



# COTSWOLD

District Council

Council name	<b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>CABINET - 16 APRIL 2026</b>
Subject	<b>UBICO BUSINESS PLAN 2026-27</b>
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Mike Evely Leader of the Council Email: <a href="mailto:mike.evely@cotswold.gov.uk">mike.evely@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer	Helen Martin Director of Communities and Place Email: <a href="mailto:helen.martin@cotswold.gov.uk">helen.martin@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Report author	Peta Johnson Head of Waste and Environment Email: <a href="mailto:peta.johnson@cotswold.gov.uk">peta.johnson@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	To consider the draft Ubico Business Plan 2026-27, produced by Ubico in consultation with its directors and shareholders, and to endorse that the Leader (as Shareholder Representative) approves the plan.
Annexes	Annex A – Ubico Business Plan 2026-27
Recommendation(s)	That Cabinet resolves to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Note the draft Ubico Business Plan 2026-27; and</li><li>2. Endorse that the Leader of the Council, as shareholder representative, will sign the written resolution to approve the draft Ubico Business Plan 2026-27.</li></ol>
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Delivering Good Services</li><li>• Responding to the Climate Emergency</li></ul>
Key Decision	NO



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Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cabinet Member for Environment and Regulatory Services</li><li>• Corporate Leadership Team of CDC and Publica</li><li>• s151 Officer</li><li>• Legal</li></ul>



## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1** The draft Ubico Business Plan 2026–27 has been produced in consultation with Ubico’s directors and shareholder councils. As a shareholder in Ubico, the Council is required to consider the Business Plan annually, with formal approval given by the Leader in their capacity as the Council’s Shareholder Representative.
- 1.2** The Plan marks the transition from Ubico’s previous five-year vision to a new strategic roadmap for 2026–2031, focusing on improving efficiency, leveraging scale, and preparing for Local Government Reorganisation.
- 1.3** For the Council, the Business Plan sets out a range of priorities that will support service delivery during 2026–27. These include improvements in emissions reporting, preparations for the introduction of plastic film collections as part of Simpler Recycling, and actions to accelerate decarbonisation, including the use of alternative fuels and low-emission fleet options. The Plan also includes commitments relating to the mobilisation of collection services in Wiltshire and an expanded programme of accreditation and performance management.
- 1.4** There are no direct financial, legal or equality implications arising from the approval of the Business Plan, as the Council’s budget is already agreed and no changes to service access or eligibility are proposed. However, failure to approve the Plan may result in risks to the Council’s shareholder obligations, create operational uncertainty, and delay planned service and environmental improvements.
- 1.5** Cabinet is asked to consider the draft Business Plan and to endorse that the Leader, as the Council’s Shareholder Representative, will complete the required written resolution to approve it.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** Cotswold District Council (The Council) is a shareholder of Ubico Limited (Ubico), a Teckal company designed to deliver environmental services.



- 2.2** Under a Service Agreement with the Council, Ubico provides household waste and recycling collections, along with street cleansing and grounds maintenance services. The current Service Agreement terminates on 31st March 2027.
- 2.3** Following a Cabinet decision (5th February 2026), the Council is proceeding with negotiations to enter into a Common Service Agreement with Ubico beyond the term of the current agreement.
- 2.4** Each year, Ubico prepares a Business Plan in collaboration with its shareholder councils.
- 2.5** The Managing Director of Ubico led an engagement session with Councillors and Officers on 20th January 2026. This was an opportunity to review an early version of the 2026-27 Business Plan, ask questions, and provide feedback.
- 2.6** This led to the production of the draft Business Plan (provided as Annex A), which where agreed, will be adopted for the coming financial year.
- 2.7** As part of the establishment of Ubico, a range of items were identified as reserved matters for Council (Shareholder) approval to ensure that shareholder councils retained control over the company.
- 2.8** The reserved matters decisions fall to the shareholder representatives to determine; in the case of the Council the shareholder representative is the Leader of the Council.
- 2.9** Where the draft Business Plan is approved, the shareholder representative will be required to sign a written resolution to formalise the decision.

### **3. UBICO BUSINESS PLAN 2025-26, OVERVIEW AND PROGRESS AGAINST COMMITMENTS**

- 3.1** The 2025-26 Business Plan was organised around the Ubico five-year vision (2021 – 2026): *To be recognised by our customers and employees as a quality provider of sustainable services for our local communities, delivering best value and reliability.*



**3.2** The Ubico Business Plan highlighted the delivery of this vision through:

- Leveraging synergies and economies of scale;
- Harnessing opportunities to deliver value back to our partners;
- Using technology to drive operational efficiency;
- Understanding our communities’ needs;
- Inspiring our workforce to be committed to providing value for money and carbon neutral services.

**3.3** Delivery of the vision and Business Plan was underpinned by four strategic pillars. These are described in the table below, together with example commitments and progress that has been achieved during 2025-26.

