7** An initial CIL charging schedule was submitted for examination in 2015 but suspended alongside the Local Plan in 2016. A revised CIL charging schedule was then published in January 2017 but not progressed to examination as the Local Plan Inspector did not want to examine CIL and the Local Plan concurrently.
- 2.8** Further consultation took place in 2020 but the draft charging schedule at that time was not progressed to examination. Subsequently, last year it was agreed that new viability evidence should be commissioned to inform both CIL and in due course, the new Local Plan 2041.

2.9 The first stage of that viability work is now complete and has informed the preparation of a new draft CIL charging schedule.

3. DRAFT CIL CHARGING SCHEDULE

3.1 The new draft CIL charging schedule is attached at Annex A. It is based on the viability evidence attached at Annex B.

Proposed residential CIL rates

3.2 The draft charging schedule identifies the following CIL rates (£ per m²) for residential uses:

CIL Zone	£ per m ²	Notes
Residential District-wide (Greenfield)	£225	Includes mixed housing development (i.e. a mix of housing and flats). On-site affordable housing on 11+ units. Nil Affordable Housing on sites between 1-10 units. Affordable Housing financial contributions apply on sites between 6-10 units in the Cotswolds National Landscape (formerly AONB).
Residential District-wide (Previously developed land)	£125	As above.
100% Flatted only development District-wide	£25	Nominal rate.
Strategic Sites	£0	Nil rated for CIL due to significant S106 and other development costs.

3.3 Key points to note are that:

- In setting a single CIL rate for residential development on undeveloped greenfield sites and a single CIL rate for residential development on previously developed (brownfield) sites, the charging schedule reflects the Government’s Written Ministerial Statement¹ of 19 February 2024 and updated CIL Planning Practice Guidance² which state that higher residential CIL rates should not be set for developments which are not major developments on the grounds that these sites are not required to provide affordable housing contributions;

¹ <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2024-02-19/hcws264>

² <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/community-infrastructure-levy> - Paragraph 024

- The proposed rate for residential schemes on previously developed (brownfield) sites is lower (£125 per m²) than greenfield sites because of the additional costs associated with bringing such sites forward;
- 100% flatted developments have additional costs which warrant the application of a nominal CIL charge (£25 per m²);
- Strategic local plan sites (Salt Cross, West Eynsham, North Witney, East Witney and East Chipping Norton) are proposed to be CIL exempt because of the significant infrastructure costs associated with bringing such developments forward, which will be secured through other mechanisms including Section 106 agreements.

Proposed non-residential CIL rates

- 3.4** The draft charging schedule identifies the following CIL rates (£ per m²) for non-residential and commercial uses:

CIL Zone	£ per m ²	Notes
Large Format Retail e.g. Supermarkets, Foodstores, Retail Warehousing	£125	
All other non-residential development	£0	Nil rated

- 3.5** It is relevant to note that on viability grounds, the only form of ‘non-residential’ development which is able to support a CIL charge is large format retail such as supermarkets, foodstores and retail warehousing.

4. NEXT STEPS

- 4.1** Taking the draft CIL charging schedule forward to consultation and submission for examination is a significant step forwards toward the implementation of CIL in West Oxfordshire. Public consultation on planning matters often results in concerns being raised about the impact of new development on infrastructure and the ability of such infrastructure to ‘cope’ whether that be in relation to wastewater capacity, school places or health care.
- 4.2** CIL represents an important potential source of infrastructure funding and importantly, unlike Section 106 planning obligations which tend to focus on larger developments, will help to ensure that the cumulative impact of smaller developments is addressed by ensuring that they make a reasonable contribution towards infrastructure costs, whilst making sure that such developments remain viable.
- 4.3** Subject to the approval of Members, the draft CIL charging schedule will be published for a 6-week period of public consultation which is expected to take place from early August to mid-September 2024 (exact dates to be confirmed).

4.4 Following the consultation, the responses received will be considered and any necessary minor modifications to the draft charging schedule will be made before it is formally submitted for independent examination.

4.5 The examination stage is likely to involve a hearing session (noting that CIL examination hearings tend to be only 1 or 2 days) after which point the appointed CIL examiner will issue their report.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

5.1 The District Council could choose not to progress CIL, but this would represent a missed opportunity to seek additional funding from new development towards the supporting infrastructure that is needed to support growth within the District. In particular it would mean that the cumulative impact of smaller development schemes which tend not to attract Section 106 planning obligations, would not be properly addressed.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The progression of CIL to adoption will allow the District Council to charge qualifying developments with the CIL revenues received able to be spent on infrastructure provision as appropriate.

6.2 A proportion of future CIL receipts can be used to cover the relatively modest costs of consultation, submission, examination and adoption/implementation.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The report raises no direct legal implications. The draft charging schedule will be published for consultation and submitted for examination in accordance with legislative requirements.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT

8.1 The report presents no significant risks.

9. EQUALITIES IMPACT

9.1 Affordable housing schemes will be exempt from CIL and therefore the report is not considered to raise any particular implications for any of the characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010.

10. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The report raises no direct implications although a proportion of future CIL receipts may be spent on infrastructure projects that have a climate change and ecological focus.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 None.
(END)



**WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Annex A

**West Oxfordshire District Council
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
Draft Charging Schedule**

June 2024

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page</u>
1. Introduction	3
2. About CIL – what is it and why is it needed?	3
3. Proposed CIL rates in West Oxfordshire	5
4. Reliefs and exemptions	7
5. Payment of CIL	7
6. Spending and Reporting on CIL	8
7. Reviewing CIL	8
8. Responding to the consultation	9
<u>Appendices</u>	
Appendix 1 – Calculation of CIL chargeable amount	10
Appendix 2 – Summary of the CIL collection process	13
Appendix 3 – Draft Charging Schedule Availability	14

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge which can be levied by local authorities on new development in their area to help fund supporting infrastructure. The levy only applies in areas where a local authority has consulted on, and approved, a charging schedule which sets out its levy rates and has published the schedule on its website.
- 1.2 This Draft Charging Schedule (DCS) sets out the proposed CIL rates for West Oxfordshire associated with development coming forward under the adopted West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031. It also sets out a brief overview of the CIL process. The DCS will be the subject of a 6-week period of public consultation before being submitted for independent examination.
- 1.3 The District Council is aiming to adopt its CIL charging schedule by the end of 2024.

2. About CIL – what is it and why is it needed?

What is CIL?

- 2.1 The Community Infrastructure Levy or ‘CIL’ is essentially a tariff or standard charge that can be placed on most forms of new development to help fund local infrastructure such as transport, flood defences, schools, green space and community and cultural facilities.
- 2.2 CIL is charged on a pounds (£) per square metre basis and can be used to increase the capacity of existing infrastructure or to repair failing existing infrastructure, where necessary to support development.
- 2.3 CIL is intended to operate alongside other, more traditional developer contributions including Section 106 planning obligations and Section 278 highway agreements. Unlike those agreements which deal with site-specific infrastructure needed to make particular developments acceptable in planning terms, CIL payments go into a general funding pot and can be spent on infrastructure across the District.
- 2.4 Importantly, the CIL regulations now allow for the same item of infrastructure to be funded through CIL and other forms of developer contribution including Section 106 planning obligations¹. There are also no longer any restrictions on the number of planning obligations that may be ‘pooled’ together to fund the same item of infrastructure.

Why is CIL needed?

- 2.5 Evidence prepared in support of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan² identified the infrastructure that is needed to support future growth in the District up to 2031. Whilst some of this is already funded, or at least able to be funded through other mechanisms such as Section 106 planning obligations and central Government funding, there remains a large infrastructure ‘funding gap’ which CIL will contribute towards.

¹ Subject to any planning obligation meeting the relevant tests set out in Regulation 122 of the CIL regulations (as amended) - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/948/regulation/122/made>

² Adopted in September 2018

What kind of development is required to pay CIL?

- 2.6 Subject to viability considerations, CIL may be payable on any non-residential development which creates new or additional internal area, where the gross internal area (GIA) of new build is 100 square metres or more. For residential development, CIL can be charged on all new dwellings (houses, flats etc.) irrespective of size.
- 2.7 The following are not required to pay CIL:
- Development of less than 100 square metres, unless this consists of one or more dwellings/annexes and does not meet the relevant self-build criteria;
 - Buildings into which people do not normally go;
 - Buildings into which people go only intermittently for the purpose of inspecting or maintaining fixed plant or machinery;
 - Structures which are not buildings, such as pylons and wind turbines; and
 - Specified types of development which local authorities have decided should be subject to a 'zero' rate and specified as such in their charging schedules.
- 2.8 The following can also be subject to an exemption or relief where the relevant criteria are met, and the correct process is followed:
- Residential annexes and extensions;
 - Self-build houses and flats;
 - Social housing that meets certain specific relief criteria;
 - First Homes
 - Charitable development that meets certain specific relief criteria.
- 2.9 Where the levy liability is calculated to be less than £50, the chargeable amount is deemed to be zero, so no levy is due. Mezzanine floors, inserted into an existing building, are not liable for the levy unless they form part of a wider planning permission that seeks to provide other works as well.

Charging CIL

- 2.10 Once the CIL charging schedule has been adopted, the District Council will assume the role of 'charging authority' for the purposes of CIL in West Oxfordshire. This means that the Council will calculate the chargeable amount (subject to any indexation as appropriate) and issue the relevant liability notice to the parties that are liable to pay the charge. Further information on how the chargeable amount will be calculated is set out at Appendix 1.

Collecting CIL

- 2.11 The District Council will also be the collection authority for CIL in West Oxfordshire. The CIL collection process involves a number of stages as summarised at Appendix 2.

How is CIL calculated?

- 2.12 In most cases, the amount of levy that is payable is calculated by multiplying the additional gross internal area (GIA) by the proposed CIL rate for that particular development type. Two very simple examples are provided below.

Example – One Dwelling

Size of dwelling (GIA) – 130 m²

CIL rate - £100 per m²

*Amount payable through CIL - **£13,000** (i.e. 130 m² x £100)*

Example – Ten Dwellings

Total size of dwellings (GIA) – 1,300 m²

CIL rate - £100 per m²

*Amount payable through CIL – **£130,000***

- 2.13 Gross Internal Area (GIA) will be calculated using use the definition contained in the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Code of Measuring Practice (currently in its 6th edition). The Council must also apply an index of inflation to keep the levy rate responsive to market conditions.

3. Proposed CIL rates in West Oxfordshire

- 3.1 It is important that CIL rates are set at a level that does not hinder new development coming forward, striking an ‘appropriate balance’ between additional investment to support development and the potential effect on the viability of developments. This balance is at the centre of the charge-setting process.
- 3.2 New viability evidence has been prepared³ on this basis and has informed the preparation of this draft charging schedule.

³ Dixon Searle CIL Viability Assessment – May 2024

Residential Uses

- 3.3 The proposed CIL charges for residential development in West Oxfordshire are set out below.

CIL Zone	£ per m²	Notes
Residential District-wide (Greenfield)	£225	Includes mixed housing development (i.e. a mix of housing and flats). On-site affordable housing on 11+ units. Nil Affordable Housing on sites between 1-10 units. Affordable Housing financial contributions apply on sites between 6-10 units in the Cotswolds National Landscape (formerly AONB).
Residential District-wide (Previously developed land)	£125	As above.
100% Flatted only development (District-wide)	£25	Nominal rate.
Strategic Sites	£0	Nil rated for CIL due to significant S106 and other development costs.

- 3.4 In considering the proposed CIL rates for residential uses, the following key points have been taken into consideration:

- In setting a single CIL rate for residential development on undeveloped greenfield sites and a single CIL rate for residential development on previously developed (brownfield) sites, the charging schedule reflects the Government's Written Ministerial Statement⁴ of 19 February 2024 and updated CIL Planning Practice Guidance⁵ which state that higher residential CIL rates should not be set for developments which are not major developments on the grounds that these sites are not required to provide affordable housing contributions;
- The proposed rate for residential schemes on previously developed (brownfield) sites is lower (£125 per m²) than greenfield sites because of the additional costs associated with bringing such sites forward;

⁴ <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2024-02-19/hcws264>

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/community-infrastructure-levy> - Paragraph 024

- 100% Flatted developments have additional costs which warrant the application of a nominal CIL charge (£25 per m²);
- Strategic local plan sites (Salt Cross, West Eynsham, North Witney, East Witney and East Chipping Norton) are proposed to be CIL exempt because of the significant infrastructure costs associated with bringing such developments forward, which will be secured through other mechanisms including Section 106 agreements.

Non-Residential Uses

3.5 The proposed CIL charges for non-residential development in West Oxfordshire are set out below.

CIL Zone	£ per m ²	Notes
Large Format Retail e.g. Supermarkets, Foodstores, Retail Warehousing	£125	
All other non-residential development	£0	Nil rated.

3.6 The key point to note here is that on viability grounds, the only form of ‘non-residential’ development which is able to support a CIL charge is large format retail such as supermarkets, foodstores and retail warehousing.

4. Reliefs and exemptions

4.1 The CIL Regulations make a number of provisions for charging authorities to give relief from CIL. Some types of relief are mandatory, others are offered at the charging authority’s discretion.

4.2 The District Council will offer mandatory relief in accordance with the CIL regulations (as amended) but does not currently intend to offer any form of discretionary relief from CIL. The decision not to offer discretionary relief from CIL at the present time will be reviewed as part of any initial review of CIL.

5. Payment of CIL

5.1 When planning permission is granted, the District Council will issue a liability notice setting out the amount payable through CIL, and the payment procedure. Typically, CIL payments must be made within 60 days of the commencement of any chargeable development. However, recognising the importance of assisting the timely delivery and viability of new development, the District Council proposes to accept the payment of CIL by instalments in respect of larger CIL payments and will publish a separate instalments policy in accordance with the CIL Regulations (as amended).

5.2 Where development is permitted on the basis of specific phases of development, each phase will be considered as a separate chargeable development and will therefore be liable for payment in line with the Council’s proposed instalment policy.

6. Spending and reporting on CIL

- 6.1 CIL payments can be used to fund a wide range of infrastructure including transport, flood defences, schools, green space and community and cultural facilities. It can be used to increase the capacity of existing infrastructure or to repair failing existing infrastructure, if that is necessary to support development. It cannot be used to fund affordable housing.
- 6.2 Since December 2020, the District Council has been required to prepare an '[Infrastructure Funding Statement](#)' setting out what it intends to spend CIL revenue on as well as information on the payments received through CIL and section 106 planning obligations during the previous financial year.
- 6.3 In accordance with the CIL regulations, up to 5% of the District Council's CIL receipts may be spent on administrative expenses associated with the operation of CIL.
- 6.4 Where all or part of a chargeable development is within the area of a Parish Council, the District Council is required to pass a proportion of the CIL receipts from the development to the Parish Council. The basic amount payable is 15% which increases to 25% where an adopted Neighbourhood Plan is in place (see below).

Parish council	Neighbourhood plan	Levy
✓	✓	25% uncapped, paid to parish each year
✓	X	15% capped at £100/dwelling (indexed for inflation), paid to parish each year
X	✓	25% uncapped, local authority consults with community about how funds can be used, including to support priorities set out in neighbourhood plans
X	X	15% capped at £100/dwelling (indexed for inflation), local authority consults with community to agree how best to spend the neighbourhood funding

- 6.5 The Parish Council must use the CIL receipts passed to it to support the development of the Parish Council's area by funding the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure; or anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on the area. Parish Councils must prepare a report for any financial year in which it receives any CIL payments.

7. Reviewing CIL

- 7.1 Once adopted, the District Council will keep its charging schedule under review to ensure that levy charges remain appropriate over time. The Council may seek to review its charging schedule in whole or in part taking account of relevant considerations including changes in market conditions and infrastructure needs.
- 7.2 In particular, the charging schedule will be reviewed to take account of the policies of the new West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041 as those reach a more advanced stage.

8. Responding to the consultation

- 8.1 A 6-week consultation period will apply to this draft charging schedule. The draft schedule will be made available online and at various locations across the District (see Appendix 3). Copies will be sent to Town and Parish Councils. Other interested parties will be notified and invited to comment.
- 8.2 Responses should be sent to the following email address:
planning.consultation@westoxon.gov.uk
- 8.3 Unless there are any materially significant issues raised during the 6-week consultation, it is anticipated that the draft charging schedule will then be submitted for examination, together with copies of any representations received and supporting background evidence.
- 8.4 A date for any CIL hearings will then be agreed and it is hoped that the Council will be in a position to formally adopt its charging schedule by the end of 2024.

Appendix 1 – Calculation of CIL chargeable amount

Chargeable amount: standard cases

1.—(1) The chargeable amount is an amount equal to the aggregate of the amounts of CIL chargeable at each of the relevant rates.

(2) But where that amount is less than £50 the chargeable amount is deemed to be zero.

(3) The relevant rates are the rates, taken from the relevant charging schedules, at which CIL is chargeable in respect of the chargeable development.

(4) The amount of CIL chargeable at a given relevant rate (R) must be calculated by applying the following formula—

$$\frac{R \times A \times I_p}{I_c}$$

where—

- A = the deemed net area chargeable at rate R, calculated in accordance with sub-paragraph (6);
- I_p = the index figure for the calendar year in which planning permission was granted; and
- I_c = the index figure for the calendar year in which the charging schedule containing rate R took effect.

(5) In this paragraph the index figure for a given calendar year is—

(a) in relation to any calendar year before 2020, the figure for 1st November for the preceding calendar year in the national All-in Tender Price Index published from time to time by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors;

(b) in relation to the calendar year 2020 and any subsequent calendar year, the RICS CIL Index published in November of the preceding calendar year by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors;

(c) if the RICS CIL index is not so published, the figure for 1st November for the preceding calendar year in the national All-in Tender Price Index published from time to time by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors;

(d) if the national All-in Tender Price Index is not so published, the figure for 1st November for the preceding calendar year in the retail prices index.

(6) The value of A must be calculated by applying the following formula—

$$G_R - K_R - \left(\frac{G_R \times E}{G} \right)$$

where—

- G = the gross internal area of the chargeable development;
- G_R = the gross internal area of the part of the chargeable development chargeable at rate R;
- K_R = the aggregate of the gross internal areas of the following—

- (i) retained parts of in-use buildings; and
- (ii) for other relevant buildings, retained parts where the intended use following completion of the chargeable development is a use that is able to be carried on lawfully and permanently without further planning permission in that part on the day before planning permission first permits the chargeable development;

E = the aggregate of the following—

- (i) the gross internal areas of parts of in-use buildings that are to be demolished before completion of the chargeable development; and
- (ii) for the second and subsequent phases of a phased planning permission, the value E_x (as determined under sub-paragraph (7)), unless E_x is negative,

provided that no part of any building may be taken into account under both of paragraphs (i) and (ii) above.

(7) The value E_x must be calculated by applying the following formula—

$$E_P - (G_P - K_{PR})$$

where—

E_P = the value of E for the previously commenced phase of the planning permission;

G_P = the value of G for the previously commenced phase of the planning permission; and

K_{PR} = the total of the values of K_R for the previously commenced phase of the planning permission.

(8) Where the collecting authority does not have sufficient information, or information of sufficient quality, to enable it to establish that a relevant building is an in-use building, it may deem it not to be an in-use building.

(9) Where the collecting authority does not have sufficient information, or information of sufficient quality, to enable it to establish—

(a) whether part of a building falls within a description in the definitions of K_R and E in sub-paragraph (6); or

(b) the gross internal area of any part of a building falling within such a description,

it may deem the gross internal area of the part in question to be zero.

(10) In this paragraph—

“building” does not include—

- (i) a building into which people do not normally go;
- (ii) a building into which people go only intermittently for the purpose of maintaining or inspecting machinery; or
- (iii) a building for which planning permission was granted for a limited period;

“in-use building” means a building which—

- (i) is a relevant building, and
- (ii) contains a part that has been in lawful use for a continuous period of at least six months within the period of three years ending on the day planning permission first permits the chargeable development;

“new build” means that part of the chargeable development which will comprise new buildings and enlargements to existing buildings, and in relation to a chargeable development granted planning permission under section 73 of TCPA 1990 (“the new permission”) includes any new buildings and enlargements to existing buildings which were built pursuant to a previous planning permission to which the new permission relates;

“relevant building” means a building which is situated on the relevant land on the day planning permission first permits the chargeable development;

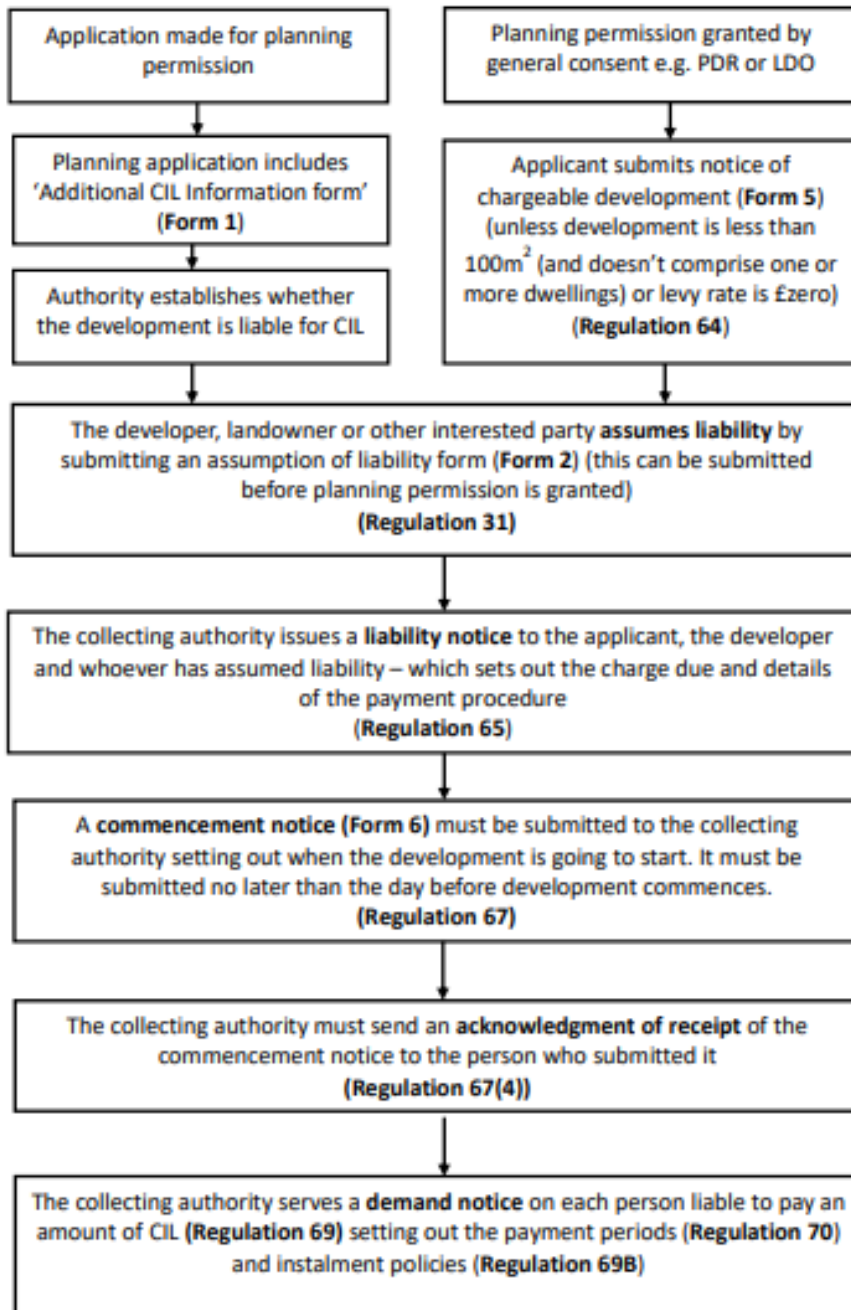
“relevant charging schedules” means the charging schedules which are in effect—

- (i) at the time planning permission first permits the chargeable development, and
- (ii) in the area in which the chargeable development will be situated;

“retained part” means part of a building which will be—

- (i) on the relevant land on completion of the chargeable development (excluding new build),
- (ii) part of the chargeable development on completion, and
- (iii) chargeable at rate R.

Community Infrastructure Levy Collection Process



Appendix 3 – Draft Charging Schedule Availability

<p>West Oxfordshire District Council Witney Town Centre Shop 3 Welch Way Witney OX28 6JH Tel: 01993 861000 Open: Monday – Friday 9am to 5pm</p>	<p>Witney Town Council Town Hall Market Square Witney OX28 6AG Tel: 01993 704379 Open: Mon, Tues and Thurs 8.30am to 5pm, Wed 9.30am to 5pm and Fri 8.30am to 4.30pm.</p>	<p>Carterton Town Council 19 Alvescot Road Carterton OX18 3JL Tel: 01993 842156 Open: Monday – Friday 9.30am to 4.00pm</p>
<p>Chipping Norton Town Council The Guildhall Market Place Chipping Norton OX7 5NJ Tel: 01608 642341 Open: Monday – Friday 9am to 1pm</p>	<p>Bampton Library Old Grammar School Church View Bampton OX18 2NE Tel: 01993 850076</p>	<p>Burford Library 86A High Street Burford OX18 4QF Tel: 01993 823377</p>
<p>Carterton Library 6 Alvescot Road Carterton OX18 3JH Tel: 01993 841492</p>	<p>Charlbury Library Charlbury Community Centre Enstone Road Charlbury OX7 3PQ Tel: 01608 811104</p>	<p>Chipping Norton Library Goddards Land Chipping Norton OX7 5NP Tel: 01608 643559</p>
<p>Eynsham Library 30 Mill Street Eynsham OX29 4JS Tel: 01865 880525</p>	<p>North Leigh Library Memorial Hall Park Road North Leigh OX29 6SA Tel: 01993 882935</p>	<p>Stonesfield Library Village Hall Longore Stonesfield OX29 8EF Tel: 01993 898187</p>
<p>Witney Library Welch Way Witney OX28 6JH Tel: 01993 703659</p>	<p>Woodstock Library The Oxfordshire Museum Fletcher's House Park Street Woodstock OX20 1SN Tel: 01993 814124 07759 140531</p>	<p>Wychwood Library 29 High Street Milton-under-Wychwood OX7 6LD Tel: 01993 830281</p>

 WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and Date of Committee	EXECUTIVE – 22 JULY 2024
Subject	FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2023/24 QUARTER FOUR
Wards Affected	All
Accountable Member	Councillor Alaric Smith – Executive Member for Finance. email: alaric.smith@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable Officer	Madhu Richards – Director of Finance. email: madhu.richards@westoxon.gov.uk
Report Author	Georgina Dyer – Chief Accountant. email: georgina.dyer@westoxon.gov.uk
Purpose	To report the financial performance of the Council in 2023/24.
Annexes	Annex A – Revenue Outturn Annex B – Capital Outturn and Capital Slippage
Recommendations	That the Executive resolves to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the 2023/24 financial performance; 2. Recommend to Council to carry forward the capital budget of £4,086,328; 3. Recommend to Council to approve the transfers to and between Earmarked Reserves as detailed in the report.
Corporate Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working Together for West Oxfordshire
Key Decision	YES
Exempt	NO
Consultees / Consultation	N/A

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- I.1** 2023/24 was a financially challenging year. In February 2023, the Council set a balanced budget using £350,129 of general fund reserves and the in-year quarterly reporting consistently forecast a higher figure for the use of general funds.
- I.2** At year end the overspend on cost of services is £972,473. This is driven by pressure on fee earning activities such as Building Control, Land Charges and Development Management. In addition, there is a significant overspend on the Ubico contract, due to the impact of the NJC pay award and additional costs for vehicle hire. Voids and rent free periods in our Investment Property portfolio exacerbated this year end position.
- I.3** The final outturn position is a contribution to general fund reserves of £11,215. This is due to one off beneficial variances which are specific to 2023/24 and are unlikely to reoccur in the future.
- I.4** Firstly, there is an additional £503,703 treasury management investment income where the Council has benefited from high interest rates for the full financial year in our Money Market account trading and high yield returns on our Pooled funds. The global economic circumstances that have held up this position for the last 12 months i.e. high inflation and high interest rates, are now starting to change. Inflation has been falling across developed economies for the last few months and our Treasury advisors believe that interest rates in the UK are likely to start falling in the Autumn of 2024.
- I.5** The uncertainty around the Leisure Contract at the time of budget setting made it prudent to include an income contingency and to reduce the amount of management fee income that was expected to be received. However, during the year ongoing discussions with GLL have meant that fee income was invoiced at the contracted level and all but 12% had been paid by the year end. The resulting underspend of £997,853 had a significantly positive impact on our cost of services. The budget for 2024/25 does not include an income contingency or reduced management fee income, therefore no variance is expected to be reported in the next financial year.
- I.6** Publica returned a net refund to the Council of £251,000 relating to early delivery against savings targets and a slightly higher employee turnover position. The Publica Transition will have an impact on the revenue budget in future years and the impact of this will be built into the 2025/26 budget process.
- I.7** The Capital Programme for the year was approved at £14.4m but expenditure by year end was only £4.2m. Much of the expenditure in the Capital Programme was budgeted to be from external borrowing with the resulting interest costs and MRP (Minimum Revenue Provision) included in the 2023/24 budget. MRP is the charge that must be made to revenue to pay off the principal amount of borrowing taken out to fund the capital programme, similar to depreciation in the private sector.
- I.8** The lower level of capital expenditure was due to the lack of suitable investment opportunities for the Investment Recovery Programme and the slippage of major projects

such as Carterton PSDS, Waste Vehicle replacement and the Agile Working project (which includes monies for Elmfield); all of which will be undertaken in 2024/25.

