

# Public Document Pack



**COTSWOLD**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Thursday, 27 May 2021

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## CABINET

A meeting of the Cabinet will be held in the Council Chamber, at the Council Offices, Trinity Road, Cirencester on **Monday, 7 June 2021 at 6.00 pm.**

Rob Weaver  
Chief Executive

To: Members of the Cabinet

(Councillors Rachel Coxcoon, Tony Dale, Andrew Doherty, Mike Evemy, Jenny Forde, Joe Harris, Juliet Layton and Lisa Spivey)

Recording of Proceedings – The law allows the public proceedings of Council, Cabinet, and Committee Meetings to be recorded, which includes filming as well as audio-recording. Photography is also permitted.

As a matter of courtesy, if you intend to record any part of the proceedings please let the Committee Administrator know prior to the date of the meeting.

# AGENDA

1. **Apologies**
2. **Declarations of Interest**  
To receive any declarations of interest from Members and Officers, relating to items to be considered at the meeting.
3. **Minutes (Pages 3 - 10)**  
To approve the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 13 May 2021.
4. **Leader's Announcements (if any)**
5. **Public Questions**  
To deal with questions from the public within the open forum question and answer session of fifteen minutes in total. Questions from each member of the public should be no longer than two minutes each and relate issues under the Committee's remit.
6. **Member Questions**  
To deal with written questions by Members, relating to issues under the Committee's remit, with the maximum length of oral supplementary questions at Committee being no longer than one minute. Responses to any supplementary questions will be dealt with in writing if they cannot be dealt with at the meeting.
7. **Ubico Business Case for expansion and extension of the partnership to Gloucester City Council (Pages 11 - 16)**
8. **Council Tax Exceptional Hardship Discretionary Policy (Pages 17 - 28)**
9. **Green Economic Growth Strategy - Six monthly update report (Pages 29 - 34)**
10. **Green Business Pledge (Pages 35 - 40)**
11. **Schedule of Decisions Taken by the Leader of the Council and/or Individual Cabinet Members (Pages 41 - 44)**
12. **Issue(s) Arising From Overview and Scrutiny and/or Audit (Pages 45 - 46)**

(END)

Cabinet  
13 May 2021



COTSWOLD  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

In accordance with relevant legislation, these minutes are a record of decisions taken. They are not intended to be a verbatim account of the meeting. A full recording of the meeting can be accessed at [www.cotswold.gov.uk](http://www.cotswold.gov.uk).

## Minutes of a meeting of Cabinet held on 13 May 2021

Councillors present:

Mike Evemy - in the Chair

Tony Dale  
Andrew Doherty

Jenny Forde  
Lisa Spivey

Clive Webster

Officers present:

Chief Executive  
Deputy Chief Executive  
Interim Monitoring Officer  
Managing Director, Ubico  
Community Partnerships Officer  
Economic Development Lead  
Forward Planning Manager

Group Manager - Commissioning  
Parking Manager  
Democratic Services

Observers: Councillors Stephen Andrews, Patrick Coleman.

CAB.140 Apologies were received from Councillor Harris.

### CAB.141 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Evemy declared an other interest in Agenda Item 9, as his employer was referred to within the report.

There were no declarations of interest under the Code of Conduct from Officers.

### CAB.142 **Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet of 12 April 2021 be approved as a correct record:

**Record of Voting - for 6, against 0, abstention 1, absent 1.**

Note:

The Chair sought an update in relation to Minute CAB.132 regarding the resolution to the opening hours of the Council Offices. In response, the Deputy Chief Executive reported that opening the offices until 9 PM Monday to Thursday would be trialed for a period to collect information on demand. This would enable the most cost effective and efficient arrangements to be put in place as a permanent arrangement.

**CAB.143 Leader's Announcements**

The Chair advised that the meeting represented the first meeting of the Cabinet held in-person within the Council Offices since the Covid-19 outbreak and was the first being webcast. He added that webcasting of Council meetings was a manifesto pledge of the Administration to increase transparency.

The Chair also reported that two standing items had been omitted from the Agenda; these were the 'Schedule of Decisions taken by the Leader and/or other Cabinet Members' and 'Matters arising from Overview and Scrutiny or Audit Committees'. These items would be reported to the next meeting of Cabinet on 7 June 2021, if required.

**CAB.144 Public Questions**

No questions had been received from members of the public.

**CAB.145 Member Questions**

No questions had been received from Members.

**CAB.146 Ubico Business Plan 2021-22**

The Cabinet was requested to consider the Ubico Business Plan 2021-22, to note progress and recommend the Leader approve the Plan.

The Managing Director of Ubico was present at the meeting and presented the report to Cabinet, responding to various questions from the Cabinet.

The Cabinet Member for the Environment, Waste and Recycling explained that the Business Plan served other partner authorities and that Ubico tailored each service to each authority's needs. He added that one of the biggest issues was in relation to the use of diesel vehicles for waste collections and how in future this requirement needed to be considered against the carbon offset, given electric vehicles were still not suitable for use on all the District's rounds. The Cabinet Member also expressed that emphasis needed to be placed on 'reduce, reuse and recycle', with particular emphasis on reducing waste, given public knowledge still considered recycling to be the most environmentally-friendly method.

The Deputy Leader added that the support provided by Ubico staff during the Christmas 2020 flooding period in Cirencester and surrounding villages should be commended. He also requested that further information be provided to the Cabinet outside of the meeting in relation to trade waste.

**RESOLVED that the Cabinet recommend that the Leader (as Shareholder representative) approve the Ubico Business Plan 2021-22.**

**Record of Voting - for 7, against 0, abstention 0, absent 1.**

**CAB.147 Spacehive: Pledge Decision Process and Scheme Criteria**

The Cabinet was requested to agree the decision process and criteria to operate Crowdfund Cotswold, the Council's civic crowdfunding platform.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report and highlighted various aspects. He concluded that it was hoped the new decision process and criteria would enable quicker decisions to be made than had happened previously in Cabinet Member Decision-Making meetings.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing commented that there had been 65 projects come forward following the Scheme's launch, of which 28 were live at present. She added that she hoped the Scheme would bring people together and enable residents to financially support local projects and drew attention to the Equalities Impact Assessment that had been undertaken by the report authors.

**RESOLVED that:**

- a) **Cabinet approve that decisions on Council pledges be taken under a delegation to the Chief Executive or Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing;**
- b) **the criteria for such pledges be agreed by Cabinet.**

**Record of Voting - for 7, against 0, abstention 0, absent 1.**

**CAB.148 Partial Update of the Adopted Local Plan - Project Update**

The Cabinet received an update on the project to partially update the Cotswold District Local Plan and received an updated Local Development Scheme (timetable of work). Cabinet were requested to draw down funding and to approve a draft Green Infrastructure Strategy for public consultation.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Forward Planning and the Forward Planning Manager jointly introduced the report and highlighted various aspects.

The Cabinet expressed their support for the recommendations and highlighted the importance of consultation with the District's town and parish councils. The Cabinet also requested that further education on the update be extended to youth and community groups to encourage residents to reconsider and challenge previously held concepts.

