

Cheltenham Borough Council Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Meeting date: 30 October 2023

Meeting time: 6.00 pm

Meeting venue: Council Chamber - Municipal Offices

Membership:

Councillor Tabi Joy (Chair), Councillor Steve Harvey (Vice-Chair), Councillor Graham Beale, Councillor Nigel Britter, Councillor Jackie Chelin, Councillor Stan Smith, Councillor Stephan Fifield, Councillor Julian Tooke, Councillor Suzanne Williams, Councillor Emma Nelson

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Contact: democraticservices@cheltenham.gov.uk

Phone: 01242 264 246

1 Apologies

2 Declarations of interest

3 Minutes of the last meeting (Pages 5 - 10)

Minutes of meeting held on 4 September 2023.

4 Public and Member questions, calls for actions and petitions

5 Cabinet Briefing

Briefing from Councillor Hay, Leader (if she has an update, or if O&S Members have questions for her)

Objective: An update from the Cabinet on key issues for Cabinet Members which may be of interest to Overview and Scrutiny and may inform the work plan

6 Matters referred to committee

There are no matters referred to O&S on this occasion.

7 Publica Annual Report 2022/23 (Pages 11 - 44)

18:05 30 mins

Objective : Consider annual report 2022/23: where is performance good/requires improvement

Frank Wilson, Executive Director Finance, Publica

Sally Walker, Chair, Publica

To be preceded by an update to the committee by Claire Hughes, Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer, on services transferred to Cheltenham Borough Council

8 Christmas in Cheltenham 2023 (Pages 45 - 52)

18:35 20 mins

Objective : Understand what the plans are, what remains to be done and where the risks are. To include an update on the ice rink.

Helen Mole, Head of Place Marketing and Inward Investment

Hannah Ward, Events Manager

9 End of year performance review and current performance (Pages 53 - 56) 18:55 30 mins

Objective : Consider a summary of end of year performance: have we achieved what we set out to, and if not, why?

What assurances can you provide for current performance ?

Ann Wolstencroft, Head of Performance, Projects & Risk

10 Feedback from other scrutiny meetings attended (Pages 57 - 60)

Gloucestershire Health O&S Committee (October 2023) – update from Councillor Bamford

Gloucestershire Economic Growth O&S Committee (21 September 2023) – update from Councillor McCloskey

Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel (meeting date) – update from Councillor Clucas to follow

11 Updates from scrutiny task groups (Pages 61 - 62)

19:25 10 mins

Members of the Committee are asked to consider the attached draft one-page strategy containing the terms of reference for a Scrutiny Task Group on Cheltenham Borough Homes transition

12 Review of scrutiny workplan (Pages 63 - 70)

19:35 10 mins

Any other Item (s) that the Chair determines to be urgent

13 Date of next meeting

20 November 2023

14 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXEMPT INFORMATION

The committee is recommended to approve the following resolution:-

“That in accordance with Section 100A(4) Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining agenda items as it is likely that, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, if members of the public are present there will be disclosed to them exempt information as defined in paragraph 3, Part (1) Schedule (12A) Local Government Act 1972, namely:

Paragraph 3; Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

15 Minster Exchange (Pages 71 - 82)

19:45 40 mins

Objective : What is the strategy and action plan in relation to the letting of the building ?

Andrew Roughan, (Managing Director, Plexal)

Gareth Edmundson (Chief Executive)

Paul Jones (Executive Director Finance and Assets),

Andy Taylor (Commercial Accountant)

(O&S Members are reminded to register for the short tour of the MX in the afternoon).

Informal de-brief

What went well? Can we identify opportunities for improvement or training needs?