- 1.9** The reduced capital expenditure meant that the Council did not need to take out external borrowing in the year, saving £516,348 in budgeted interest costs and correspondingly, without additional assets, the MRP is £311,775 below budget.
- 1.10** The budget for 2024/25 has been set based on lower interest rates and a smaller capital programme. The variances that we have seen this financial year are not expected to feature in the next financial year.

There are a number of budget variances identified in the report across a range of service areas, commentary for the most significant of these is set out below. A full list of variances by cost centre is listed in Annex A.

These figures are subject to External Audit review; however no material change is expected from what is being reported here.

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL - Budget Monitoring				
Revenue Budget Monitoring 2023/24 - Quarter 4, 1st April to 31st March 2024				
	Quarter 4			
	Original Budget 2023/24	Current Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£	£
Service Area				
Democratic and Committee Services	1,194,664	1,217,467	1,241,925	24,458
Environmental & Regulatory Services	594,312	601,812	740,231	138,419
Environmental Services	8,041,444	7,870,525	8,706,734	836,209
Finance, Human Resources & Procurement	1,035,476	1,076,080	1,090,668	14,588
ICT, Change & Customer Services	2,210,013	2,105,529	2,031,862	(73,667)
Land, Legal & Property	1,147,227	1,172,814	1,339,992	167,178
Leisure & Communities	1,282,513	1,272,765	230,784	(1,041,981)
Planning & Strategic Housing	1,174,379	1,215,027	1,390,694	175,667
Revenues & Housing Support	1,406,799	(853,884)	(1,164,702)	(310,818)
Investment Property and Retained Services	(3,125,286)	(1,556,043)	(513,622)	1,042,420
Total cost of services	14,961,541	14,122,092	15,094,566	972,473
Plus:				
Investment income receipts	(1,102,228)	(1,277,228)	(1,780,931)	(503,703)
Cost of services before financing:	13,859,313	12,844,864	13,313,634	468,770
Funding				
General Government Grants	(2,941,995)	(3,086,995)	(3,210,979)	(123,984)
Retained Business Rates	(4,349,327)	(5,349,327)	(5,145,342)	203,985
Interest Payable	522,375	522,375	6,027	(516,348)
MRP	813,391	813,391	501,616	(311,775)
RCCO	540,100	540,100	494,683	(45,417)
Earmarked Reserves	(542,252)	2,050,017	2,069,668	19,651
Disposal of fixed assets	0	0	(74,430)	(74,430)
Covid	0	0	18,058	18,058
Capital Charges	(1,731,690)	(2,026,458)	(2,026,311)	147
Contribution from GF	(350,129)	(350,129)	0	350,129
Council Tax	(5,819,781)	(5,819,781)	(5,819,781)	0
Contribution to General Fund	0	138,057	126,844	(11,215)

2. FINANCIAL REPORTING – REVENUE

2.1 Building Control

Throughout the financial year, reporting has shown a consistently pessimistic picture of the performance of Building Control income against budget. Income for 2023/24 is £135,000 below target, compared to £77,000 in 2022/23. The service continues to struggle against competition from the private sector and the general state of the economy. With interest rates remaining at 5.25% mortgage and borrowing costs continue to impact the volume of house renovations and moves which shrinks the market for Building Control commercial services. Some mortgage rates are beginning to come down and the advice from our Treasury Advisors is that interest rates will begin to fall incrementally in the Autumn. This should boost demand and it will be important to try and maintain our market share. The income budget for 2024/25 has been reduced by £93,000 and performance in Q1 of 2024/25 is on target.

2.2 Land Charges

Income is £77,000 below target but is on par with income achieved in 2022/23. The income budget for 2024/25 has been reduced by £75,000 and Q1 2024/25 results are close to target. Competition from Personal Search companies remains strong, putting pressure on our market share.

2.3 Leisure Contract

A prudent income contingency and a reduced income target was included in the 2023/24 budget representing the uncertainty, in February 2023, of the level of achievable income from the leisure contract. Discussions have been ongoing with GLL to review the nature of the contract subject to a change of HMRC policy on VAT recovery and the potential impact of the PSDS projects at Carterton and Witney Leisure Centres.

Income invoiced in the year is £713,000 more than budgeted, only 12% of which remained unpaid at year end; and the income contingency provides an underspend of £400,000. This is offset against expenditure on equipment purchase of £91,000 and professional fees relating to the repairs at Chipping Norton Leisure Centre of £25,000. Expenditure on updating the internal areas of Chipping Norton Leisure Centre will be incurred in 2024/25, to repair water damage to the walls, floors and reception area.

The current leisure contract expires in 2027 and is likely to change both the nature of the leisure offering in West Oxfordshire and the income return.

2.4 Environmental Services – Waste Contract

The Waste Contract as a whole is £654,000 overspent, £322,000 of which relates to additional Ubico contract costs for vehicle hire and the NJC pay awards for 2022/23 and 2023/24.

Recycling - the Suez contract is £243,000 overspent at £1.243m an increase of £171,000 on 2022/23. The contract with Suez ends in September 2024 with a new contract coming into

force with an expected saving of at least £300,000 a year. Work is ongoing with the new contractor to determine the annual contract cost.

Green Waste – the service achieved 97% of its income target (set at £1,525,995) but additional costs for the Ubico contract and bins are showing as a revenue overspend of £73,000. The 2024/25 budget includes an increase in the green licence fee by £5 a year to £50 which is expected to generate an additional £165,000 of income. To set the licence fee for 2024/25, the fees of the 10 nearest local authorities were benchmarked. The average cost of a licence in those authorities in 2023/24 was £54 versus the West Oxfordshire charge of £45. The increase to £50 puts West Oxfordshire as the second lowest licence fee out of 11 authorities.

Trade Waste – the performance of Trade Waste is encouraging, at £29,000 above the income target. In this financial year we have taken the customer service & administration elements back into Publica from Ubico which has enabled quicker resolution to customer issues and the introduction of direct debit payments has dramatically reduced issues with aged debt.

Bins & Boxes – there is an overspend of £93,000 on bins and boxes across the service, £74,000 of which are for recycling. Overspends are driven not only by additional houses and replacement of damaged bins, but also from the long lead time for the suppliers to deliver to the Council. It is therefore difficult for the service to accurately predict when orders need to be placed to make sure that sufficient stock is held to fulfil requests from residents.

2.5 Development Management Applications

Planning Application income has always been volatile, with significant variations month on month. Much of the volatility is created by major applications and the lengthy discussions that are required before an application is submitted. In 2023/24 income is £81,000 below budget. The government announced a 25% increase in Planning Application fees in December 2023, the full benefit of which should be seen in 2024/25.

2.6 Development Management Appeals

Over the last 18 months the number of Planning Appeals and subsequent Planning Inquiries has increased. For many appeals we are obliged to employ specialist barristers to defend the Council's position. Each appeal, depending on how complicated, costs the Council between £20,000 and £40,000 on average. The overspend for 2023/24 is £184,000 or 18.9% of the total cost of services overspend for the year. At the time of setting the budget, £90,000 was considered a prudent increase to the budget for Planning Appeals, this is now looking inadequate and will be monitored and reported in the quarterly budget monitoring reports for 2024/25.

2.7 Investment Property

We have seen a mixed year for Investment Property with an overall overspend of £892,00 due to voids, rent free periods and service charges, driven by Marriotts (£315,585), Des Roches (£209,286), Town Centre Properties (£114,576) and Carterton Industrial Estate (£176,108). This position is consistent with quarterly budget monitoring reporting throughout the year but demonstrates that the 2023/24 budget was not realistic.

The 2024/25 budget setting process considered the variances in 2023/24, and the 2024/25 was based on a detailed cashflow, as well as including a budget for service charges and business rates, and so we should see less volatility in the quarterly reporting in 2024/25.

Despite the overspend in 2023/24, there is cause for optimism as several new tenants have moved into our properties in the last 12 months, reducing our level of voids, with an increase in income for Des Roches, Talisman, Marriotts and Elmfield coming through in 2024/25. As reported in the 2024/25 Budget Report, Between Towns Road is expected to be vacant for the whole of the next financial year, reducing our income by £350,000 which has been included in the 2024/25 budget. A report will come to Executive on the future of the building in due course.

2.8 Publica

The Publica contract has returned a net refund to the Council of £251,000 relating to early delivery against savings targets and a slightly higher employee turnover position. An additional 4% is included in the 2024/25 budget to fund the annual pay award, however, if consistent with previous years, the actual pay award will not be confirmed until much later in the financial year. The Publica Transition will have an impact on the revenue budget in future years and the impact of this will be built into the 2025/26 budget process.

2.9 Non Distributed Costs

There are two elements to the pension contribution the Council makes for employees. Firstly, there is the amount paid monthly through payroll which is balanced by a secondary cash element paid direct to the LGPS that keeps the payroll contribution at a steady rate and funds historic pension liability. The primary contribution of 17.6% has not changed in the last five years, but the secondary cash contribution this year is higher than the budget and is £141,000 overspent at year end, as reported in quarterly budget monitoring. The 2024/25 budget includes a confirmed secondary pension cost from the actuary of £766,000, an increase of £116,900.

However, the Publica Transition and TUPE of staff back to the Council is likely to impact pension costs during 2024/25 and beyond. The pension scheme actuaries will be able to advise on the required pension rate for the remainder of 2024/25, and beyond, once Phase I has been approved and finalised.

2.10 Local Council Tax & Business Rates Collection

Throughout the year the Revenues Team have put a significant amount of resource into tackling the backlog of liability orders that go through the Magistrates Court, to collect Council Tax and Business Rates arrears. It is a statutory responsibility for the Billing Authority to collect arrears which go back into the Collection Fund, of which the Council retains 9.85% with the remainder being distributed to the County Council (78.5%) and Thames Valley Police (11.65%).

The income from liability orders however is retained by the Council to cover the costs of administering the service. In 2023/24 there is a £279,000 surplus which is not ring fenced to Revenues administration but goes into the General Fund to support core Council services.

2.11 Admin Buildings

Across the Council's admin buildings there is an overspend of £96,000 which represents a combination of overspends on reactive maintenance, the delayed timeline for renting out Elmfield and underspends on utility costs. The overall saving on utilities in 2023/24 has been £68,000 due to a partnership agreement the Council has entered into with the Publica partner Councils and Cheltenham Borough Council and the subsequent change in utilities provider mid-year. The 2024/25 budget has been reduced by £77,000 to take into account that the Council no longer occupies Elmfield.

3. FUNDING

3.1 Retained Business Rates and Pooling

The accounting arrangements for Business Rates are complex and statute requires recognition of items charged in one financial year to be resolved in the following year i.e. the deficit arising in 2023/24 (the shortfall in collectable rates vs expected due to the Govt's reliefs) will be repaid to the Collection Fund in 2024/25. This deficit has therefore been budgeted for in 2024/25 and will be funded by the Business Rates deficit earmarked reserve set up specifically for this repayment.

As the Billing Authority the Council collects 100% of the '*payable*' income but distributes 50% of the '*budgeted*' income (regardless of whether the actual cash collected has reduced significantly due to Govt reliefs) to Central Government and 10% to the County Council on a monthly basis.

The table below shows the calculation of the budgeted / expected Business Rate income for the Council vs the Actual.

	Budget 2023/24	Actual 2023/24	
	£m	£m	
Total BR Income	41.305	40.196	Expected vs Collectable
WODC share 40%	16.522	16.522	WODC receive 40%. 50% goes to Govt with 10% going to the County, fixed through NNDR 1 at Budget Setting. Uncollectable income compensated by exceptional S31 Grant.
Less Tariff	-13.759	-13.759	This is a Govt specified adjustment to reduce our collected rates to the baseline funding level they determine.
Deficit Payable	-0.991	-0.991	Fixed at Budget Setting
S31 Grant	5.074	4.895	Grant received to compensate for lost business rates income due to Central Gov policy
Renewables	0.272	0.271	Income retained by WODC for renewable energy schemes
BR Income	7.118	6.938	
Less Levy	-2.239	-0.566	This represents 50% of excess funding over baseline net of Pool Gain
Net Business Rates	4.879	6.372	
Movement to Reserves	0	-1.227	To fund the deficit paid out in 2024/25 & 2025/26 relating to 2023/24 & 2024/25
Retained Income	4.879	5.145	

4. TRANSFER TO EARMARKED RESERVES

The table below shows the proposed movements to earmarked reserves.

After the proposed movements to earmarked reserves, the final outturn position will be an £11,215 surplus which will go to the General Fund.

Reserve	Transfers To Reserves	
	£	
Business Rates Deficit Reserve	1,227,910	S31 grant to fund Business Rates deficit relating to 2022/23 & 2023/24 to be repaid to the Collection Fund in 2024/25 & 2025/26.
Project Contingency Reserve	75,000	Reserve delegated to Director of Finance to fund feasibility studies and external consultant work for projects i.e. Weavers Fold, Housing Option Appraisal, Hensington Road etc
Service Resilience Reserve	30,000	Part of the ICT underspend in 2023/24 to fund migration to the Cloud platform to improve data security and management software changes to be compliant with ISO 27001, projects delayed from 2023/24 to be implemented in 2024/25
Climate Change Reserve	49,932	Grant funding - Coronation Living Heritage Fund to be spent in 2024/25
Homelessness Prevention Reserve	325,000	Specific grant allocation for Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation county wide scheme, Domestic Abuse & Rough Sleeping Specialist post and a Flexible Homelessness Prevention Fund to reduce reliance on Bed & Breakfast accommodation.
Total Proposed Movement	1,707,842	

5. FINANCIAL REPORTING - CAPITAL

- 5.1 The capital programme approved by Council as part of the budget for 2023/24 totalled £14,440,557. At year end £4,247,831 had been spent against this budget.
- 5.2 The majority of the underspend is related to the Investment Recovery Programme, budgeted at £5,000,000 but due to high borrowing costs, no suitable financially viable projects were identified in the year that complied with the approved Investment Strategy.
- 5.3 Other significant underspends represent delays in key projects i.e. Carterton PSDS, replacement of Waste Vehicles and the element of Agile working, including Elmfield, that will be undertaken in 2024/25.
- 5.4 A full breakdown of the schemes for the year and expenditure at 31st March is attached at Annex B.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The positive outturn position for 2023/24 is due to one off factors. The underlying cost of services overspend is of concern making the budget setting process for 2025/26 likely to be a challenging one.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The outturn for 2023/24, with a cost of services overspend of £972,473 underlines the continuing pressure on the Council's finances, as identified in the MTFS approved by Council in February. The uncertainty around future Local Government funding, the end of the Statutory override for Pooled Fund investments and the Publica Review remain risks to the revenue budget. Mitigation of these risks, through the repurposing of some earmarked reserves, was agreed by Council at budget setting for 2024/25. This should, in the short to medium term, preserve an adequate general fund balance to endeavour to be able to set a balanced revenue budget.

As detailed in this report, there are several key factors which impact the financial stability of the Council. Some, such as the recycling and leisure contracts, are within the control of the Council while others, such as the financial settlement and interest rate movements, the Council has no control over.

By careful financial management and doing the best possible in terms of the factors within our control, the Council can put itself in the best position to be able to withstand the adverse impact when factors beyond our control go against us.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 None

9. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 Not applicable

10. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 10.1 None

11. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 None

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Annex A - Comparison of Q4 Budget Monitoring

	Q4 position		
	Profiled £	Actual Exp £	Variance £
Democratic Services			
DRM001-Democratic Representation and Mgmt	109,280	111,366	2,086
DRM002-Support To Elected Bodies	465,406	463,307	(2,099)
ELE001-Registration of Electors	84,467	115,550	31,083
ELE002-District Elections	75,700	84,712	9,012
SUP001-Administration	482,614	466,990	(15,624)
Total - Democratic Services	1,217,467	1,241,925	24,458

ELE001- The year end position represents the additional expenditure for the new voter ID measures and postage which has only partially been offset by one off New Burdens funding

SUP001- Employee costs are £17k underspent from the vacant Director of Governance post until filled in July 2023.

	Q4 position		
	Profiled £	Actual Exp £	Variance £
Environmental & Regulatory Services			
BUC001-Building Control - Fee Earning Work	(65,879)	75,863	141,742
BUC002-Building Control - Non Fee Earning Work	3,366	3,372	6
EMP001-Emergency Planning	14,108	13,785	(323)
ESM001-Environment - Service Mgmt & Supp Serv	102,932	103,463	531
PSH002-Private Sector Housing-Condition of Dwellings	3,000	2,410	(590)
REG001-Environmental Health General	0	6	6
REG002-Licensing	36,998	5,533	(31,465)
REG009-Environmental Protection	245,726	245,804	78
REG011-Authorised Process	(11,890)	(9,882)	2,008
REG013-Pollution Control	122,639	126,839	4,200
REG016-Food Safety	145,472	145,398	(74)
REG021-Statutory Burials	5,000	4,755	(245)
STC011 - Abandoned Vehicles	0	(3,559)	(3,559)
TAC309-Other Trading Services - Markets	(100)	26,146	26,246
Total - Environmental & Regulatory Services	601,812	740,231	138,419

BUC001 - Fee income is £135k below target. Fee income budgets have been reviewed as part of 24/25 budget setting and have been set at an achievable level.

REG002 - income is above target for taxi licences, HMO licences, premises and street trading.

TAC309 - Market income is £24k below target. It was agreed by the Executive in December, that we would seek a commercial market operator to take over the running of the markets in Witney and Chipping Norton for an initial period of 2 years. This would provide a modest saving to base budget in 24/25 & 25/26. Efforts are ongoing to contract a commercial operator.

	Q4 position		
	Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£
ICT, Change & Customer Services			
SUP002-Consultation, Policy & Research	164,478	166,654	2,176
SUP005-ICT	1,310,908	1,244,496	(66,412)
SUP006-Telephones	10,000	743	(9,257)
SUP008-Reception/Customer Services	609,847	609,770	(77)
SUP014-Cashiers	110	174	64
SUP041-Business Solutions	12,113	12,136	23
TMR001-Street Naming & Numbering	0	(695)	(695)
TMR002-Street Furniture & Equipment	(16,102)	(10,719)	5,383
TOU002-Tourist/Visitor Information Centre	14,175	9,302	(4,874)
Total - ICT, Change & Customer Services	2,105,529	2,031,862	(73,667)

SUP005 - tight controls on software licence renewals, rationalisation of software requirements and the strategic move to Microsoft 365 have produced the saving against budget.

	Q4 position		
	Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£
Land, Legal & Property			
ADB301-3 Welch Way (Town Centre Shop)	56,211	43,762	(12,449)
ADB302-Guildhall	21,454	5,361	(16,093)
ADB303-Woodgreen	322,022	309,472	(12,550)
ADB304-Elmfield	172,507	207,727	35,220
ADB305-Corporate Buildings	493,434	580,268	86,834
ADB306-Depot	8,298	23,334	15,036

LLC001-Local Land Charges	(150,964)	(73,391)	77,573
SUP004-Legal	270,617	265,354	(5,263)
TAC303-Swain Court & Newman Court Ind Est			
Witney	(20,765)	(21,895)	(1,130)
Total - Land, Legal & Property	1,172,814	1,339,992	167,178

ADB301/302/303 - a significant increase to the cost of utilities was included in the 2023/24 budget due to the national energy price increases seen in 2022/23 and into this financial year. However, a change of supplier in partnership with the other Publica Councils and Cheltenham Borough Council have produced a saving against budget of £68k across the Council.

ADB304 - the timeline for renting out Elmfield slipped with rental income due for 2023/24 £75k below target and there has been £14k of expenditure related to a possible upgrade to the heating system and an additional £16k liability for Business Rates. This has been offset by a £72k saving on utilities as the building has been vacant since the end of August 2023.

ADB305 - the majority of the overspend, £72k, relates to reactive repairs and maintenance to Council buildings. £40k has been spent on survey and upgrade works to Elmfield to bring it into a condition to rent out, with the remainder related to repairs at Woodgreen and the Guildhall. An unbudgeted for spend of £13k relates to external valuer fees for insurance re-instatement values for all Council properties.

ADB306 - reactive repairs for the year for roof repairs, shutter maintenance and guttering have caused an overspend of £15k.

LLC001 - income is £77k behind target, consistent with quarterly reporting. The income budget for 2024/25 has been reduced to a more achievable level, but strong competition from Personal Search companies is likely to further squeeze our market share in future.

Q4 position		
Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
£	£	£

Leisure & Communities

CCR001-Community Safety (Crime Reduction)	108,381	112,469	4,088
CCR002-Building Safer Communities	(3,332)	35,932	39,264
CCR301 - Communities Revenue Grant	218,820	226,818	7,998
CCT001-CCTV	99,112	81,030	(18,082)
CSM001-Cultural Strategy	88,939	84,759	(4,180)
CUL001-Arts Development	57,847	41,603	(16,244)
ECD001-Economic Development	161,808	163,493	1,685
ECD010 – SPF Community and Place	(226,195)	(226,195)	0
REC001-Sports Development	63,317	37,882	(25,435)

REC002-Recreational Facilities Development	74,456	90,286	15,830
REC003-Play	84,390	55,474	(28,916)
REC301-Village Halls	15,008	15,001	(7)
REC302-Contract Management	206,507	(791,346)	(997,853)
SUP016-Finance - Performance Review	111,729	111,835	106
TOU001-Tourism Strategy and Promotion	211,978	191,743	(20,235)
Total - Leisure & Communities	1,272,765	230,784	(1,041,981)

CCR002 - a change to the funding arrangements for Domestic Abuse works has produced an overspend of £33k from a reduction in contribution from the County Council and Thames Valley Police.

CUL001 -underspends against legacy budgets for professional fees, commission and subscriptions have produced an £11k saving and unbudgeted income of £5k has been received in year. The 2024/25 budget has been reduced to take out the unused legacy budget lines.

REC001 - income received in the year relating to 2022/23 has created a surplus in this cost centre

REC002 - during the latter part of the year, consultancy work has been undertaken on the Strategic Outcomes Planning Model, looking at the future of leisure provision in the district. This external consultancy has been partially funded through earmarked reserves with the remainder showing as an overspend in this cost centre.

REC003 - the 2023/24 budget includes £61k for maintenance and repair of Play Areas in the district which has proven to be more than required in the year. The budget for 2024/25 has been reduced to reflect a prudent level for the ongoing maintenance of the Play Areas retained by the Council.

REC302 - a prudent income contingency is included in the 23/24 budget which represents the uncertainty, in February 2023, of the level of achievable income from the leisure contract. Discussions are being held with GLL to review the nature of the leisure contract subject to a change of HMRC policy on VAT recovery and the potential impact of the PSDS project at Carterton. Income invoiced in the year to date is £713k more than budgeted and the income contingency provides an underspend of £400k. This is offset against additional expenditure on equipment purchase of £91k and professional fees relating to the repairs at Chipping Norton Leisure Centre of £25k.

TOU001 -there is a £20k underspend against the legacy budgets of marketing, software and printing. The 24/25 budget has been reviewed to amend these legacy budgets and provide a saving of £7k.

	Q4 position		
	Profiled £	Actual Exp £	Variance £
Environmental Services			
CCC001-Climate Change	224,459	224,814	355
COR301-Policy Initiatives - Shopmobility	16,479	19,171	2,692
CPK001-Car Parks - Off Street	410,109	413,105	3,906
ENI002-Grounds Maintenance	462,337	492,014	29,677
ENI303-Landscape Maintenance	4,988	30,186	25,198
FLD001-Flood Defence and Land Drainage	182,453	222,741	40,288
REG004-Dog Warden	92,991	138,682	45,691
REG018-Pest Control	14,960	92	(14,868)
REG019-Public Conveniences	169,906	223,023	53,117
REG023-Environmental Strategy	81,974	81,448	(526)
RYC001-Recycling	3,290,162	3,724,827	434,665
RYC002-Green Waste	(330,633)	(257,068)	73,565
STC001-Street Cleansing	38,310	46,146	7,836
STC004-Environmental Cleansing	1,106,582	1,157,229	50,647
TRW001-Trade Waste	25,452	(10,539)	(35,991)
TRW002-Clinical Waste	(500)	(429)	71
WST001-Household Waste	2,024,383	2,104,623	80,240
WST004-Bulky Household Waste	34,055	46,435	12,380
WST301-Env. Services Depot, Downs Rd, Witney	22,085	49,351	27,266
Total - Environmental Services	7,870,525	8,705,824	836,209

ENI002 - income from Parish & Town Councils for grass cutting is £7k below target and external costs for Ubico are £22k over budget.

ENI303 - additional external contractor fees of £13k for the Kilkenny parking scheme have been incurred in the year and there is a £12k overspend on maintenance i.e. drainage works and fencing repairs.

FLD001- £ 17k ditch clearance works related to 22/23 charged in 23/24 with a further £20k charged for 23/24.

REG004 - the overspend relates to the cost of the third party contract to collect stray dogs and the kennelling fees. The 24/25 budget has been amended and the third party arrangement has been updated. The net effect on the 24/25 budget is a saving of £10k.

REG018 - a Pest Control service is no longer offered by the Council. This is a legacy budget which has been removed in 2024/25.

REG019 - fee income is £19k below target and there have been repairs due to vandalism of £5k and contract cleaning is overspent by £30k due to a contract price increase in year. The 2024/25 budget has been adjusted to fund the additional cleaning costs.

RYC001 - there is a £243k overspend on Suez contract and a further £74k overspend on bins and boxes. The Suez contract ends in September 2024 with a new contract expected to save at least £300k a year on recycling handling costs. Ubico costs for the year are £110k over budget, mainly due to additional hire costs for waste lorries and the NJC pay award.

RYC002 - Fee income is £42k below budget and bins are £9k overspent with Ubico costs £37k over budget. £15k underspend for printing and postage costs. The 24/25 budget includes an increase in the green licence fee by £5 a year to £50.

STC004 - the overspend is due to the additional costs of the Ubico contract.

TRW001-income is £29k above budget & there is a £36k underspend on disposal costs paid to OCC a £10k overspend on boxes & bins and additional Ubico costs of £18k.

WST001 - additional Ubico costs are £77k

	Q4 position		
	Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£
Planning & Strategic Housing			
DEV001-Development Control - Applications	(159,773)	(116,155)	43,618
DEV002-Development Control - Appeals	125,955	310,279	184,324
DEV003-Development Control - Enforcement	174,924	175,008	84
ENA001-Housing Enabling	110,493	111,752	1,259
ENI301-Landscape Initiatives	57,982	61,619	3,637
HLD315-Growth Board Project (Planning)	148,354	129,626	(18,728)
PLP001-Planning Policy	510,237	496,915	(13,322)
PLP003-Implementation	(1,031)	(1,033)	(2)
PLP004-Conservation	109,085	100,373	(8,712)
PSM001-Planning Service Mgmt & Support Serv	138,801	122,309	(16,492)
Total - Planning & Strategic Housing	1,215,027	1,390,694	175,667

DEV001 - fee income is £81k below budget. The government announced a 25% increase in planning application fees from 6th December 2023 and the budget for 24/25 has been updated to reflect this increase.

DEV002 - there is a £184k overspend on external legal fees, incurred through Planning Appeals and subsequent Planning Inquiries. An additional £90k has been included in the budget for 24/25 but this could be insufficient if the number of appeals is at a similar level to 2023/24.

PLP001 - additional income has been raised in the year by partnering with CDC on the PropTech project which increases the use of digital engagement with the Planning process, creating a saving for West Oxfordshire.