**RESOLVED that Cabinet:**

- a) **approve the Local Development Scheme 2021 to 2024;**

- b) **approve draw down of £21,000 from reserves to programmes of work identified; and**
- c) **approve the Draft Cotswold District Green Infrastructure Strategy for a six week public consultation.**

**Record of Voting - for 7, against 0, abstention 0, absent 1.**

**CAB.149 Reopening High Streets Safely Fund/Welcome Back Fund**

Cabinet were requested to note the spend on Reopening High Streets Safely Fund projects to date and to agree a broad approach to the use of the Welcome Back Fund.

The Cabinet Member for the Economy and Skills introduced the report and highlighted various aspects. He also wished to extend his thanks to the Economic Development Team for their work in relation to the project.

The Cabinet commended the consistency of messaging that had been produced by the Council in relation to the reopening of high streets, and the digital education that had taken place, but questioned if discussions could take place with the County Council given that signs relating to historic Covid-19 information were still being displayed across the District.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Forward Planning questioned if bike storage installation had been encouraged as part of the re-opening to encourage residents to move away from car travel. In response, Officers explained that the onus had been placed on town and parish councils to consider their own plans for reopening but that some local councils had considered similar plans for their own reopening.

**RESOLVED that:**

- a) **the use of the Reopening High Streets Safely Fund to date is noted;**
- b) **the proposed approach to the use of the Welcome Back Fund is endorsed and authority is delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive to agree specific allocations in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills.**

**Record of Voting - for 7, against 0, abstention 0, absent 1.**

**CAB.150 Funding and Contract Changes to Support BEIS Public Sector**

The Cabinet were presented with a report which sought to seek contingency and revenue funding to support the installation of carbon reduction measures in the Council's buildings as part of the BEIS decarbonisation scheme and to seek delegated authority to award contracts for project management and works and to negotiate a contract variation with the Council's leisure provider, SLM, to ensure requirements of grant funding are met.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Forward Planning and Group Manager for Commissioning jointly introduced the report and highlighted various aspects.

The Cabinet expressed their support for the quick action being undertaken by Officers, despite the restrictive timescales, and commented that hopefully the ambition for the project would be rewarded with substantial funding being awarded.

**RESOLVED that Cabinet:**

- a) **note the potential revenue implications for repair and maintenance of specialist technology installed through BEIS decarbonisation funding;**
- b) **note that the revenue implications of a) will be managed in 2021/22 through the Council's budget monitoring process and through application of Financial Rules if necessary;**
- c) **note that the revenue implication of a) with effect from 2022/23 onwards will be considered as part of the Council's update to its Medium Term Financial Strategy and budget setting process;**
- d) **delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive/Chief Finance Officer to appoint consultants, funded by the BEIS grant, to carry out all stages of delivery support including project management, procurement and on-site delivery, via a Procurement Framework;**
- e) **delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive/Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance to award contracts to contractors, suppliers and installers to complete the grant funded carbon reduction works, via a Procurement Framework;**
- f) **delegate authority to negotiate a contract variation with SLM to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive/Chief Finance Officer and the Cabinet Member for Finance.**

**Recommend to Council that:**

- g) **the Council proceed with the planned decarbonisation installation noting the financial risks surrounding withdrawal of funding should delivery fail to meet the grant funding completion deadline;**
- h) **allocate a contingency sum of £120,000 (12.5% of works capital costs) to support delivery and avoid unnecessary delays if costs exceed initial estimates and grant funding provided; any expenditure of this contingency to be agreed by the Deputy Chief Executive/Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance;**

- i) that £120,000 be reallocated in the Capital Programme from the £980,000 available for “Acquisition of a Strategic site at Moreton-in-the-Marsh” to the contingency for the decarbonisation scheme;
- j) note that a variation to the SLM leisure services contract is necessary to enable utility costs to be paid by the Council and agrees that management fees payable to the Council are adjusted accordingly.

**Record of Voting - for 7, against 0, abstention 0, absent 1.**

**CAB.151 Funding for Improvement Works to Rissington Road Car Park, Bourton-on-the-Water**

Cabinet received a report seeking agreement to allocate capital and car parking earmarked reserve funds for improvements to Rissington Road Car Park, Bourton-on-the-Water.

The Deputy Leader introduced the report and explained that the car park was in need of a complete overhaul as it regularly experienced issues of flooding and poor lighting. He explained that the works would seek to create additional disabled bays, additional lighting and the installation of electric vehicle charging points and that the works were planned for October 2021 when the tourism season for the village was at its quietest.

The Parking Manager responded to various questions from the Cabinet and advised that little improvement work had been undertaken to the car park for over 20 years; the capacity of the car park would remain largely unchanged but would feature a better layout; no tree planting was included within the proposals, but planting would feature at the adjacent roadside and lighting engineer specialists had been consulted in relation to the proposed lighting to ensure any light pollution generated was the lowest amount possible.

The Cabinet expressed support for their recommendations highlighting that Bourton village was a valuable asset to the District and investment should be made accordingly towards its improvement. The Cabinet also requested if Officers could further investigate the possibility of tree planting, covered cycle storage and electric cycle charging within the scheme.

**RESOLVED that:**

- a) **Cabinet recommend to Council the allocation of £245,000 of capital funding and £92,000 of car park earmarked reserve fund to make improvements to Rissington Road Car Park, Bourton-on-the-Water; and**
- b) **delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance to award the contract for the agreed works.**

**Record of Voting - for 7, against 0, abstention 0, absent 1.**



CAB.152 **Other Business**

The Chair welcomed Angela Claridge, Interim Monitoring Officer, to her first meeting of the Cabinet.

The Chair also advised that Parish Council Clerk Jackie Weaver would be appearing on the next episode of CDC Live on 25 May 2021 at 3.00pm

The Meeting commenced at 6.00pm and closed at 7.58pm.


Chair

(END)

Unconfirmed

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# Agenda Item 7

 <p><b>COTSWOLD</b> DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>	<p><b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>
<p>Name and date of Committee</p>	<p><b>CABINET - 7 JUNE 2021</b></p>
<p>Report Number</p>	<p><b>AGENDA ITEM 7</b></p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p><b>UBICO BUSINESS CASE FOR EXPANSION AND EXTENSION OF THE PARTNERSHIP TO GLOUCESTER CITY COUNCIL</b></p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>ALL</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Cllr Andrew Doherty, Cabinet Member for Environment, Waste and Recycling Email: <a href="mailto:Andrew.Doherty@cotswold.gov.uk">Andrew.Doherty@cotswold.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Accountable officer</p>	<p>Scott Williams, Business Manager – Contracts</p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>To present Members with a proposal for Gloucester City Council becoming an equal shareholder in Ubico Limited and to present the findings of a due diligence appraisal of the business case.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>Recommendation/s</p>	<p>It is recommended that Cabinet: <i>Endorse the proposal contained within this report and recommends that the Leader (As the Ubico Shareholder Representative) formally supports Gloucester City Council joining Ubico Limited, as an equal shareholder, subject to any comments it wishes to make.</i></p>
<p>Corporate priorities</p>	<p>The proposal in this report supports the Council priority: Respond to the challenges presented by the Climate Change Emergency.</p>
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>Exempt</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>Consultees/ Consultation</p>	<p>The following people have all been consulted on this report and the detail contained within: Councillor Andrew Doherty and Senior Council and Publica and Ubico officers.</p>

## **I. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Cotswold District Council (CDC), West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) along with Forest of Dean District Council (FoDDC), and four other partners in Gloucestershire are shareholders in 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 cost price. Ubico holds no assets, the depot it operates from, the vehicles it uses to perform the services, and the waste and recycling containers that are provided to residents are all owned by the authority. This ensures that the shareholders have full control over high value expenditure.
- 1.3 Ubico has submitted a tender bid to Gloucester City Council (GCi) for its environmental services contract, which has been successful and would mean that GCi would join the partnership and become an equal shareholder in the company.
- 1.4 Publica, a teckal company also owned by CDC, provides business support services to Ubico in the form of finance, ICT, procurement and human resources.

