

Appendix A Progress towards achieving our Top Tasks (2013/14 year end)

Priority 1: Freeze Council Tax for the next three years whilst protecting front line services that matter to our residents		
1a. Commission services that provide best value	Status	Progress
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 st October 2013	Achieved	<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>
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 st March 2015	On target	<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>At Cotswold, the relevant Uniform modules and Document Management System were upgraded in December, and following internal customer testing, went 'live' in January 2014. As part of the upgrade, all Uniform users were issued with a new laptop or PC, and software compatible to run the upgraded Uniform modules. One module, the Public Access module is still to be implemented; the build has been completed, and the service is testing the module and aligning the relevant business processes. Once this element has been implemented, the upgrade will be complete.</p> <p>A full replacement of all software modules is required at West Oxfordshire. System testing has been completed; and data acceptance testing of live data loads commenced in January. Once the system is implemented in June 2014, both Development Services at West Oxfordshire and Cotswold will be running on common software. Work on Public Protection and licensing modules will commence in September 2014 at West Oxfordshire.</p>

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1a. Commission services that provide best value	Status	Progress
<p>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 31st March 2014</p>	<p>Broadly Achieved</p>	<p>During the year, officers have been investigating and putting plans in place for the potential transfer of services to Ubico as part of a rolling programme, which aims to achieve efficiencies from reduced overheads and economies of scale. Significant work has also been carried out with potential new partners; this work is on-going.</p> <p>One service, the Council's car park winter gritting service was transferred to Ubico in September 2013 which is estimated to deliver annual savings of £50,000 - £80,000, which will enable the service to be within budget, while the transfer of other services are still being progressed, including the potential transfer of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public conveniences cleansing/maintenance service - a specification has been written and a quote will now be obtained from Ubico for delivering this service; • 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. <p>In addition, the introduction of a new trade waste service is being considered informally. The project initiation document has been completed, and officers are exploring the final details of service delivery.</p> <p>Over the next year, officers will continue to investigate the potential transfer of additional services to Ubico, as well as developing a permanent Environmental Services depot for Cotswold District Council.</p>
1b. Drive down administrative and management costs		
<p>To review the Joint Working Strategy, and deliver savings of £600,000 over the next five years (to 31st March 2018)</p>	<p>On target</p>	<p>In the early part of 2013/14, the Joint Working Strategy was reviewed, and an assessment of the current management structure against future needs was completed. Initial joint savings of £300k are expected to be delivered from the senior management restructure, which became fully operational on 1st April 2014. Further savings will also be achieved from a greater sharing of officers and services within the individual 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.</p> <p>We are also exploring opportunities with our GO Shared Services partners and have been awarded £500k from the Government's Transformation Fund to support this work.</p>

1b. Drive down administrative and management costs		
<p>To reduce the cost of the Council's asset holdings by actively reviewing and rationalising the Council's land and property portfolio, and to generate increased rental income and/ or new capital receipts where possible whilst meeting service delivery objectives by 31st March 2015</p>	<p>On target</p>	<p>Four properties have been reviewed by Property services, and approved by Council for disposal. One property, the Old Prison, Northleach was transferred to the Friends of the Cotswold at the end of July 2013. Officers are continuing to progress the disposals of the other three properties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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; • Lorry Park – we are currently resolving issues in order to progress open market disposal; • 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. <p>A property review has been undertaken on the recently vacant former Social Services club in Cirencester. The Cabinet and Council approved disposal by auction in May 2014.</p> <p>Wildmoor Properties has submitted a revised proposal for planning permission to build a new complex (with cinema, retail, restaurants and student accommodation) at Brewery Court, Cirencester. 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.</p> <p>Following the senior management restructure and potential for further shared services, a review of office accommodation requirements at Trinity Road has commenced.</p>

Priority 2: Maintain and protect our environment as one of the best places to live, work and visit

2a. Protect the built and natural environment

Status

Progress

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 31st March 2015

On target

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.).

We appointed a contractor in October to undertake the design work, and have consulted with the Cirencester Parking Partnership, the Cirencester Access Disability Group and Gloucestershire Highways on the proposed layouts for the Forum car park. The generic design and the design of the Forum car park are being finalised (layout and materials etc.) and proposals will be submitted to Cabinet to request capital funding. Capital funding has already been identified in the Medium Term Financial Strategy for this purpose.

In partnership with Gloucestershire County Council, we appointed a contractor to provide virtual permits and payment for parking using a mobile phone, offering motorists greater choice in payment options, with the new arrangements commencing in November 2013.

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

Achieved

In January 2013, the government launched Green Deal, its flagship scheme for improving energy efficiency and reducing carbon emissions. To ensure that there would be adequate provision in Cotswold District, the Council became a shareholder in the Green Deal Together (GDT) Community Interest Company, which would operate as a Green Deal provider for both domestic and non-domestic purposes. Following a lengthy process to access Green Deal Finance, GDT was launched in April 2014 and has started processing applications from customers.

The partnership has recently secured £2.5m from the Department of Energy and Climate Change (Green Deal Communities fund) which will support delivery of green deal plans across communities, especially hard to treat properties.

During the year, we have also provided assistance to communities as part of the Warm and Well Plus service level agreement with Severn Wye Energy Agency. On our behalf, they have provided householders with advice on energy efficiency options and supported them to take action to install measures, undertaken district wide campaigns and promotions to increase awareness and take up of schemes, and negotiated ECO (energy company obligation) funding with energy suppliers to fund hard to treat properties in the District.