Q4 position		
Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
£	£	£

Retained Services

COR002-Chief Executive	391,468	412,848	21,380
COR003-Corporate Policy Making	75,462	81,465	6,003
COR004-Public Relations	12,310	11,028	(1,282)
COR005-Corporate Finance	572,704	592,277	19,573
COR006-Treasury Management	26,700	25,818	(882)
COR007-External Audit Fees	75,860	163,091	87,231
COR008-Bank Charges	78,500	204,664	126,164
COR012 - Publica Review	22,391	22,391	(0)
COR302-Publica Group	(253,837)	(504,920)	(251,083)
FIE341-Town Centre Properties	(598,966)	(484,390)	114,576
FIE342-Miscellaneous Properties	(831,310)	(770,223)	61,087
FIE343-Talisman	(838,533)	(911,657)	(73,124)
FIE344-Des Roches Square	(394,455)	(185,169)	209,286
FIE345-Gables at Elmfield	(153,365)	(54,734)	98,631
FIE346 - Marriotts	292,933	608,518	315,585
NDC001-Non Distributed Costs	649,100	790,892	141,792
TAC304-Witney Industrial Estate	(166,160)	(161,886)	4,274
TAC305-Carterton Industrial Estate	(503,775)	(327,667)	176,108
TAC306-Greystones Industrial Estate	(10,195)	(23,966)	(13,771)
TAC308-Other Trading Services - Fairs	(2,875)	(2,000)	875

Total - Retained Services

(1,556,043)	(513,622)	1,042,420
--------------------	------------------	------------------

COR002 - there is a £23k overspend on employee costs which includes advertising costs for the S151 and Monitoring Officer roles recruited to in the year.

COR005 - the net cost of having the S151 Officer post vacant and employing an interim S151 is £45k. There is a partial offset of £15k against professional fees.

COR007 - external audit fees have increased, over and above the scale fee due to the delays and additional work required for the 2021/22 and 2022/23 audits. The Housing Benefit audit fee has also increased resulting in an overall overspend of £87k. New scale fees for 24/25 have been set by the PSAA and the budget has been updated accordingly.

COR008 - A new contract is now in place for our Merchant Card acquirer which will bring expenditure on card processing charges back within the budget envelope from 24/25.

COR302 - Publica returned a refund to the Council for 2023/24.

FIE341 - rental income is £116k behind target, £36k of which relates to a lower than budgeted income from Woolgate sublease rent which is based on a % of turnover in the year. The remaining £80k relates to Marriotts Close. When the Marriotts site was purchased in January 2023 an element of the budget was retained in this cost centre in error which has caused an overspend. This has been corrected for 2024/25.

FIE342 -the overspend represents lost income of £118k due to Between Towns Rd being vacant since mid November and £46k for Chawley Park which will be vacant from the beginning of Q4. There is an offset of £70k from income received from the previous tenant of Yarrow Road in Poole to fund the new tenant's rent-free period in 2023/24, as per the lease surrender agreement and £10k additional income from rent reviews. In addition, there is unbudgeted income of £23k for surplus assets i.e. garage rents, service charges and ground rent. The 24/25 budget has accounted for the income reduction for our Investment Properties and any additional associated costs i.e. business rates and security.

FIE343 -the net income position, taking into account the income contingency in the budget is £3k below target but there are underspends of £39k in repairs, £22k in Business Rates and £15k in marketing costs.

FIE344 - Rental income is £88k below target due to the first floor of the building being vacant for the start of the year and the current rent-free period that is in place. At year end the income deficit was £187k but an earmarked reserve for the rent-free period has been used to fund £99k of this deficit. In addition, the Council has incurred £55k liability for Business Rates, £12k advertising costs, £13k external fees relating to survey and rent review and £41k of repairs to bring the building up to a rentable standard.

FIE345 - the budget includes £100k for renting out Elmfield from Q2 of the year. This timeline has slipped into late 2024/25.

FIE346 - the overspend comes from void units, service costs, business rates and rent-free periods. The income position will be markedly improved in 2024/25 as new leases have been completed and some rent-free periods come to an end. The 2024/25 budget has been set to include the rent receivable but also the service costs applicable to the Council.

NDC001 - Non-Distributed costs are the secondary pension contribution the Council pays on a monthly basis to cover the historic liability of the pension fund. This amount changes year on year and has been updated in the 24/25 budget following confirmation from the Actuary. However, this cost is likely to change during 2024/25 due to the transfer of staff from Publica back to the Council. Variations will be included in the quarterly budget monitoring reports.

TAC305 - a tenant went into liquidation causing an underachievement of rental income of £129k for the year. The base budget is overstated by £47,350 which has been adjusted in the 24/25 budget.

	Q4 position		
	Profiled Budget	Actual Exp	Variance (under) / over spend
	£	£	£
Revenues & Housing Support			
HBP001-Rent Allowances	301,622	293,445	(8,177)
HBP003-Local Housing Allowance	0	59	59
HBP005-Benefit Fraud Investigation	5,888	6,018	130
HOM001-Homelessness	111,316	118,100	6,784
HOM004-Refugees	400	400	0
HOM005-Homelessness Hostel Accommodation	11,571	(3,918)	(15,489)
HOM006 - The Old Court	30,625	12,469	(18,156)
HOM007-Afghan Resettlement Programme	(492,998)	(492,998)	0
HOM008-Homes for Ukraine	(994,670)	(994,476)	194
LTC001-Council Tax Collection	222,464	(56,740)	(279,204)
LTC002-Council Tax Support Administration	7,134	7,703	569
LTC011-NNDR Collection	(61,123)	(71,687)	(10,564)
PSH001-Private Sector Housing Grants	51,993	51,672	(321)
PSH004-Home Improvement Service	(58,822)	(45,465)	13,357
Total - Revenues & Housing Support	(853,884)	(1,164,702)	(310,818)

HOM005/HOM006 - both emergency accommodation premises are in surplus for the year. The introduction of additional resource in the Housing team has allowed for the more effective administration of clients moving in and out of the properties and therefore the Council has been successful in claiming the Housing Benefit due for our temporary accommodation clients.

LTC001/LTC011 - during the course of 2023/24, the Revenues team have put significant resource into tackling the backlog of liability orders that go through the Magistrates Court. The result has been a significant rise in income resulting in a surplus in these cost centres. This surplus is General Fund income and can be used to fund any Council service, it is not restricted to the administration of Council Tax or Business Rates.

PSH004 - the overspend relates to the additional costs incurred in the year to employ the contractors who undertake minor works i.e. installing ramps, key safes, handrails on the Council's behalf.

This page is intentionally left blank

Annex B

Capital Slippage - 2023/24

The annual Revenue Budget setting process requires the Council to put forward a 10 year Capital Programme of estimated future expenditure. It is only expenditure that is funded through Revenue that is approved through the budget setting process. Capital Expenditure funded through Earmarked Reserves, S106, Grants, Borrowing or External Contributions all require a business case to be submitted to Members for approval.

The table below shows the incomplete elements of capital projects still outstanding at year end but not included in the 2024/25 budget and therefore recommended to be carried forward.

Scheme	2023/24 Budget	2023/24 Actual	Funded By	Over/(Underspend)	Recommended c/f	2024/25 Original Budget	2024/25 Total Budget
Agile Working	2,150,000	702,932	Borrowing	-1,447,068	1,447,068		1,447,068
Solar PV on Council Buildings			Borrowing	0		276,345	276,345
Replacement dog and litter bins	25,000		Borrowing	-25,000			
Chipping Norton LC Repairs	1,000,000	265,841	Borrowing	-734,159	150,000		150,000
Ubico Fleet - Replace Vehicle Hire Costs	2,000,000	334,490	Borrowing	-1,665,510		3,500,000	3,500,000
Update to Planning System (Idox)	150,000		Borrowing	-150,000	150,000		150,000
Update to Finance System (ABW)	25,000		Borrowing	-25,000	25,000		25,000
Electric vehicle charging points	200,000		Borrowing	-200,000	200,000		200,000
In Cab Technology			Borrowing	0		100,000	100,000
Investment Strategy for Recovery	5,000,000		Borrowing	-5,000,000			
CCTV - Upgrading	255,635		Capital Receipts	-255,635	255,635		255,635
Shop Mobility - Replacement stock	10,000		Capital Receipts	-10,000	10,000		10,000
Affordable Housing in Witney (Heylo)	212,125	253,500	External Contribution/S106	41,375	212,125		212,125
Improvement Grants (DFG)	800,000	771,537	Grant	-28,463		880,000	880,000
Carterton Leisure Centre PSDS Project	1,300,000		Grant	-1,300,000	1,300,000		1,300,000
UKSPF	0	226,195	Grant	226,195			
Witney Leisure Centre PSDS			Borrowing	0		1,874,000	1,874,000
IT Provision - Systems & Strategy	100,000	93,782	Revenue Contribution	-6,218		100,000	100,000
Weighbridge at Bulking Station			Capital Receipts	0		25,000	25,000
Council Buildings Maintenance Programme	200,000	86,117	Revenue Contribution	-113,883		200,000	200,000
IT Equipment - PCs, Copiers etc	40,000		Revenue Contribution	-40,000		40,000	40,000
Community Grants Fund	200,000	123,186	Revenue Contribution	-76,814		200,000	200,000
Windrush Public Art		35,601	S106	35,601			
Weavers Fold	378,000		S106	-378,000			
Play Parks	100,000		S106	-100,000	50,000		50,000
EVCP Woolgate	167,000		S106	-167,000	167,000		167,000
Chipping Norton Creative	8,297		S106	-8,297			
Carterton Connects Creative (Swinbrook s106)	44,500		S106	-44,500	44,500		44,500
Raleigh Crescent Play Area (s. 106)	75,000		S106	-75,000	75,000		75,000
Developer Capital Contributions		1,354,650	S106	1,354,650			
	14,440,557	4,247,831		-10,192,726	4,086,328	7,195,345	11,281,673

Comments:

- a. The Agile working project has successfully updated the Council Chamber into a community space and work on Woodgreen is nearly complete. In 2024/25 attention moves to the upgrading of Elmfield.
- b. A Waste Vehicle replacement project group was set up in 2023/24 to investigate the options for the renewal of the waste fleet as 25 vehicles come to the end of their economic life in 2024/25. Vehicle type, size and fuel have all been considered and a two week trial of an electric waste lorry was undertaken in May 2024. A business case for the renewal of waste vehicles will go to Executive in Q2 2024/25.
- c. The Carterton Leisure Centre PSDS project has been delayed due to the findings of an investment grade appraisal which indicated that the scheme in its then format would not be financially viable. The Council is working on an amended scheme for the Autumn round of PSDS funding.
- d. The Witney Leisure Centre PSDS project is at the stage of going out to tender for PSDSc3. The total cost of the project is estimated at £1.8m and a mandatory 12%, or £225,000 is included in the Capital Programme for 2024/25 as the Council's contribution.

 WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and Date of Committee	EXECUTIVE – 22 JULY 2024
Subject	WEST OXFORDSHIRE LOCAL PLAN 2041
Wards Affected	All
Accountable Member	Councillor Andy Graham – Leader of the Council. Email: andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable Officer	Chris Hargraves – Planning Policy Manager. Email: chris.hargraves@westoxon.gov.uk
Report Author	Chris Hargraves – Planning Policy Manager. Email: chris.hargraves@westoxon.gov.uk
Purpose	To provide an update on the emerging West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041, and to agree a revised timetable for taking the plan through to adoption.
Annex	Annex A – Local Development Scheme (LDS) Update – July 2024
Recommendations	That the Executive resolves to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the content of the report; 2. Approve the updated Local Development Scheme (LDS) attached at Annex A, including the following key milestones for the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regulation 18 preferred option consultation – October 2024 - Regulation 19 pre-submission draft publication – March 2025 - Submission for examination – June 2025
Corporate Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting Residents First • A Good Quality of Life for All • A Better Environment for People and Wildlife • Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency • Working Together for West Oxfordshire
Key Decision	NO

Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	<p>The emerging West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041 is currently at the Regulation 18 'plan preparation' stage, with two major public consultations having been carried out in autumn 2022 and autumn 2023.</p> <p>This has been interspersed with focused engagement with a number of key stakeholders.</p> <p>The original intention had been to undertake further Regulation 18 consultation on a series of preferred options in June 2024. However, a number of reasons have been identified for deferring the consultation until October 2024 as per the timetable set out in this report.</p> <p>Beyond that, a statutory 6-week consultation will take place at the Regulation 19 'publication' stage which is now expected to be in March 2025.</p> <p>All consultation will take place in accordance with the Council's approved Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).</p>

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** Members will be aware that the District Council is in the process of producing a new Local Plan, which, when adopted, will replace the current Local Plan adopted in September 2018.
- 1.2** The purpose of this report is to explain the progress made since the last consultation took place in autumn 2023 and why it is necessary to agree a revised timetable for taking the Local Plan forward to adoption.

2. PROGRESS TO DATE

- 2.1** The current West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 was adopted in September 2018. A review was undertaken in September 2023 when the plan became five years' old and concluded that many of the policies, including those relating to housing provision, need to be updated to ensure they reflect current national policy and are based on up-to-date evidence.
- 2.2** Work on a new Local Plan covering the period to 2041 is now well underway with two major public consultations having taken place under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. This is the stage when the Council scopes the content of the plan and tests different options with a view to identifying a preferred approach.
- 2.3** Both consultations attracted a good level of interest and summary reports outlining the main issues raised have been published [online](#) and made available at a number of locations across the District.
- 2.4** Focused discussions have also taken place with a number of other key stakeholders including representatives of the Cotswolds National Landscape, Historic England, the Environment Agency and the agricultural sector along with landowners/developers and a number of Town and Parish Councils.
- 2.5** To complement the consultation feedback received, a number of evidence base studies have been commissioned to help inform the development of the new Local Plan including, but not limited to:
 - Sustainability Appraisal (SA)
 - Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)
 - Viability
 - Housing Needs Assessment
 - Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)
 - Economic Needs Assessment
 - Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)
 - Health and Equality Impact Assessment
 - Carterton Strategic Study

- 2.6 An important part of the evidence base is the District Council's Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) the purpose of which is to identify a future supply of land that is suitable, available and achievable for housing and economic development uses.
- 2.7 A methodology for the HELAA has now been prepared in accordance with the Government's Planning Practice Guidance and joint methodology which was agreed between the Oxfordshire local planning authorities in November 2021. The intention is to prepare the HELAA from July – September 2024 including engagement with key stakeholders such as Town and Parish Councils.
- 2.8 In addition to those studies outlined above, a number of others are in the process of being scoped out and commissioned as the proposed content of the new Local Plan takes shape and there is greater clarity on key issues such as the number of new homes and amount of employment space to be planned for.

3. REVISED LOCAL PLAN TIMETABLE

- 3.1 The current timetable for taking the Local Plan through to adoption is set out in the Council's approved [Local Development Scheme](#) (LDS) published in February 2024.
- 3.2 The approved LDS envisaged further Regulation 18 consultation on the emerging Local Plan taking place in June 2024. However, since the LDS was approved there have been a number of changes in circumstance and in light of these, Officers have concluded that it would be preferable to defer the consultation until October this year.
- 3.3 The reasons for this include, but are not limited to, the following:
- Potential changes to national planning policy as a result of the General Election;
 - There would be greater clarity on any potential implications arising from the Oxford City Local Plan 2040 with the Inspector's preliminary findings on housing need expected to be published in July 2024;
 - Greater clarity on the scope of the A40 improvements being progressed by Oxfordshire County Council under the Homes from Infrastructure (HIF2) project;
 - It would enable the next stage of consultation to include preferred draft site allocations (e.g. for housing and employment) rather than just a broad distribution of growth by location which had been the original intention;
 - This will ensure greater certainty and provide the opportunity for stakeholders to comment on specific sites before the formal Regulation 19 publication stage. It would also mean that the District Council is only required to demonstrate a 4-year housing land supply in accordance with national policy¹;
 - It will provide more time for key evidence (e.g. housing and economic needs) to effectively feed into the emerging draft plan; and
 - It would avoid consultation taking place over the summer holiday period.

¹ Paragraph 226 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – December 2023

3.4 The key milestones for taking the new Local Plan forward are therefore now expected to be as follows:

- Regulation 18 preferred option consultation – October 2024
- Regulation 19 pre-submission draft publication – March 2025
- Submission for examination – June 2025
- Examination and adoption – Autumn/Winter 2025/26

3.5 It is important to note that between these specific stages, Officers will continue to engage with key stakeholders on a focused basis including the other Oxfordshire local planning authorities and other relevant bodies in accordance with the Duty to Co-Operate.

3.6 An updated Local Development Scheme (LDS) reflecting the timings outlined above is attached at Annex A.

3.7 In updating the LDS, Officers have also taken the opportunity to update other aspects including the anticipated timing of the Salt Cross Area Action Plan (AAP).

4. NEXT STEPS

4.1 Taking a new Local Plan forward to submission, examination and adoption is a challenging task and it is important that it is done in such a manner that the plan stands the best chance of being found to be sound when considered by a Planning Inspector.

4.2 A number of good reasons have been identified for deferring the next planned stage of consultation as outlined in the report. Whilst this represents a small degree of slippage in the currently agreed programme, it is considered that ultimately, the approach being taken will help to increase the likelihood of the draft plan passing successfully through examination.

4.3 Subject to the approval of Members, the updated LDS will be published online and made physically available at a number of locations across the District.

4.4 Officers will continue to draft the Regulation 18 preferred options consultation paper taking account of consultation feedback received to date and emerging evidence on key issues such as housing and economic needs and infrastructure provision as well as Sustainability Appraisal, including the consideration of all reasonable alternatives.

4.5 It is anticipated that the consultation paper will set out a series of preferred policy options based on the following broad headings:

- Strategic policies to address the key strategic priorities for West Oxfordshire on a District-wide basis including any relevant cross-boundary issues;
- Area and settlement-specific policies including draft site allocations; and
- Development management policies.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 5.1** The District Council could choose not to progress with an update of the Local Plan. However, local authorities are required to keep plans up to date, typically reviewing them every 5-years or so.
- 5.2** The Regulation 10A review of the current Local Plan carried out in September 2023 highlighted a number of policies which require updating, including those relating to housing provision.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** The preparation and adoption of a new Local Plan has significant financial implications with provision for this having been made through the District Council's budget setting process.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1** The report raises no direct legal implications. The Local Plan must be prepared in accordance with legislative requirements and when considered at examination, the appointed Planning Inspector will determine whether or not the District Council has fulfilled those requirements.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 8.1** The report presents no significant risks.

9. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 9.1** The intention is that a Health and Equalities Impact Assessment of the Local Plan will accompany the next stage of public consultation in October 2024.

10. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1** The climate and ecological emergencies form a central component of the emerging Local Plan.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1** None.



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

www.westoxon.gov.uk

West Oxfordshire Local Development Scheme (LDS)

July 2024

Contents

1.	Introduction.....	3
2.	West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031	3
3.	West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041	3
4.	Salt Cross Garden Village Area Action Plan (AAP)	4
5.	Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs).....	5
6.	Neighbourhood Planning	6
6.	Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).....	6
7.	LDF Monitoring Report.....	7
8.	LDS availability and updates.....	7
	Appendix 1 – Document Profiles	9
	Appendix 2 – Overall Timetable	13

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This is the West Oxfordshire District Council Local Development Scheme (LDS). It explains what planning policy documents the Council already has in place and what will be prepared during the three-year period February 2024 – February 2027.

2. West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031

- 2.1 The current [West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031](#) was formally adopted on 27 September 2018. The plan provides an overall framework for growth in the period up to 2031.
- 2.2 Because the Local Plan became five years old in September 2023, a [formal review](#) was undertaken in accordance with Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 2.3 The review concluded that although the adopted local plan policies remain generally consistent with national policy, many of them could usefully be strengthened and updated, in particular those policies relating to the plan's housing requirement given they are based on evidence dating from 2014.
- 2.4 Work on a new Local Plan to 2041 is therefore now well underway as outlined below.

3. West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041

- 3.1 The District Council is currently in the process of producing a new Local Plan covering the period up to 2041.
- 3.2 The plan is currently at the Regulation 18 'plan preparation' stage, with two rounds of initial stakeholder engagement carried out in October 2022 and October 2023 respectively.
- 3.3 The first consultation sought general views on the overall scope of the new Local Plan. A [consultation summary report](#) has been made available online.
- 3.4 The second consultation started to explore draft plan objectives and potential patterns of development. It also included a specific call for sites, ideas and opportunities. A consultation summary report has again been made available online.
- 3.5 In terms of next steps, it is envisaged that a further Regulation 18 consultation will take place in October 2024. The primary purpose of this will be to set out a series of preferred policy options, drawing on national policy, the feedback received to date and supporting technical evidence.
- 3.6 Depending on the outcome of that consultation, it is anticipated that the Regulation 19 pre-submission draft plan will be published in March 2025.

- 3.7 The Council should then be in a position to formally submit the draft Local Plan for examination in June 2025 with a view to examination in autumn 2025.
- 3.8 Further information on the purpose, scope and timing of the Local Plan 2041 is set out at Appendix I.

4. Salt Cross Garden Village Area Action Plan (AAP)

- 4.1 A key element of the adopted Local Plan is the allocation of land to the north of the A40 near Eynsham for a new garden village of around 2,200 homes, together with business space and other supporting uses and facilities. The proposal is being supported by central Government through its locally led garden village, towns and cities programme.
- 4.2 The planning of the garden village is being led by a separate [Area Action Plan](#) (AAP) which, when adopted, will form part of the statutory development plan for West Oxfordshire.
- 4.3 The AAP was formally submitted for examination in February 2021, with examination hearing sessions held in June/July 2021. Following the hearing sessions, the appointed Planning Inspector wrote to the Council, effectively ‘pausing’ the examination and requesting further work on the phasing of infrastructure.
- 4.4 Subsequently, the Inspector wrote to the District Council on 26 May 2022 confirming that the AAP can be made ‘sound’ through a number of Main Modifications. Consultation on those modifications took place from 23 September to Friday 4 November 2022 and the Inspector’s Final Report¹ was received on 1 March 2023.
- 4.5 Subsequently however, a legal challenge was submitted by a third-party organisation called Rights Community Action (RCA). The challenge focused on the conclusions reached by the Inspector in relation to the soundness of AAP Policy 2 – Net Zero Carbon Development.
- 4.6 The case was heard in the High Court in November 2023 and the written judgement was handed down on the 20th February 2024. The subsequent order of 4th March 2024 confirmed that the claim for judicial review is allowed and that the Inspectors’ report into the Salt Cross Area Action Plan dated 1 March 2023 and the Inspectors’ proposed Main Modifications to the Salt Cross Area Action Plan are quashed, insofar as they relate to Policy 2 of the said Plan.

¹ <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/djkhe03s/salt-cross-aap-inspectors-report-main-mods-appendix-final.pdf>

- 4.7 As a result and having taken legal advice on the matter, Officers wrote to the Planning Inspectorate on 2 April 2024 to suggest that the examination be re-opened on a focused basis to re-consider Policy 2 and that a new Inspector should be appointed.
- 4.8 On 22 April 2024, the Planning Inspectorate confirmed that the examination has been re-opened and that a new Inspector - Helen Hockenhull BA(Hons) B.PI MRTPI has been appointed.
- 4.9 The following approximate timings are now anticipated to apply:
- Preparation of Main Modifications and supporting evidence – May to August 2024
 - Submission to Inspector – August 2024
 - Inspector prepares and publishes Matters, Issues and Questions (MIQs) – August to September 2024
 - Hearing session/s – October 2024
- 4.10 Timings beyond this will depend on the outcome of the examination including any need for public consultation on further Main Modifications to Policy 2. It is anticipated that the Council should be in a position to formally adopt the AAP by April 2025 or sooner if possible.
- 4.11 Further information on the purpose, scope and timing of the AAP is set out at Appendix I.

5. Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

- 5.1 Supplementary planning documents do not form part of the statutory development plan but are important material considerations in the determination of planning applications. Their main purpose is to elaborate on specific local plan policies and explain in more detail how those policies will operate.
- 5.2 At present, the Council has four adopted SPDs:
- West Oxfordshire Design Guide SPD – adopted in 2016
 - Affordable Housing SPD – adopted in October 2021
 - Developer Contributions SPD – adopted in July 2023
 - Combe Village Design Statement SPD – adopted in July 2023
- 5.3 These are all available [online](#).
- Hanborough Station Masterplan*
- 5.4 The District Council has previously agreed to provide funding, in conjunction with Oxfordshire County Council, to commission a masterplan for Hanborough Station. Potentially, any such document could be taken forward as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) subject to due process.

- 5.5 At the current time, discussions remain ongoing between the District Council and County Council on the scope of the work and it is intended to be the subject of further dialogue with the Hanborough Station Sub-Group which will be reconvened in summer 2024.
- 5.6 Once the scope and timing of the project has been agreed, this will be reflected in an updated future iteration of the LDS.

6. Neighbourhood Planning

5.1 Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area.

5.2 There are currently nine adopted Neighbourhood Plans in West Oxfordshire including:

- Cassington Neighbourhood Plan (adopted 26 June 2023)
- Charlbury Neighbourhood Plan (adopted 14 June 2021)
- Chipping Norton Neighbourhood Plan (adopted 15 March 2016)
- Eynsham Neighbourhood Plan (adopted 6 February 2020)
- Hailey Neighbourhood Plan (adopted 2 September 2019)
- Milton under Wychwood Neighbourhood Plan (adopted 26 June 2023)
- Shilton Neighbourhood Plan (adopted 2 September 2019)
- South Leigh Neighbourhood Plan (adopted 8 January 2019)
- Woodstock (adopted 23 January 2023)

5.3 There are six other Neighbourhood Plans currently in progress including:

- Ascott under Wychwood Neighbourhood Plan
- Brize Norton Neighbourhood Plan
- Ducklington Neighbourhood Plan
- North Leigh Neighbourhood Plan
- Stonesfield Neighbourhood Plan
- Wootton by Woodstock Neighbourhood Plan

5.4 Because the progress and timing of neighbourhood plans are beyond the control of the District Council, the LDS does not include any information on their anticipated timetables. Further information can however be obtained from the District Council's [website](#).

6. Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

6.1 A Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) explains how local communities and other stakeholders will be engaged in the preparation of the Local Plan and other related documents. It also provides information about how local communities and other stakeholders will be engaged in relation to the determination of planning applications.

- 6.2 Local planning authorities are required to review their Statements of Community Involvement every 5 years with the Council’s most recent SCI being adopted in February 2020².
- 6.3 The Council will ensure that the SCI is updated prior to February 2025 – in particular to reflect the increased use of digital engagement tools, with the District Council having secured funding from central Government to develop its approach in this field.

7. LDF Monitoring Report

- 7.1 In accordance with national planning regulations the Council is required to produce a monitoring report addressing various matters including plan progress and implementation, neighbourhood planning, CIL (where applicable) and the duty to co-operate.
- 7.2 The Council’s most recently published monitoring report covers the period 1st April 2021 – 31st March 2023 and is available [online](#).

8. LDS availability and updates

- 8.1 The LDS must be made publicly available and kept up-to-date.
- 8.2 In terms of availability, a copy of this LDS is available [online](#)
- 8.3 Hard copies are also available in the locations listed in the following table.
- 8.4 The LDS will be updated annually or more often if there are any significant changes in timescales or documents being prepared.

² <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/jo0g3prh/statement-of-community-involvement.pdf>

<p>West Oxfordshire District Council Witney Town Centre Shop 3 Welch Way Witney OX28 6JH Tel: 01993 861000 Open: Monday – Friday 9am to 5pm</p>	<p>Witney Town Council Town Hall Market Square Witney OX28 6AG Tel: 01993 704379 Open: Mon, Tues and Thurs 8.30am to 5pm, Wed 9.30am to 5pm and Fri 8.30am to 4.30pm.</p>	<p>Carterton Town Council 19 Alvescot Road Carterton OX18 3JL Tel: 01993 842156 Open: Monday – Friday 9.30am to 4.00pm</p>
<p>Chipping Norton Town Council The Guildhall Market Place Chipping Norton OX7 5NJ Tel: 01608 642341 Open: Monday – Friday 9am to 1pm</p>	<p>Bampton Library Old Grammar School Church View Bampton OX18 2NE Tel: 01993 850076</p>	<p>Burford Library 86A High Street Burford OX18 4QF Tel: 01993 823377</p>
<p>Carterton Library 6 Alvescot Road Carterton OX18 3JH Tel: 01993 841492</p>	<p>Charlbury Library Charlbury Community Centre Enstone Road Charlbury OX7 3PQ Tel: 01608 811104</p>	<p>Chipping Norton Library Goddards Land Chipping Norton OX7 5NP Tel: 01608 643559</p>
<p>Eynsham Library 30 Mill Street Eynsham OX29 4JS Tel: 01865 880525</p>	<p>North Leigh Library Memorial Hall Park Road North Leigh OX29 6SA Tel: 01993 882935</p>	<p>Stonesfield Library Village Hall Longore Stonesfield OX29 8EF Tel: 01993 898187</p>
<p>Witney Library Welch Way Witney OX28 6JH Tel: 01993 703659</p>	<p>Woodstock Library The Oxfordshire Museum Fletcher's House Park Street Woodstock OX20 1SN Tel: 01993 814124 07759 140531</p>	<p>Wychwood Library 29 High Street Milton-under-Wychwood OX7 6LD Tel: 01993 830281</p>

Appendix I – Document Profiles

West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041	
Status	Development Plan Document (DPD)
Overview	The Local Plan will set out the overall framework for future growth in West Oxfordshire to 2041. This is expected to include strategic policies dealing with the overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development as well as non-strategic policies dealing with other matters including site allocations and development management policies.
Geographical coverage	District-wide
Timetable	<p>Regulation 18 initial scoping consultation – August - October 2022 (COMPLETE)</p> <p>Regulation 18 focused consultation on draft plan objectives and spatial strategy options along with a ‘call for sites’ exercise – August – October 2023 (COMPLETE)</p> <p>Regulation 18 consultation on preferred policy options – October 2024</p> <p>Publication of pre-submission draft Local Plan (Regulation 19) – March 2025</p> <p>Submission of pre-submission draft Local Plan (Regulation 22) – June 2025</p> <p>Examination and adoption – 2025/26</p>
Conformity	Prepared in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).
Management arrangements	Document production to be led by the Council’s Planning Policy Team under the direction of the Planning Policy Manager. Cross Party Member Working Group established to oversee the process.
Resource requirements	Internal resources comprise the Council’s Planning Policy Team with input from other teams and services as appropriate via Local Plan Officer Working Group. External resources will be drawn upon in terms of the production of supporting technical evidence.

