



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Name and Date of Committee	EXECUTIVE – 23 APRIL 2025
Subject	UBICO BUSINESS PLAN 2025-2026
Wards Affected	ALL
Accountable Member	Councillor Andy Graham – Leader of the Council. Email: andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable Officer	Giles Hughes – Chief Executive. Email: giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk
Report Author	Bill Oddy – Assistant Director Email: bill.oddy@publicagroup.uk
Purpose	To consider the Ubico Business Plan 2025-26, which has been produced by Ubico in consultation with the Directors and Shareholders, and to recommend that the Leader (as Shareholder Representative) approves the plan.
Annexes	Annex A – Ubico Business Plan 2025-2026
Recommendations	That the Executive Resolves to: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Note the Ubico Business Plan 2025-26; and2. Note that, subject to feedback from the Executive, the Leader of the Council, as Shareholder Representative, will sign the written resolution to approve the Ubico Business Plan 2025-2026 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	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	The following people have all been consulted on this report and the detail contained within: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Councillor Andy Graham

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Councillor Lidia Arciszewska• Senior Council Officers• Senior Publica Officers
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1** Ubico is a Teckal company wholly owned by local authorities including West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC). The company delivers waste and environmental services on behalf of its shareholders, including WODC, and is required to submit an annual business plan for approval by its shareholders.
- 1.2** The Leader of the Council, as the Shareholder Representative, has authority to approve the Business Plan. Whilst the Leader of the Council has authority, as shareholder representative, to approve the business plan, it is being brought to Executive for Members to consider.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) is a shareholder of Ubico limited, a teckal company established to deliver waste and environmental services, offering better value for money than commercial contracts.
- 2.2** The Teckal model enables councils to commission services without the costs associated with an EU procurement process. Ubico delivers services on behalf of the council at a price which reflects the actual cost of service provision, but in doing so holds no assets, and so the depots it operates from, the vehicles it uses to perform the services and the waste and recycling containers which are provided to residents, are all owned or leased by the authority. This ensures that the shareholders have full control over high value expenditure.
- 2.3** As part of the establishment of Ubico, a number of items were identified as reserved matters for council (Shareholder) approval to ensure that Shareholder Councils retained an element of control over their company, this includes the annual business plan. The reserved matters decisions fall to the shareholder representatives to determine, this is the Leader of the Council.
- 2.4** The Managing Director of Ubico gave a presentation on the Draft Business Plan 2025-26 to the Scrutiny Committee on the 4th December 2024. The points relating to the Business Plan raised by the Committee, alongside comments from other Shareholder Councils as part of the consultation, have been considered as part of the development of the business plan.

3. MAIN POINTS

- 3.1** The Business Plan provides the vehicle to carry forward and address the issues identified by the Ubico Shareholder Councils. The 5-year vision developed by the Ubico Board of Directors in 2021 identifies the following priorities:
 - Leveraging synergies and economies of scale
 - Harnessing opportunities to deliver value back to our partners
 - Using technology to drive operational efficiency

- Understanding our communities needs
- Inspiring our workforce to be committed to providing value for money and carbon neutral services.

3.2 Ubico's 2025-26 Business Plan and 5-year vision are built around four key pillars:

People

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

Operations

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

Climate

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

Business Development

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

Local Government Reorganisation

- 3.3 On Monday 16 December 2024, the government published its [English Devolution White Paper](#). The paper sets out the government's ambitions for devolution and covers a wide range of policy areas as well as reorganisation of local government in two tier areas including Oxfordshire.
- 3.4 In January 2025 the Executive considered the review of the waste and environmental services contract with Ubico and agreed to extend the contract until 2027 as well as support the creation of The Oxfordshire Waste and Environmental Services Transformation Programme. Over the next year, councils in Oxfordshire will be determining the best operating model for waste and environmental services in parallel with the work to reorganise local government. As the future structure of local government in Oxfordshire becomes clearer in 2026, consideration will need to be given to the Councils future relationship with Ubico.

Service Transformation

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

- Transfer of commercial waste back-office and management function from Ubico to Publica delivering circa £100,000 additional income and efficiencies as well as improved customer satisfaction
- A review of street cleansing delivering £100,000 of efficiencies and investment in in-cab technology by the Council
- Implemented a stream of work to adopt a vehicle strategy and support the Council's net-zero by 2030 target
- Implementation of a new dry mixed recycling and glass recycling contracts delivering £500,000 of efficiencies annually.
- Review of the Ubico contract with WODC and approval by Full Council
- Creation of The Oxfordshire Waste and Environmental Services Transformation Programme

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

4.1 The Leader of the Council, as Shareholder Representative, has delegated authority to approve the Ubico business plan (which forms part of the 5-year vision), and there is no need, other than to support transparency for a report to be considered and noted by The Executive.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 It is recommended that The Ubico Business Plan 2025-26 is accepted to meet the company's members agreement, which is to approve the Business Plan.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no additional financial implications associated with the Ubico Business Plan as the Council 2025-26 budget has already been approved. Ubico has committed to supporting the council deliver savings through the Environmental Services Innovation Program (ESIP) to support its medium-term financial strategy (MTFS).

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The Business Plan has to be adopted in accordance with the Shareholder Agreement for Ubico.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 8.1** There are no specific risks in adopting the Ubico Business Plan. The council is a shareholder of the company and has already committed to a contract extension until 2027.
- 8.2** If the council does not approve the plan there is a risk that the company will not be able to support some of the activities necessary to deliver the savings set out in the council's MTFS or its corporate priorities.

9. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 9.1** Not Applicable

10. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1** Climate implications feature heavily in the Business Plan with climate being a strategic pillar and emissions benchmarking and carbon reduction goals clearly detailed throughout the plan. If the council does not approve this plan, it could risk delivery of these targets and progress towards the Council's own net zero goal by 2030.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1** None

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