## **2. BUSINESS CASE APPRAISAL**

- 2.1 The purpose of the appraisal was to review the confidential extended partnership business case, which has been provided to the existing shareholders, in order to provide assurance to the Leader of the Council.
- 2.2 Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC), and the other Ubico shareholders are performing their own reviews and are therefore not included or referenced in this appraisal. Stroud District Council and Forest of Dean District Council have already agreed to GCi joining the partnership.
- 2.3 The business case has been evaluated on the following criteria:
  - 1) That the business case provides benefits;
  - 2) That there is no financial detriment to this Council;
  - 3) That there is no detriment to the Council's short, medium or long-term transformation plans with Ubico as part of the Environmental Services Innovation Programme (ESIP).
- 2.4 In order to effectively review the business case, senior officers from Waste, Finance, HR, ICT, Legal, and South West Audit Partnership (SWAP) have been involved in the appraisal.
- 2.5 The appraisal has taken the form of an assessment of three key areas of risk:
  - Risk to the councils Environmental Services Innovation Programme (ESIP)
  - Risk concerning the business support costs to Publica of integrating GCi into Ubico Limited and the partnership
  - Risks concerning the ongoing business support costs to Publica of GCi becoming a member of the partnership

### **3. ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES INNOVATION PROGRAMME (ESIP)**

- 3.1 Ubico has confirmed that the GCi mobilisation and integration would be run as a separate project with resources separate to business as usual and other innovation based projects (which are in their business plan and funded in business as usual or incremental investment by partners). They have been recruiting project resources and have appointed a senior manager as the project sponsor and are recruiting to back-fill this post, which provides evidence that the project will not affect either operational delivery or programmes they are committed too.
- 3.2 Ubico are working on other initiatives concurrently and whilst they accept that they will have to be realistic about managing commitments around a GCi service commencement date (1 April 2022), much of the resource that will be focussed on that project day to day, will be funded and dedicated to the mobilisation in isolation. Ubico is working on the critical path for the mobilisation in order to raise any resource conflicts early on and resolve them with stakeholders.
- 3.3 A dedicated ESIP team has been established to deliver the projects, which includes Publica and Ubico staff. The Publica transformation fund has been used to ensure Ubico posts are backfilled so that there is no detriment to operational service delivery. In addition, robust programme governance is in place to ensure risks and issues are managed. Ubico has appointed a manager as a Senior Supplier for ESIP to work alongside A Publica Business Manager who will also act as the ESIP Senior Supplier. This relationship will be critical to ensuring the delivery of the programme and ESIP will be sponsored by a Group Manager and monitored by the Publica - Service Improvement Group (SIG) that is chaired by an Executive Director. Monthly meetings take place with shareholder Cabinet Members and this will provide the opportunity to monitor and track the programme.
- 3.4 Following approval of ESIP by the shareholder councils in April, the programme is currently in the mobilisation phase. A Programme Initiation Document (PID) is being developed, which contains a long list of potential projects and benefits that will form the programme plan. This process has been discussed with the shareholder Cabinet Members and senior council officers and a project plan will be presented to them by the 4th June.

### **4. COSTS OF INTEGRATION AND RESOURCING TO PUBLICA**

- 4.1 The Business Support Services Group Manager, ICT and HR Business Managers have been working closely with the Finance Director of Ubico and project lead to identify the additional support costs associated with GCi joining the partnership in April 2022.
- 4.2 Ubico is working with GCi to determine the final mobilisation plan. It will be adequate to provide mobilisation resources: dedicated operational involvement, consultative/legal advice, procurement, finance analysis and project/program management. They expect all of these areas to be resourced internally or within the partnership and they have engaged with functional leads at Publica regarding IT, HR and Finance resources.
- 4.3 The resource requirements from an ICT and Finance Teams perspective is relatively small and there are adequate resources as long as timescales are worked through in partnership as part of the planning process.

- 4.4 There will need to be additional resourcing in HR to support the mobilisation to ensure that the due diligence is completed for the TUPE process, as well as ensuring that the transfer to Ubico of the staff is managed effectively.

## **5. ADDITIONAL ONGOING COSTS TO PUBLICA**

- 5.1 A proposal outlining the additional HR resources required to support day-to-day activities has been presented along with options in regards to ICT and assurance has been given that the budget has been calculated to meet these costs and others that will be generated by the increased volumes of work in areas such as accounts payable / receivable.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER ASSURANCE REQUIRED**

- 6.1 As a result of the Publica functional leads engaging with the Executive team at Ubico throughout the process, both sides are confident that the resources required to support mobilisation and the ongoing day to day support activities if GCi joins the partnership have been identified and the budget will be in place to cover all the associated costs.

## **7. FINANCIAL FINDINGS/IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There would be a financial benefit to the Council in GCi joining the Ubico partnership through an estimated reduction of £33,000 per annum in corporate overhead costs. The Council, as a founding authority, who met the costs of the initial company set up, can also expect to receive a one off payment of £27,000 from the joining fee paid by GCi to Ubico.
- 7.2 A costing exercise designed to establish the impact of GCi joining the partnership on the Business Support Services in Publica including a full evaluation of transactional resources required has started. Assurance will need to be obtained that additional expenditure relating to the addition of the Gloucester City Contract does not result in increased contract costs for this Council, as outlined in the business plan, this should be mitigated through the ring fencing of contract costs or savings which are passed directly back to the partner contracted.
- 7.3 Further future savings could be achieved through productivity from cross partner initiatives such as depot sharing, asset sharing, partners sharing the development of innovation (such as zero carbon fleet and digital working pilots) and creating scalable commercial offerings. Savings could also be achieved through shared procurement/maintenance.

## **8. LEGAL FINDINGS/IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 Legal Agreements will need to be reviewed and agreed including a new Shareholder's Agreement, Deed of Adherence and a Contract and Terms of Engagement with regard to the Contract activities.

## **9. ICT FINDINGS/IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The system integration for GCi is easier than that of previous new Ubico partners, as there are no existing systems that have to be integrated.

9.2 Whilst a suitable project timeline will need to be agreed, the Publica ICT team are sighted and there is the necessary budget factored in to support for the integration.

9.3 There are no major risks, issues or concerns related to this business case from an I.C.T. perspective.

## **10. HUMAN RESOURCES FINDINGS/IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are always risks associated with TUPE transfer but that will be covered off in the due diligence plan which the Publica HR team are accustomed to producing, having supported Ubico in previous similar such contract/staff integrations.

10.2 There are no major risks, issues or concerns related to this business case from a Human Resource perspective.

## **11. AUDIT FINDINGS/IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are no major risks, issues or concerns related to this business case that have been highlighted from an Audit perspective.