Community engagement	Engagement to be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).
----------------------	---

Salt Cross Garden Village Area Action Plan (AAP)


Status	Development Plan Document (DPD)
Overview	Supplements the Local Plan 2031 providing additional detail on the Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village Strategic Location for Growth (SLG) – now referred to as Salt Cross Garden Village. The AAP will establish a vision for the garden village, supported by a series of core objectives and policies arranged on a thematic basis. A key focus of the AAP will be delivery and implementation.
Geographical coverage	Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village Strategic Location for Growth (SLG) north of Eynsham
Timetable	<p>Submission – February 2021 (COMPLETE)</p> <p>Examination hearings – June/July 2021 (COMPLETE)</p> <p>Consultation on Main Modifications – September/November 2022 (COMPLETE)</p> <p>Inspector’s Report received – March 2023 (COMPLETE)</p> <p>Examination re-opened to consider Policy 2 - Net Zero Carbon Development – April 2024 (COMPLETE)</p> <p>Preparation of Main Modifications and supporting evidence - May to August 2024</p> <p>Submission to Inspector – August 2024</p> <p>Inspector prepares and publishes Matters, Issues and Questions (MIQs) – August to September 2024</p> <p>Hearing session/s – October 2024</p> <p>Adoption – April 2025</p>
Conformity	Prepared in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) and the West Oxfordshire Local Plan (2031).
Management arrangements	Document production to be led by the Council’s Planning Policy Team under the direction of the Planning Policy Manager.
Resource requirements	Internal resources comprise the Council’s Planning Policy Team with input from other teams and services as

	appropriate. External resources will be drawn upon in terms of the production of supporting technical evidence.
Community engagement	Engagement on the preparation of the document to be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

Appendix 2 – Overall Timetable

Document	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25
West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041						IC					FC			S
Salt Cross Area Action Plan (AAP)				S										
Key: IC = Informal Consultation; FC = Formal Consultation; S = Submission														

This page is intentionally left blank

 <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>	<p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>
<p>Name and Date of Committee</p>	<p>EXECUTIVE – 22 JULY 2024</p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p>OUR HOUSE PROJECT FUNDING EXTENSION 2024-2026</p>
<p>Wards Affected</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Accountable Member</p>	<p>Councillor Geoff Saul – Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare. Email: geoff.saul@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Accountable Officer</p>	<p>Jon Dearing – Interim Executive Director. Email: jon.dearing@publicagroup.uk</p>
<p>Report Author</p>	<p>Caroline Clissold – Business Manager, Housing. Email: caroline.clissold@publicagroup.uk</p>
<p>Purpose</p>	<p>To update members on the ‘Our House’ project since its inception with a recommendation that funding be extended from 1st November 2024 to 31st October 2026.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Annex A – Our House Annual Report 2023-24 Annex B – Equalities Impact Assessment</p>
<p>Recommendations</p>	<p>That the Executive resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve a 2-year funding extension for the Our House project from 1 November 2024 to 31 October 2026; 2. Agree to continue with the current Support Provider via waiver; 3. Delegate authority to the Business Manager for Housing, in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare, to approve the delegation of any minor amendments to this funding extension; 4. Delegate authority to the Business Manager for Housing, in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and Social Welfare, to apply for external funding should any become available; 5. Recommend to Council that it agrees to utilise Housing Projects Reserves as set out in section 4 of the report.
<p>Corporate Priorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting Residents First • A Good Quality of Life for All

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working Together for West Oxfordshire
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Cabinet Members with Responsibility for Housing and Finance Monitoring Officer Chief Executive Deputy Chief Exec / Chief Finance Officer Head of Legal Services Deputy CEO, Cottsway

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1** The Our House Project was initially launched by West Oxfordshire District Council in 2018 in partnership with Cottsway Housing Association to address a rising concern with homelessness in young people.
- 1.2** The project was relaunched in 2021 to include Aspire who would take over the support element. Early learning identified that the best approach for the residents was to separate the support element from tenancy management to maximise their readiness for moving on into independent accommodation.
- 1.3** The aim of the project remains to provide young people with accommodation and support them into employment, education, training and into their own independent accommodation.
- 1.4** Funding to extend the project for another two years is available from Housing reserve funds.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** West Oxfordshire District Council has worked with our countywide partners for many years to provide a collaborative approach to ending homelessness and rough sleeping in the County.
- 2.2** As a result of this collaboration, Oxfordshire has both an established Young Peoples Supported Accommodation Pathway (YPSA) which is for care leavers, and a general needs Adult Homelessness Pathway and has achieved much success in reducing the numbers of those that are sleeping out. However, due to the high concentration of rough sleeping in Oxford City, and the graduation of people from rural areas to the services located in the city much of the funding and supported accommodation projects are in Oxford.
- 2.3** Many of our residents however, especially young people who have high support needs, do not wish to be relocated outside of our district or to lose contact with their own support networks in the area.
- 2.4** The traditional supported accommodation approach does not work for all with many preferring the 'own front door' or to live in smaller shared schemes. High rents within supported accommodation can also prevent residents from moving into employment.
- 2.5** West Oxfordshire District Council therefore created an innovative project called the 'Our House' Project in 2018. By working with our local housing provider, Cottsway and specialist support provider Aspire Oxfordshire, accommodation is provided to address the needs of our local young people who are either rough sleeping, at threat of rough sleeping or are unable to remain at home with family or friends.
- 2.6** The Our House project now provides accommodation with support for up to 11 young people across 3 shared houses located within the district.
- 2.7** Funding was initially secured through government grants however once these were fully utilised, further funding was secured in November 2022 from Housing Projects Reserve funds.

3. MAIN POINTS

- 3.1** The current funding arrangements are due to end in October 2024. The cost for continuing the project and delivering the support element is £73,500 for 2024-2025 rising to £75,500 per annum for 2025-2026. The total contract value for the two-year period is £149,000.
- 3.2** Most referrals into the project are from young people who were either 'sofa surfing' or 'street homeless' and would otherwise be placed in unsuitable B&B accommodation.
- 3.3** As the residents have varying levels of need, a bespoke package of support is identified for each new resident prior to them moving into the property thus unlocking further potential by better managing the support required for the young people and their own personal journeys towards employment and independent living.
- 3.4** Most of the residents accommodated in the three properties have had complex and sometimes challenging support needs and mental health issues meaning that the project has often had to be very reactive to certain situations to help reduce further escalations. The continuation of the project in partnership with Aspire will provide experienced and diverse support with a greater variety of resources that can be delivered 'in house' by the Council.
- 3.5** The 'Our House' project has provided some much-needed single accommodation for young people within West Oxfordshire and has assisted us with discharging our homelessness duties. Using the 'Our House' project has significant financial benefits for both the Council and the residents, providing better outcomes for our young people.
- 3.6** Working in partnership with Cottsway means that each resident is paying on average around £300 per month in rent compared with an average of around £1300 per month within the wider counties supported accommodation pathways. By keeping the rents to such a low level, young people are not prevented from working due to affordability of high rents.
- 3.7** Residents have been able to access employment and training opportunities and work alongside independent work coaches to establish their own plans and goals towards employment. Given the nature of the project there have been challenges, but these have been overcome through the work of various partnerships the project has created.
- 3.8** The Our House Project does not have any minimum or maximum time limits set for how long a person can remain in the accommodation as each resident will have different needs to be addressed before they can move on, the average length of their stay is around 12 months.
- 3.9** More information about Key Outcomes and the success of the Project so far can be found in Annex A
- 3.10** The cost of providing this accommodation with high level bespoke support averages out at around £133 per week per person. Should funding for the project not be agreed, the cost of providing emergency B&B accommodation would be in the region of £300 - £500 per week, plus additional staffing to offer support to the young people to maintain this.

4. PROPOSAL

- 4.1 Housing currently has sufficient funding to meet the costs of extending the Our House project in earmarked Housing Project Reserves from underspends in previous allocations of ring-fenced grants. The current balance of the Housing Project Reserves is £293,000.
- 4.2 The remaining balance of the Housing Project Reserves will be used to fund additional Housing Projects such as expanding Housing First offers, expected rising costs of within Countywide Accommodation Pathways, and additional staffing to meet rising demands on the Housing service in general.
- 4.3 The ethos of the Our House Project meets the requirements set out in the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) Homelessness Prevention Grant allocation instructions.
- 4.4 Aspire are currently providing high level support and are achieving excellent outcomes for young people leaving the project.
- 4.5 There are currently no external funding opportunities however the Housing Team will continue to search for options for additional funding.
- 4.6 Proposed Support Package costs:

Year 1 November 2024 – October 2025	£73,500
Year 2 November 2025 – October 2026	£75,500
Total	£149,000

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 5.1 Alternatively, the Executive may wish to consider not extending the funding for the project any further.
- 5.2 Should this be the case however, the Council and Cottsway would have to issue notices to the 11 young people currently resident to leave their accommodation by 31st October 2024.
- 5.3 If the residents are not able to source their own accommodation, the Council would need to offer emergency accommodation in B&B until such time as alternative accommodation could be found.
- 5.4 Therefore, this option is not recommended due to the increased costs that would be incurred and the detrimental effect on the cohort of being moved from their homes into emergency accommodation.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** There are multiple complex funding streams supporting the work of the Housing Team particularly regarding homeless prevention and project work. Some of these funding streams are subject to bids and some are allocations. Often these come through at short notice and require officers to investigate options and put together work packages or bids within brief time limits.
- 6.2** The Our House Project is aimed at addressing the expectations set out by the government under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and maximising the use of available accommodation in the West Oxfordshire District. There are limited options and significant costs associated with the provision of emergency accommodation within the district, as well as a shortage of longer-term accommodation.
- 6.3** The proposal is therefore aimed at reducing the use and time spent in expensive short term, emergency accommodation by utilising the funds from Housing Projects Reserves.
- 6.4** It is recommended that the £149,000 cost of extending the Our House project is met by the homelessness earmarked reserve, which is made up of the underspends of grant income received since 2017. Reports have gone through Executive each year to approve what our allocation of Homelessness Prevention grant (formerly Flexible Homelessness Prevention grant) is spent on, normally a split between specialist posts and projects. Due to the difficulty of recruiting in the last few years, fixed term contract posts were not filled for 12 months of the year, thereby creating underspends against grant funding received. The available balance in the earmarked reserve as at 31st March 2024 is £293,000.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1** The council should exercise its functions regarding its duties to homeless persons under part vii housing act 1996.
- 7.2** The council has a statutory duty to follow the expectations set out in the homelessness reduction act 2017 to prevent homelessness and help people threatened with or who become homeless.
- 7.3** The council must also provide suitable accommodation where homelessness cannot be prevented.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 8.1** The current residents of the Our House project will need to be served notice and alternative properties sourced for them if approval to extend funding for the project into 2024 – 2026 is not agreed.
- 8.2** West Oxfordshire has a shortage of social and affordable one bedroom accommodation and the private sector would prove to be unaffordable to those in minimum wage jobs, apprenticeships or training therefore sourcing this type of accommodation is likely to be unachievable.
- 8.3** If move-on properties are not found for the Our House residents, this could force them into homelessness, emergency / B&B accommodation, or rough sleeping.

9. EQUALITIES IMPACT

9.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment is attached – Annex B

10. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 None

(END)

This page is intentionally left blank

OUR HOUSE

Year in review

April 2023 to April 2024



Key stats across reporting year
















● 5 successful move ons
1 eviction





● employment outcomes reported for 10 residents -
indicating a strong motivational trend towards
employment.

● 882 recorded support interactions
72% face to face

● residents increasingly engaging with ASD & ADHD assessments &
medication, counselling, WODC housing team, benefits
entitlements, dental care & physical activity



Date of move in	Initial outcome star	Follow up outcome star(s)	Move on plan/ goals set	Ready for move on	
Sept 23					
BC Jan 21					
DH Feb 23					
JD Nov 21			 		
LB Sept 21					
LC June 23					
JHe May 22					
JHa Feb 24					

 = Q1 23/24
 = Q2 23/24
 = Q3 23/24
 = Q4 23/24

Move on progression chart

Date of move in	Initial outcome star	Follow up outcome star(s)	Move on plan/ goals set	Ready for move on	Move on
Jan 22					
Feb 22					
May 22					
Jul 22					
April 23					
Aug 23					

social tenancy via move on banding

Moved on to private rental arrangement with ex-foster carer

social tenancy via move on banding

social tenancy via move on banding

Moved on to uni halls at Oxford Brookes

evicted due to non-engagement and risk behaviours - ongoing support eg CAF

Page 86

= Q1 23/24
 = Q2 23/24
 = Q3 23/24
 = Q4 23/24

Move on achieved

89% positive 11% negative

Employment, training & education updates

- Employment outcomes include 1 promotion
- Minimal disengagement from sustained employment - changes in employment have frequently for some participants
- 1 participant completed a landscaping apprenticeship & secured work experience in this area whilst also working part time
- 1 participant undertook children's nursing qualification
- 1 Participant recorded his rap music at Inspire Sounds, and was accepted for Soho Farmhouse creative mentorship scheme
- 1 Participant completed maths and English GCSEs with Cherwell college
- a 2nd participant joined English and Maths tutoring for GCSEs with the above



Affordable rents

Rent setting within LHA rate has made securing work and sustaining employment an achievable reality.

The self worth and confidence generated, alongside budgeting support, has empowered residents to take responsibility for their rent and arrears. As well as enable them to fund their own social activities, purchase personal items for everyday living and move on

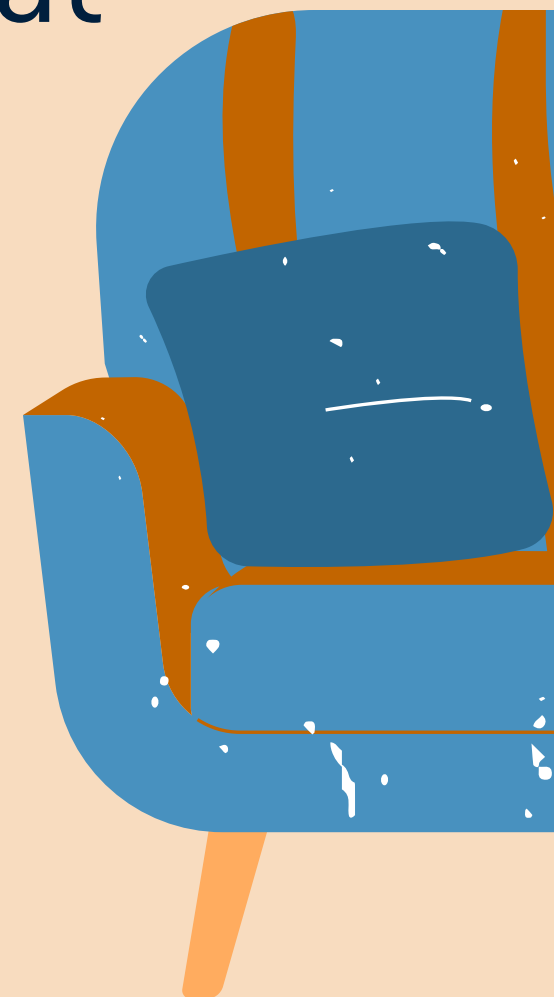
Compared with alternative local supported housing provision

	OUR HOUSE	ALTERNATIVE
Monthly rent	£297.73 (avg)	£1280
%age in arrears	10%	37%
%age in employment	70%	40%



Shortlisted under the Housing category, we are delighted to be heading to London next month to speak to the heart of this project - relationships that are the truly focused on supporting our young residents to regain their lives and realise their potential.

watch this space....



updates



The new referral panel is proving a great success for sharing information and decision making, to further interweave & strengthen our committed partnership working.

WODC will be introduced earlier in our move in process to ensure that move on is supported from the start of our residents journeys.

We are trialling pre-sing up engagement in support planning as part of our assessment process, to ensure prospective residents are invested in accepting the offer of housing with support



Equality and Rurality Impact Assessment Form

When completing this form you will need to provide evidence that you have considered how the ‘protected characteristics’ may be impacted upon by this decision. In line with the General Equality Duty the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard for the need to:

- a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

This form should be completed in conjunction with the guidance document available on the Intranet

Once completed a copy should be emailed to Cheryl.sloan@publicagroup.uk to be signed off by an equalities officer before being published.

1. Persons responsible for this assessment:

Names: Caroline Clissold	
Date of assessment: 10/05/2024	Telephone: 01594 812309 Email: caroline.clissold@publicagroup.uk

2. Name of the policy, service, strategy, procedure or function:

Our House Project Funding Extension
Is this a new or existing one? Existing project

3. Briefly describe it aims and objectives

<p>The Our House project was sent up in 2018 specifically to address the needs of young people with complex needs in the district facing homelessness. Young people need a high level of support which often differs significantly from older adults.</p> <p>The Our House Project provides up to 12 bed spaces split between 3 housing within the district and provides bespoke in person support to assist young people to find education, employment, volunteering alongside longer term sustainable housing options.</p>
--

4. Are there any external considerations? (e.g. Legislation/government directives)

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (along with various other Housing Legislation) provides the statutory framework against how the Housing Team provide advice and assistance to households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

5. What evidence has helped to inform this assessment?

Source	✓	If ticked please explain what
Demographic data and other statistics, including census findings	✓	Regular monitoring of local housing trends and data obtained from HomeseekerPlus which is reported to central government via our H-CLIC reporting requirements
Recent research findings including studies of deprivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Results of recent consultations and surveys	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Results of ethnic monitoring data and any equalities data	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Anecdotal information from groups and agencies within Gloucestershire	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Comparisons between similar functions / policies elsewhere	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Analysis of audit reports and reviews	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	

6. Please specify how intend to gather evidence to fill any gaps identified above:

No gaps identified

7. Has any consultation been carried out?

No
NA

If NO please outline any planned activities

NA

8. What level of impact either directly or indirectly will the proposal have upon the general public / staff? (Please quantify where possible)

Level of impact	Response
NO IMPACT – The proposal has no impact upon the general public/staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
LOW – Few members of the general public/staff will be affected by this proposal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
MEDIUM – A large group of the general public/staff will be affected by this proposal	<input type="checkbox"/>
HIGH – The proposal will have an impact upon the whole community/all staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: e.g. Who will this specifically impact?	

Page 93

9. Considering the available evidence, what type of impact could this function have on any of the protected characteristics?

Negative – it could disadvantage and therefore potentially not meet the General Equality duty;

Positive – it could benefit and help meet the General Equality duty;

Neutral – neither positive nor negative impact / Not sure

	Potential Negative	Potential Positive	Neutral	Reasons	Options for mitigating adverse impacts
Age – Young People		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		The proposal is specifically to address the support and housing needs of young people	

Age – Old People	✓			The proposal is specifically to address the support and housing needs of young people so excludes older adults over 25 in most cases	Older Adults have other options available to them in West Oxfordshire in other Projects aimed at over 25's
Disability			✓	The proposal is inclusive to people with disabilities but is not specific to disability	
Sex – Male			✓	The proposal is inclusive to all gender groups, but it is not specific to gender	
Sex – Female			✓	The proposal is inclusive to all gender groups, but it is not specific to gender	
Race including Gypsy and Travellers			✓	The proposal is inclusive to people of all races, but it is not specific to race	
Religion or Belief			✓	The proposal is inclusive to people of all religions, but it is not specific to religion	
Sexual Orientation			✓	This proposal is inclusive to all types of sexual orientation, but it is not specific to sexual orientation	
Gender Reassignment			✓	The proposal is inclusive to all gender groups, but it is not specific to gender	
Pregnancy and maternity			✓	The proposal is inclusive to people who are pregnant and/or on maternity, but it is not specific to this group	
Geographical impacts on one area			✓	The proposal is inclusive to the whole of West Oxfordshire district	
Other Groups			✓	This proposal is inclusive to all other groups that are not mentioned – see note	
Rural considerations: ie Access to services; leisure facilities, transport; education; employment; broadband.			✓	The proposal is inclusive to the whole of West Oxfordshire district	

10. Action plan (add additional lines if necessary)

Action(s)	Lead Officer	Resource	Timescale
NA			

11. Is there is anything else that you wish to add?


NA

Declaration

I/We are satisfied that an equality impact assessment has been carried out on this policy, service, strategy, procedure or function and where an negative impact has been identified actions have been developed to lessen or negate this impact. We understand that the Equality Impact Assessment is required by the District Council and that we take responsibility for the completion and quality of this assessment.

Completed By:	Caroline Clissold	Date:	10/05/2024
Line Manager:	Jon Dearing	Date:	04/06/2024
Reviewed by Corporate Equality Officer:	Cheryl Sloan	Date:	11/06/2024

This page is intentionally left blank

 WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and Date of Committee	EXECUTIVE – 22 JULY 2024
Subject	APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES
Wards Affected	All
Accountable Member	Councillor Andy Graham – Leader of the Council. Email: andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable Officer	Andrew Brown – Business Manager, Democratic Services. Email: andrew.brown@publicagroup.uk
Report Author	Max Thompson – Senior Democratic Services Officer. Email: max.thompson@westoxon.gov.uk
Purpose	To provide a list of appointments to Outside Bodies for the civic year 2024/25.
Annexes	Annex A – Appointments to Outside Bodies (TO FOLLOW) Annex B – Guidance for members who are appointed to outside bodies.
Recommendation	That the Executive resolves to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the appointments to outside bodies as set out in Annex A; 2. Recommend to Council to note the appointments to outside bodies as set out in Annex A; 3. Note the guidance for members who are appointed to outside bodies (Annex B).
Corporate Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting Residents First • Working Together for West Oxfordshire
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees	N/A

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report sets out the appointments to outside bodies for the 2024/25 civic year.
- 1.2 Appointments to most outside bodies are a responsibility of the Leader of the Council, who makes such appointments annually following the Annual Council meeting.
- 1.3 The appointments for 2024/25 have been confirmed by the Leader and are included in Annex A to this report. Executive and Council are asked to note the report.
- 1.4 The Council has produced guidance for members who are appointed to outside bodies (Annex B). This includes guidance on Members' responsibilities on different types of outside bodies, dealing with interests, and issues of bias and predetermination. The guidance will be circulated to the members appointed to outside bodies.

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1 Members may be appointed to a wide range of outside bodies. Most appointments are made by the Leader. Members may also be appointed directly by the outside body itself to serve in a private capacity (for instance as a member of the community) rather than as an elected member of the Council, or they may be serving as a member of that body before being elected as a Councillor.
- 2.2 Many of the appointments reflect specific Executive responsibilities so it may be the wish of the Leader to appoint to these in accordance with Executive roles.
- 2.3 At the meeting of Annual Council on 22 May 2024, Council noted the Executive arrangements and appointments to the Future Oxford Partnership, which included the four advisory groups. At the Annual Council meeting three members were appointed to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Scrutiny Panel. As these appointments have already been dealt with (or in the case of the Scrutiny Panel, was not for appointment by the Leader), they are not included in Annex A.

3. REVIEW PROCESS

- 3.1 Towards the end of the current civic year the Council will undertake a review exercise which will involve seeking feedback from the outside bodies on their requirements as well as feedback from the appointed members on the work of the outside bodies and their involvement. This review exercise will help to inform the Leader's decision on appointments made to outside bodies in 2024/25.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 The Leader is free to make such appointments as they consider appropriate in respect of executive functions.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Travel and subsistence allowances will be payable in respect of the majority of appointments made, if claimed. Provision for this is included in the Council's budget.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** The Council's Constitution (Part 3C) includes the following as a responsibility of full Council:

To appoint or nominate individuals to outside bodies in respect of non-Executive Functions and revoke or withdraw such appointment or nomination where there is no Group Leader consensus on the decision to be taken. To note the Leader's appointments to outside bodies in respect of Executive Functions, as advised.

- 6.2** Legal implications for members appointed to outside bodies are covered in the guidance document. For example, any member appointed as a director of a company will owe a fiduciary duty to the company.

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.1** Guidance has been produced for Members who are appointed to serve on outside bodies by outlining their responsibilities and obligations in that role. The guidance, appended at Annex B, does not attempt to provide definitive answers to every particular set of circumstances but rather to provide a framework against which Members can exercise judgement when faced with potential conflicts.

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.1** None.

9. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1** There may be climate change implications arising from car travel to meetings of the outside bodies.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

(END)

This page is intentionally left blank



Guidance for Members who are appointed to Outside Bodies

Contents

Introduction	1
The application of the Council's Member Code of Conduct	2
Interests	2
Bias and Predetermination.....	2
Insurance.....	2
Where a Member is appointed Director of a Company	3
Where the Member is appointed as a Trustee.....	4
Where the Member is appointed to an Unincorporated Association	4
The Member Code of Conduct.....	4
General.....	5

Introduction

This guidance has been produced for Members who are appointed to serve on outside bodies by outlining their responsibilities and obligations in that role. The guidance does not attempt to provide definitive answers to every particular set of circumstances but rather to provide a framework against which Members can exercise judgement when faced with potential conflicts.

Members may be appointed to a wide range of outside bodies. Most appointments are made by the Leader. Members may also be appointed directly by the outside body itself to serve in a private capacity (for instance as a member of the community) rather than as an elected member of the Council, or they may be serving as a member of that body before being elected as a Councillor.

The roles of Members on outside bodies will depend upon the legal nature of that organisation and the capacity in which they are appointed to act. Members must act according to the framework set by the outside body and take an informed role in the management of the outside body's affairs. This involves attending meetings on a regular basis and carrying out their duties to the best of their abilities. Whilst it is permissible for a Member to take account of the Council's interests, Members should apply their own judgement in any given situation.

The application of the Council's Member Code of Conduct

Members must adhere to the Member Code of Conduct as set out in the Council's Constitution (Part 6A) when taking part in Council business.

Interests

If a Member has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) in a matter to be considered at the meeting they must not speak or vote on the matter. They should also leave the room during any discussion of, or vote on, any matter in which they have a DPI.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to the financial interest or wellbeing of a Member's Other Registerable Interests (ORI) they must disclose the interest. The Member must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room.

When Members discuss matters relating to an outside body on which they serve at Council meetings, they may take account of that outside body's interest. However, they should not vote simply in accordance with the mandate of that outside body. The primary consideration is the public interest.

Bias and Predetermination

If a Member is found to have been biased when making a Council decision, the decision is likely to be set aside in the event of legal challenge. (Where actual bias has not been established the personal impartiality of the Member is to be presumed).

In summary, the duties of a Member as a director, or a trustee or a member of a management committee may well give rise to a legitimate fear of lack of impartiality.

The fundamental principles of this guidance are as follows:

- Members will act according to the rules, constitutions and frameworks set by the relevant outside body and, where possible, with those of the Council.
- Members will make independent and personal judgements based on their responsibilities to the outside body.
- Members will report back on their involvement with the outside body – they may be asked to provide feedback each year about the organisation to which they are appointed for consideration by the Leader.

The guidance addresses three specific circumstances which arise from time to time and as a result of which potential conflict can arise. These are:

- Where the Member is appointed Director of a Company.
- Where the Member is appointed as a Trustee.
- Where the Member is appointed to an Unincorporated Association.

Insurance

Members should establish as soon as they are appointed what, if any, insurance is in place that covers them in their role.

Members should establish what insurance the organisation itself holds for other purposes, for example third party liability insurance and employer's liability insurance (the second of

which is a legal obligation for all organisations which employ staff). Clearly adequate and comprehensive insurance cover for the organisation is likely to limit any residual exposure for the Member as a trustee, director, committee member, etc.

The ability of local authorities to indemnify Members and officers for any personal liability arising from actions or decisions taken by them in the course of their official duties is covered under The Local Authorities (Indemnities for Members and Officers) Order 2004.

Where a Member is appointed Director of a Company

Companies can be:

- Limited by shares, usually operating a trade or business. They have shareholders and distribute profits to shareholders as dividends.
- Limited by guarantee, “not for profit” organisations. This type of company may also be a charity and has members rather than shareholders.