Cheltenham Borough Council Overview & Scrutiny Committee Minutes

Meeting date: 4 September 2023

Meeting time: 6.00 pm - 7.30 pm

In attendance:

Councillors:

Steve Harvey (Vice-Chair), Graham Beale, Jackie Chelin, Stephan Fifield, Julian Tooke, Suzanne Williams and Emma Nelson

Also in attendance:

Darren Knight (Executive Director of Place and Communities), Maizy McCann (Climate Emergency Support Officer), Mike Redman (Director of Climate Change and Place Services) and Karen Watson (Environmental Partnerships Manager), Councillors Victoria Atherstone, Iain Dobie, Alisha Lewis and Rowena Hay

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Britter and Joy. As Councillor Payne stood down from the Council in August, the Chair for this meeting was Vice-Chair, Councillor Steve Harvey.

2 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Minutes of the last meeting

The Chair proposed an amendment to the minutes from the last meeting. He clarified that he is not a member of Cheltenham Art Council but a trustee of the Cheltenham Trust.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 03 July 2023 (as amended) were approved and signed as a correct record. He is trustee and has membership of the Cheltenham Trust which is why he declared an interest.

The Chair paid tribute to the outgoing Chair, John Payne who has stepped down. On behalf of the committee, he thanked him for his work as Chair of this committee and also for his service to his ward, Prestbury and as a colleague.

The Chair thanked Darren Knight, the Executive Director for Place and Communities, (who was leaving the council) for his advice and support to the committee and wished him the best of luck in the future.

The Chair also thanked Mike Redman, Director of Climate Change and Place for his service and for his work on the climate agenda in particular.

4 Public and Member questions, calls for actions and petitions

There were no public or member questions.

5 Cabinet Briefing

No questions were raised.

6 Matters referred to committee

A Member asked for an update on the Chairmanship for the Overview and Scrutiny committee and plans in place for that process.

The Executive Director Place and Communities confirmed that this will be addressed at October Council.

7 UBICO Annual Report

Karen Watson, Environmental Partnerships Manager presented the report and highlighted the following:

- UBICO has been leading the way in respect of the Climate change pathway in that a number of vehicles have been moved from diesel to hydrogen treated vegetable oil, not palm oil. There has been an approximate reduction of 492 tonnes approx. of CO₂e greenhouse gases since May 2023 when it was measured. This is a result of CBC funding the equipment and UBICO operating and bringing it in.
- Enhanced vehicle has resulted in nearly 9000lts of fuel being saved, whether that be HVO or diesel.
- There was a budget underspend last year of £80,000 and performance of the quality of the service was above target at 99.92%.
- Risks to the business include inflation, fuel, salaries and Health and Safety which is significant part of this industry.

- The risks around street cleansing and ground maintenance relate to a lack of skills within the industry at an affordable price but this is being tackled with in housing training and apprenticeships.

Marvyn Langston, Head of Operations highlighted the following:

- Driver behaviour training was ongoing to encourage operators to drive in a more eco-friendly manner
- Work to reduce sickness and absence levels included the presence of mental health nurses on site to signpost staff to professionals where required. There had been a significant drop in the number of people taking time off work.

Members made the following comments:

- the availability of mental health support was welcomed
- both performance and achieving an underspend was recognised and praised
- It was encouraging to note the amount of recycling boxes being requested and
- Ubico's commitment to training and keeping staff was acknowledged

The following responses were provided to Members questions:

- Reason for less waste may be due to cost of living crisis as people are not able to buy as much, and manufacturers are looking at less packaging.
- Complaints increase and compliment decrease may be due to new technology being used to log them as these were now being logged and captured better than previously.
- The closed bin lid and no side waste policy needs to be enforced in a more robust way and further education was required to encourage recycling.
- Garden waste subscription is net figure.
- Fly tipping decreased despite the changes in hours to the Swindon Road recycling centre; this may be due in part to cost of living crisis. These are UBICO figures and will be double checking with the Neighbourhood Team for their figures.

Member questions with responses were published prior to the meeting.