## **12. ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES FINDINGS/IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 Whilst there is not a significant financial benefit to the existing shareholders in GCi joining the Ubico partnership, it is clear that this would strengthen the business case/s for larger scale initiatives such as cross boundary working and sharing of resources.

12.2 In addition to the reputational risk to the company if the service delivery failed in GCi, there is also a reputational risk to the existing shareholders if a large proportion of the management team had to be drafted in to resolve, because it would potentially weaken the management capacity overseeing the existing front line services/contracts and so if there were a localised problem, then it may not be rectified suitably or in a timely manner, causing reputational damage locally.

12.3 In response to this Ubico has confirmed that because there would be a separate team formed to manage the GCi integration, this would ensure that the front line services for the existing partners retain effective management oversight and control.

## **13. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

13.1 None associated with this report.

## **14. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

14.1 None associated with this report.

## **15. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

15.1 The Council can choose to oppose GCi joining the Ubico Partnership as an equal shareholder however, the final decision will be made based on the majority.

**16. CONCLUSION**

16.1 The conclusion of the due diligence review is that Ubico has provided sufficient assurance to the Council to enable the Cabinet to recommend that the Leader approves the admission of GCi to Ubico as a shareholder.


**17. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

17.1 None.

(END)



# Agenda Item 8

 <p><b>COTSWOLD</b> DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>	<p><b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>
<p>Name and date of Committee</p>	<p><b>CABINET – 7 JUNE 2021</b></p>
<p>Report Number</p>	<p><b>AGENDA ITEM 8</b></p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p><b>COUNCIL TAX EXCEPTIONAL HARDSHIP DISCRETIONARY POLICY</b></p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>ALL</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Cllr Mike Evey - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance Email: <a href="mailto:mike.evey@cotswold.gov.uk">mike.evey@cotswold.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Accountable officer</p> <p>Author</p>	<p>Jon Dearing - Group Manager for Resident Services Tel: 01993 861221</p> <p>Mandy Fathers - Business Manager for Operational Support and Enabling Tel: 01993 861232</p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>This report outlines proposals to introduce a Council Tax Exceptional Hardship Discretionary Policy to assist the Council in making decisions when considering such applications from Council Tax payers in the district.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>Annex A – Council Tax Exceptional Hardship Discretionary Policy</p>
<p>Recommendation/s</p>	<p><i>That Cabinet approve:</i></p> <p><i>a) To adopt the Council Tax Exceptional Hardship Discretionary Policy;</i></p> <p><i>b) The decision making process as detailed within paragraph 4.2 of this report.</i></p>
<p>Corporate priorities</p>	<p>Delivering our services to the highest standards</p> <p>Helping residents and communities access the support they need for good health and wellbeing</p>
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>NO</p>

Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	The Leader of the Council, The Deputy Leader of the Council, The Chief Executive Officer, The Deputy Chief Executive Officer, The Monitoring Officer, Legal Services Manager

## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. Section 76 of the Local Government Act 2003 introduced Section 13A (Billing Authority's Power to Reduce Amount of Tax Payable) into the local Government Finance Act 1992. This provides the Council with discretionary powers to reduce the amount of Council Tax payable to such an extent as it thinks fit; including reducing the amount to zero, where other national discounts and exemptions cannot be applied.
- 1.2. The Local Government Finance Act 2012 (LGA 2012) inserted a new Section 13A(1)(a), (b) and (c); in the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (LGFA 1992), creating two discounts:-
  - Local Council Tax Support schemes under Section 13A(1) (a) and (b); and
  - Section 13A(1)(c) effectively the original Section 13A discount, now including the provision to further reduce the amount of any reduction provided by S13A (1)(a) and (b).
- 1.3. In accordance with Section 13(A)(1)(a) of the LGFA 1992 as amended, the Council has a Council Tax Support scheme which provides assistance to those deemed to be in financial need. The scheme has been designed to take into account the financial and specific circumstances of individuals with maximum relief of 100% of Council Tax liability, available to working age applicants.
- 1.4. Council Tax legislation also provides for a wide range of discounts, exemptions and reductions that have the effect of reducing the level of Council Tax due. The Policy under Section 13A (1) (c) as shown within Annex A will require the applicant to have exhausted all other options before making an application under the policy.

## 2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1. When applying this policy officers will similarly consider whether alternative actions could be undertaken before applying this policy. As such, this policy will only consider exceptional circumstances, due to financial need or crisis, where it is appropriate and fair to provide a discretionary discount.

Any relief awarded under Section 13A (1) (c) would be intended only as short-term assistance and not a means to reduce Council Tax liability indefinitely. Having a policy in place ensures that the Council has a fair approach to dealing with applications for discretionary discount in Council Tax, and the criteria to which there will be regard. The Council will treat all applications on their individual merits and the criteria which should be met is listed at 3.1 in Annex A.

- 2.2. The full cost resulting from the granting of a local discretionary discount is met by the billing authority and there is no statutory right to pass on the cost to other major precepting authorities. During the flood event at Christmas 2020, officers from Gloucestershire County Council expressed the County Council's support for a discretionary Council Tax scheme which would support Council Tax Payers in exceptional circumstances and stated that the County Council would be willing to pay a proportionate share of the costs of the discount as this as the body benefiting the most from the collection of Council Tax.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1. The full cost resulting from the granting of a local discount is met by the billing authority and there is no statutory right to pass on costs to other major precepting authorities. However, Officers from Gloucestershire County Council have expressed the County Council's support for this Policy, as the body benefiting the most from the collection of Council Tax. Officers will include the level of financial support from the County Council in decision-making reports.
- 3.2. In circumstances where there could be a high demand for discretionary support for Council Tax, such as events which trigger the implementation of the Council's Emergency Response Plan, Officers will engage with the County Council to confirm the commitment to financial support for the costs of implementing this Policy. The level of County Council financial support will be included in decision-making reports to the Cabinet Member or Cabinet.
- 3.3. Based on the average band D property for 2021/2022 the full cost associated with a discount would be £1,902.36 for the full financial year. Should Gloucestershire County Council give their full support for these discounts their share would be 74.07% (£1,409.22) per case and the District Council £493.14. Discounts are rarely awarded for the full financial year so it is envisaged that any award given would be less than the example given.
- 3.4. All costs associated with Council Tax discounts and reliefs are examined as part of the annual budget activity. Any costs in the current financial year, which cannot be funded within the Council's revenue budget, will be funded from the Council Priorities Fund. Ongoing revenue provision for costs associated with this Policy will be considered as part of the budget setting process for the 2022/23 budget.

### **4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. Section 76 of the Local Government Act 2003 introduced Section 13A (Billing Authority's Power to Reduce Amount of Tax Payable) into the local Government Finance Act 1992. This provides the council with discretionary powers to reduce the amount of council tax payable to such an extent as it thinks fit; including reducing the amount to zero, where other national discounts and exemptions cannot be applied.
- 4.2. The authority to determine individual applications under Section 13A may be delegated to an officer of the authority under section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972; however for this purpose it is proposed that the decision making process for individual applications be determined by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Finance in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive in her role as Chief Finance Officer.
- 4.3. Applications which relate, or could potentially relate to a class or classes of case (for example, a group of properties affected by flooding) will be determined by Cabinet following consideration of a report from the Deputy Chief Executive and the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Finance.