Companies offer limited liability which means that the members or shareholders are usually not personally liable for the company’s debt and liabilities, subject to some limited exemptions.

The powers of the directors are usually set out in the Articles of Association. These are the rules that govern the internal management of the company.

The Director cannot vote simply in accordance with the Council’s mandate, to do so would be a breach of duty.

When acting as a Director a Member owes a fiduciary duty to the company, not to the individual shareholders, to act honestly and in good faith and in the best interests of the company as a whole. Directors must take proper care of the interests of the company.

A general duty of care and skill to the company is imposed, but a Director requires no greater skill than might reasonably be expected of someone of that individual’s particular knowledge and experience. A Director is not deemed to be an expert but is expected to use due diligence and to obtain expert advice if necessary.

There may be actual or potential conflicts between the interests of the Council and the interests of the company. In such circumstances it would be inappropriate for the Member to take part in discussions upon such topics both as a Member and as a Director. If the conflict is a serious one or repeatedly presents itself then it may be appropriate for the Member to resign as a Director of the company. If in doubt, Members should seek advice from the Monitoring Officer about any potential conflicts of interest.

Directors are not allowed to make a private profit from their position. They must therefore disclose any interests they or their family have in relation to the company’s contracts.

Whether they are then allowed to vote will depend upon the Articles of Association of the company.

Directors must ensure compliance with relevant companies’ legislation in relation to the keeping of accounts and the making of relevant returns Companies House. Failure to do so incurs fines and persistent default may lead to disqualification as a Director.

Directors should also ensure that the company complies with other legislation such as Health and Safety legislation if the company employs staff or employs contractors to undertake work.

Where the Member is appointed as a Trustee

A number of useful publications are available on the Charity Commission's website:

www.charitycommission.gov.uk.

Those who are responsible for the control and administration of a charity are referred to as trustees, even where the organisation is a company limited by guarantee where they are not strictly trustees.

Trustees must take care to act in accordance with the Trust deed and to protect the charity's assets. They are also responsible for compliance with the Charities Acts and the Trustee Act 2000.

Trustees must not make a private profit from their position. They must also perform their duty with the standard of care which an ordinary, prudent business person would show. Higher standards are required of professionals and in relation to investment matters.

Charitable Trustees must ensure that the information relating to the Trust and Trustees is registered with the Charity Commissioners and annual accounts and returns are completed and sent.

If charitable income exceeds £5,000 the letters, advertisements, cheques, etc., must bear a statement that the organisation is a registered charity.

Trustees are under a duty to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation for example in relation to tax and health and safety.

Where the Member is appointed to an Unincorporated Association

Groups which are neither limited companies nor charitable trusts may be "unincorporated associations" which have no separate legal identity from their members.

The rules governing the members' duties and liabilities will (or should) be set out in the organisation's constitution, which is simply an agreement between members as to how the organisation will operate. Usually the organisation's constitution will provide for a management committee to be responsible for the everyday running of the organisation. Management committee members must act within the organisation's constitution and must take reasonable care when exercising their powers.

The Member Code of Conduct

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Member Code of Conduct which has been adopted by Council. When Members are representing the Council on another body, they must follow the code unless it conflicts with a legal duty owed to the other body.


Some outside bodies may require the Member to treat their business as confidential. This may sometimes create a dilemma for the Member and may seem contrary to the idea of assisting public accountability. However, a Member will be bound by any confidentiality undertaking given.

General

As mentioned earlier these guidelines are intended solely for the purpose of providing a general basis upon which members appointed to outside bodies can exercise their judgement when balancing their respective responsibilities as a Member and a nominated representative. The guidelines cannot provide a detailed answer for all circumstances and consequently, if in doubt, a Member should seek further advice and guidance from the Council's Monitoring Officer.

(END)

This page is intentionally left blank

 <p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>	<p>WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>
<p>Name and Date of Committee</p>	<p>EXECUTIVE – 22 JULY 2024</p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p>PUBLICA TRANSITION PLAN</p>
<p>Wards Affected</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Accountable Member</p>	<p>Councillor Andy Graham – Leader of the Council. andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Accountable Officer</p>	<p>Giles Hughes – Chief Executive. giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Report Author</p>	<p>Andrew Pollard – Interim Programme Director andrew.pollard@westoxon.gov.uk</p>
<p>Summary</p>	<p>To consider the Detailed Transition Plan, to note its contents and to approve the recommendations therein.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Annex A – Detailed Transition Plan</p>
<p>Recommendations</p>	<p>That Executive resolves to Recommend to Full Council to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the implementation of Phase I of the Publica Transition on the basis of the Detailed Transition Plan; 2. Delegate to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council the decision to deal with any final detail matters arising from the Detailed Transition Plan; 3. Delegate authority to the Director of Governance in liaison with the Leader to update the constitution by making any consequential changes required as a result of Phase I of the Publica Transition. 4. Carry out a budget re-basing for the 2026/7 financial year so that the funding provided to Publica is proportionate to the services received.
<p>Corporate Priorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting Residents First • A Good Quality of Life for All • Working Together for West Oxfordshire
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>YES</p>
<p>Exempt</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>Consultation</p>	<p>Chief Executive, Director of Finance, Director of Governance, Leader, Deputy Leader, Executive Members, Publica Review Programme Director, Publica Interim Managing Director and through a facilitated workshop with Local Partnerships, Publica Assistant Directors.</p>

I. BACKGROUND

- I.1** Council services are currently delivered through Publica, a joint vehicle owned by the Council together with Cotswold District Council, Cheltenham Borough Council and Forest of Dean District Council. An options appraisal review of Council services and the way in which they are delivered was undertaken in 2023 by external advisors Human Engine. Their final report recommended that the majority of services should move from Publica and return to being under greater control of the Councils. In November, the Council's Executive resolved to support in principle the direction recommended in the Human Engine report to return a range of services back to the Council and reshape Publica (Minute no 112 refers). This work has been developed following the appointment of an Interim Programme Director in January 2024, leading to the Detailed Transition Plan having been prepared.
- I.2** Local Partnerships, supported by the Local Government Association (LGA), South West Region transformation funding, subsequently delivered a report in February 2024, endorsing the Human Engine Report findings, providing additional supporting detail and setting out two phases under which the majority of services should be repatriated: phase 1 comprising a significant number of services expected to be in/around October 2024 and phase 2 expected to be in/around March 2025.
- I.3** To support the Chief Executives of the Shareholders Councils and elected members in implementing the transition of services, an Interim Programme Director was appointed at the end of January 2024 to lead the Publica Transition Programme. The scope of this Programme referenced the Human Engine Report delivered in Autumn 2023 which recommended retaining selected services within Publica, meaning that the majority of services would move to direct control, be shared, via Publica or some other model on a case-by-case basis.
- I.4** In March 2024, the Council received the Local Partnerships report which built on the recommendations set out in the Human Engine report, and which was subsequently considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and by Executive. The Council's Executive noted the findings and recommendations in the report and instructed the Interim Programme Director to prepare a Detailed Transition Plan (Minute no 161 refers).
- I.5** To facilitate this, the Interim Programme Director established a small, focused Programme Management Office, comprised of an HR expert / lead and a Business Partner Accountant. The programme team engaged with Council and Publica key staff (including the Section 151's and Monitoring Officers) via the creation of a number of workstreams (Finance, Legal, HR, ICT and Communications, initially) as the 'spokes' to the Programme Management Office (PMO) 'hub'. This flexible model has provided engagement that is both broad and technically defined. In addition, a workshop jointly facilitated with Local Partnerships took place with senior Publica executives and retained officers from the Councils to understand more about the views of the wider stakeholder group regarding the transition. This

information was then used to develop an outline framework for the transition of services to enable the PMO to take the Programme forward.

- 1.6** A governance structure was developed to provide oversight, support and decision making by way of an Officer Transition Board (comprised of each Council CEO, the Interim Managing Director of Publica and the Interim Programme Director), with a Councils' Programme Board providing the bridge link back to the Councils.
- 1.7** In developing the Detailed Transition Plan, the PMO carefully considered the Councils' objectives expressed through their corporate plan objectives, the design led principles outlined at high level by Local Partnerships in their report and the aims of the Transition in relation to services and service delivery to:
- Deliver more defined local priorities
 - Better reflect Member priorities and Corporate Plans
 - Be more agile
 - Be more sustainable
 - Ensure better control over service
 - Define services more to locality, with residents at the heart.
- 1.8** In addition to the initial workshop, and project governance meetings, the PMO has undertaken fact finding meetings with a number of officers at the Councils and Publica to help inform the Transition Plan. This helped to develop the rationale for the transition of services back to the Councils.
- 1.9** Significant work has been undertaken to model the costs associated with the transition of services back to the council, involving the CEO's and SI51 officers at each Council. Costings were modelled, beginning with ensuring an assured baseline onwards, together with a consideration of risk, opportunity and risk mitigation, with each element informing the overall project brief. Opportunities for sharing of certain services and roles were considered and refined following a CEO workshop. Taken together, this has enabled a Programme GANTT chart (a bar chart showing the project schedule) to be refined over time which provides the backbone to the programme. Through the process, it became clear that Phase I needed to take effect on 1 November to allow sufficient time for workforce consultation. The focus of the Detailed Transition Plan has therefore been on Phase I and the relevant steps for this are set out in the GANTT chart. A full programme of Communications has been developed in support, together with documents developed by HR in support of the transition. There are no ICT systems implications and ICT are engaged in developing a series of Council employee portals to support Councils from the 1 November "go live" date onwards.

2. THE DETAILED TRANSITION PLAN

- 2.1** The Detailed Transition Plan attached in Appendix A sets out the services proposed to transfer, the process including phasing, consideration of risks and opportunities, cost

implications, practicalities and timelines. It makes recommendations for a number of elements to be noted and for the phasing for the Transition to be approved.

2.2 The service areas transferred in Phase I will include:

- Democratic Services and Elections
- Forward Planning
- Development Management (but not 'planning validation and planning support')
- Ecology
- Conservation, Heritage & Design
- Building Control
- Economic Development
- Tourism
- Communities and wellbeing
- Climate change
- Strategic Finance (to include all finance roles apart from transactional finance (AP / AR), procurement, insurance and Treasury Management)
- Communications
- Strategic Housing
- Corporate Planning, policy and partnerships
- Executive Assistants and Support.

2.3 In addition a HR Business Partner is to be seconded, to the Council, ahead of transfer, meaning that there will be a dedicated in-house Council resource at an early stage to support the Council directly pre- and post-transfer.

2.4 The Detailed Transition Plan has an accompanying employee communications and engagement plan to ensure that all the key information is passed to employees, they are engaged in the process and they are consulted with as part of the transition process. The plan follows best practice HR and communications and will follow a clear and prescribed process to ensure the right information is communicated at the right time to ensure employment law is correctly followed and Publica employees are treated fairly. It also focusses to supporting employees through the process and explaining what the future will look like post transfer via the correct channels.

3. THE COUNCIL PLAN

3.1 The Council adopted an ambitious Council Plan in January 2023. This outlines the following vision for West Oxfordshire:

“Shaping West Oxfordshire as a District which offers a fulfilling and meaningful quality of life for our residents with opportunities for all to flourish. A thriving and prosperous

place for entrepreneurs and businesses, where local people and visitors can enjoy the beauty and heritage of our landscape, built, farmed and natural environment.”

3.2 To achieve the Council Plan there are five priorities, of equal importance, which will guide the work we do:

- *Putting Residents First*
- *Enabling a Good Quality of Life for All*
- *Creating a Better Environment for People and Wildlife*
- *Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency*
- *Working Together for West Oxfordshire*

4. BUSINESS CASE

4.1 The Publica Review provides an opportunity to restructure the Council and invest to deliver the vision and priorities set by the Council Plan.

4.2 The rationale for the additional costs of Phase I is:

- A more focused and defined approach to driving the delivery of the Council’s priorities as set through the Council Plan.
- Much better definition between Policy and high-level strategy on the one hand and delivery on the other. More defined control for the Council.
- Greater clarity over roles, responsibilities and accountabilities – and where direction is set from.
- Greater clarity and focus for those functions remaining with Publica – such as Revenues and Benefits, and ICT.
- Enabling performance and value for money be more clearly defined and measured by the Council.
- Simplification of processes and in determining whether and how resources can be deployed and redeployed as priorities shift.
- Greater responsiveness and agility, so as to be able to deliver Member priorities and adapt to changing circumstances.
- Greater focus on locality and local services.
- Employing people locally, using this in support of economic growth (e.g. apprenticeships), being more accessible and visible and foster the spirit of the West Oxfordshire community.
- Opportunity to group services to accelerate efficiencies, by identifying synergies between certain services before moving and re-defining services.
- Being responsive and business like – adopting a commercial mindset when considering engagement with businesses, residents and key stakeholders, ensuring a

cost recovery approach is used where appropriate to maximise service efficiencies, whilst balancing with community benefit.

- Better focus and ability to drive the sustainability agenda of the Council.

4.3 It is assumed within the Detailed Transition Plan that with the significant changes to Publica, there would also be a budget re-basing for the 2026/7 financial year. This is timed to follow the implementation of Phase 1 of the Publica Review and will sit alongside the consideration of Phase 2. It will ensure that the funding provided to Publica is proportionate to the services received.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

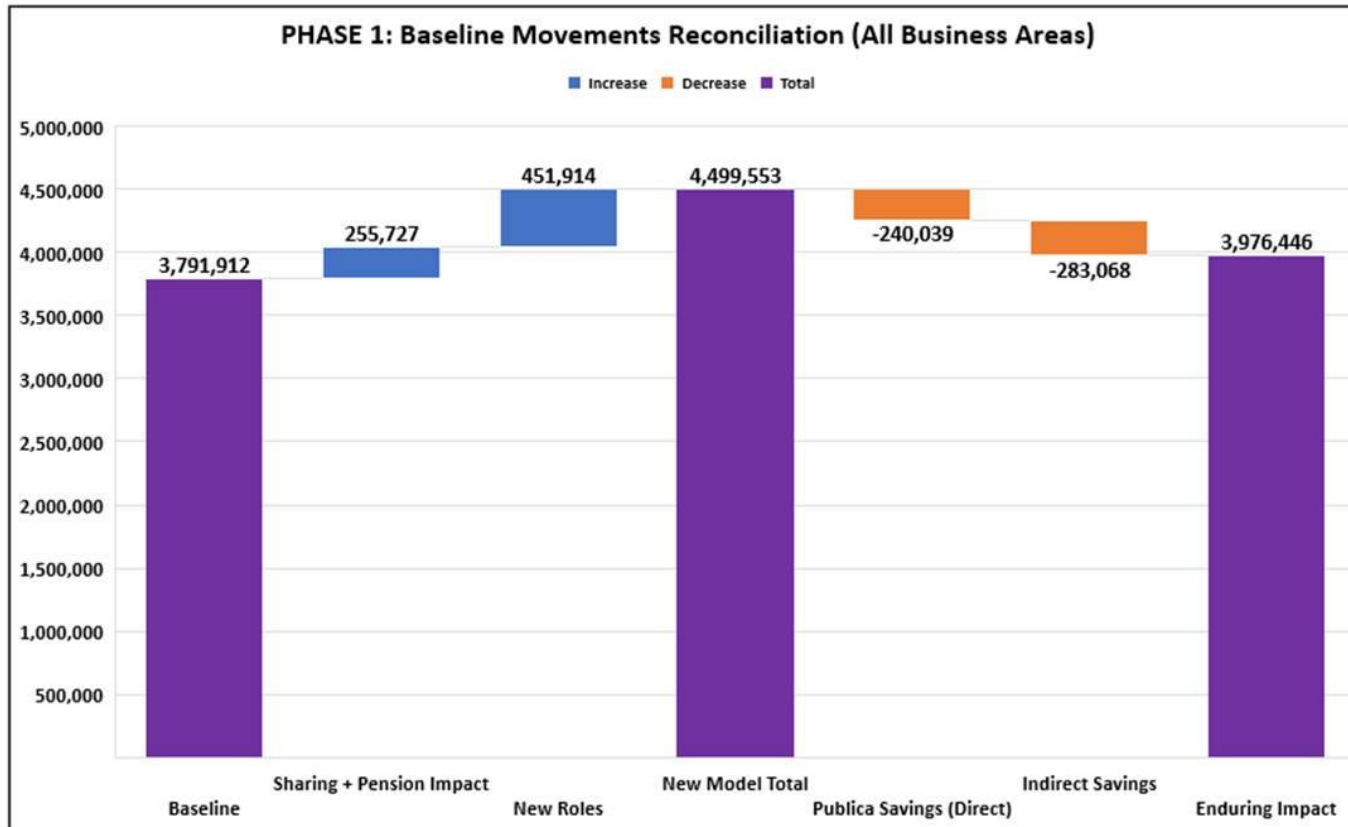
5.1 The financial implications of the Publica Review have been the subject of extensive due diligence since programme inception in February 2024. The resulting financial modelling output reflects robust programme assumptions and a detailed audit trail of movements between baseline costing, of delivery via the current Publica model, to the new WODC structure post transition, as proposed in the Detailed Transition Plan. The key financial implications of the Detailed Transition Plan are:

- Indicative enduring annual increase to West Oxfordshire District Council revenue budget of £185k per annum (pro rata for 2024/25 would be £77k) with one-off costs of restructuring between £207k to £301k, being the “most likely” and “maximum” scenario respectively.

5.2 The ‘Waterfall’ chart below highlights the core movements in cost from the Publica baseline costing to the WODC new structure post transition. The key assumptions which underpin the Phase 1 cost movements are:

- The Council model assumes all Phase 1 roles are opted-in to Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) at the point of transfer (November 2024) with no subsequent opt out.
- Newly created roles are in accordance with service delivery requirements under the Council model post Phase 1. Proposed organisational structures have been developed, to facilitate this cost modelling, and these will be refined and finalised after consultation with staff involved in Phase 1.
- “Direct savings” result from roles not transferring to an equivalent role within the Council operating structure.
- “Indirect savings” result from a Senior Management restructure within Publica. These savings are offered in entirety underneath the scope of Phase 1, therefore no further executive management savings are anticipated for future Phases.
- For modelling purposes, both the one-off costs of transition and the savings (direct & indirect) have been split equally across Councils (one third each).
- This paper does not consider any impact of the Council restructure on Retained Officers’ remuneration.
- As mentioned, Local Partnerships envisaged a phased approach to this transition and Phase 2 will be the subject of a future report.

WODC PHASE 1: Variance Analysis / Commentary (Baseline → Phase 1 → New Council Model)



All Business Areas	
TOTAL	
	£
Baseline	3,791,912
Sharing + Pension Impact	255,727
New Roles	451,914
New Model Total	4,499,553
Publica Savings (Direct)	-240,039
Indirect Savings	-283,068
Enduring Impact	3,976,446

Indicative Annual Increase / (Decrease) 184,534

One-Off Costs	
Phase 1: Roles at Risk	18
Minimum	14,824
Most Likely	207,027
Maximum	300,717

Most likely estimate represents WODC share of any redundancy costs. Outline agreement reached with Partner Councils to share the cost of redundancy 33% each.

Savings (Direct & Indirect) follow the same basis of apportionment to Phase 1 one-off costs (33%).

5.3 In terms of the budget implications:

- The 2024/25 budget, approved in February 2024, included £200k for Publica Review one off costs (primarily project office related) and £75k for ongoing pensions costs.
- Section 2.19 of the 2024/25 Report of the Chief Financial Officer stated:

Initially one-off costs will be funded from earmarked reserves and ongoing costs will be included in the 2025/26 base budget when there is more certainty with regards to the transition plan

- The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) identified the Publica Review as a risk area, alongside Local Government Funding, Statutory Override for Financial Instruments and Investment Property, and earmarked reserves were set aside to mitigate these risks. In the 2024/25 budget cycle £500k was set aside for the Publica Review one off costs.
- The full year impact of the Publica Transition on 2025/26 budget (£185k per annum) and MTFS will be considered in the autumn as part of the budget setting process.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Councils established a Legal Workstream with a membership composed of the Monitoring Officers for all four partner councils to Publica, the Interim Head of Legal Services, Business Manager for Business Continuity, Governance and Risk and the Interim Programme Director. This has met regularly to identify legal issues yielded by the proposed transition.

6.2 The Legal Implications of transferring services back to the Council fall into three principal areas:

- Contractual Obligations (internal and external)
- Governance
- Employment law

Internal Contractual arrangements

The contractual relationship between the Council and Publica Group Ltd is the subject of various legal agreements including:

- A members' agreement dated 25 May 2017 between FoDDC, CDC (Cotswold District Council) and WODC (West Oxford District Council)
- Admission Agreements in relation to the Gloucestershire County Council Local Government Pension Scheme dated 14 November 2017 and in relation to Oxfordshire County Council scheme dated 30 November 2017
- A Services Agreement dated 31 October 2017, with a commencement date of 1 November 2017.

The Services Agreement sets out the contract periods for general services, support services and for commissioning services, which come to an end on 31 October in 2024, 2026 and

2027 respectively. For now, the Council has agreed with Publica via a series of side letters that the contract will continue in respect of all these services until the Council has made a decision whether or not to transfer services back in-house, whereupon it will vary the contract or give notice.

External Contractual Arrangements

Existing contracts with external parties would require novation if the current party were Publica instead of the Council. This was identified as a potential risk in early meetings of the legal workstream, but it has not materialised. The contracts register appears to show that contracts have been completed in the name of the Council.

Shared Working

Phase One of the transition for the most part proposes services coming back in-house on a “sovereign council” basis. If there are any proposals to deliver via a shared service, this will have to be established by a legal agreement. Both the existing Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit and Legal Service partnerships offer examples of different legal models for shared services delivered by retained officers.

Any standalone shared posts (not within a shared service) will need to be secured by way of a suitable legal agreement whereby the employing council agrees that its employee is available to carry out duties for the partner council. This is particularly important for posts which discharge statutory functions within the Council’s Scheme of Delegation.

Governance

The Council will need to evaluate its existing non-executive scheme of delegation and satisfy itself that it either employs or has available to it (for example through shared services) the officers empowered to discharge delegated powers. The Council will also need to remove references to Publica in its Constitution where these are no longer applicable. It is proposed that the Monitoring Officer be given the power to make all consequential amendments to the Constitution that result from members’ decision.

Best Value Consultation

External legal advice has been sought and obtained on whether or not the Council is obliged to carry out a public consultation under Section 3 Local Government Act 1999 on its proposals. Based on that advice, the Interim Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officers are satisfied that no duty to consult arises.

Employment Law

Clearly, the proposal has at its core a change in the employment relations of all staff it impacts. Whilst this has principally been within the remit of the HR Workstream, The Legal Workstream has interrogated aspects of applicable employment law. There has been extensive discussion with external lawyers over the extent to which the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (“TUPE”) applies to the insourcing of services. The conclusions of this are set out in section 4.0 of the Detailed Transition Plan.

Where TUPE does apply, the employment of any employees assigned to an organised grouping will transfer automatically to the Council unless they object to the transfer. They would be employed on the same terms and conditions, save for gaining an entitlement to join the Local Government Pension Scheme.

- 6.3** Where a role is fragmented (shared) and will no longer remain shared post transfer, TUPE will not apply. In these instances, formal consultation will be undertaken with the impacted

employees in line with the Publica Redundancy Policy and Procedure following ACAS best practice. Consideration will be given to alternative measures to minimise or avoid redundancies including, but limited to, suitable alternative suitable employment within Publica, or through employment opportunities with the Shareholder Councils.

7. RISK ASSESSMENT

7.1 The Workstreams, the Officer Transition Board and the Council's Programme Board regularly review the Programme Risk Register and the Programme is reviewed periodically through Publica's own risk management framework. This approach of risk management will continue through the Programme.

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.1 Under equality legislation, the Council has a legal duty to pay 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality in relation to:

- Race
- Disability
- Gender, including gender reassignment
- Age
- Sexual Orientation
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Religion or belief

When considering this recommendation, no barriers or impact on any of the above groups has been identified.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared and is attached.

Trade Union recognition is being considered for the Council. Publica currently has Trade Union recognition agreements. Council and Publica Officers are currently in contact with relevant Trade Unions on this.

9. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 This recommendation has no direct climate change implications.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Annex A - Detailed Transition Plan



A Detailed Transition Plan for Council Services and Publica

Contents

- 1.0 Background**
- 2.0 Transition Planning**
- 3.0 Planning the Order of Service Transition**
- 4.0 Service Transition Practicalities**
- 5.0 Systems and Processes**
- 6.0 Programme Risks and Opportunities**
- 7.0 Financial modelling assumptions and outputs**
- 8.0 Steps to Transition and Communications**
- 9.0 Ongoing Transition Planning**
- 10.0 Conclusions / Summary Recommendations**

Appendix I – Project Initiation Document

Appendix II – Transition Framework

1.0 Background

In February 2024, Local Partnerships was asked to support the shareholders of Publica through the Local Government Association's South West transformation grant funding programme. The brief was to further develop an initial study delivered by Human Engine in Autumn 2023 as a bridging document to inform the preparation and implementation of a Detailed Transition Plan to repatriate the majority of services from Publica to the District Councils in 2024 and onwards. In their report, Local Partnerships confirmed that doing so would improve control, accountability and delivery of the Councils' corporate objectives.

In consideration of a Detailed Transition Plan, Local Partnerships stated: *"Each council will need to articulate its ambitions for success and consider if this aligns with other councils. Corporate plans will need to be assessed in terms of their alignment to one another and the shared ambition. This should assist in embedding the councils to a new organisational culture into the ways of working, rather than creating a like-for-like structure"*.

In future the district Councils will drive directly the provision of the majority of services through holding the majority of the resources, with some retained through Publica. This contrasts with the position currently where the service delivery vehicle holds the principal resource with which to do this. It is this change which is central to this Transition.

The Local Partnerships' report, published on 16 February 2024 was approved by the Councils and:

- Built on the work of the Human Engine report and verified much of the early stages work carried out there
- Clarified the portfolio of Publica services to remain; the sovereign services to be carved out and the services that may be jointly shared in future
- Set the design guidelines
- Confirmed the target to extract key services in 6 months from April 2024
- Confirmed the need for a Programme Management Office to drive the transition.

This Detailed Transition Plan builds on the earlier work of Local Partnerships and Human Engine through detailed discussion, analysis and fieldwork, involving a significant number of Publica and Council officers. In particular, it references the detailed financial modelling that has taken place.

Executive sponsors for this work are:

Rob Weaver, Chief Executive, Cotswold District Council
Nigel Brinn, Chief Executive, Forest of Dean District Council
Giles Hughes, Chief Executive, West Oxfordshire District Council.

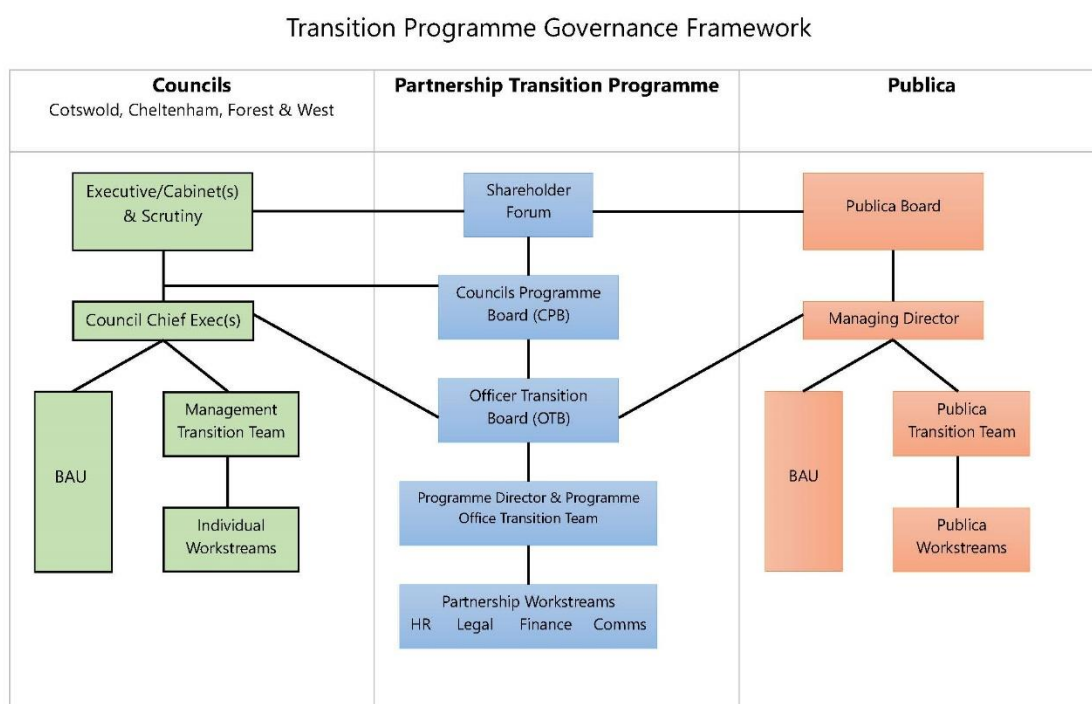
Links to the Human Engine Report and the Local Partnerships Report are here:

- [Human Engine Report: Strategic Review of Publica Services](#)
- [Local Partnerships Report: Insourcing from Publica](#)

2.0 Transition Planning

A small Programme Management Office (PMO) was established in February 2024 in support of the transition comprising an Interim Programme Director plus two Publica employees; one a HR specialist; the other a chartered accountant/modelling specialist. The PMO was set up to operate on ‘hub and spoke’ principles, with the spokes being a set of subject area workstreams: Finance, Legal, Communications, ICT and HR comprising subject matter experts from Publica and the Retained Officer Group.