2a. Protect the built and natural environment	Status	Progress
<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>Milestones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 2013 – a six week public consultation on the district housing requirement and proposed distribution of development; • October-December 2013 – commence facilitated workshop events with parishes to identify potential site allocations; • April-June 2014 – public consultation on draft Local Plan, including development strategy, site allocations and development management policies (full consultation); • March 2015 – submission to the Planning Inspectorate. 	<p>On target</p>	<p>Overall, we are on schedule to submit the Local Plan by the target date. Within the timetable, minor adjustments have had to be made to certain key milestones.</p> <p>The six week consultation on the Preferred Development Strategy, which included online consultation and drop in events at Moreton Area Centre, Chesterton, and the Council Chamber at Trinity Road generated over 2000 individual comments from 667 individuals and organisations, to which officers have made detailed responses. Due to the large number of representations, the Cabinet report on the Development Strategy was delayed to December 2013. The Response report has since been produced and published on our website.</p> <p>Community engagement on the site allocations commenced on 17th January, with a facilitated workshop for Town and Parish Councils. Parishes have completed their assessments of the relevant sites and have reported back to the Council.</p> <p>The refresh of the housing numbers by an external consultant and the SHMA (Strategic Housing Market Assessment) have been completed.</p> <p>Development Management policies are being reviewed by Forward Planning officers and Development Services officers.</p> <p>The Statement of Community Involvement which sets out how we will consult with communities and developers in the planning process was approved for consultation by Cabinet in May 2014.</p> <p>The draft Local Plan for consultation, including a revised draft Development Strategy, detailed site allocations, and Development Management policies, is expected at Cabinet for approval in September 2014.</p>
<p>To brief parishes to enable them to contribute effectively to the site allocation process at the facilitated workshop events by 31st December 2013</p>	<p>Achieved</p>	<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 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 worked with their communities, and their feedback will help to inform site allocations in the draft Local Plan.</p>

Priority 3: Work with local communities to help them help themselves

3a. Provide local homes for local people including bringing empty properties back into use

<p>To work with other agencies to prepare customers for the implementation of national and local welfare reform 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 31st March 2014</p>	<p>Achieved</p>	<p>During 2013/14, the Benefits Service has worked in partnership with the local voluntary sector, Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and other stakeholders, to prepare customers for both national and local welfare reforms including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the social sector size criteria changes (provided assistance with claims for Discretionary Housing Payment and signposting to other forms of assistance);• the Benefit cap (set up mini conferences with RSLs and the Citizens Advice Bureau for those affected);• revisions to local council tax support scheme (consulted the public in October 2013 prior to its implementation on 1st April 2014). <p>In addition, the service has developed a Local Support Services Framework with its partners - Job Centre Plus, Registered Social Landlords, Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), and the voluntary sector, which will support customers when Universal Credit is introduced by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) (was due 1st October 2013 with whole caseload transfer by April 2017). In the interim, the service is continuing to maintain good communications with its partners, and recently met to discuss the updated guidance on the LSSF issued by the DWP at the end of March 2014.</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>Achieved</p>	<p>During the year, a total of 137 affordable homes (Target: 70) were delivered in the District. One hundred homes were delivered at the Fire College, Moreton-in-Marsh, Upper Rissington, Fairford, and South Cerney which included rented, shared ownership and shared equity homes (70% ownership); and an additional 37 homes were delivered under the Government's 'Help to Buy' scheme.</p> <p>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 approved by Cabinet in November and Council in December, and will be implemented during 2014/15.</p> <p>The Local Authority Mortgage Scheme (LAMS), a scheme aimed at first time buyers who can afford a mortgage but not the initial deposit was launched at the end of January 2014, following a short delay while Lloyds Banking Group conducted a review of its involvement in LAMS nation-wide.</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

Achieved

As a result of the works completed to date throughout the District, there was minimal internal flooding to properties during the heavy rain and flooding during Q4; and a further £200K of capital was allocated for flood alleviation during budget setting in February 2014.

During 2013/14, work in a number of settlements has been completed including;

- Weston sub Edge (ford at Saintbury brook and installation of extended flood relief pipeline);
- Daglingworth (some watercourse clearance undertaken by the riparian owners);
- Naunton (work to prevent springwater from entering the sewerage system);
- North Cerney (new bridge has been installed on the river Churn to alleviate a localised flooding problem);
- Bledington (a new clay bund preventing flooding to residential properties but ground water issues remain to be resolved);
- Avering (a new wall next to the watercourse has prevented the school from being flooded);
- Upper Up, South Cerney (a culvert section replacement has prevented highway and sewer flooding);
- Moreton-in-Marsh (improvements to highway drainage on Bourton on the Hill Road; and construction of a bund in Swan Close. A major flood alleviation scheme is scheduled for late summer subject to Cabinet agreement and additional funding secured from GCC);
- Lechlade (Phase 1 engineering works were completed, and second phase of the scheme is planned for Summer 2014);
- Fairford – following extensive delays, the final stage of the Environment Agency led scheme has been agreed and should be completed by June 2014.

In this rolling programme, all major schemes should be completed by March 2015 with the exception of the flood alleviation scheme in Cirencester (this EA led scheme is estimated at £2m and currently has no funding secured). This will be part of the work considered by the Cotswold Flood Action Group.

The Cotswold Flood Action Group was recently established to coordinate a multi-agency response to tackling flooding problems. This member led group has identified key areas based on river catchments which require a coordinated approach to tackling fluvial, sewer and surface water flooding.