5. **RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1. The adoption of this policy will help to reduce the risk of challenge against the administrative processes of such a discount, as it will be subject to scrutiny by other elected members through the Council's scrutiny processes.

6. **EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 6.1. This policy is accessible to all Council taxpayers in the event of financial crisis or event causing exceptional hardship and where other statutory reductions cannot be claimed.

7. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 7.1 None.

(END)

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COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL

# Council Tax Exceptional Hardship Discretionary Policy

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## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 Since April 2013 each Local Authority has in place its own scheme for Council Tax Support. Unlike the Council Tax Benefit scheme the Local Council Tax Support scheme is not fully funded by Central Government and thus the onus is on Local Authorities to implement their own schemes. Whilst there is the need to have a local scheme there also needs to be some provision for those residents who do find themselves in ‘exceptional’ circumstances and require short term assistance to meet their Council Tax obligation. It is important to define what could be considered exceptional and in this instance it would be a situation that was not typical, was entirely unusual and only likely to happen very infrequently. It is envisaged that exceptional situations for the purpose of this scheme are likely to be things entirely out of the control of the Council Tax payer, such as flooding to a property as an example. It is therefore relevant to include those suffering severe financial hardship as a direct result of the Covid-19 global pandemic as this is an exceptional and unprecedented situation.

## **2 Legal Provision**

- 2.1 Billing authorities have discretion under Section 13(1) (c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended, to reduce the amount of Council Tax payable to individuals, or for classes of Council Tax payer. This includes the power to reduce the amount payable to nil.

## **3 Eligibility Criteria**

- 3.1 The intention is for this scheme to be a last resort for exceptional situations and circumstances. It is not intended to replace any discounts, exemptions or Council Tax support awards. The Council will treat all applications on their individual merits, however some, or all of the following criteria should be met for each case:

- There must be clear, demonstrable evidence of financial hardship or exceptionally difficult personal circumstances that justifies a reduction in Council Tax liability
- The taxpayer must satisfy the Council that all reasonable steps have been taken to resolve their situation prior to the application
- The taxpayer must have applied for Local Council Tax Support – the scheme which ensures that those on low incomes receive financial support towards their council tax
- All other discounts and reliefs must have been applied to the Council Tax account
- The taxpayer does not have access to other assets that could be used to

pay council tax

- The Council's finances allow for a reduction to be made
- The situation and reason for the application must be out of the taxpayer's control
- The amount outstanding must not be as a result of wilful refusal or culpable neglect
- It is reasonable for the Council to award a reduction having regard to the interests of other local Council Tax payers who have to meet the cost of any relief granted
- An award can only be made for the Council Tax element of any charge, any court or enforcement agency costs applied to the account cannot be considered

## **5 Claiming discretionary hardship**

- 5.1 Requests for a reduction in Council Tax must be made in writing from the taxpayer, their advocate/appointee or a recognised third party acting on their behalf. A designated application form will also be made available. The application should be supported by a full financial statement of income and outgoings and accompanied by any supporting evidence.
- 5.2 The application will be reviewed and considered having regard to each individual applicant's personal circumstances, the scheme guidelines, the content of the application and the evidence supplied in support of the application.
- 5.3 Awards will be made directly by way of a discount applied to the Council Tax bill

## **6 Decision Making**

- 6.1 Individual applications will be determined by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Finance in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive acting in the role of Chief Finance Officer.
- 6.2 Applications which relate, or could potentially relate, to a class or classes of case (for example, a group of properties affected by flooding) will be determined by Cabinet following consideration of a report from the Deputy Chief Executive and the Cabinet Member responsible for Finance.

6.3 All decisions will be notified to the applicant in writing as soon as practicable, and the Council will normally determine applications within 6 weeks from receiving all required information.

## **7 Review of Decision**

7.1 The Council Tax Discretionary Hardship scheme is administered in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended, and as such, there is no right of appeal against the Council's use of discretionary powers.

## **8 Equalities**


8.1 The Council is committed to equality and the fair application of the policy, ensuring that people receive fair outcomes in the standard of service they receive from the Council and equality of access to Council services. This policy is fully inclusive and could support all members of the community, regardless of their race, gender, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status and/or disability in line with the principles set out in the Equalities Act 2010.

## **9 Fraud**

9.1 The Council takes fraud seriously and has adopted a zero tolerance approach. All allegations of fraud will be investigated; should a person make a false statement or provide incorrect evidence in support of their application for discretionary hardship relief, they may commit a criminal offence. All such instances will be dealt with in accordance with the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy and any overpaid monies will be recovered together with any outstanding Council Tax.

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# Agenda Item 9

 <p><b>COTSWOLD</b> DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>	<p><b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>
<p>Name and date of Committee</p>	<p><b>CABINET - 7 JUNE 2021</b></p>
<p>Report Number</p>	<p><b>AGENDA ITEM 9</b></p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p><b>GREEN ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGY – SIX MONTHLY UPDATE REPORT</b></p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>ALL</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Cllr Tony Dale, Cabinet Member for the Economy and Council Transformation Email: <a href="mailto:tony.dale@cotswold.gov.uk">tony.dale@cotswold.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Accountable officer</p>	<p>Paul James, Economic Development Lead Tel: 01285 623558 Email: <a href="mailto:paul.james@cotswold.gov.uk">paul.james@cotswold.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>To note the progress in the delivery of the Council’s Green Economic Growth Strategy.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>Recommendation/s</p>	<p><i>That progress against the actions identified in the Green Economic Growth Strategy, as set out in this report, is noted.</i></p>
<p>Corporate priorities</p>	<p>Enable a vibrant economy</p>
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>Exempt</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>Consultees/ Consultation</p>	

## I. BACKGROUND

The Council's Corporate Strategy identifies the need to "enable a vibrant economy" as a key priority. To this end, Cabinet approved a draft Green Economic Growth Strategy for consultation in October 2020 and, following amendments made as a result of the consultation, it was adopted by Cabinet in December 2020. The Strategy covers a four-year period from adoption and the report by the Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills in December 2020 undertook to provide six monthly updates to Cabinet. This report is the first such update. It is also worth reminding Cabinet that in the same report they approved the establishment of the Cotswold Economic Advisory Group to oversee implementation of the actions contained within the strategy. The Group first met in February 2021 and is meeting on a bi-monthly basis.

## 2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1 The Strategy set out a number of different themes and progress against each of them is reported below. Efforts have understandably been focused in recent months on the safe reopening of town centres, but progress on other matters has still been maintained. It is anticipated in the months ahead that the work on town centres will continue but as part of a broader effort to help the economy to recover from the pandemic.

### Growing Key Sectors

- 2.2 Discussions have been held with the Royal Agricultural University and their developer partner HBD (formerly Henry Boot Developments) to encourage them to come forward with a suitably ambitious scheme for their Triangle/University Gate site, which could include an agritech or related element building on the success of the Farm491 incubator. A marketing exercise has been taking place and a further meeting will be held with them shortly to discuss progress.
- 2.3 Various discussions have also been taking place in terms of the cyber and digital sector. These discussions are at an early stage but have the potential to bring exciting developments in this sector to the District. Members will also be aware that the Applied Digital Skills Centre at Cirencester College, which was awarded £4.48 million of funding through GFirst LEP last summer, is now on-site and will be completed next year.