These workstreams have formed part of a comprehensive Transition Programme Governance Framework, shown below.



A Programme Initiation Document was created by Publica with progress monitored monthly (see **Appendix I**). The workstreams have provided significant support to the development of the Programme. By way of example, the ICT workstream informed the Programme on key operational elements and risks, as well as providing the basis for consideration of additional infrastructure to support the new Councils’ operations in the form of employee portal development. In addition, statutory officers have contributed to a critical friend brief which, with the output of the workstreams, has made a significant contribution to the development of this Detailed Transition Plan.

A key focus for the Transition Planning was on modelling the potential impacts, risks and delivery planning. Reference was made to Local Partnerships’ advice, the principal elements of which are in the Transition Framework table, updated, at **Appendix II**.

Key goals for the Transition, discussed with the Executive Sponsors, have included ensuring:

- A more focused and defined approach to driving each council's priorities through their corporate plan strategies.
- Greater clarity and focus for those functions remaining with Publica.
- Greater clarity over roles, responsibilities and accountabilities – and where direction is set from.
- How performance and value for money is understood and managed and how it can be more clearly defined and measured.
- Simplification of processes and in determining whether and how resources can be deployed and redeployed as priorities shift.
- Greater responsiveness and agility so as to be able to deliver Member priorities.
- Greater focus on locality and local services.
- Employing people locally, using this in support of economic growth (e.g. apprenticeships), being more accessible and visible and foster the spirit of communities.
- Much better definition between Policy and high-level strategy on the one hand and delivery on the other. More defined control.
- Opportunity to group services to accelerate efficiencies, by identifying synergies between certain services before moving and re-defining services.
- Being responsive and business like – adopting a more commercial mindset when considering engagement with businesses, residents and key stakeholders, ensuring a cost recovery approach is implemented whenever possible to maximise service efficiencies.
- Better focus and ability to drive the sustainability agendas of all Councils.

These are linked to 'design led principles' to ensure that services can maximise delivery of the Councils' corporate plans and Administrations' Values. These include:

- *Councils shaping the delivery of services* - being more mindful of efficient working methodologies and in relation to the Council's corporate plan objectives, which are key.
- *Councils considering the repatriation approach* - where Publica employees work across multiple councils, considering factors such as historic pension strain, relationship led roles with specific councils, otherwise whether roles are shared, in other words whether the majority of work is undertaken principally for a particular

council or not. Also, an approach to the potential future sharing of services by Councils, if appropriate.

- *Consideration of cost* – recognising that there is a cost to bringing services back in-house and it may be difficult to quantify any savings such as on management costs in the short term.
- *Councils employing people locally, being accessible and visible*, with the ambition of making services more local with greater accountability and transparency, building in apprenticeship and graduate programmes to ensure succession planning and improve Equity, Diversity & Inclusion metrics.
- *Grouping services together to accelerate efficiencies*, by identifying synergies between certain families of services before moving services. A good example would be that under the broad header of Sustainability, could sit climate change, environment, flood etc. Grouping services in this way would support efficiencies assuming that employees were employed under a broader brief than is currently the case.
- *Addressing anomalies and driving efficiencies by way of straight through processing where possible*. In the longer term, an example might be grouping planning validation with the whole of planning, rather than in a separate administrative function, as now and potentially, in future, using technology to help triage in the first instance.

A key focus for the transition is to ensure that teams are structured around delivery of the Councils' corporate plans and priorities. Throughout the Councils' corporate plans there are strong areas of common focus around environment, sustainability and climate change related areas, community and local economic development. These aspects have been considered carefully in the modelling of appropriate Council structures.

Recommendations:

- 1. Note the Design Led principles**
- 2. Note the Key Goals for the Transition**

3.0 Planning the Order of Service transition

Local Partnerships had suggested that the following services could be transitioned in Phase I, around October 2024 (using the descriptions set out in their report):

- Development and Building Control
- Local Plan Team
- Democratic Services and Elections
- Corporate Plan and Policy
- Economic Development
- Communities
- Climate change/environment/sustainability
- Strategic finance
- Strategic HR
- Strategic Housing
- Community Wellbeing;

with the following suggested for Phase 2, in/about March 2025:

- Food Safety and Licensing
- Environmental Health
- Performance and Business Intelligence
- Property and Estates
- Project Management
- Communications.

Local Partnership's work did not include modelling the baseline establishment of Publica, nor did it include an analysis of systems associated with service delivery. In addition, the scope did not allow for significant fieldwork. On analysis, however, a helpful distinction can be drawn from the work that Local Partnerships delivered in that the identified Phase I grouping comprises services where only a very modest proportion of employees work across more than one Council, whereas in Phase 2, employees are typically working across several Councils. Such a distinction is helpful in planning for the Transition.

The Transition programme discussions on council priorities clarified that all planning/ planning policy (except for planning validation, and planning support, where there was a consensus on having the resilience associated with sharing across the three councils at this time).

The Transition phases will significantly change Publica's scale and operations as services transition back to the Councils. Accordingly, an assumption has been made that the Publica organisation is simultaneously to be re-structured, together with its governance.

4.0 Service Transition Practicalities

The Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employees ('TUPE') legislation has been in force in the UK since 1981 and applies in many, though not all, instances. It is designed to protect the rights of employees when there is a transfer of the business in which they work resultant either from:

- The transfer from one employer to another of an organised grouping of resources which has the objective of pursuing an economic activity; or
- A service provision change, where activities are switching from one employer to another, and there is an organised grouping of employees whose principal purpose is carrying out those activities.

A number of the services are provided by Publica to a single Council by employees that are now and always have been focused 100% on one Council. This is the case for the majority of Phase I. It would therefore be reasonable for the Councils to conclude that for the most part, TUPE will apply to the insourcing of the services and hence employees in Phase I. In those instances where TUPE does not apply, which relates to roles which are fragmented and/or will no longer remain shared, processes that are objectively fair, reasonable and transparent would be applied.

HR have checklists ready and available for TUPE transfers for both Transferor and Transferee and will also have a suite of documentation ready for use as Councils move to initiate, carry out and complete the TUPE process. Ensuring the process is followed correctly reduces risk and supports employees and the organisations effectively. The aim will be to ensure that employees have a smooth transition from Publica into the Councils to ensure services and the customer experience continue throughout the process to underpin success.

Whilst planning is ongoing, it is imperative that confidentiality is maintained so far as practicably possible. The Programme Office, HR and Communications have working on the basis that the transition of services is under consideration and no more than that. Any direct conversations between Council management and Publica employees could be construed as consultation before formal consultation has been initiated and should therefore be avoided.

All communications to any or all employee(s) in relation to the transition should be conducted through official channels whether that is through the Communications Team or by HR, Trade Unions and the joint consultation process.

5.0 Systems and processes

A key element of the transition is ICT as this underpins all operations. It also links closely to communications, which will be key in delivering a successful Transition.

Many of the ICT systems are inter-linked. Some of the systems licences are owned by Publica, some by a single Council, some by all four Councils. No particular issues were identified through the ICT Workstream in terms of systems and processes for the transition. The current ICT set up is flexible to an extent that will relatively easily support the transition that is envisaged, though this will require significant focus and resource from the ICT Team to be able to deliver this.

Microsoft Tenants are becoming more important over time. When Publica was created, Microsoft Tenants in their present form did not exist. Subsequently a single Tenant was created for the three District Councils aligned to objectives for Publica. Whilst this should be maintained for at least Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the transition, logic dictates that the three Councils should move, ultimately, to a single Microsoft Tenant for each Council, as each Council begins to assume a greater role in direct service delivery.

All employees currently have access to a Publica portal and there are three Councillor portals (one for each District Council) in addition. All are hosted and created using a product called Lumapps. In the medium term, it would make sense to look at moving this functionality to Microsoft 365. This is not a sensible approach until there are dedicated Microsoft Tenants for each Council as there is a one-to-one relationship between portals and tenants in Microsoft. The short-term solution is to create three new portals in the Lumapps product, one for each Council and the Councillor portals could potentially be merged in and this is to be progressed to ensure that each Council has its own employee portal ahead of Phase 1 'go live' at no additional cost.

6.0 Programme Risks and Opportunities

A Programme Risk and Opportunity Register has been developed aligned to each Council's Risk Management Policy with input through the Workstreams and Retained Officers and is available for viewing via the PMO.

Key risks that require continued focus throughout the transition and are elevated on the Risk Register centre around:

- Processes linked to the transition, and the need to follow the law and due process
- People, the need to continue to motivate, attract and retain
- Communications, the need to ensure effective and timely communications for each relevant audience.

7.0 Financial modelling assumptions and outputs

The Detailed Transition Plan (“DTP”) provides the framework for services to transition from Publica to each Council and will have a significant impact on the cost-of-service delivery.

Given the scale and complexity of the Publica Review programme, extensive due diligence on the Human Engine review and Local Partnerships report recommendations has been undertaken.

A detailed financial model has been developed, tested and reviewed with a key output from the financial model considering the affordability of service delivery choices through identification and quantification of:

- Additional costs associated with service delivery of services transferring from Publica to each Council in Phase I
- Reductions in the Publica contract sum as a result

There are two financial models that have been developed in support of the financial due diligence. A Baseline Model (“BM”) developed from Publica’s payroll data and reconciled against the agreed Publica Contract Sum (“PCS”). A subsequent Council Model (“CM”) was developed building on the agreed output from the BM with additional post included to support Phase I services in each Council. The output from the CM is therefore considered within this section of the Detailed Transition Plan.

Publica Contract Sum/ Baseline Model

The agreed Publica Contract Sum (excluding mark-up and transformation) for the 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years is shown in the Table below.

A. Contract Sum Reconciliation	TOTAL (£)	Cheltenham Borough Council (£)	Forest of Dean District Council (£)	West Oxfordshire District Council (£)	Cotswold District Council (£)
2023/24 Base Contract Sum	30,358,576	966,439	7,388,247	11,266,710	10,737,179
2024/25 Base Contract Sum	32,137,769	826,653	7,888,763	12,259,122	11,163,232

The Baseline Model was developed from Publica Payroll data and reconciled back to the 2023/24 base contract sum. Several material differences were identified and investigated through the reconciliation process:

- Vacant posts – duplication of vacant post due to creation of new post references rather than utilising the vacant post reference.
- Post reference discrepancies between payroll, service establishments and working papers supporting the contract sum budget – allocation of new post references as above.

Posts funded outside of the contract sum (i.e., time-limited posts funded from each Council's other resources such as earmarked reserves).

The *BM* was subject to check and challenge/peer review by s151 officers through the Finance Workstream. S151 officers were content that the *BM* was based on accurate and reliable financial data, included reasonable financial assumptions to support financial forecasting, and had been prepared following best practice financial modelling principles (ICAEW Financial Modelling Code).

The key output from the *BM* is the identification of the baseline cost of posts/services that transfer to each Council under Phase I of the transition plan and the impact on the baseline cost resulting from the additional employer pension contribution costs associated with the Local Government Pension Scheme ("*LGPS*").

Service Area	Baseline Cost (£)	Phase I Cost (£)	Change in Cost (£)	% Change in Cost	Posts
BUC001: Building Control	784,321	827,054	42,733	5.45%	19
CCR001: Community Engagement	824,080	873,493	49,413	6.00%	31
COM001: Community Intelligence	125,119	125,119	0	0.00%	2
COM801: Health Delivery	140,244	154,160	13,916	9.92%	18
COR801: Corporate Support	213,682	229,745	16,063	7.52%	5
DEV001: Development Management	2,930,793	3,147,609	216,816	7.40%	64
DRM005: Committee Services	440,648	485,089	44,441	10.09%	12
ECD001: Economic Development	468,704	489,391	20,687	4.41%	9
ELE001: Elections Services	368,726	377,317	8,591	2.33%	12
HOS001: Housing Strategy	245,878	260,182	14,304	5.82%	6
PLP001: Planning Policy	1,136,952	1,187,840	50,888	4.48%	25
PLP004: Heritage & Conservation	901,857	974,956	73,099	8.11%	26
REG023: Environmental Strategy	410,980	463,412	52,432	12.76%	11
SUP003: Human Resources	175,352	175,352	0	0.00%	3
SUP009: Accountancy	721,152	758,499	37,347	5.18%	13
SUP018: Communications	678,593	754,996	76,403	11.26%	15
TOU001: Tourism	221,221	233,880	12,659	5.72%	5
TOTAL	10,788,301	11,518,093	729,792	6.76%	276

Council Model (RAG rating for each assumption/output)

The *CM* builds on the outputs from the *BM* and includes the costs of additional Council roles that are required to support Phase I services.

Key assumptions and observations made in the *CM* are listed below and assess in terms of robustness, confidence, and materiality on a **Red, Amber, Green** basis.

RED	AMBER	GREEN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Front-loaded Publica cost reductions <input type="checkbox"/> Agency cost assumption (not included in model) • Redundancy provision (not included in model) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> LGPS Assumptions <input type="checkbox"/> Financial analysis shown in Waterfall Chart <input type="checkbox"/> Vacancy Factor

- **GREEN** All staff currently outside of the Local Government Pension scheme are auto enrolled. Assumption is that there is no subsequent opt-out from LGPS (i.e., 100% of staff eligible to join LGPS do not opt-out). For the purposes of the model, this is a prudent assumption with likely opt-out rates expected to be very low.
- Whilst the Model includes Publica contract sum reductions, as shown in the Waterfall charts below, this is for completeness and to demonstrate the net financial impact of the changes associated with Phase 1. Contract Sum amendments, whether increases or decreases, are recognised as a change to the General Fund Revenue Budget and therefore support the net financial position of the Council. Contract Sum reductions, therefore, should not be viewed as a source of funding for the Phase 1 transition nor justification for increased service or structure costs.
- **AMBER** It is also important for members to recognise the front-loaded nature of Contract Sum reductions. Cost reductions associated with the removal/deletion of post within the Publica senior management structure (Managing Director (MD), Assistant Director (AD) roles have been allocated in full against Phase 1. As a result, no further indirect savings are anticipated across future phases thereby limiting the mitigation of additional costs associated with Phase 2 service transfers.
- **GREEN** The table and waterfall chart show the full-year enduring impact of the Phase 1 transfer and decisions taken on Council services. For the 2024/25 financial year there will only be a part-year impact as Phase 1 will not commence until November 2024. However, there may be additional costs in 2024/25 associated with recruitment and retention that have not been included in the modelling and will be identified and reported through each Council's regular financial reporting to members.
- **GREEN** Vacancy Factor – a vacancy factor of 2.5% is applied by Publica to payroll budgets at service level. As services are transferred to Councils it is appropriate for the equivalent vacancy factor to be applied to Phase 1 budgets (i.e., the net transfer of budget from Publica to each Council will include a reduction equivalent to 2.5%). Each Council will therefore need to determine how to account for and apply their share of the vacancy factor.

- **AMBER** The model does not include any provision for agency staff costs. The CSM includes all posts – whether occupied or vacant. Each Council will need to manage services within the available budget and where vacancies are temporarily covered by agency staff there may not be sufficient budget at service level. Whilst the 2023/24 outturn position in Publica supports the view that at an aggregate level the salary savings through vacancy management exceed the cost of agency staff (£1.8m salary savings vs. £0.9m agency staff cost), this may be more difficult for each Council to achieve. The regular financial reporting to members will focus on the cost of agency staff at service level and identify through variance reporting budget pressures and management action that can be taken in mitigation.
- **AMBER** For the avoidance of doubt, the model does not include redundancy, payment in lieu of notice (PILON), or pension strain cost (where applicable). These costs are one-off in nature with future salary savings accruing back to each Council. The covering report to the Detailed Transition Plan sets out the financial implications for each Council and addresses the business case justification for redundancy, apportionment of these costs across each Council, and the treatment of salary savings.
- Note: One-off costs incurred are ‘paid back’ before any cost reduction is recognised in the MTFS and will be judgement for each Council’s s151 officer in terms of proper accounting treatment.

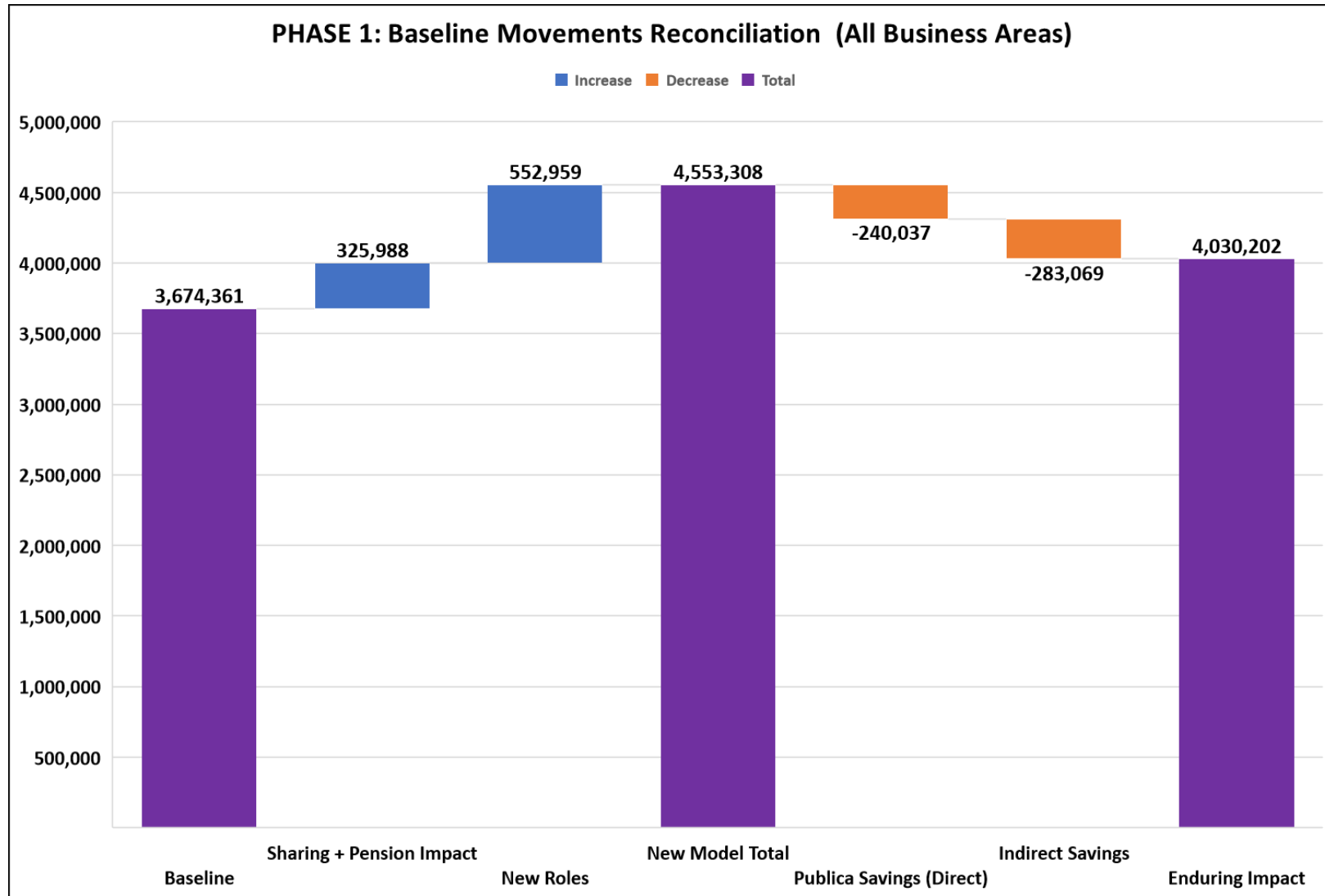
Explanation of headings in the Waterfall chart are listed below and assess in terms of robustness, confidence, and materiality on a **Red, Amber, Green** basis.



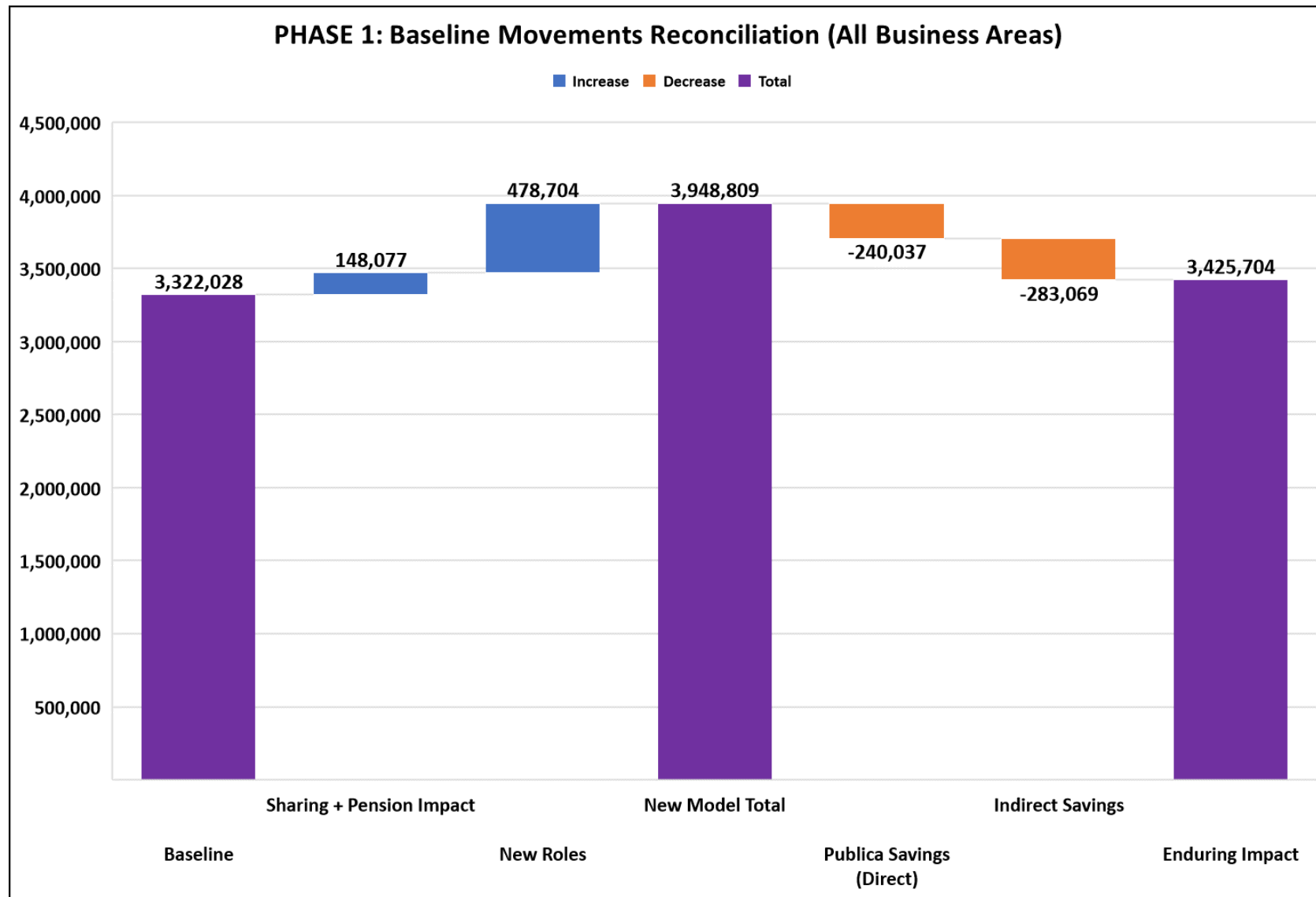
- **GREEN** 276 roles are included within the Phase I review.
- **GREEN** The Baseline cost represents the current cost of roles within each service area.
- **GREEN** 2.5% vacancy factor has been applied as an adjustment to the Baseline.
- **GREEN** The ‘Sharing + Pension Impact’ represents any impact of a change in split of current role, plus the increase in contributions for new LGPS memberships. This analysis assumes all roles are opted in.
- **AMBER** New Roles are reflective of any new positions created as part of the transition of services back to the Council. (Some of these roles may be offset by ‘Publica Savings (Direct)’)

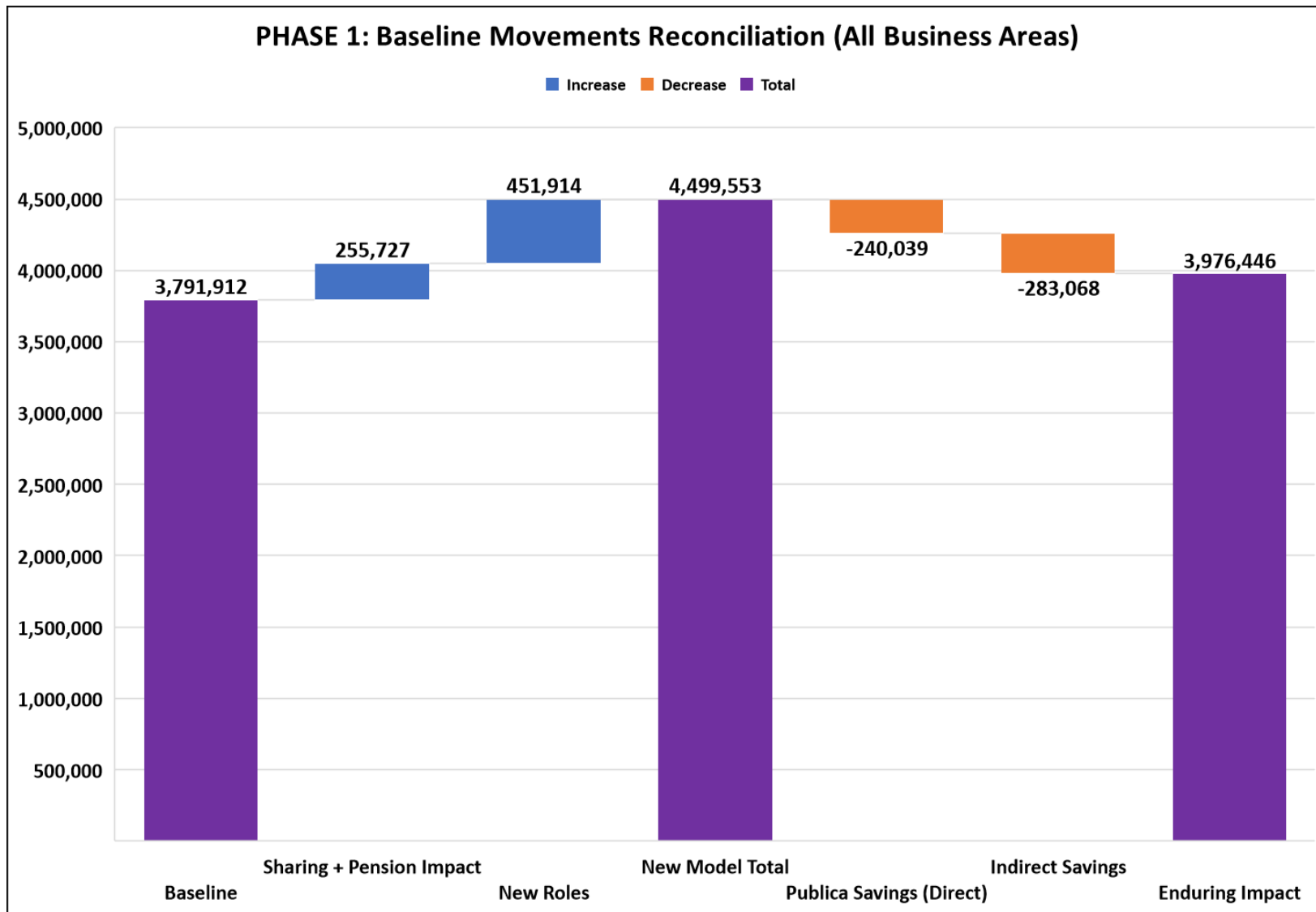
- **AMBER** 'Publica CS reduction (Direct)' are those roles which do not naturally transfer to an equivalent position/role within the new Council Organisational structures.
- **AMBER** 'Indirect CS reduction' are informed by the Senior Management restructure across Publica:

The table below summarises the Baseline (starting point) and Enduring Impact (end point) for Cotswold District Council, Forest of Dean District Council, and West Oxfordshire District Council.



