



WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Name and date of Committee	<b>FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 13 April 2022</b>
Report Number	<b>Agenda Item 7</b>
Subject	<b>UBICO BUSINESS PLAN 2022-23</b>
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr Michele Mead, Leader of the Council Email: Michele.mead@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Giles Hughes, Chief Executive Email: giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk
Report author	Bill Oddy, Group Manager – Commercial Development Email: <a href="mailto:bill.oddy@publicagroup.uk">bill.oddy@publicagroup.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	To consider the Ubico Business Plan 2022-23 and make any comments that can be considered by the Cabinet and the Leader as Ubico Limited Shareholder Representative.
Annexes	Annex A - Ubico Business Plan 2022-23
Recommendation/s	a) That – subject to any comments it makes - the committee recommends the Ubico Business Plan 2022-23 be approved by the Leader, as the Council's Shareholder Representative of Ubico Limited, and subject to any minor amendments that might arise from the final stages of consultation with the other Shareholder Councils and/or general editing.
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leading the way in protecting and enhancing the environment by taking action locally on climate change and biodiversity</li><li>• Delivering excellent modern services whilst ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council</li></ul>
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"><li>• Councillor Michele Mead</li><li>• Councillor Norman MacRae</li><li>• Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee</li><li>• Senior Council Officers</li><li>• Senior Publica Officers</li></ul>

## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC), is a shareholder of Ubico Limited, a teckal company designed to deliver environmental services, offering better value for money than commercial contracts.
- 1.2. The teckal model enables councils to commission services without the costs associated with an EU procurement process. Ubico delivers environmental services on behalf of the council at a price which reflects the actual cost of service provision, but in doing so holds no assets, and so the depot it operates from, the vehicles it uses to perform the services and the waste and recycling containers which are provided to residents, are all owned by the authority. This ensures that the shareholders have full control over high value expenditure.
- 1.3. As part of the establishment of Ubico, a number of items were identified as reserved matters for council approval to ensure that shareholder councils retained an element of control over their company.
- 1.4. The reserved matters decisions fall to the shareholder representatives to determine. For each partner council this is the Leader of the Council. To assist the Leader in reaching her decision the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee are being asked to review the Draft Business Plan. Feedback from the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 3<sup>rd</sup> February has been incorporated into the final draft. The Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee comments will be verbally given to the Cabinet when it meets on the 20<sup>th</sup> April.

## 2. MAIN POINTS

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

### People

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

### Operations

We will deliver high quality services, which remain safe and compliant, seeking continuous improvement in productivity, value and service excellence. We will harness innovation

where appropriate and will explore synergies and opportunities for partnership and cross boundary working.

### Climate

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

### Business Development

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

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

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

2.4 The Finance Director of Ubico, Chris Urwin, will attend the meeting and be able to answer and questions.

## **3. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

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

## **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **6. RISK ASSESSMENT**

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

## **7. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

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

## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 8.1. None