### Growing a Green Economy

- 2.4 Various private sector-driven initiatives are underway in the District that, if successful, will help build a green economy and contribute directly to emissions reduction. The Council has, in principle, an opportunity to invest directly in some of these. Several large-scale grid-connected solar farms are either being built or seeking planning permission, and linked to these, it is likely that hydrogen generation from solar energy will take place in the District.

Zero Avia, the ambitious and innovative company developing hydrogen-powered aviation has relocated to Cotswold Airport. Home energy retrofit is a huge challenge in emissions reduction and, in principle, a huge economic opportunity – the Council may be able to play a role in accelerating this activity locally. The Council's forthcoming investment in EV charge points, initially in Council-owned car parks, will promote more EV usage and it might be possible, in time, to link EV charge points to Council-invested solar power in the district.

- 2.5 Cabinet will also be aware that the Council is in the process of adopting a Green Business Pledge, which will involve businesses committing to reducing their carbon emissions. A report on this appears elsewhere on the Cabinet agenda.

### Town Centres

- 2.6 As mentioned earlier in the report, town centres have been a key focus of activity and effort over recent months as the Council has assisted with the safe reopening of high streets following several lockdowns and will now continue to assist town centres to recover from the pandemic and evolve to take account of changes to shopping habits which have been accelerated by events over the last 12 months or so.

- 2.7 Last month Cabinet received a report on the use of the Reopening High Streets Safely Fund and the Welcome Back Fund. To remind Members, each of these two funds allocated £81,114 to Cotswold to be spent by the end of March 2022. The initial tranche was spent on a number of initiatives including:

- Temporary public realm changes, signage etc.
- Business packs with signs, stickers etc. showing safety messages
- A footfall counting system for Cirencester, Stow-on-the-Wold and Tetbury
- Promotional campaigns with public safety messages
- Cirencester town centre ambassadors deployed in the run-up to Christmas
- Webinars for the hospitality sector
- Business advisers for town centre businesses
- Support for businesses to improve their digital presence, working with tech company Maybe\*

- 2.8 It is proposed to spend the second tranche on creating a Virtual High Street and delivering physical improvements to town centres. An intern position has been advertised and it is hoped to appoint someone for a period of 10 weeks over the summer to assist with these projects.

### A Sustainable Visitor Economy

- 2.9 Work to improve the online & bookable presence of businesses within the visitor economy has been ongoing as part of Uncover the Cotswolds project. The team is working with individual businesses to help them become bookable via Visit England's Tourism Exchange Great Britain (TXGB) platform allowing visitors to look and immediately book these experiences and accommodation.

- 2.10 A focus on gathering content to improve the online content for towns saw digital town guides produced, consumer town itineraries and content for towns such as Cirencester improved. Two surveys were launched to gather a range of information including how businesses use Cotswolds Tourism and a digital health survey to understand the training requirements of businesses to reach new audiences. New training modules for businesses are now available online and free SEO reports have assisted businesses to improve online presence - see <https://www.cotswolds.com/partnership/training>.

2.11 A briefing note on the Green Economy and Sustainable Tourism has been drafted and will go to the Cotswolds Tourism DMO Advisory Board in the coming weeks. This is the initial step to creating a sustainable tourism strategy for the Cotswolds, including both short and long-term actions, in line with other key strategies and plans such as the Council's Climate Strategy, Green Economic Growth Strategy, and GFirst LEP's Gloucestershire Sustainable Energy Strategy.

2.12 The joint tourism team have been working with the Cotswolds National Landscape to identify short and long-term sustainable tourism actions that they can collaborate on. Actions include the development and marketing of rural skills experiences as part of the Marketing Recovery Fund project being undertaken by the tourism team at the moment, further development of the Caring for the Cotswolds scheme and its promotion to Cotswolds Tourism members, and various walking initiatives, such as extending the Cotswold National Landscape warden-led walks programme to include town walks and developing their offer to have greater appeal to visitors.

#### Infrastructure

2.13 The Economic Development Lead continues to liaise with and lobby both Fastershire and broadband providers such as Openreach and Gigaclear to address areas in the District where internet speeds are poor. Currently 97.17% of addresses in the District are able to access superfast broadband (download speeds of 30mbps and above). 45.04% of addresses have access to full fibre broadband. Gigaclear are currently working in Cirencester. At the moment they have 1500 live connections and when they have completed their build in 2022 there will be just over 3500. They are also currently working to finish their build in Westonbirt which should be completed by the end of the year. Openreach have committed to start work on upgrading the Cirencester exchange in 2022, with survey work beginning early next year and the build running through 2022/23.

2.14 Lobbying has also been undertaken with the four main mobile phone operators to address "not spots" in the District, informed by local intelligence provided by Members. BT/EE have shared with us their plans to upgrade masts and provide new ones, which will go some way to addressing current issues. The other main operators have committed to sharing their plans with us once they are fully developed.

2.15 The Council is in regular contact with Highways England regarding the planned upgrade to the A417 Missing Link in order to maximise the opportunities this will provide.

#### Skills and Training

2.16 One of the concerns about the skills and training offer in the County is that it has been fragmented and difficult to navigate both for businesses and those individuals seeking support. The Council worked with the County Council and GFirst LEP to bring forward the Gloucestershire Skills Portal ([www.skillsportalglos.com](http://www.skillsportalglos.com)) which brings together the various strands of support into a single site.

2.17 The Economic Development Lead also works very closely with Cirencester College in promoting opportunities for apprenticeships and work placements associated with T-Levels.



2.18 As mentioned earlier in the report, the Cotswolds Tourism DMO have made available a suite of digital training videos on the Cotswolds.com website.

#### Inward Investment

2.19 The Business Support page on the Council's website has been updated and a new page added with information for potential investors to the District. This is very much an interim update, with a more fundamental review of the business pages of the website being undertaken across the Publica partner councils.

2.20 The Economic Development Lead has been liaising closely with the agents for key sites in the District, including the Mitsubishi HQ at Watermoor and the employment land elements of the Steadings development.

2.21 In addition, Officers have been working closely with the Inward Investment Team at GFirst LEP in relation to inward investment opportunities, including the relocation of Zero Avia to Cotswold Airport. Zero Avia are developing a hydrogen aviation drivetrain. They are already building their team to around 50 employees and have potential to grow this much further over the next couple of years.

#### Business Support and Engagement

2.22 The Economic Development Lead has dealt with numerous enquiries from new and established businesses. Contact has been made with many of the key employers in the District, although visits to businesses have been restricted due to the Coronavirus pandemic. It is hoped to start a structured programme of business engagement over the coming months. The Council works closely with the Cirencester Growth Hub to ensure businesses are getting the support they need. It is an action in the Corporate Strategy to improve Growth Hub provision in the north of the District. Conversations have been held with various stakeholders on this and an Expression of Interest was submitted to Gfirst LEP, but a suitable funding source for this project has yet to be identified.

#### Innovation

2.23 The Cotswold District is home to a significant number of innovative businesses – far more than many people realise. Our ambition is to support existing businesses to grow and to attract more innovative high growth businesses. The Cabinet Member arranged a meeting with the Regional Manager of Innovate UK that has helped to raise the profile of the District.