8 Cheltenham Borough Homes - Carbon Footprint Report

The Cabinet Member for Housing presented the report, highlighting the following points:

- Greenhouse gas emissions over the past three years have seen gradual decline across all three scopes and the percentage change on the original base line in 2019 shows an overall decline of 14.66% across all three scopes.
- 94% of CBH carbon emissions arise from the large number of housing stock that CBH manages on behalf of CBC, which is key to understanding why it is so important that the funds continue to be available for the government social housing decarbonisation fund. It is key driver to supporting our net zero target

and it also improves the lives of residents across the town, as less energy efficient homes result in higher energy costs.

- This funding has meant that 250 homes have increased from below to EPC Level C to Level C.
- A challenge for CBH is their building services fleet with transport for building maintenance and services. This is being approached in conjunction with the various leases of the vehicle plans.
- Wastewater and purchasing has not been accounted for in the last three years, but will be a focus in the next 12 months.
- Behavioural change is a key driver for CBH, working with various neighbourhood works programmes, community engagement activities and one-on-one support for customers in terms of energy advice and energy related cost of living support.

A Member thanked CBH for the report, looked forward to seeing projects delivering net zero homes, and said how important sustainable social housing is for the future.

The Chair was pleased to see the joined-up approach with working in partnerships and collaborations.

The following responses were provided to Members' questions:

- CBC and UBICO meet regularly and are sharing ideas around initiatives and plans. Through working with UBICO, CBH has managed to achieve its aim of decarbonisation of the fleet by the supply of plant-powered instead of diesel-powered vehicles.
- Since starting to measure carbon emission reduction for the three scopes, the data has been refined, and with 94% of the emissions arising from the existing housing stock, that has become a strong focus for emission reduction.
- The level of reduction CBH is able to achieve is entirely dependent on government funding. We need to deliver carbon direct measures at a viable pace and scale and at the moment that looks like delivering the government minimum standard of EPC Level C, which still relies on investment and relies on external government funding. Officers recognise that this isn't net zero however, and they will continue to maximise the amount of funding available from central government via the social housing decarbonisation fund.

Member questions with responses were published prior to the meeting.

9 Climate Emergency Overview

The Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency introduced this item with background about climate change and its effect on various services, such as the leisure centre, scout huts, food banks and religious spaces.

She thanked the team for the report and Mike Redman, Director of Climate Change and Place, for the progress made.

Mike Redman added that net zero is a huge challenge not just for borough but also nationally. He is proud of the climate team and the pace at which they have delivered initiatives locally, but they have to keep up the pressure, getting into the public consciousness and trying to keep up a degree of momentum behind it. Cheltenham can be proud of its progress but there's more to be done, challenging budgetary situations to manage locally, and other priorities alongside the climate. We need to recognise that we don't necessarily have the necessary resources to achieve the 2030 goal.

Members commented on the steep aspiration that may not be reached, but thanked the team for their work, their report, and collaborative working with GCC.

The Executive Director for Place and Communities suggested it may be worth the committee inviting the flooding team for future agenda item on that topic.

The following responses were provided to Members' questions:

- flooding is an area where we need to invest in partnership working. The flooding team at CBC has regular meetings with Gloucestershire County Council; the challenge is with funding.
- Recruitment for the senior post will be picked up by the Chief Executive and the recent LGA peer review gives insights to the expertise needed. Climate is a top priority for the Council, to ensure we have the best skills and capabilities within the team. The climate impact tool is a national, awarding-winning tool and it is important to use it at the start of decision-making process.
- The Zellar platform is an online app service that we are providing via our shared UK prosperity fund. It allows businesses to input information, and provides them with customised and personalised suggestions for where they can make changes, such as changing energy suppliers and the way they are operating.

The Chair thanked the climate team for their report.

Member questions with responses were published prior to the meeting.

10 Feedback from other scrutiny meetings attended

The Chair thanked Councillors Bamford, McCloskey and Clucas for attending the county level meetings and asked the Councillor Bamford to look into funding for pharmacies as people are being encouraged to go to pharmacies in first instance. The reports were all noted.