FOREST OF DEAN DISTRICT COUNCIL





Sharing

The sharing of services is a key element of the design led principles. WODC and CDC have confirmed they are open to sharing certain roles, which would TUPE across. Sharing specialist expertise in this way should support WODC and CDC in the delivery of their corporate plan objectives avoiding the need to either recruit specialists that are not readily available or use of external service providers. It also makes optimal use of specialist skillsets that have been developed within Publica.

Civil Contingencies Act

All Councils have a statutory duty under the Civil Contingencies Act, and as part of this, Publica currently provides an on-call duty rota 365 days per year to cover Operational and Tactical response. This rota includes Assistant Directors, Business Managers and other key personnel who are trained in Emergency Response. It is assumed that those employees who are currently on the on-call rota will remain, whether they transfer to one Council or not, until a longer-term decision is made on how emergency planning will be managed moving forward. This will be covered through a Section 101 agreement. Strategic responsibility (Gold) will remain with the Statutory Officers for each Council.

Phase I

Aligned to the priorities expressed by Councils through the Transition planning process, service areas in Phase I will include:

- Democratic Services and Elections
- Forward Planning
- Development Management (but not 'planning validation and planning support')
- Ecology
- Conservation, Heritage & Design
- Building Control
- Economic Development
- Tourism
- Communities and wellbeing
- Climate change
- Strategic Finance (to include all finance roles apart from transactional finance (AP / AR), procurement, insurance and Treasury Management)
- Communications
- Strategic Housing
- Corporate Planning, policy and partnerships
- Executive Assistants and Support.

This currently totals 276 roles.

To support the three District Councils, HR Business Partners are to be seconded, one to each Council, ahead of transfer, meaning that there will be a dedicated in-house Council resource at an early stage to support the Councils directly pre- and post-transfer.

In the light of the significant number of posts being repatriated to each Council and in support of Councils' operations going forward, each District Council is to appoint a Director level post to join their senior leadership team (in a role called 'Director for Communities & Place' or similar). This is envisaged to take effect ahead of the Phase I 'go live', again, to support the transition of Phase I services to the Council and to ensure the smoothest possible transition, with no breaks in service. It is anticipated that Councils would open up such roles with appropriately drafted Role Specifications soon after the Councils resolve to approve the Transition Plan.

At the same time in moving significant numbers of people out of Publica and into the Councils, the Publica organisation will naturally change, with less senior management of a smaller cohort likely to be needed. An early paper setting out options in relation to a revised Publica, was presented at the Publica board at its 8 December 2023 Meeting. For Publica, a new structure has been costed which reflects the reduced size of the organisation, its reduced service needs and budget reflective of Phase I, which based on the agreed Publica Contract Sum for the current full financial year 2024/25 would see turnover reduce from circa £32.14m per annum to £21.56m. The savings associated with this have been taken in to Phase I.

Similarly, it has been assumed that Publica's board will be streamlined as the shape and size of Publica changes. The direction of travel implied by the Publica transition is that the Councils will wish to exert much more direct control than is the case today. This implies less need for boardroom independence as such and a boardroom that is reflective of an organisation structure that will be considerably reduced in scale. Currently the cost of operating the corporate entity is circa £100k per annum. The two largest elements of this are Non-Executive Director fees and external audit fees.

In re-structuring the Publica business, it is assumed that the number of Non-Executives could reduce. With a smaller board, the boardroom skillset is brought into sharper focus. It will be important that Non-Executives with the right individual and collective skills are selected to support and provide strategic oversight and governance to the Publica organisation. With no direction to engage in external trading, there may not be a particular need for independent external advisors to the business given that it is clear that the business will, going forward, be entirely focused on servicing internal Council shareholder focused business and with a narrower focus on support services, particularly systems and process related, as opposed to strategic aspects.

It would be sensible to close the dormant company entities as these have never been used. At the same time, it should be possible to streamline external audit and audit fees aligned to the streamlined business.

It is assumed that the Publica board is re-shaped soon after the end of the 2024 calendar year, after Phase I of the transition is completed. The result should be a simpler, more cost effective set up with no less effective governance, delivering a saving of circa £30k per annum.

It is assumed that with the significant changes to Publica, there would also be a budget re-basing for the 2026/7 financial year.

Recommendations:

Note the Cost Modelling for Phase I

8.0 Steps to Transition and Communications

Subject to the three District Councils deciding to proceed by the end of July 2024, transition timings are assumed to be as follows:

Phase 1 – ‘go live’ 1 November 2024.

A GANTT chart detailing the transition steps was developed by and is being managed and kept up to date by the PMO, focused principally on the steps required for Phase 1. This is available for viewing via the PMO. As soon as the three District Councils have made a decision to proceed with Phase 1, the Programme will move into an implementation phase to deal with the practicalities up to ‘go live’. Consultation will commence in September 2024 aligned to the 1 November target transfer date.

As mentioned, Local Partnerships envisaged that Phase 2 would take effect in/about March 2025. Once Councils have decided to proceed with Phase 1, detailed preparatory and planning work including financial modelling for Phase 2 can begin. The services identified as part of Phase 2 transition typically involve a number of employees working across more than one council. This phase has greater complexity and therefore careful planning and engagement with operational teams will be required ahead of implementation.

A Communications Plan outlining the key communication gateways has been developed and a full programme of communications leading to ‘go live’ will be delivered. There has been a targeted programme of communications up to this point. Going forward, a meeting with Trade Unions is planned for week commencing 1 July and meetings with Publica executives, affected employees (Phase 1) and with all employees in the week commencing 8 July. Publica will lead on the employee communications, however there will also be input from Council Chief Executives. In addition a set of FAQs has been developed in support of the process. As mentioned previously, an employee portal through which to deliver Council led communications will need to be developed for each of the three District Councils and work for this is underway. It is expected that frequent and targeted communications will be developed from the Councils’ decision to progress Phase 1 up to “Go Live” and beyond.

With continued focus on transition into 2025 and with a need for more traditional, rather than strategic, programme management capability in the PMO, it is recommended that from around October 2024, the Councils consider sourcing a Programme Manager to augment the PMO. At this stage it is anticipated that the role of the Interim Programme Director would begin to tail off from then until December to which the current brief runs, though this depends on the degree of progress made towards Phase 2. This was envisaged by the Human Engine report at around that stage as the emphasis on traditional Programme Management functions increases.

Recommendation:

Approve the Phasing for the Transition.

9.0 Post-Transition Support

In addition to a process of pre-transition due diligence, a transition of this kind is unlikely to be successful without significant post-transition support and investment on an ongoing basis. This is because the transition is engaged in the seeding and establishment of services from scratch within Councils that have not themselves delivered these services for a number of years. Culture needs to be built. This takes considerable time, typically 3 to 5 years minimum and requires significant and ongoing investment in time, particularly in senior leadership commitment and in an organisational development budget. This culture needs to reflect the 'design led principles' that shapes up how Council senior management and elected members want their Council to 'look and feel', including brand and identity. Results need to include:

- Improved Quality of Service for residents
- Improved environments
- Improved operational effectiveness
- Improved productivity

Change needs careful planning and good management. It also needs a full programme of ongoing support in each Council, training, Culture Change, through a Culture Development Plan, to include consideration of:

- Values
- Organisation culture and ways of working
- Key Performance metrics

It may be sensible to introduce consultative committees to drive improvement from the grassroots of each organisation, including in areas such as Health and Safety, particularly.

Looking forward, the new organisations will want to:

- Continuously consider organisational alignment to their evolving corporate plans
- Identify strengths and weaknesses in service delivery
- Ensure an optimal organisation structure and/or approach to service delivery.
- Ensure regular communication and engagement on objectives, opportunities and improvements
- Implement business plans, audit, review, and improvement through further engagement.
- Consider opportunities for further transition and change. This could include further insourcing or shared service arrangements.

Getting this right will also help the Councils in testing "the putative barriers to recruitment", mentioned by Human Engine as part of Option 6.

In addition, Councils will want to ensure that Publica, as its key support services delivery partner evolves and changes as they wish to evolve and change.

The process of transition and change is a dynamic one and one that will continue to evolve. The new organisations will want to *embody culture* from the top, *fuel this* from the middle and *drive this* from the grassroots of the organisations through active engagement. They will wish to promote inclusivity in support of cultural strengthening and to ensure, in a competitive

environment, the ability to attract and retain the best available employees to the organisations, ensuring that they have opportunities to thrive and grow within the organisations and in that way, support organisational and cultural development and prosperity and build the reputation of the organisations within their communities as employers of choice.

The Local Government Association is keen to support the council with the Publica Review through a further contribution from the South West Transformation fund. It is likely that this work will be in the form of assisting the Councils with advice, guidance and recommendations on the future form and function of both Publica and the councils.

In delivering service suites in-house within the Councils, Councils will want to ensure there is leadership from the top in building culture and that this involves key Members as well as Officers. The Chief Executives at each Council have been working with their retained management teams in terms of preparedness for the transition process and the responsibility for a greater number of employees. A programme of further senior level engagement and support may be needed in forming new senior teams that will take on these functions ideally, beginning before this happens.

Getting these aspects right, pre- and post-transition, with an appropriate degree of support, will be fundamental to being able to deliver effectively from “Day 1” after transition as there will then have been suitable preparation for this, smoothing the path to the upcoming and potentially ongoing change that will lie ahead. Ongoing change should be a realistic expectation for Councils and services going forward as demands and pressures change and technologies in support of delivery changes.

The starting point will be in building and embedding a culture of trust across the newly forming Council service delivery organisations as part of strengthening each organisation and ensuring that dynamic conversations of this kind are continuous, with wide engagement. Investment into leadership training and development across the Councils and Publica may be helpful in building the leadership culture needed to take the organisations forward.

Recommendation:

Note the need for Post-Transition support

10.0 Conclusions / Summary Recommendations

This Detailed Transition Plan is designed to deliver key operational objectives for the three District Councils as an evolution of earlier work carried out by Human Engine and Local Partnerships to repatriate most services from Publica. At this stage the focus is on Phase I as the relevant service areas are largely comprised of roles that are now, have always been and will be 100% to a particular Council. In progressing with Phase I, Councils will have much more direct control than before and should be better placed to shape services with residents at the heart.

A number of recommendations have been made throughout this report which are summarised here:

Section 2, Transition Planning. This sets out how the Transition Programme has been taken forward, the Design Led principles and summarises the key goals for the Transition. Recommendations:

1. Note the Design Led principles.
2. Note the Key Goals for the Transition.

Section 7, Modelling Assumptions and Outputs. This sets out the assumptions that have been used in the modelling and the outputs relevant to Phase I.

Recommendation: to note the cost modelling for Phase I.

Section 8, Steps to Transition and Communications. This sets out the proposed phasing for the Transition and key actions.

Recommendation: to approve the phasing for the Transition.

Section 9, Post-Transition Support. This outlines how Councils might take forward the development of culture and ways of working.

Recommendation: to note the need for Post-Transition support.

APPENDIX I – Project Initiation Document (Publica)

Publica transition plan programme

Programme Brief

Aim: To develop and implement a comprehensive transition / change strategy following a decision to transfer the majority of services to each Council.

The success of this programme will be measured through cost, the smooth return of services to the Councils' direct management and the continued smooth running of core transactional functions via Publica.

Background: In October 2023 the Leaders of Cotswold District (CDC), Cheltenham Borough (CBC), Forest of Dean District (FoDDC) and West Oxfordshire District (WODC) Councils announced their intention to transition the majority of services from Publica to Councils. This announcement was a result of a review of Publica carried out on their behalf by Human Engine, a management consultancy. The key question that the Councils asked Human Engine to report on was: **“How will the Councils’ ensure financial and service sustainability and what are the right operating models for the future?”** The recommendation of this review, which has subsequently been approved subject to due diligence, is Option 6: Retain Selected Services. The Councils therefore now wish to retain selected services within Publica and return the majority of services to the Councils, or operate these on a shared basis or via some other model on a case by case basis.

Objectives:

- Develop a transition/change strategy
- Develop a transition plan
- Carry out due diligence, financial, legal and HR prior to seeking agreement to transfer services
- Seek approval of matters in accordance with schemes of delegation
- Coordinate the transition programme activity with individual transition activity at each of the Councils and Publica
- Make any necessary changes to Council constitutions, Publica Articles of Association and contracts
- Transfer employees, budgets, HR/payroll data, email addresses
- Work collaboratively with stakeholders at all levels to execute the transition in a synchronised manner to reduce impact on people and services
- Manage change and communications with stakeholders
- Manage risks to reduce impact on people and services

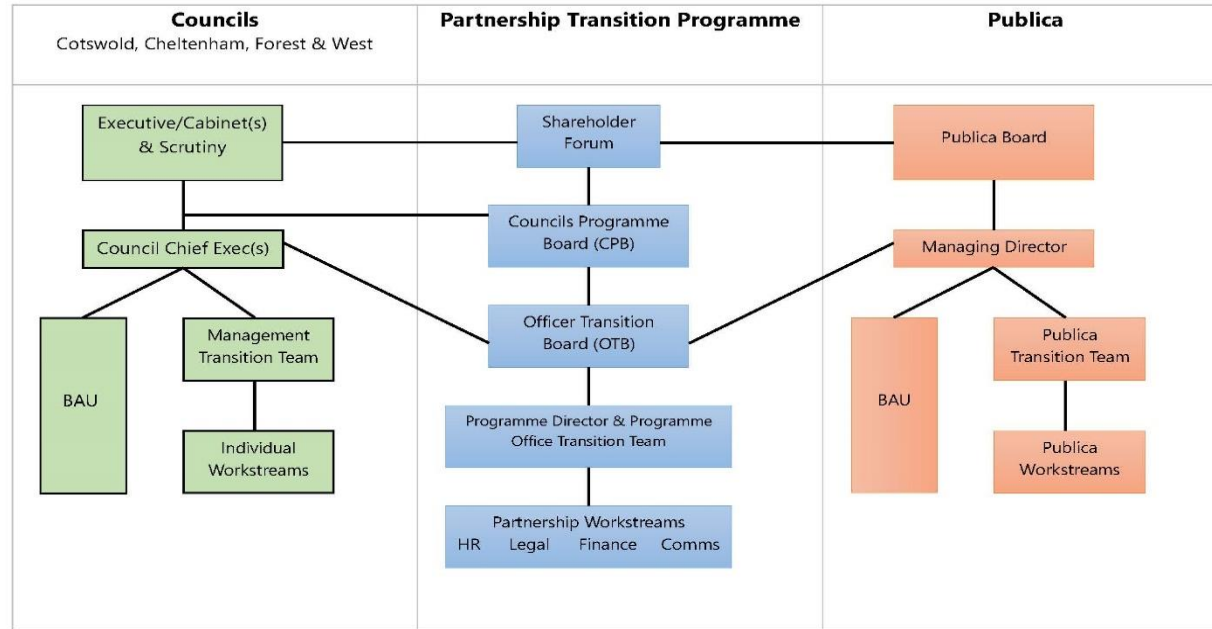
- Ensure effective programme, project management and risk management throughout transfer
- Ensure probity

Context: This work will need to take into account Employment Law, in particular TUPE regulations, the statutory requirement placed on s151 officers to ensure a balanced Council budget over a 5 year period, Company Law in relation to changes to Articles of Association and contracts, continuity of pay during transfers and continuity of service during transfers, changes to pension liabilities.

Funding: One off programme funding and transition costs – shared equally between 3 councils (CDC, FoDDC, WODC)

Approach: The following diagram outlines the Publica Transition Plan Programme Governance Framework. The programme board is accountable for the successful delivery of the programme and realisation of the consequent benefits.

Transition Programme Governance Framework



Each partnership workstream, individual Council workstream and Publica workstream will have a single responsible workstream lead. Each workstream will produce a workstream brief, risk register and implementation plan agreed by the programme board and provide regular progress reports to ensure successful coordination of the transition. Where there is a lot of activity to manage that is on the critical path, workstreams will involve a project manager.

Partnership workstream leads will be responsible for coordinating activity with individual workstreams.

An overall transition plan and risk register (of significant/escalated risks) will be managed by the programme director and overseen by the programme board.

Key stakeholders: This is a significant and complex change that has the potential to unsettle staff and hence have an impact on services. As such excellent change management and effective collaboration amongst stakeholders will be critical to the success of this programme and the ongoing success of benefits realisation. Key stakeholders are staff, managers, senior leadership, trade unions, Cabinets/Executive, Scrutiny, Shareholder Forum and Publica Board,

Key risks: A risk register will be developed. Primary risks are around staff retention, staff morale, service provision, cost of transition, compliance with employment law and accuracy of financial due diligence, in support of timely decision making.

Reason for this piece of work:

The council's aims are:

- More autonomy over service delivery and shaping future services
- Greater control over service spend
- Greater ability to recruit
- Council specific focus on key service areas and programmes
- Ability to be more 'fleet of foot' - shaping services specifically to the needs of residents and communities rather than adopting a one size fits all approach

The **expected benefits**, as summarised in the Human Engine report are:

- i. Provide flexibility for councils in their approach to delivering individual strategic objectives and greater responsibility in doing so.
- ii. Return a critical mass of strategic oversight to councils, enabling councils to better manage the strategic direction of the organisation.
- iii. Increasing capacity within each council's core operating team(s).
- iv. Greater ownership to deliver own savings plans, through a range of different service arrangements that best align to each council's priorities.
- v. Provides individual council identity for services where this is not currently the case and ensuring council identity where services are delivered through Publica hosted but council specific teams (for example, Planning Services).
- vi. Maintain services within the current model where there is agreement that the service is working well – and therefore removing risk of performance reduction during transition.
- vii. Maintain economies of scale and resilience in back-office services where there is less need for a council-specific USP.
- viii. Reduce the risk of recruitment challenges for local government specific roles.
- ix. Minimising risk disruption to large stakeholder groups (staff, residents, businesses) through the ability to prioritise (or deprioritise) services to be

retained.

x. Reduction in corporate overheads of services retained in the Publica model.

APPENDIX II – Transition Framework

Phase	Action	Features	Points to note	Indicative timescales	Dependencies
I	Programme office set up Completed	Membership, TOR, reporting mechanisms	Staff roles and responsibilities agreed and staff seconded into teams TOR for programme agreed PID produced Meeting schedule developed Project plans including timelines, dependencies, milestones established	Immediate	Reporting lines to be established e.g. to each council's cabinet Delegation of authority/decision-making agreed
I	Creation of Programme Board to support alignment of all stakeholders Completed	Articulation of agreed principles underpinning the project	Any red lines of each council to be noted Recorded and minutes of meeting required	Immediate	Details may take time to be agreed
I	Development of Target Operating Model Completed	Stages of transfer, confirm which services are moving and when, what is remaining in Publica Development and agreement of design-led principles	Ethos of new organisations to be established and new organisation design developed – see below Early indication of the future look of Publica and its relationship with councils Review services coming across and in what order Defining new approach e.g. more commercial approach to service delivery Councils may not all agree on principles and phasing of transition	Immediate	Other partnerships (shared services) may be being considered in parallel but not to be a distraction Agreement may not be reached by June 2024
I	Organisational Design Model incorporating	Review current management	Review the current management structure within each council in order to identify any	June 2024	TOM / Design principles to be

	individual organisations organograms Completed	structure to ensure adequate capacity to manage and lead future insourced functions	functional/capacity gaps e.g. Human Resources, OD/Culture and transformation requirements Primary responsibility sits with each of the councils to determine their own organograms with the assistance of Publica to share details on current staffing arrangements/alignment etc. Purpose to set a clear direction of travel for the councils, to review and evaluate and update its practices, policies, procedures and ways of working, ensuring an improved customer experience post transfer of services		agreed to trigger what is implemented
1	Development of Target Operating Model Completed				
Phase I outcome: a settled and detailed transition plan ready for cabinet approvals					
2	Financial plans and future operating budgets developed and agreed	Detailed financial analysis of impact of transfer	Costs of transfer including programme board costs, transfer related costs, any redundancies, branding etc. Benefits may be measured against these	June 2024	Depending on decision regarding Publica's future look
2	Consultation with recognised Trade Unions	Establishing a partnership approach with Trade Unions so that their views and those of their members can be taken into	Dialogue should commence in good time to allow for meaningful consultation (and where appropriate) negotiation and as a minimum in line with statutory requirements Consultation documents to be developed including business case for change, benefits	July 2024	TOM and Organisation Design/ organograms completed and approved.

		consideration when developing transitional plans.	to services to be realised, current and future establishments and any resulting impacts on staff etc		Financial plans and budgets developed and agreed
2	Communications	Staff engagement strategy required. Regularised updates to be shared with elected members including backbenchers	Engagement and Communications strategy developed and detailed plan produced utilising Platforms e.g. Yammer	July 2024	
2	Individual Employee Consultation	Within the wider consultation process and in addition to the formal consultation process undertaken between management and Trade Union representatives.	Individual consultation with affected staff should commence once business case for change has been developed and shared with Trade Unions Employees given the opportunity to express their own preference as to where they transition to prior to any final decisions being taken by management	July 2024	Consultation document prepared and shared with Trade Unions.
2	Managing Change protocols	Single agreed set of protocols to be developed and consistently applied by all councils when filling new vacancies arising out of TOM /Organisation Design.	A single, transparent, fair and equitable approach to 'Managing Change' protocols should be developed and adopted by all parties in consultation with Trade Unions, incorporating i) appointment process ii) redeployment process iii) Pay protection and iv) Employment law	Post July 2024	

2	Organisation Development/Culture change programme	Encouraging dialogue/ identify Staff champions	Recognising that change is a difficult process consideration as to how staff will be supported through the transition should be developed Managers will have a key responsibility throughout the process and therefore, appropriate OD interventions, training and use of other support facilities should be made available	Post July 2024	Link to communications and organisational design and development review.
2	Internal Governance	Identification of all relevant governance boards and reporting lines to each by the Officer Transition Board Consideration of cross-party working group	Audit and Scrutiny Committee Cabinet Shareholder Forum Scrutiny Panel Formation of Member Transition Group to be considered All-member briefing to gather views on what 'success' looks like	Post July 2024	
2	Publica governance	Implementation of new governance system for Publica following transfer	Shareholder Forum revised to meet current needs Revised structure of Publica board	Post July 2024	
2	Risk management	Development of risk register	Monitoring arrangements	Post July 2024	
2	Transfer of existing staff	Transfer of staff from Publica to sovereign councils	Regulation 3 of the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 will apply where a service provision of an organised group is	Post September 2024	

			transferred back into one or more of the councils Since TUPE transfers can be detailed, time consuming and fought with legal and contractual challenges, Councils are recommended to obtain specific and more detailed HR and legal advice a part of the Officer Transition Board	Indicatively: Phase 1 – 6 months	
2	Transfer of other assets	As above	As above	As above	
Phase 2 outcome: completion of phase 1 transfers in October 2024					
3	Development of new roles e.g. client commissioner roles, new senior team officers	Client roles to be set up to manage contracts remaining with Publica	May be drawn/appointed from Publica transferees subject to Managing Change protocols	Post July 2024	
3	Explore further opportunities for sharing	Opportunities to share between each other and/or with others	This could be carried out as a second stage	Post July 2024	
3	Benefits realisation assessment	Reviewed regularly to ensure no problems escalate	Part of Transition team's remit and circulated to stakeholders	Post July 2024	
Phase 3 outcome: Completion of identification of further operational efficiencies leading to phase 2 transfer					

This page is intentionally left blank

Equality and Rurality Impact Assessment Form

When completing this form you will need to provide evidence that you have considered how the ‘protected characteristics’ may be impacted upon by this decision. In line with the General Equality Duty the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard for the need to:

- a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

This form should be completed in conjunction with the guidance document available on the Intranet

Once completed a copy should be emailed to cheryl.sloan@publicagroup.uk to be signed off by an equalities officer before being published.

1. Persons responsible for this assessment:

Names: Andrew Pollard, Interim Programme Director	
Date of assessment: 24/06/2024	Telephone: 01993861297 Email: andrew.pollard@westoxon.gov.uk

2. Name of the policy, service, strategy, procedure or function:

Is this a new or existing one?

New. Proposal to in-source a number of services currently provided by Publica, back into the respective Councils (Cotswold, West Oxfordshire, Forest of Dean). This will impact on circa 270 job roles, currently delivered through Publica.

3. Briefly describe it aims and objectives

- A more focused and defined approach to driving each council’s priorities through their corporate plan strategies.
- Greater clarity and focus for those functions remaining with Publica.
- Greater clarity over roles, responsibilities and accountabilities – and where direction is set from.
- How performance and value for money is understood and managed and how it can be more clearly defined and measured.
- Simplification of processes and in determining whether and how resources can be deployed and redeployed as priorities shift.
- Greater responsiveness and agility so as to be able to deliver Member priorities.

- Greater focus on locality and local services.
- Employing people locally, using this in support of economic growth (e.g. apprenticeships), being more accessible and visible and foster the spirit of communities.
- Much better definition between Policy and high-level strategy on the one hand and delivery on the other. More defined control.
- Opportunity to group services to accelerate efficiencies, by identifying synergies between certain services before moving and re-defining services.
- Being responsive and business like – adopting a more commercial mindset when considering engagement with businesses, residents and key stakeholders, ensuring a cost recovery approach is implemented whenever possible to maximise service efficiencies.
- Better focus and ability to drive the sustainability agendas of all Councils.

4. Are there any external considerations? (e.g. Legislation/government directives)

Services which are proposed to transfer from Publica back into the Council will statutory services and therefore a smooth transition with minimal impact to BAU is required.

Page 154

5. What evidence has helped to inform this assessment?

Source	✓	If ticked please explain what
Demographic data and other statistics, including census findings	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Recent research findings including studies of deprivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Results of recent consultations and surveys	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Results of ethnic monitoring data and any equalities data	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Anecdotal information from groups and agencies within Gloucestershire	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Comparisons between similar functions / policies elsewhere	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Analysis of audit reports and reviews	X	<p>The proposal to insource services has been developed through the commissioning of two reviews / reports from Human Engine and Local Partnerships. Links to reports can be found here:</p> <p>Human Engine Report: Strategic Review of Publica Services Local Partnerships Report: Insourcing from Publica</p>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	

6. Please specify how intend to gather evidence to fill any gaps identified above:

If the proposal is approved through Cabinet / Executive, Council and Overview and Scrutiny, a full meaningful consultation process will commence with the services and roles which are impacted by this proposal. This will be a formal consultation process under the Transfer of Undertakings, Protection of Employment (TUPE). Any feedback from the consultation process will feed into the decision-making and any proposals which are then taken forward.

7. Has any consultation been carried out?

No

Formal consultation will commence should the proposals be agreed at Cabinet / Executive, Council and Overview and Scrutiny, which will be subject to formal consultation.

Consultation will commence in September and is scheduled to complete early to mid October, with a proposed transfer date of 01/11/24.

If NO please outline any planned activities

8. What level of impact either directly or indirectly will the proposal have upon the general public / staff? (Please quantify where possible)

Level of impact	Response
NO IMPACT – The proposal has no impact upon the general public/staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
LOW – Few members of the general public/staff will be affected by this proposal	<input type="checkbox"/>
MEDIUM – A large group of the general public/staff will be affected by this proposal	X
HIGH – The proposal will have an impact upon the whole community/all staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Comments: e.g. employees will be impacted by this proposal. Circa 270+ roles have been identified as potentially transferring under TUPE subject to consultation. TUPE will protect the terms and conditions of employees who transfer.</p> <p>There will be a small number of employees who will fall outside of TUPE due to their role being fragmented. A formal consultation process will also be completed for these employees.</p>	

9. Considering the available evidence, what type of impact could this function have on any of the protected characteristics?

Negative – it could disadvantage and therefore potentially not meet the General Equality duty;

Positive – it could benefit and help meet the General Equality duty;

Neutral – neither positive nor negative impact / Not sure

	Potential Negative	Potential Positive	Neutral	Reasons	Options for mitigating adverse impacts
Age – Young People			x	Under TUPE, the new employer should step into the shoes on the old employer, with minimal impact on the transferring employees.	<p>Formal consultation process will be undertaken with all employees who are in scope.</p> <p>Any roles which are fragmented and will not remain shared will have the opportunity to take new roles at one of the Councils.</p> <p>Any employee who is not on a Local Government Pension scheme will be auto-enrolled onto LGPS.</p>
Age – Old People			x		
Disability			x		
Sex – Male			x		
Sex – Female			x		
Race including Gypsy and Travellers			x		
Religion or Belief			x		
Sexual Orientation			x		
Gender Reassignment			x		
Pregnancy and maternity			x		

Geographical impacts on one area					
Other Groups					
Rural considerations: ie Access to services; leisure facilities, transport; education; employment; broadband.					This will not be impacted as the same service will be delivered, it will just be managed directly by the Council rather than through Publica.