#### Performance Measures

2.24 The Economic Development Lead has been working with the Business Information and Resources Team to develop an Economic Health dashboard for the District, bringing together data from a number of sources. The next six monthly update will include an example of the dashboard.

#### Conclusion

2.25 The above is a flavour of the actions, which have been taken over the last six months, but it is by no means an exhaustive list. By their very nature, some of the actions within the Green Economic Growth Strategy will take some time to deliver, but the activities undertaken within the first six months of the strategy form a firm foundation for their

delivery. The resource now in place to support Economic Development has certainly raised the profile of the Cotswold economy locally and regionally.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1. All activities have been undertaken within existing budgets. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

### **4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

### **5. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1. Risk assessments are undertaken where necessary on a project-by-project basis. There are no risks arising from this report.

### **6. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 6.1. The Green Economic Growth Strategy seeks to deliver inclusive economic growth across the District.

### **7. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1. The Green Economic Growth Strategy seeks to deliver sustainable growth and includes a number of actions which will positively impact the battle against climate change, including growing the environmental technology sector within the District and encouraging businesses to build climate change considerations into their operations.


### **8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 8.1. The District Council could choose not to have an Economic Growth Strategy or could choose not to monitor it. Neither option is recommended as it would lead to missed opportunities and would not maximise the District's potential for sustainable economic growth.

### **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 9.1. None.

(END)

 <p><b>COTSWOLD</b> DISTRICT COUNCIL</p>	<p><b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b></p>
<p>Name and date of Committee</p>	<p><b>CABINET - 7 JUNE 2021</b></p>
<p>Report Number</p>	<p><b>AGENDA ITEM 10</b></p>
<p>Subject</p>	<p><b>GREEN BUSINESS PLEDGE</b></p>
<p>Wards affected</p>	<p>ALL</p>
<p>Accountable member</p>	<p>Cllr Tony Dale, Cabinet Member for the Economy and Council Transformation Email: <a href="mailto:tony.dale@cotswold.gov.uk">tony.dale@cotswold.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Accountable officer</p>	<p>Paul James, Economic Development Lead Tel: 01285 623558 Email: <a href="mailto:paul.james@cotswold.gov.uk">paul.james@cotswold.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Summary/Purpose</p>	<p>To endorse the Council signing up to the Gloucestershire Climate Commitment and undertaking to promote it to businesses in the District.</p>
<p>Annexes</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>Recommendation/s</p>	<p><i>That the Council endorses the Gloucestershire Climate Commitment and resolves to use its various communications with businesses in the District to sign up to it and commit to reducing their carbon emissions.</i></p>
<p>Corporate priorities</p>	<p>Responding to the climate crisis - Influence and encourage residents, businesses and partners to reduce their carbon emissions</p>
<p>Key Decision</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>Exempt</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>Consultees/ Consultation</p>	<p>None.</p>

## I. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Council declared a climate emergency and an ecological emergency and has signed up to the COP26 UK100 pledge, committing to net zero emissions from its own activities by 2030 and a net zero district by 2045 at the latest. The Green Economic Growth Strategy, adopted in December 2020, contains an action to “encourage local businesses to embed climate change objectives into their operations”.

## 2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1 The Council has been looking at adopting a “Green Business Pledge” in order to encourage businesses to review their operations with the objective of reducing their carbon emissions and ultimately becoming carbon neutral. The objectives of the pledge are:
- 1) To show commitment by business to addressing the climate emergency
  - 2) To lead to actions which will have a tangible impact
  - 3) To show the Council as demonstrating community leadership on this issue.
  - 4) To reinforce Cotswold District as a location for green business.
- 2.2 The Council initially considered a range of options - either using an existing pledge, coming up with its own pledge for the Cotswold District alone or joining with other councils to create a Gloucestershire-wide pledge. A report was taken to the Cotswold Economic Advisory Group who were supportive of such an initiative, but with some members expressing a preference for a countywide scheme. The report to the Economic Advisory Group set out a number of tests any pledge would have to meet. These were:
- a) be simple enough for businesses not to be put off by it, bearing in mind that the vast majority of businesses in the District are micro-businesses with 9 or fewer employees.
  - b) be equally applicable for businesses large and small.
  - b) lead to benefits for the business as well as the environment.
  - c) be recognisable, or become recognisable in a short space of time, for consumers who wish to support businesses who are environmentally responsible.
  - d) lead to tangible actions which are measurable.
  - e) lead to the sharing of best practice.
- 2.3 There are a considerable number of environmental commitments ranging from Business Declares (see [www.businessdeclares.com](http://www.businessdeclares.com)) to the Terra Carta initiative endorsed by HRH Prince Charles (see <https://www.sustainable-markets.org/terra-carta/>). Some of these are rather long and complex and could be overwhelming for small businesses. Some also come with a significant cost for the business, which can also be a negative factor. It is important to remember that the majority of businesses in the District are micro-businesses with 9 or fewer employees. Any pledge needs to be simple enough not to be off-putting for small businesses who have many other pressures to deal with, particularly as we recover from the pandemic, and ideally come at no cost to the business. In fact, it should prompt the business to take action, which will reduce its costs and therefore help the bottom line.
- 2.4 There are other sound business reasons for signing up to the pledge. In these environmentally conscious days, many consumers make their buying decisions with sustainability issues in mind. A 2019 survey showed that 73% of people would change their consumption habits in

order to reduce their impact on the environment. In addition, a 2015 study showed that 62% of millennials wanted to work for a company, which made a positive social or environmental impact. The thrust of policy from Government, reflected in GFirst LEP's Draft Local Industrial Strategy, is that the environmental technology sector can stimulate innovation, create jobs and drive sustainable economic growth. Finally, the impacts of climate change if not addressed would have severe consequences for businesses of all types, so we all have a stake in responding to the climate emergency.

2.5 Eoin McQuone of Sustainable Business Design has been developing a pledge of this type. His pledge is very similar in content to what the Council is proposing and it therefore makes sense to work with him. Eoin's proposal, which is well-advanced, is for a "Gloucestershire Climate Commitment", which would have the advantages of scale of a countywide pledge. Eoin was introduced to officers at GFirst LEP and it is likely that a report will be taken to the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee to seek sign up from other councils in the county. As this Council's thinking in this area is already well-developed, we can be a leader in this area.

2.6 The basis of the Gloucestershire Climate Commitment is a three stage plan to:

- 1) Make a public commitment to climate action.
- 2) Calculate your total carbon footprint.
- 3) Pledge to achieve Net Zero emissions.

The pledge is to:

- 1) Halve your greenhouse gas emissions before 2030.
- 2) Achieve Net Zero emissions before 2050.
- 3) Publicly report progress on a yearly basis.

2.7 Engagement has also taken place with the Head of Environmental Strategy at St James's Place on this issue. As the largest employer in the District and a FTSE100 business, their sign-up would send a powerful message to other businesses in the area.

2.8 It is proposed that the Council proactively promotes the pledge to businesses in the District, using its channels including:

- Business Matters newsletter
- Council website business pages
- Social media channels
- Liaison with other key partners like the Growth Hub, Chamber of Commerce and Federation of Small Business
- Cotswolds Tourism's links with businesses in the visitor economy

2.9 A website has been developed – see [www.climatecommitment.co.uk](http://www.climatecommitment.co.uk). It is not the finished article yet and there is the opportunity for it to be finessed as more businesses start to use it and experience is gained. The website includes two downloadable 'playbooks' which set out how businesses can achieve the reduction in carbon emissions the pledge seeks. For example, areas which businesses can review in order to reduce their emissions include energy, transport, waste, packaging and their supply chain.