<b>Ubico Strategic Pillars</b>	<b>Commitments and Progress</b>
<b>People</b>	
<i>We will have a well-trained, supported and engaged workforce who live our values and are proud to work for Ubico.</i>	Continued employee engagement programme to gain feedback and identify areas for continuous improvement.
<b>Operational Excellence</b>	
<i>We will deliver high quality services which remain safe and compliant, seeking continuous improvement in productivity, value, and service excellence. We will harness innovation where appropriate and will explore synergies and opportunities for partnership and cross boundary working.</i>	The Business Plan identified an ongoing process of benefits realisation from in-cab technology. In-cab technology has been in place on collection services since 2022. This was rolled out onto street cleansing services in 2025-26.
<b>Business Development</b>	
<i>We will build business development capability which enhances our partnerships and allows for effective</i>	Contract renewals, growth, and the development of services in line with



<p><i>identification, analysis, and presentation to shareholders of potential new business opportunities. We will explore opportunities that aren't simply about profit, including those that would deliver greater value, help our communities, or improve services.</i></p>	<p>change (LGR, Simpler Recycling) were all identified in 2025-26.</p> <p>Contract renewals are being progressed. Ubico will grow in the coming financial year by providing collection services to Wiltshire, and Ubico are working with all partners to document and develop services in line with expected changes.</p>
<p><b>Climate</b></p>	
<p><i>We will minimise our environmental impact and support our shareholders to meet their carbon neutral targets, integrating carbon reduction opportunities wherever reasonably possible in both our fleet and non-fleet activities.</i></p>	<p>Improvements in reporting Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions were identified as an action. This continues into 2026-27.</p> <p>Building on the success of introducing Alternative Fuelled Vehicles (AFV) for some partners, Ubico are planning to further minimise emissions, including with the Council through the planned installation of fuel tank, sourcing of sustainable Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) and intention to procure and operate an electric recycling vehicle.</p>

**4. UBICO BUSINESS PLAN 2026-27, AREAS OF FOCUS FOR THE COUNCIL**

**4.1** Now at the end of the five-year vision, Ubico are entering into the period of a five-year strategic roadmap (2026-2031). This five-year strategy focuses on leveraging increased scale, delivering further operational efficiency, and preparing for a changing local government landscape.

**4.2** Delivery builds upon the areas identified in 2026-27 (e.g. leveraging scale and harnessing technology) with the following areas described:

- Mobilising and delivering services for Wiltshire Council from August 2026;
- Preparing for Local Government Reorganisation;
- Accelerating decarbonisation;



- Embedding robust performance management, including integration of a balanced scorecard approach.

**4.3** Key commitments for 2026-27 include:

- Provision of a dedicated team to support the mobilisation of services in Wiltshire;
- Increased capacity in support services;
- Beginning the process of extending ISO accreditation to energy and quality management systems;
- Beginning the process of evidencing high standards in driver and vehicle compliance through accreditation to the Driver and Vehicles Standards Agency (DVSA) Earned Recognition Scheme;
- Development of a strategy to harness emerging technologies, artificial intelligence, and data analytics to facilitate smarter decision making;
- Appointment of a dedicated climate lead responsible for coordinating carbon reduction activities, supporting shareholder sponsored projects;
- Planning for the additional collection of plastic film in line with Simpler Recycling.

**5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

**5.1** The Leader of the Council, as shareholder representative, has full delegated authority to approve the Ubico Business Plan. The only option is for the Leader to approve or to refuse. Other than to support transparency there is no constitutional need for a report to be considered and noted by Cabinet.

**6. CONCLUSIONS**

**6.1** It is recommended that the draft Ubico Business Plan 2026-27 is approved.

**6.2** The Business Plan applies to Ubico as a whole, providing services to all seven current shareholders (extending to eight shareholders with the addition of Wiltshire). The key commitments included in this Business Plan that relate to the Council will be extracted and tracked throughout 2026-27, via a service provider action plan. This plan will be reviewed each month with Ubico, with progress tracked quarterly at the Environmental Services Partnership Board meeting (ESPB).



## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

**7.1** There are no additional financial implications arising from the Ubico Business Plan, as the Council's 2026/27 approved budget already includes the agreed Ubico contract value of £9.173 million. Furthermore, the 2026/27–2029/30 approved Capital Programme makes provision of £7.8 million for the replacement of recycling and food waste fleet vehicles, as well as for decarbonisation measures, including the introduction of HVO fuel and the purchase of one electric vehicle.

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**8.1** The Ubico Business Plan must be approved by a simple majority of shareholders of which the Council is one.

## **9. RISK ASSESSMENT**

**9.1** Where the Business Plan is not approved the following risks may apply:

- Failure to meet the Council's shareholder obligations;
- Delay or disruption to Ubico's planned operational improvement;
- Reduced transparency or uncertainty for Ubico.

## **10. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

**10.1** The Business Plan sets out operational priorities for 2026–27 but does not propose changes that would alter access to services, eligibility, or working practices in a way that would require an equality assessment.

## **11. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATION**

**11.1** Through commitments such as accelerating decarbonisation, improving emissions reporting, and supporting shareholder-led climate projects, the Plan forms part of the Council's wider ecological emergency response.

## **12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**12.1** None

(END)