10. Action plan (add additional lines if necessary)

Action(s)	Lead Officer	Resource	Timescale
Employee Consultation	Cheryl Sloan / John Llewellyn	Supported by HRBPs	Commencing 2 nd September 2024.


11. Is there is anything else that you wish to add?

Declaration

I/We are satisfied that an equality impact assessment has been carried out on this policy, service, strategy, procedure or function and where an negative impact has been identified actions have been developed to lessen or negate this impact. We understand that the Equality Impact Assessment is required by the District Council and that we take responsibility for the completion and quality of this assessment.

Completed By:	Andrew Pollard	Date:	24 June 2024
Line Manager:		Date:	

Reviewed by Corporate Equality Officer:	Cheryl Sloan	Date:	24 June 2024
---	--------------	-------	--------------

 WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and Date of Committee	EXECUTIVE – 22 JULY 2024
Subject	ONE YEAR PUBLICA BUSINESS PLAN
Wards Affected	All
Accountable Member	Councillor Andy Graham – Leader of the Council. Email: andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable Officer	Giles Hughes – Chief Executive Officer. Email: giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk
Report Author	Bill Oddy – Assistant Director, Commercial Development. Email: bill.oddy@publicagroup.uk
Purpose	To consider the Draft Publica Business Plan 2024-25, produced by the Publica Board in consultation with Directors and Shareholders, and to recommend that the Leader (as Shareholder Representative) approves the plan.
Annexes	Annex A – Publica Board Report and Draft Publica Business Plan 2024-2025
Recommendations	That the Executive resolves to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the 2024/25 Publica Business Plan; and 2. Note that the Leader of the Council, as shareholder representative, will approve the Publica Business Plan 2024-2025 in due course.
Corporate Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting Residents First • A Better Environment for People and Wildlife • Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency
Key Decision	YES
Exempt	NO

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Publica's [Articles of Association](#) has twelve reserved matters for Shareholder Council approval, these ensure they retain the necessary control over their Teckal company.
- 1.2 Adopting or amending the Business Plan is one of the reserved matters. The Shareholder Councils adopted the current [2022-25 Business Plan](#) in April / May 2022.
- 1.3 Although the current plan has twelve months to run, the priorities and the narrative is now out of date following the Publica review and the decision to in-source services. Publica and the partnership is now in what could be described as a 'transitional period'. [The Local Partnerships report](#), commissioned by the Shareholder Councils in January 2024, recommends that the Publica Business Plan should be reviewed.

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1 The main purpose of the revised plan is to:
 - Acknowledge Publica (and the Shareholder Councils) are in a 'transitional period' to staff and interested parties such as Councillors and Ubico, Publica's sister Teckal company;
 - Provide clear messages to employees and interested parties on the priorities over the next year as part of a change management strategy;
 - Ensure there is a clear focus on supporting Publica employees through transition and manage service changes effectively;
 - Focus on the planning for the 'New Publica' and co-creating a new operating model in partnership with the Shareholder Councils;
 - Working with the Shareholder Council's to enable a smooth transition of services back under Council control.
- 2.2 The three priorities in the current business plan (Place, People, and Planet) are supplemented by a further priority called Transition in the revised plan. This will ensure the organisation is focused on delivering the councils' priorities as well as supporting our employees through the transition to a new operating framework over the next year. The priorities in the refreshed plan are:
 - **Place** – Deliver Council priorities & effective operational services;
 - **People** – Supporting our employees through transition and manage service changes effectively;
 - **Planet** – Reach Net-Zero Carbon and obtain carbon literacy accreditation;
 - **Transition** – Support the transfer of services to the Councils & explore options for a new operating model for services retained within Publica.

- 2.3 As part of the development of the Business Plan, the Shareholder Councils Chief Executives and the Interim Transition Programme Director have been consulted and their feedback has been incorporated.
- 2.4 The Business Plan was considered by the Shareholder Forum (which includes the Council Chief Executives and the Publica Shareholder Representatives – Council Leaders) on 24 April 2024 and agreed.
- 2.5 One of the Publica Assistant Directors will attend the Executive meeting and be able to answer any questions.
- 2.6 The Leader of the Council, as shareholder representative, has delegated authority to approve the Publica Business Plan, and there is no need, other than to support transparency for a report to be considered and noted by executive.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no additional financial implications associated with the Ubico Business Plan as the budget has already been approved.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Business Plan has to be adopted in accordance with the Shareholder Agreement for Publica.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 There are no specific risks in adopting the Publica Business Plan.

6. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 6.1 Not Applicable

7. CLIMATE, BIODIVERSITY, AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

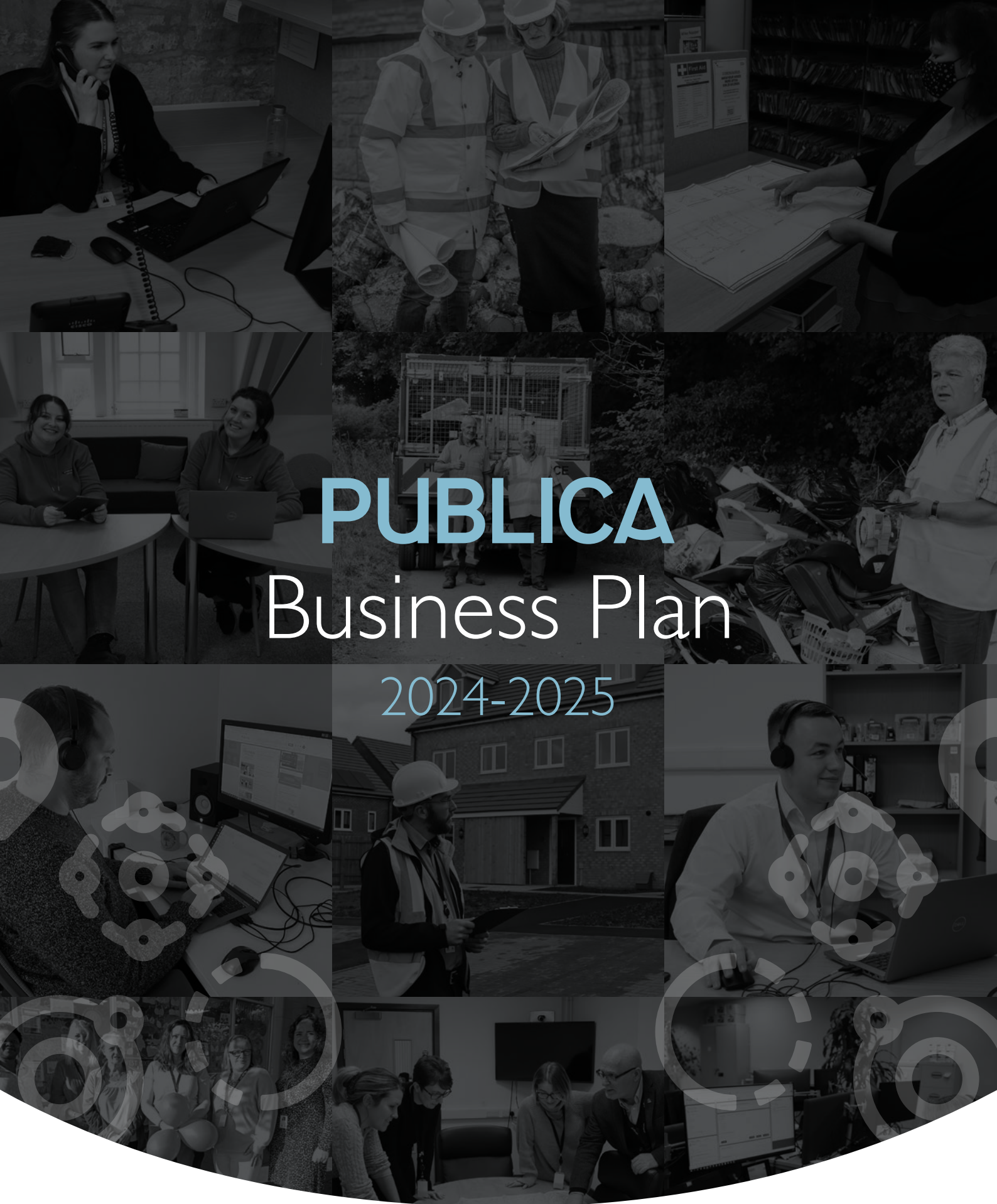
- 7.1 Planet is one of the four priorities in the Business Plan.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

(END)

This page is intentionally left blank



PUBLICA

Business Plan

2024-2025



PUBLICICA

We are proud to present to the shareholder councils the Publica Business Plan for 2024-2025.



Christine Gore
Chair of the Board



Frank Wilson
Interim Managing Director

In August 2023 the shareholder councils commissioned a review of Publica to examine whether the business model still suited the needs of the councils moving forward. The review's conclusions were presented to the Councils in the Autumn and recommended that most services be transferred back to council control. Over the following two months the councils took decisions to endorse the recommendations in the report. As a consequence of this decision the current three-year 2022-2025 business plan needs refreshing for the final year.

Our three priorities in the current business plan (Place, People, Planet) are supplemented by a further priority called Transition. This will ensure the organisation is focused on delivering the councils' priorities as well as supporting our employees through the transition to a new operating framework over the next year.

Firstly, **Place** - We are committed to delivering the Shareholder Councils' priorities and realising the benefits for local communities. We are also focused on maintaining our high performance and service quality through the transition, with residents and businesses at the heart of what we do.

Next, our **People** - We are incredibly proud of our employees and their commitment to delivering public services; they frequently go the extra mile to help and support residents. We are committed to supporting them through the transition and working with Trade Unions and Shareholder Councils.

Next, **Planet** - 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 will make our response central to all we do.

Finally, **The Transition** - As part of the transition, we will support the Shareholder Councils implement a partnership operating model to reflect the new arrangements and we are fully committed to working collaboratively to deliver a safe and secure structure and governance arrangements that delivers the ambitions of the councils and meets the needs of residents.

This business plan and the priorities will be delivered against a very significant local government financial challenge with latest forecasts suggesting that our shareholder councils will need to fill an emerging funding gap in the future.

The Publica Business Plan

Publica's Articles of Association have twelve reserved matters for Shareholder Council approval, these ensure they retain the necessary control over their Teckal company. Adopting or amending the Business Plan is one of the reserved matters.

The previous business plan was for three years, but this one is for twelve months to reflect the transition period the partnership is in. The main purpose of this plan is to:

Focus

Focus the organisation on delivering the Shareholder Councils priorities.

Provide

Provide clear messaging to employees on the priorities over the next year.

Acknowledge

Acknowledge Publica (and the shareholder councils) are in a 'transition period'.

Ensure

Ensure there is a clear focus on supporting Publica employees through transition and manage service changes effectively.

Focus

Focus on the planning for the 'New Publica' and co-creating a new operating model and governance arrangements in partnership with the Shareholder Councils.

The Publica Values

The Publica values will continue to help and guide us through the transition.

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

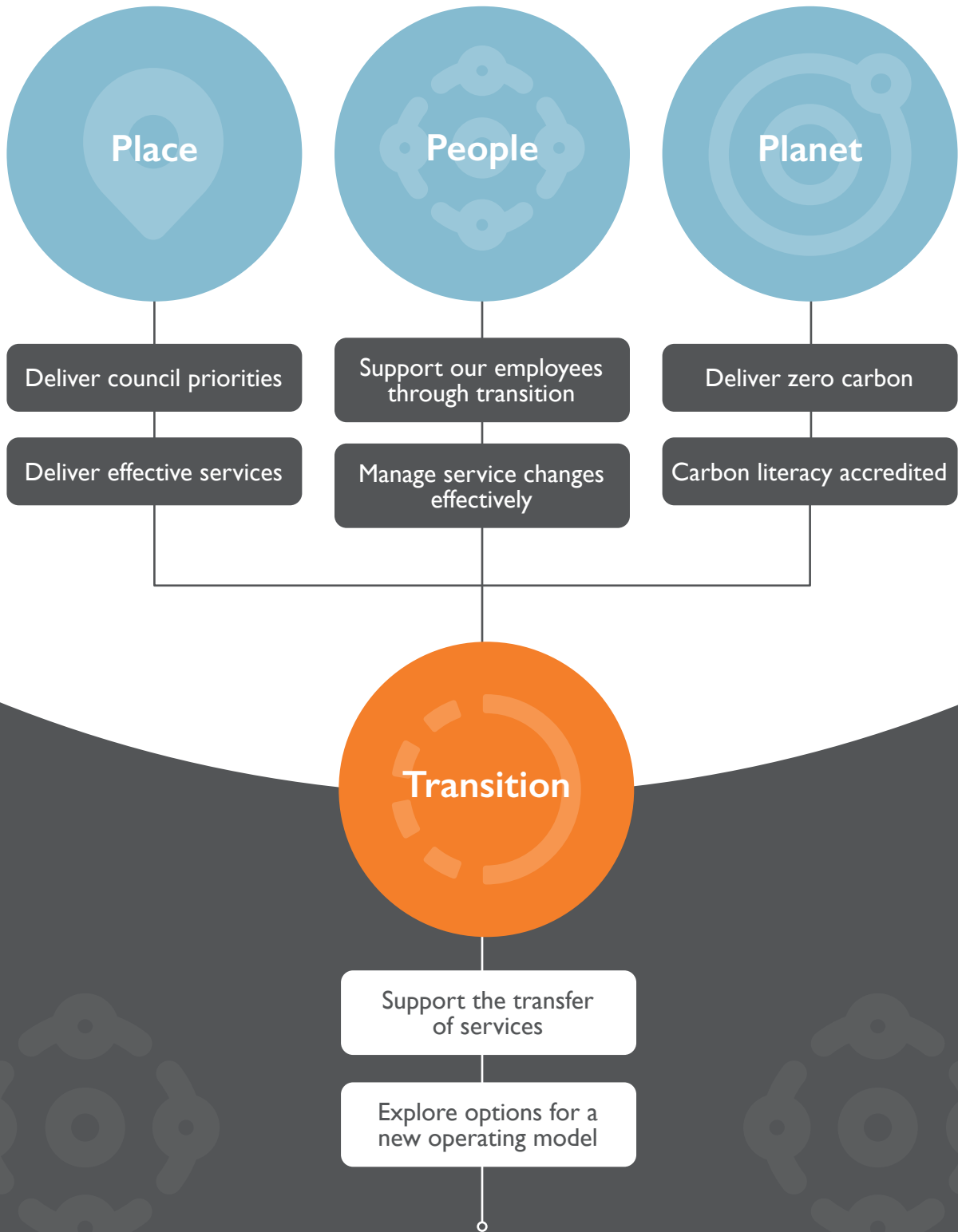
We are agile - adapting how and what we do to meet the demands of our customers, our colleagues, our local communities and the needs of the modern world.

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.

PUBLICA

Our Priorities



PUBLICA



Place: Deliver council priorities & effective operational services

Deliver council priorities

Shareholder councils have ambitious plans to deliver their priorities which are outlined below. We are committed to delivering key projects with the shareholder councils, being flexible and agile to emerging priorities, and realising the benefits for local communities. The Councils and Publica produce annual reports which highlight progress against their priorities and key achievements.

Deliver effective services

Publica delivers a collection of front line operational, back-office support, and strategic policy functions for the shareholder councils. Effective, modern services are at the heart of ensuring that we deliver the best possible outcomes for local residents and businesses at the best possible value for the shareholder councils.

Services work closely with a multitude of local stakeholders to deliver Council priorities including community groups, the voluntary sector, and Town and Parish Councils. They also have contracts with service providers delivering services like leisure and waste.

We know that these services are performing effectively because national headline performance reports place shareholder councils well above the midpoint, in the upper and top quartiles, when compared to other district authorities. Through the

transition period we will carefully monitor business performance through the Performance Board and corporate reporting, ensuring that the hard work we have put into improvement is maintained. Recent advances, enabling the provision of current performance information, will be critical in supporting a high level of assurance to the councils during the transition.

The Shareholder Councils and Publica have already delivered £3m of recurring annual savings since 2017 (Total cumulative cash savings are forecast to reach £21m by the end of March 2025 based on current projections) alongside making significant investment and progress in transforming and modernising services, leading to high levels of customer satisfaction. The challenge is to maintain this progress during and after transition to the new operating framework.

3,000,000

The Shareholder Councils and Publica have already delivered £3m of recurring annual savings since 2017





Cotswold District Council	Cheltenham Borough Council	Forest of Dean District Council	West Oxfordshire District Council
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering Good Services • Responding to the Climate Emergency • Delivering Housing • Supporting Communities • Supporting the Economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance Cheltenham's reputation as the cyber capital of the UK • Working with residents, communities and businesses to help make Cheltenham net zero by 2030 • Increasing the number of affordable homes through our £180m housing investment plan • Ensuring residents, communities and businesses benefit from Cheltenham's future growth and prosperity • Being a more modern, efficient and financially sustainable council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thriving Communities - To foster resilient and inclusive communities that are motivated and competent to adapt to the challenges and opportunities posed by the climate and nature emergencies • Decarbonisation and Nature Recovery - For the Forest of Dean to have a protected and enhanced natural environment, and be on target to be carbon neutral by 2030 • Sustainable Economy - To foster economic prosperity while ensuring environmental sustainability and social well-being 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting Residents First • Enabling a Good Quality of Life for All • Creating a Better Environment for People and Wildlife Creating a Better Environment for People and Wildlife • Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency • Working Together for West Oxfordshire





People: Supporting our employees through transition and manage service changes effectively

As a people organisation, we are very proud of our employees and their commitment to delivering public services; they frequently go the extra mile to help and support residents. We will only accomplish our collective aims and deliver our priorities if the very best in class people work for us across our partnership. We need to harness the enthusiasm our employees have to deliver great services and ensure that they are focused on delivering council priorities over the next year through the transition period.

Supporting our people through transition

During 2023, an options appraisal was undertaken by the shareholder councils. The final report recommended that a number of operational services should be moved back to the councils to provide them with more autonomy over individual strategies for service delivery and shaping future services. This will leave the Publica of the future as a leaner organisation. Each of the four councils are working in partnership to create a phased transition plan to establish which services and the order in which they will be transferred. We are committed to working with them and our recognised trade unions to ensure the transition is seamless for our employees and minimises the impact on service performance or quality.

- I Clear communication and engagement channels - We have already held employee briefings and created a dedicated page on the portal
- II A clear migration proposal and consultation plan to ensure that the transition is expeditious and successful
- III Upskilling managers to ensure that they have the necessary skills and knowledge to support employees through change - We have completed a training needs survey with our employees that will shape this
- IV Raising awareness of employees' support services to maintain employee wellbeing - We provide our employees with an extensive free wellbeing support programme.

Manage service changes effectively

A transition team, led by a Programme Director, has been established to oversee the entire transition process. The team will be responsible for managing and coordinating a programme of change and providing a clear route forward in agreement with the Shareholder Councils. As our employees are at the heart of all we do, we recognise the importance of keeping them informed and engaged with the change process and this will include:

We have already completed an employee welfare survey and adopted an action plan to improve wellbeing as part of monitoring the impact of the transition on our employees. We are also committed to working with recognised trade unions to achieve the best possible outcomes for employees. Our meetings with local and regional trade union representatives, as well as the Employees Forum, provide the framework by which we can obtain useful feedback, share ideas and discuss issues.



Planet: Reach Net-Zero Carbon and obtain Carbon Literacy Accreditation

Tackling climate change is a global challenge. Each shareholder council has declared a climate emergency as well as an ecological and biodiversity emergency, and we will continue to make our response to these crises central to all we do. Tackling the climate emergency will become a key focus through all our activity at Publica, meaning we will put it at the centre, so it has the urgent focus it requires.

Publica's carbon footprint is intrinsically linked with that of our shareholding councils, so it is vital that we play our full part in the push to achieve net zero carbon by 2030. We will demonstrate our commitment to net zero carbon by putting the climate emergency at the heart of service delivery, ensuring all staff understand and consider climate and ecological impacts in their day-to-day work and the decisions that they advise on. We will do this by:

- I Rolling out formal Carbon Literacy Training to our employees, aiming to be recognised as a Gold Level Carbon Literate Organisation
- II Securing advanced climate emergency training for planning officers and other employees, whose professional role requires that they have a greater understanding of issues around energy use, low emission building and transport technologies
- III Embedding climate, ecological and social value considerations in procurement processes to maximise the use of sustainable suppliers and support local businesses
- IV Making climate implications a core consideration in decision making, alongside finance, legal and risk
- V Implementing our Agile Working Strategy, which will reduce unnecessary business travel, staff commuting journeys, in addition to excess heating and lighting in under occupied offices
- VI 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



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

2030

Transition: Support the transfer of services & explore options for a new operating model

We recognise that this is a significant and complex change programme but we are committed to supporting the Shareholder Councils to develop and implement a new target operating model for local and shared services.

The Local Partnerships report, commissioned by the Shareholder Councils, stated that *“It is likely that in the short-medium term, Publica will be leaner and focused on a smaller number of largely support/back-office services.”* As Publica transitions into this leaner organisation, we are committed to working collaboratively with Shareholder Councils to deliver a safe and secure structure and governance arrangements that deliver the ambitions of the councils and meets the needs of residents.

In accordance with the recommendations made in the Local Partnerships report, Publica will support the councils in strengthening those key governance areas that the councils have identified as requiring focus; including:

- I Refreshing the Shareholder Forum through a review of composition and Terms of Reference to ensure that it has sufficient oversight of Publica
- II Reviewing the Board of Directors, ensuring that its size and nature is appropriate for the revised size of Publica, and that Non-Executive Directors have the relevant skills to steer the company through the next phase i.e. transition/business change skills

- III Ensuring that council committees such as Audit and Governance, Overview & Scrutiny are regularly reviewing the performance of the company, as opposed to council services, in accordance with the councils' requirements
- IV Supporting a strong client function to manage the day-to-day oversight of the remaining Publica contract. Including improving clarity over the contract specification and quantifying deliverables.

As we emerge from the initial stage of transition planning we will need to focus on building on our strengths within Publica for the services that remain and which are critical to the broader partnership of Councils including Ubico, our sister Teckal company.

It is likely that in the short-medium term, Publica will be leaner and focused on a smaller number of largely support/back-office services.





PUBLICA

Publica Business Plan 2024-2025

 WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and Date of Committee	EXECUTIVE – 22 JULY 2024
Subject	PUBLIC CONVENIENCE CONTRACT
Wards Affected	All
Accountable Member	Councillor Lidia Arciszewska – Executive Member for Environment. Email: lidia.arciszewska@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable Officer	Jon Dearing – Interim Executive Director. Email: jon.dearing@publicagroup.uk
Report Author	Maria Wheatley – Parking Manager. Email: maria.wheatley@publicagroup.uk
Purpose	To consider agree a contract award for the cleaning and maintenance of public conveniences.
Annexes	Annex A – Equality Impact Assessment Exempt Annex B – Contract Award
Recommendation	That the Executive resolves to: I. Award the contract for cleaning and maintenance of public conveniences to the preferred contractor.
Corporate Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Good Quality of Life for All • A Better Environment for People and Wildlife • Working Together for West Oxfordshire
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	Exempt Annex B – Contract Award
Consultees/ Consultation	Nil

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The council owned public conveniences are currently cleaned and maintained by Danfo (UK) Ltd under contract. The contract expires on the 30th September 2024, and a procurement exercise has been completed to secure a new contract from 1st October 2024 for a period of 4 years.

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1 The procurement process was carried out with an open tender method. The new contract will benefit from economies of scale being a shared contract across Cotswold District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council. The submissions have been evaluated 60% for quality and 40% for price. Quality criteria included an assessment of the bidders' ability to meet the required standards, their arrangements for management and supervision, their approach to manage customer complaints, their fleet management arrangements, their resilience and their approach to health and safety and sustainability.
- 2.2 Officers evaluated the bids, the outcome being that the preferred contractor for recommendation is Danfo (UK) Ltd, our current supplier. (Annex B)
- 2.3 The Council reserves the right to vary the number of sites within the contract giving the contractor 2 months written notice.
- 2.4 Any permanent closures of a site will be reflected in the contract price after the 2-month notice period.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1 There was an option to award the contract for a different length of time, however a 4-year contract gives stability to both the contractor and the council. The contract will allow the Council the flexibility for fluctuations in the future needs of the service.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Contract costs are £1,624,000. The council has modified the specification to keep costs as low as possible without affecting the quality of the service, for example each site has a specified cleaning regime and number of visits depending on usage. The provision for this contract in the 2024/25 budget is £155,685, costs in excess of this will need to be offset from savings identified elsewhere as part of the 2025/26 budget setting process.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The requirements have been processed through the procurement process in accordance with the Council's Procurement and Contract Management Strategy and The Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

6. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 Failure to award the contract will mean the Council has no arrangements in place for cleaning and maintenance when the existing contract ends.

7. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 7.1 The recommendation will not have an effect on different service users; the access to facilities remains free of charge with a RADAR key. (Annex A)

8. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The approach of each bidder to Environmental and Sustainability issues will be assessed as part of the evaluation process.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1 None.

(END)

This page is intentionally left blank

Annex A

Equality and Rurality Impact Assessment Form

When completing this form you will need to provide evidence that you have considered how the ‘protected characteristics’ may be impacted upon by this decision. In line with the General Equality Duty the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard for the need to:

- a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

This form should be completed in conjunction with the guidance document available on the Intranet

Once completed a copy should be emailed to cheryl.sloan@publicagroup.uk to be signed off by an equalities officer before being published.

1. Persons responsible for this assessment:

Names: Maria Wheatley	
Date of assessment: 3.6.24	Telephone: 01285 623228 Email: maria.wheatley@publicagroup.uk

2. Name of the policy, service, strategy, procedure or function:

West Oxfordshire District Council New Contract for the cleaning and maintenance of public toilets
--

3. Briefly describe it aims and objectives

The council owned public conveniences are currently cleaned and maintained by Danfo (UK) Ltd under contract. The contract expires 30 th September 2024. The report seeks approval to award contract for the cleaning and maintenance of public conveniences within West Oxfordshire District, with the new contract to start on the 1 st October 2024 for a 4 year period.
--

4. Are there any external considerations? (e.g. Legislation/government directives)

The provision of public toilets it not a statutory service.

5. What evidence has helped to inform this assessment?

Source	✓	If ticked please explain what
Demographic data and other statistics, including census findings	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Recent research findings including studies of deprivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Results of recent consultations and surveys	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Results of ethnic monitoring data and any equalities data	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Anecdotal information from groups and agencies within Gloucestershire	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Comparisons between similar functions / policies elsewhere	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Analysis of audit reports and reviews	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Page 178

6. Please specify how intend to gather evidence to fill any gaps identified above:

7. Has any consultation been carried out?

No

If NO please outline any planned activities

The contract has gone out to tender, officers will evaluate the responses with the support from the procurement team.

8. What level of impact either directly or indirectly will the proposal have upon the general public / staff? (Please quantify where possible)

Level of impact	Response
NO IMPACT – The proposal has no impact upon the general public/staff	✓
LOW – Few members of the general public/staff will be affected by this proposal	<input type="checkbox"/>
MEDIUM – A large group of the general public/staff will be affected by this proposal	<input type="checkbox"/>
HIGH – The proposal will have an impact upon the whole community/all staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments: e.g. Who will this specifically impact? The new contract should not impact any members of the public or staff.	

9. Considering the available evidence, what type of impact could this function have on any of the protected characteristics?

Negative – it could disadvantage and therefore potentially not meet the General Equality duty;

Positive – it could benefit and help meet the General Equality duty;

Neutral – neither positive nor negative impact / Not sure

	Potential Negative	Potential Positive	Neutral	Reasons	Options for mitigating adverse impacts
Age – Young People			✓		
Age – Old People			✓		
Disability			✓		
Sex – Male			✓		
Sex – Female			✓		
Race including Gypsy and Travellers			✓		

Religion or Belief			✓		
Sexual Orientation			✓		
Gender Reassignment			✓		
Pregnancy and maternity			✓		
Geographical impacts on one area			✓		
Other Groups					
Rural considerations: ie Access to services; leisure facilities, transport; education; employment; broadband.			✓		

Page 180

10. Action plan (add additional lines if necessary)

Action(s)	Lead Officer	Resource	Timescale

11. Is there is anything else that you wish to add?

Declaration

I/We are satisfied that an equality impact assessment has been carried out on this policy, service, strategy, procedure or function and where an negative impact has been identified actions have been developed to lessen or negate this impact. We understand that the Equality Impact Assessment is required by the District Council and that we take responsibility for the completion and quality of this assessment.

Completed By:	Maria Wheatley	Date:	3.6.24
Line Manager:	Susan Hughes	Date:	
Reviewed by Corporate Equality Officer:	Cheryl Sloan	Date:	13.6.24

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of
Regulation 21(1)(A) of the Local Authorities (Executive
Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England)
Regulations 2000.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank