

**Appendix A Progress towards achieving our Top Tasks (2013/14 Quarter 3)**

<b>Priority 1: Freeze Council Tax for the next three years whilst protecting front line services that matter to our residents</b>		
<b>1a. Commission services that provide best value</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Progress</b>
<p>To implement a new joint website which provides greater access to information through improved navigation and signposting, and leads to higher levels of user satisfaction, supports 'channel shift', reduces costs and facilitates communication with our communities and users by 31<sup>st</sup> October 2013</p>	<p>Achieved</p>	<p>A shared IT platform has been implemented at Cotswold and West Oxfordshire.</p> <p>The Cotswold website went 'live' in the first week of November, followed by the West Oxfordshire website in early December. Officers are monitoring both the usage of the website and the benefits.</p>
<p>To achieve further efficiencies through the implementation of the LEAPS (Land, Environment, Assets, and Property System) Project and the development of further shared services projects which will improve customer service, increase customer self-serve and channel shift, and deliver cashable efficiencies by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015</p>	<p>On target</p>	<p>The LEAPS project is a joint project with West Oxfordshire District Council, and aims to deliver common software across Development Services and Public Protection; for West Oxfordshire, it will involve the replacement of all software modules (to IDOX Uniform suite and IDOX EDRMS); and for Cotswold, an upgrade of modules. The project aims to improve access to services, data and information, resilience and service delivery, whilst delivering efficiency savings.</p> <p>The first stage of work is taking place at West Oxfordshire, as a full replacement of the system is required. The Uniform system build has been completed, and rigorous testing of the system is progressing. Officers are completing the preparatory work to enable the first load of live data to take place at the end of January.</p> <p>At Cotswold, we commenced the upgrade of relevant Uniform modules and Document Management System in December for internal customer testing in Development Services and Public Protection; with an upgrade to the live system planned in mid/end of January 2014. As part of the upgrade all Uniform users will be issued with a new laptop or PC, and software compatible to run the upgraded Uniform modules.</p>

<b>1a. Commission services that provide best value</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Progress</b>
To achieve further efficiencies through the transfer of additional services to Ubico, joint procurement, the development of a trade waste service, and the possible inclusion of additional partners by 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2014	On target	<p>During 2013/14, we have been investigating and putting plans in place for the potential transfer of three additional services to Ubico Ltd, and the delivery of a new service for trade waste.</p> <p>The Council's winter gritting service has already been transferred to Ubico with an estimated annual saving of £50,000 - £80,000.</p> <p>Cotswold and Ubico officers continue to investigate and/or progress the potential transfer of the following services to Ubico:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public conveniences cleansing/maintenance service - a scoping document has been prepared for the cleansing /maintenance of the Council's public conveniences. However, this project may become part of a wider procurement project;</li> <li>• Bulky waste collection service – Ubico is continuing to investigate the provision of a bulky waste collection service for Tewkesbury Borough Council and Cotswold District Council.</li> </ul> <p>In addition, the introduction of a new service is being considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new trade waste service – the project initiation document has been completed, and officers are exploring the final details of service delivery. A report is expected at Cabinet in the next few months.</li> </ul>
<b>1b. Drive down administrative and management costs</b>	On target	<p>The Joint Working Strategy has been reviewed including an assessment of the current management structure against future needs. Joint savings of £500k are expected to be delivered from the senior management restructure (£300k from 2014/15), and £700k from a greater sharing of officers and services within the Units. The aim is to both align services and functions across West Oxfordshire District Council and Cotswold District Council, whilst ensuring that structures remain sufficiently flexible to provide further opportunities to reduce overheads in the future. Other models for service delivery involving more partners continue to be investigated.</p> <p>Both informal and formal staff consultation on the detailed proposals for revisions to the Senior Management structure were completed over the summer; and after consideration of the consultation findings, refinements were made. The revised senior management structure was approved by Cabinet at both Councils in November 2013. The relevant Heads of Service will transition to the new structure during Q4, with the new structure fully operational by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014.</p>
To review the Joint Working Strategy, and deliver savings of £600,000 over the next five years (to 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2018)		

**1b. Drive down administrative and management costs**

<p>The new combined structure will reduce the number of Service Heads from 17 to 12 (eight are shared including GO Shared Services) and two in each Council will provide a bespoke service to their Council (the Planning service and Democratic services).</p>		
<p>Four properties have been reviewed by Property services, and approved by Council for disposal. One property was disposed of at the end of July 2013; and the disposals of the other three properties are being progressed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Old Memorial Hospital – a third party, who we were in discussion with, has withdrawn; officers are now drawing up alternative disposal plans including the option of disposing the property on the open market;</li> <li>• Lorry Park – we are currently resolving issues in order to progress open market disposal;</li> <li>• Bourton-on-the-water (land off Roman Way) – the Council has an Option Agreement with Bloor Homes who intend to develop the site for residential homes. Outline planning permission has already been granted; and Bloor Homes is expected to make an offer in line with the agreement.</li> </ul>	<p>On target</p>	
<p>Wildmoor Properties submitted a proposal to build a new complex (with cinema, retail, restaurants and student accommodation) at Brewery Court, Cirencester. The application was approved by the Planning Committee in November; and in due course, the Council may need to consider ownership issues.</p> <p>Officers are currently negotiating the purchase of a permanent Cotswold depot for the delivery of Environmental Services which could result in potential cost savings. Planning permission has also been submitted to extend the duration of permission on the temporary depot in South Cerney.</p>		

