



WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Name and Date of Committee	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY – 17 JULY 2024 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

- I.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.
- I.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.
- I.3 Although the current plan has twelve months to run, the priorities and the narrative is now out of date following the Publica review and the decision to in-source services.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)