



Minutes of a meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Monday, 3 March 2025

Members present:

Gary Selwyn	Gary Selwyn	
David Cunningham	Lisa Spivey	Len Wilkins
Angus Jenkinson	Clare Turner	David Fowles
Dilys Neill	Jon Wareing	Patrick Coleman

Officers present:

Andrew Pollard, Interim Programme Director	Robert Weaver, Chief Executive
Angela Claridge, Director of Governance and Development (Monitoring Officer)	Julia Gibson, Democratic Services Officer
David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer	

Observers:

Councillor Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation - Cllr Mike Evemy

OS.150 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Gina Blomefield, Councillor Tony Slater and Councillor Michael Vann.

Councillor Gary Selwyn chaired the meeting as Vice-Chair of the Committee in the absence of Councillor Gina Blomefield.

OS.151 Substitute Members

Councillor Len Wilkins substituted for Councillor Gina Blomefield, Councillor David Fowles substituted for Councillor Tony Slater and Councillor Patrick Coleman substituted for Councillor Michael Vann.

OS.152 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

OS.153 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2025 were discussed. The Chair explained that these had been amended to make minor corrections after publication, prior to the meeting.

Councillor David Cunningham proposed accepting the minutes and Councillor Lisa Spivey seconded the proposal.

RESOLVED: To APPROVE the minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2025.

OS.154 **Matters Arising from Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

Members had sought clarification on the CDC pay inflation laid out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The explanation of the figures was circulated to members by the Chief Financial Officer.

There were no further discussions.

Members referred to the date proposed by the Interim Head of Planning Policy for the next Moreton-in-Marsh Working group. The proposed date of 31 March fell within the pre-election period for the County Council elections and as such the meeting was to be rescheduled. Members wanted clarification as to whether the meeting date could be brought forward and take place before the start of the pre-election period. The Chief Executive Officer explained the complications with the time restrictions but said he would provide feedback to Planning Officers and report back to Members as to whether the meeting could be brought forwards.

OS.155 **Chair's Announcements**

Councillor Gary Selwyn announced that he was substituting for Councillor Blomefield as Chair in her absence.

OS.156 **Public Questions**

There were no public questions.

OS.157 **Member Questions**

There were no Member questions.

OS.158 **Report back on recommendations**

There were no recommendations to Cabinet arising from the previous Committee meeting.

OS.159 **Publica Transition Plan - Phase 2**

The purpose of the report was to consider the document Publica Transition: a plan for phase 2 of the Council's services.

The Chief Executive Officer, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation and the Interim Program Director for the Publica Transition program introduced the report and made the following points:

- Following the successful implementation of the Publica Transition Phase 1 in November 2024, planning for Phase 2 began. This process aligned with recommendations from the Human Engine and Local Partnerships reports. These reports had suggested a launch implementation date of 1 July 2025.
- An initial planning workshop identified key service areas for inclusion in Phase 2, including property and estates, leisure contract management, waste, project management, and Careline/Linkline services. Some areas, such as environmental regulatory services and performance/business intelligence, were excluded due to cost, fragmentation and lower impact.
- A detailed service-by-service review was conducted through the autumn to ensure clarity on service structures and council needs. Feedback from Phase 1 indicated smooth implementation, with no major TUPE transition issues and overall positive outcomes.
- Modelling began on 1 January 2025, leading to a transition plan that was presented for consideration. If approved, implementation was set to begin in April, including TUPE consultation and structural formation, with a target go-live date of 1 July 2025.
- That meeting was part of a series of discussions across three partner councils. Pending approvals, the implementation phase was scheduled to commence, ensuring alignment with corporate objectives and financial strategies.

Councillor Fowles left the meeting at 17:06 and returned at 17:42

Members discussed the report, raising the following points:

- Members asked about services that would remain within Publica and whether there were any plans for a Phase 3 transition. The Interim Program Director of the Publica Transition explained that the remaining services were fragmented across the different councils and would not be covered by TUPE and at present, Phase 3 was not being considered. Members raised concerns that the remaining staff within Publica had not been offered as good a pension as those transitioned to Cotswold Council.
- Members wanted clarification about possible issues arising if one council in the Publica partnership did not agree to proceed with the transition. The Interim Program Director of the Publica Transition explained that the plan was developed collaboratively from the start and whilst councils were sovereign and

could make their own decisions, there had been a consistent approach across all councils.