<b>Priority 2: Maintain and protect our environment as one of the best places to live, work and visit</b>		
<b>2a. Protect the built and natural environment</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Progress</b>
<p>To invest in the Council's car parks by delivering the actions identified within the parking strategy to improve the quality, access and environment of the Council's car parks and the service provided by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015</p>	<p>On target</p>	<p>The overall aim is to create a specific design for the Forum car park in Cirencester; and an 'approved design' which will include generic principles to be applied to all council off-street car parks (materials, signage and lighting etc.).</p> <p>We appointed a contractor in October to undertake the design work. Consultation on a proposed layout for the Forum car park was undertaken with the Cirencester Parking Partnership in December and the Cirencester Access Disability Group and Gloucestershire Highways in January 2014. Once the proposed layout has been agreed, the consultant will commence work on the other design elements such as materials, signage and lighting (which will subsequently become the template for the generic design).</p> <p>In partnership with Gloucestershire County Council, we appointed a contractor to provide virtual permits and pay using mobile phone, with the new arrangements commencing in November 2013.</p>
<p>To provide assistance to communities to have energy efficient homes which are warm through the Green Deal Together Community Interest Company and through the delivery of Warm and Well Plus during 2013/14</p>	<p>On target</p>	<p>The Green Deal is the Government's flagship scheme for improving energy efficiency and reducing carbon emissions, and replaces national energy-efficiency schemes (such as Warm Front) and external funding for local Warm &amp; Well schemes.</p> <p>Cotswold District Council is a shareholder in the Green Deal Together Community Interest Company, which will operate as a Green Deal provider for both domestic and non-domestic purposes. The Company's application was approved in September, and the strict on-boarding process<sup>1</sup> to access Green Deal Finance was approved by the 'credit committee' in January 2014. The Company is now able to produce Green Deal plans, and commence preparations for the launch.</p> <p>We are also making provisions through Warm and Well Plus as part of a service level agreement with Severn Wye Energy Agency.</p>

<sup>1</sup> to date, only a handful of Green Deal providers have completed the on-boarding process

<b>Progress</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>2a. Protect the built and natural environment</b>
<p>Overall, we are on schedule to submit the Local Plan by the target date. Within the timetable, however, minor adjustments have had to be made to certain key milestones.</p> <p>Officers have almost completed the detailed responses to over 2000 representations made during the six week consultation on the Preferred Development Strategy. Currently, we are awaiting a refresh of the housing numbers by an external consultant before all responses can be completed on that element of the Strategy. Once completed, the Response report can be produced. However, it is clear from all the representations reviewed to date that there is no reason to alter the overall thrust of the Strategy; a position that was endorsed by Cabinet in December 2013, subject to some minor amendments.</p> <p>Community engagement on the site allocations commenced with Parishes on 17<sup>th</sup> January, with a facilitated workshop. Parishes will engage with their communities over the next two months.</p> <p>Development Management policies are being reviewed by a consultant, who, as part of this exercise, will hold workshops with Members and Development Management officers during Q4. This work is expected to be completed by the Spring.</p> <p>The draft local plan, including a revised draft Development Strategy, detailed site allocations, and Development Management policies, is expected to be published during summer 2014 for public consultation.</p> <p>The second review of the Strategic Housing and Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) which is required for the site allocation work was assessed in November 2013 by an independent panel. We now expect to complete the review of the SHLAA in Spring 2014 to ensure that it complies fully with the latest national requirements, which includes testing the viability of sites and securing 'buy-in' from local communities.</p>	<p>On target</p>	<p>To produce a robust, well evidenced Local Plan that will shape the development of the District until 2031 (to be submitted by 31st March 2015)</p> <p><b>Milestones:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• June 2013 – a six week public consultation on the district housing requirement and proposed distribution of development;</li> <li>• October-December 2013 – commence facilitated workshop events with parishes to identify potential site allocations;</li> <li>• April-June 2014 – public consultation on draft Local Plan, including development strategy, site allocations and development management policies (full consultation);</li> <li>• March 2015 – submission to the Planning Inspectorate.</li> </ul>