- 2.10 It is proposed to pilot the commitment with a relatively small number of businesses, to test the system works, before promoting more widely. It is also intended that some larger businesses, such as St James's Place, will act as 'mentors' to smaller businesses. It is recognised that small businesses in particular will need support in measuring their carbon footprint and further work will need to be done to determine the best way in which to deliver that support.
- 2.11 Members will be aware that the UK is hosting the COP26 conference later this year in Glasgow. In the run-up to this, the Government has launched the "Race to Net Zero" which is similar in its aims to the Gloucestershire Climate Commitment. Sustainable Business Design is investigating options for joining Race to Net Zero for accreditation.
- 2.12 In terms of next steps, Officers will continue to work with Sustainable Business Design to continue to refine the way in which the pledge and the detail which sits behind it will operate, making changes as necessary as a result of the pilot. A communications plan will be devised for when the pledge is ready to be launched on a wider scale and progress will be reported back to Cabinet as part of the regular update reports on the Green Economic Growth Strategy.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. There is no cost to the Council endorsing the Gloucestershire Climate Commitment. Work to promote the pledge to businesses within the District will be done within existing budgets.

### **4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

### **5. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1. There is a risk that businesses will not sign up to the pledge in sufficient numbers to make a significant difference. This will be mitigated by promoting it using the Council's various channels. The risk that it will be seen as too onerous by smaller businesses will be mitigated by the pilot referred to in the report. The biggest risk is to not do anything at all and fail to meet our climate change obligations.

### **6. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 6.1. Failure to address issues of climate change will impact on people from all sections of society.

### **7. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1. The Green Economic Growth Strategy seeks to deliver sustainable growth and includes a number of actions which will positively impact the battle against climate change, including growing the environmental technology sector within the District and encouraging businesses to build climate change considerations into their operations.

**8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 8.1 The District Council could choose not to have a Green Business Pledge but this would not assist us in meeting our climate change obligations. The Council could simply adopt an existing pledge or could develop one just for the Cotswold District. These options are not recommended for the reasons set out in the report.

**9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 9.1. None.

(END)

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**CABINET – 7 JUNE 2021 - AGENDA ITEM 11**

**SCHEDULE OF DECISION(S) TAKEN BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND/OR INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBERS**

Note: Further details regarding the decision(s) are available in the relevant Decision Notice(s).


<b>Cabinet Member</b>	<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Decision(s)</b>
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance	8 April 2021	To seek approval to make additional amendments to the Test and Trace Self-Isolation Discretionary Support Policy.	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the Deputy Leader approve the inclusion of the Test and Trace Self-Isolation Discretionary Support Payment to parents and guardians of children who have been asked to self-isolate.
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance	22 April 2021	To formally agree the eligibility criteria, timescales, application approach, authorisation protocols and delegations and to confirm the process of the Additional Restrictions Grants (Restart) Policy.	<b>RESOLVED</b> that the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance:  a) Approve the eligibility criteria, subject to minor amendments to 2.2 (i) of the policy so that the final bullet point states “Businesses that supply goods or services to the retail, hospitality, leisure and events sector” and to 5.3 ii to read “....between £15,001 and £50,999 ....”;  b) approve the business-type priorities;  c) approve the allocation of grant funding as set out in paragraph(s) 2.5 (subject to minor amendments) and 3.3 of the report;

Cabinet Member	Meeting Date	Subject	Decision(s)
			<p>d) adopt the process and application window proposals, as set out in paragraph 2.9 of the report;</p> <p>e) delegate the detailed consideration of individual grant awards to the Group Manager for Resident Services in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance.</p>
Cabinet Member for the Planning Department, Town and Parish Councils	11 May 2021	To consider the results of the three Neighbourhood Plan referendums held on the 6 May 2021, and subject to the results, to formally 'make' the Neighbourhood Plans.	<p><b>RESOLVED that:</b></p> <p>a) the Cabinet Member for the Planning Department, Town and Parish Councils having considered the referendum result for Kemble and Ewen, agrees to Plan being made;</p> <p>b) the Cabinet Member for the Planning Department, Town and Parish Councils having considered the referendum result for Preston, agrees to the Plan being made;</p> <p>c) the Cabinet Member for the Planning Department, Town and Parish Councils having considered the referendum result for Somerford Keynes and Shorncote, agrees to the Plan being made.</p>
Cabinet Member for the Planning Department, Town and Parish Councils	11 May 2021	To consider whether a neighbourhood plan submitted by South Cerney Parish Council meets the legal criteria necessary to progress to public consultation, and subsequent independent examination.	<p><b>RESOLVED that:</b></p> <p>a) the Cabinet Member agree that the submitted documents meet the requirement of Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012;</p>

Cabinet Member	Meeting Date	Subject	Decision(s)
			b) consequently, the Council will launch the statutory 'Regulation 16' 6 week publicity period.

(END)

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 <b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>	<b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Committee and date	<b>CABINET – 7 JUNE 2021</b>
Report Number	<b>AGENDA ITEM 12</b>
Subject	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – TETBURY AND FAIRFORD LEISURE PROVISION – TASK AND FINISH GROUP.</b>

1. Overview and Scrutiny Committee received the final report of the Tetbury and Fairford Leisure Provision Task and Finish Group at their meeting on 25 May 2021.
2. The Committee set up the Task and Finish Group to review the approach taken to leisure provision in Tetbury and Fairford and the future provision of facilities to meet current and future needs of residents.
3. The full report, Agenda Item 9, can be viewed on the Council's Website at the following link:  
[Tetbury and Fairford Leisure Provision Task and Finish Group](#)
4. The key lessons which Overview and Scrutiny Committee would like Cabinet to take note of are:
  - (a) Clear service requirements and desired outcomes need to guide all procurement and service delivery decisions, so that there is a robust process to evaluate quality, viability, social value and community impact, in addition to financial cost.
  - (b) Strategic needs analysis should be used to bring objectivity to good commissioning decision making, so that the desired outcomes are delivered sustainably.
  - (c) The robustness of cost : quality assessments brought to formal procurement evaluations should apply equally to other commissioning routes, so that risks, quality, viability and efficiencies are all considered as part of the due diligence process.
  - (d) Reports to Members should explicitly frame alternative options and the associated risks, costs and benefits so that a clearer understanding between cost and social value informs their decisions.
  - (e) Any significant proposed changes to service provision (or policy decisions) should be subject to an impact assessment, so that any potentially positive or negative impacts are understood, as well as presenting an opportunity to better involve stakeholders in our decision making process.
  - (f) Formal monitoring of relevant grant agreements should be undertaken in conjunction with finance, so that any concerns over financial viability of a service can be identified at the earliest opportunity.

5. In terms of future provision of Leisure Services, report identifies the need for a community fitness facility to replace the one at Farmor's school, Fairford and in Tetbury the need for more community space or improved partnership to open up planned community space for physical activity use e.g. Tetbury rugby clubhouse. It is recommended that these points be taken forward by the current review of the District Leisure Strategy.
6. All of these points should be read in conjunction with the full report.

(END)