- Members asked whether the Linkline and Careline service would continue to be provided after the Publica transfer and whether Forest of Dean District Council would continue to provide the service. The Deputy Chief Executive clarified that indications were that the Linkline and Careline services would continue to be provided at no extra cost to Cotswold District Council.
- Potential benefits included the improved recruitment of planning and enforcement officers.
- There was a request for an update report to be brought to the November 2025 Committee meeting to gauge performance improvements.
- Members asked for a costing for the whole of the Publica Transition which was to be provided by the Deputy Chief Executive Officer.
- Members asked whether there were the options of sharing some services with other councils in light of Local Government Reorganisation. The Chief Executive explained that whilst there were a few areas, such as ICT, that could lend themselves to be shared by councils not in the same unitaries, other services, such as Environmental Health would be more difficult due to geographical distances.
- Members discussed the role of communication around the Publica transition to internal employees and to Parish and Town councils and residents.

Regarding Annex B of the Publica Transition Plan, Members asked for reasons why the Cotswold District Council transition plan was more expensive than the Publica proposal. The Chief Executive explained that there were various reasons for the higher costs and some of the advantages to Cotswold District Council. The move to the more costly Local Government Pension Scheme was expected to reduce the difficulties around the recruitment in areas such as planning and enforcement which would hopefully reduce the costs of interim and agency staff in the longer run. Members asked if there was an expected time scale for the financial pay-back due to the Publica transition.

The Cabinet Member explained that the Publica model had been financially unsustainable because the Council had lacked control over spending and service decisions. The three councils involved had different priorities, making the old model unsuitable. The aim had been to make services adaptable for any future council, addressing financial pressures and ensuring a smooth transition for the successor council.

The Committee resolved to submit three recommendations to Cabinet:

1. That consideration be given to what Phase 3 of the Publica Transition may look like in view of local government reorganisation.
2. That the Council undertakes an annual review of the Publica Transition.

3. That consideration is given to wider communications about the Publica Transition to the public and town and parish councils following the pre-election period for the County Council elections.

OS.160 **Service Performance Report 2024-25 Quarter Three**

The Chief Executive Officer introduced the Service Performance Report for 2024/25 Quarter Three and highlighted the progress the Council had made in delivering its priorities.

Some of the highlights of service performance were:

- Levels of customer satisfaction
- Planning applications determined within the agreed time
- Land charge searches completed within 10 days
- Increase in gym memberships and gym visits

And the lowlights were:

- The number of affordable homes being delivered
- The number of missed bin collections.

Concern was expressed about the accessibility of the reports.

Members highlighted the importance of tackling the level of missed bin collections. Members were interested in whether there were further breakdowns of the performance indicators used to measure the waste collection service which would be more useful to the Committee. Members also highlighted the importance of tackling the level of missed bin collections.

The Business Information and Performance Lead reported that they would be able to provide a further breakdown of the data for the Committee to consider.

Members raised a reporting issue for missing bin collections on the Cotswold District Council website and asked for clarification as to whether one or multiple missed bins can be reported per postcode. The Business Information and Performance Lead agreed to check with the IT service.

Members referred to the current rise in the amount of homelessness cases in the district and the increase in the use of B&Bs and hostels for emergency accommodation. It was recommended that the issue be added to the Committee workplan.

Concerns were raised about the performance indicators regarding the delivery of the Local Plan. The Chief Executive introduced a review of the planning services by the Planning Advisory Service. It was envisaged that the findings would explore some of the planning amber status indicators and provide insights for improvements. It was expressed that further recruitment into key posts would hopefully lead to improvements.

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Members raised the importance of Agri technique in the Green strategy and the focus around farming and its impact on the economy and climate.

Members discussed the need to maintain the programme of replacing worn or damaged street name plates.

Members requested a briefing on the Cirencester Master Plan when it is available.

Members asked for the deadline for the Local Plan update and whether the Council was on target to achieve the schedule. An update would be requested from the Interim Assistant Director- Planning and the Interim Head of Planning Policy and Infrastructure.

The Committee resolved to submit the following recommendation to Cabinet:

1. That a review be undertaken of the performance indicators used to measure the waste collection service with a view to supplying the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with additional data (already collected/measured by Ubico) that gives a more accurate picture of collection performance.

OS.161 **Updates from Gloucestershire County Council Scrutiny Committees**

Gloucestershire Economic Growth and Scrutiny Committee

The Chair thanked Councillor Angus Jenkinson for his written feedback.

Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Dilys Neill drew members' attention to the National Review looking at the next 10 years of the National Health Service and would notify members of any forum meetings.

A question was raised about the definition of 'timely handover' procedure.

OS.162 **Work Plan and Forward Plan**

It was agreed to add the rise of homelessness and the use of emergency accommodation to the Work Plan for scrutiny.

The Meeting commenced at 4.00 pm and closed at 6.00 pm

Chair

(END)