	<b>Status</b>	<b>Progress</b>
<p><b>2a. Protect the built and natural environment</b> To brief parishes to enable them to contribute effectively to the site allocation process at the facilitated workshop events by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013</p>	Achieved	<p>Working with Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC), we agreed the process for engaging and consulting with those communities that are identified in the Preferred Development Strategy, to enable them to consider their preferred sites for development.</p> <p>Cotswold officers have produced evidence packs, in preparation for the workshop which was held in January, and facilitated by GRCC. Over a two month period, starting in the New Year, Town and Parish councils will work with their communities, and their feedback will help to inform site allocations in the draft Local Plan.</p>
<p><b>Priority 3: Work with local communities to help them help themselves</b></p>		
<p><b>3a. Provide local homes for local people including bringing empty properties back into use</b> To work with other agencies to prepare customers for the implementation of national and local welfare reform changes such as a local Council Tax Support scheme, the Social Sector Size Criteria, the Benefit Cap, the introduction of Universal Credit and changes to Local Housing Allowance by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014</p>	On target	<p>The Benefits Service, working in partnership with the local voluntary sector, Registered Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and other stakeholders, continues to prepare customers for the changes to both national and local welfare reforms.</p> <p>To date, the service has supported customers during the implementation of the social sector size criteria changes on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013; and the introduction of the Benefit cap on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2013.</p> <p>The revised local council tax support scheme is progressing as scheduled; public consultation was completed in October 2013, and a report on the outcome and revised scheme was approved by Cabinet and Council in December 2013. The revised scheme will shortly be published on our website, and we will be informing our clients in preparation for its introduction on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014.</p>

<p><b>3a. Provide local homes for local people including bringing empty properties back into use</b></p> <p>To work with other agencies to prepare customers for the implementation of national and local welfare reform changes such as a local Council Tax Support scheme, the Social Sector Size Criteria, the Benefit Cap, the introduction of Universal Credit and changes to Local Housing Allowance by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014 (contd.)</p>		<p>The introduction of Universal Credit, which combines several benefit payments into one payment including all new housing benefit customers, has been delayed (due 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013 with whole caseload transfer by April 2017) by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Following the evaluation of the initial pilots, the pilots have been extended but so far, only testing of the basic cases such as single people with no children is taking place. In preparation for the introduction of Universal Credit, we have developed a Local Support Framework with our partners - Job Centre Plus, Registered Social Landlords, Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), and the voluntary sector. At this stage, we are unable to progress further, but continue in the interim, to maintain good communications with our partners.</p>
<p><b>3a. Provide local homes for local people including bringing empty properties back into use</b></p> <p>To implement the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan, including the delivery of 400 affordable homes between 2012 and 2016; and the implementation of the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme (Year 2 of four year plan)</p>	<p>On target</p>	<p>Overall, we are broadly on target with the implementation of Year 2 of the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan.</p> <p>The Council has already delivered well over half of the 400 affordable homes planned between 2012 and 2016. In the first nine months of the year, we delivered 47 units at the Fire College, Moreton-in-Marsh, Fairford and South Cerney which included rented, shared ownership and shared equity homes (70% ownership).</p> <p>The 12 week public and stakeholder consultation on the draft Housing Allocations Scheme which incorporates changes (eligibility, income, and local connection criteria for accessing affordable housing) in line with the Localism Act 2012 and Welfare Reform Act, was completed, and revisions made in response to the feedback. The revised scheme was approved by Cabinet in November and Council in December, and will be implemented during 2014/15.</p> <p>The Local Authority Mortgage Scheme (LAMS) was launched in January 2014, following a short delay while Lloyds Banking Group conducted a review of its involvement in LAMS nation-wide. The scheme is aimed at first time buyers who can afford a mortgage but not the initial deposit, and will allow first time buyers to borrow up to 95% loan to value.</p>

**3b. Work with town and parish councils to meet local needs**

To reduce the risk of property flooding in those settlements severely affected by flooding in 2007 by providing financial and technical support for flood alleviation projects, and working in partnership with agencies and communities during 2013/14

On target

We continue to work in partnership with communities, the Environment Agency and Gloucestershire County Council to fund and deliver flood alleviation schemes to reduce flood risk in settlements affected severely by flooding in 2007. As a result of the works completed to date throughout the District, there has been minimal internal flooding to properties during the heavy rain and flooding in recent weeks.

Work in a number of settlements has been completed; in Bledington (a new clay bund preventing flooding to residential properties but ground water issues remain to be resolved); Avening (a new wall next to the watercourse has prevented the school from being flooded), and Upper Up, South Cerney (a culvert section replacement has prevented highway and sewer flooding).

In Moreton-in-Marsh, improvements to highway drainage were carried out by CDC on Bourton on the Hill Road and the construction of a bund in Swan Close and provision of Property Level Protection is due to commence in January and be completed by 31st March 2014. In addition, funding to enable a major flood alleviation scheme to be progressed to the South of Moreton, will be sought from Cabinet.

Work is also planned for Bourton on the Water, Lechlade, Moreton, Somerford keynes, North Cerney, Baunton, Whelford and Paxford (subject to funding).