



CABINET

21ST MARCH 2019

AGENDA ITEM (7)

PUBLICA BUSINESS PLAN 2019/20

Accountable Members	Councillor AW Berry Leader of the Council Councillor C Hancock Cabinet Member for Enterprise and Partnerships
Accountable Officer(s)	David Neudegg Managing Director, Publica 01285 623100 david.neudegg@publicagroup.uk
Purpose of Report	To consider the draft Publica Business Plan for 2019/20.
Recommendation	(a) That Cabinet recommends that the Leader approves the Business Plan subject to any comments it wishes to make; (b) that the Council sets aside £70,000 of the anticipated underspend against the contract sum for Publica to utilise over the next two financial years to support a graduate and paid intern scheme.
Reason(s) for Recommendation(s)	To provide an opportunity for the Cabinet to engage in the on-going development of Publica and its relationship with the Council
Ward(s) Affected	All
Key Decision	No
Recommendation to Council	No
Financial Implications	As part of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, savings are included in line with the business case approved in October 2016. Publica is required to deliver these savings and the Business Plan sets out how it intends to deliver these both in respect of 2019/20 and also in respect of future years. The savings set out in the recently adopted MTFS for the Council are £639,000 over the period April 2019 to March 2022.
Legal and Human Rights Implications	The governance of Publica is set out in the company's Articles of Association, Members' Agreement and the Service Agreements with the Councils.

	The company Members' Agreement sets out a number of reserved matters which can only be decided on a 75% agreement of shareholders (each Council owning one share). Cotswold District Council has agreed that the Leader of the Council shall act on its behalf in casting its vote for reserved matters decisions. Approval of the Publica Business Plan is one such reserved matter item.
Environmental and Sustainability Implications	None directly arising from this report
Human Resource Implications	None directly arising from this report
Key Risks	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. If the Council (via its Leader) 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 the Council's MTFs.
Related Decisions	Council reports - 27 th September 2016, 13 th June 2017 and 19 th October 2017 Overview and Scrutiny Committee/Cabinet reports - draft Business Plan 2018/19
Background Documents	Council reports - 27 th September 2016, 13 th June 2017 and 19 th October 2017
Appendices	Appendix 'A' - Draft Publica Business Plan 2019/20 Appendix 'B' - Publica Proposal re Graduate and Intern Programme

Performance Management Follow Up	Implement any Cabinet
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Options for Joint Working	Publica is an example of joint working across local authorities
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<p>Background</p> <p>1. <u>General</u></p> <p>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.</p> <p>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, it has been requested that Cabinet reviews the Business Plan and suggests any appropriate amendments (which it will do at its Meeting on 21st March 2019), aided by any comments from this Committee.</p>

1.3 In addition to Cabinet receiving this report, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a presentation from the Group Finance Director on 5th March 2019 on this matter. Any comments made by that Committee will be reported orally at the Cabinet Meeting.

1.4 A copy of the draft Business Plan 2019/20 is attached as **Appendix 'A'** to this report.

1.5 The draft Business Plan has now been considered and endorsed by the Publica Board.

2. Graduate and Intern Programme

2.1 Historically the Council has, from time to time, taken on graduates as a way of building capacity and introducing younger people to local government service. This is in addition to our approach to supporting a range of apprenticeships within the Council and more latterly Publica. The graduate, intern and apprenticeship programmes form a central part of Publica's 'Next Generation' goal in its emerging People Plan. Existing employees will be supported by a new leadership programme 'Stepping up to Lead'.

2.2 Last year, whilst returning some £188,000 underspend to Cotswold DC, Publica flagged that if there was a further underspend in 2018/19 it might be useful to reinvest some of this in areas of employment where we have been struggling to recruit and retain and, in effect, create a 'grow our own' model.

2.3 The latest estimate at Q3 projects an underspend for Cotswold in the order of £295,000 and given the timing of university graduations it seems timely, should we get a positive indication from partners, that we should now move forward with these plans.

2.4 Attached at **Appendix B** is a proposal, approved by the Publica board, seeking Council approval to retain £70,000 of the 2018/19 underspend to finance a two-year graduate and intern programme. The funding request is equal for the three principal partners (in budget terms) and will allow each Council to have one graduate and two ten-week internships for two years - and, as with previous programmes, the positions would be paid in line with nationally-recognised rates.

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