



COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET - 1 JUNE 2020
Report Number	AGENDA ITEM (7)
Subject	PUBLICA BUSINESS PLAN 2020-22
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr. Joe Harris - Leader of the Council Email: joe.harris@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Nigel Adams - Head of Paid Service Tel: 01285 623202 Email: nigel.adams@cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To consider the Draft Business Plan 2020-22
Annexes	Annex A - Draft Publica Business Plan 2020-22
Recommendation/s	<i>That Cabinet recommends that the Leader (as Shareholder) approves the Publica Business Plan 2020-22 subject to any comments it wishes to make.</i>
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respond to the challenges presented by the Climate Change Emergency• Deliver good quality social rented homes• Present a Local Plan which is Green to the Core• Ensure that all services delivered by the Council are delivered to the highest standard• Help residents, businesses and communities to access the support they need to ensure a high level of health and wellbeing
Key Decision	YES
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overview and Scrutiny Committee• Publica Board• West Oxfordshire District Council• Forest of Dean District Council• Cheltenham Borough Council

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1.** As part of the establishment of Publica, a number of items were identified as reserved matters for council approval to ensure that member councils retained an element of control over their company. The reserved matters were approved in October 2016 as part of the governance principles underpinning the establishment of Publica.
- 1.2.** 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 his decision the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet review the Business Plan and suggest any appropriate amendments.
- 1.3.** The Chairman of Publica, Dave Brooks; the Managing Director, Jan Britton; the Executive Director (Commissioning), Christine Gore; and the Group Manager - Commercial Development, Bill Oddy, will be available at the meeting to answer any questions.

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1** The focus of the new business plan is on supporting the partner councils to deliver their priorities, improve Publica's approach to commissioning, continue to improve services and customer experience using digital technology, deliver efficiency savings, and invest in its employees' development. Collectively, the fourteen strategic actions that support the business plan priorities form a cohesive programme achieving sustainable and embedded change over the business plan period.
- 2.2** The Business Plan provides the 'vehicle' to carry forward and address the issues identified in the Incoming Managing Director's report to the Publica Board over the next two years.
- 2.3** The proposal is for the plan to be for the next two years and to review and refresh it in 2021. This will enable a sustained focus on the priorities and the longer horizon will fit better with the nature of the plan and priorities. It will also enable the partner councils to review the priorities and strategic actions during the life of the plan. The legal advice we have received is that this is permitted under the Members' Agreement.
- 2.4** The proposed Business Plan priorities are:
 - Support our member councils to deliver their ambitions for their place
 - Get commissioning right
 - Be a great service provider
 - Be a great place to work
- 2.5** The draft business plan has now been considered by scrutiny committees at the partner councils (Cotswold, West Oxfordshire, and Forest of Dean District Councils) and by the Executive Team and Cabinet Member at Cheltenham Borough Council. The Publica Board met on 6 March to consider the feedback on the draft plan. The shareholder councils were positive about the format of the plan which they said was straightforward, supported their priorities, and was easy to understand. A number of amendments have been made to the draft plan to provide even greater clarity including:
 - Aligning the language used in the priorities to the previous business plan to ensure greater continuity
 - Providing greater clarity regarding the delivery of the priorities and strategic actions and aligning these to Strategic Directors.

- 2.6** Each of the fourteen strategic actions will have an action plan that will ensure the outcomes and benefits are delivered and there are clear milestones and measures of success. These plans will each have a Sponsoring Director and Lead Group Manager who, along with a core delivery team, will be responsible for developing the action plans and delivering the strategic actions. A framework to monitor progress and involving the Partner Councils and Publica Board will be put in place.
- 2.7** Consideration has been given to any amendments that might be required to the Business Plan in the light of the Coronavirus pandemic. The assessment is that the Business Plan continues to be sound as a high-level strategy; indeed many of the aims of the Business Plan around such things as self-service access to Council services via the internet have taken on a heightened importance due to Coronavirus. The Action Plans (which are referred to in the Business Plan and will set out the next level of detail) can be fine-tuned to reflect the changing circumstances around Coronavirus. The Business Plan itself will be reviewed half way through its two-year term in 2021 and this will provide an opportunity to update the plan should it be required.
- 2.8** The revised draft plan is being presented to the Cabinet for consideration, recommending that it recommends to the Council Leader (as Shareholder) to give formal agreement.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1** As part of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, savings are included in line with the Publica business case approved in October 2016. Publica is required to deliver these savings and Strategic Action 6 in the business plan outlines a commitment to deliver these.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1** This Business Plan has to be adopted in accordance with The Members Agreement for Publica Group Limited.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1.** There are no specific risks in adopting the Publica Business Plan as it is based upon the principles and targets set out in the business case approved by the Council in 2016.
- 5.2.** If the Council does not adopt the plan there is a risk that the company will not be able to commence some of the activities necessary to deliver the savings set out in the business case and Council's MTFS.

6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 6.1.** The Cabinet is free to make comments in relation to the Draft Plan, but any proposed amendments will need to be agreed by the other partner councils.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

(END)