11 Draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2022-2023

There were no questions on the annual report.

12 Updates from scrutiny task groups

There were no active scrutiny task groups.

13 Review of scrutiny workplan

The Chair suggested inviting Gloucestershire Airport back to committee sooner than in one year, and also inviting Gloucester City Council Overview and Scrutiny colleagues to join CBC to discuss the airport as it is jointly owned.

Members asked about inviting the CBC flooding team to attend CBC, and about the accessibility report which is overdue. This was noted.

14 Date of next meeting

30 October 2023

15 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXEMPT INFORMATION

RESOLVED THAT:

In accordance with Section 100A(4) Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining agenda items as it is likely that, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, if members of the public are present there will be disclosed to them exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 5, Part (1) Schedule (12A) Local Government Act 1972, namely:

Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

Paragraph 5: Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings

16 Exempt Minutes

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 03 July 2023 were approved and signed as a correct record.

Information / Discussion Paper

Overview and Scrutiny

Monday 30th October 2023

Publica Annual Report

1. Why has this come to scrutiny?

- 1.1. Cheltenham Borough Council is one of the four shareholder councils of Publica Group Ltd. As a shareholder Publica is required to report back on progress of work undertaken by the company on an annual basis via the company's Annual Report.

2. Summary of the Issue

- 2.1. The purpose of the paper is to provide background information on the Publica Annual Report, and the process that sits behind it, to enable the committee to consider the report and then discuss it with Publica executives during the meeting.
- 2.2. The report also provides some performance information directly related to the services provided to Cheltenham Borough Council as part of the service agreements.

3. Summary of evidence/information

- 3.1. Publica is a local authority company that was established in 2017 and is owned equally by the shareholder councils who are: Cheltenham Borough Council, Cotswold District Council, Forest of Dean District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council.
- 3.2. Publica delivers a range of services on behalf of the shareholder councils' and for Cheltenham Borough Council in particular delivers Transactional Finance, HR, and ICT services. Over time the service offering has been changed to meet the needs of the Council with Financial Accounting, Treasury and more latterly HR (post April 2023) transferring back to the Council.
- 3.3. The company has a Board consisting of two Executive Directors, four

Independent Non-Executive Directors (appointed collectively by the Councils), and one Non-Executive Director appointed by Cheltenham Borough Council who is Councillor Paul McCloskey.

The Annual Report 22-23

- 3.4. Publica produces an annual report for the business every year. The Annual Report 22-23 (Annex A) is due to be considered at the Shareholder Forum meeting on 6th November 2023 and as such remains in draft format at the time of writing but will be finalised after the issuing of this report.
- 3.5. Publica also produces a business plan – the last version was a three year document published in May 2022, and was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in early 2022 and is available on the Publica website.
- 3.6. The purpose of the annual report is to highlight key achievements from the year in question and to update on progress against the company Business Plan.
- 3.7. The report for this year includes key delivery against the Publica priorities set out in the business plan of:
 - People: Being a ‘Great Place to Work’
 - Planet: How we are tackling climate change
 - Place: Delivering for businesses and communities
 - How we are supporting partner councils meet their financial challenges
- 3.8. In addition to an update on the key priorities the annual report also gives an update on savings delivered to date compared to the original business case projections. The savings made in 2022/23 bring the total underlying budget savings to £2.9m since the formation of Publica set against a target of £1.9m at this stage of the business case. In addition to this underlying budget reduction Publica has delivered back to the partner Councils a total of £2.5m of one-off savings through a six year track record of delivering the service within the budget envelope allowing partners to reinvest these funds in priorities of the Councils.

Future Publica

- 3.9. In June 2023, in response to the worsening financial situation our shareholders were experiencing, we produced a further document for

shareholder consideration, Future Publica, which set out a series of actions that could be taken to deliver additional savings (circa £2m). This document (Annex B) was welcomed by the shareholders but there was a recognition from all parties that the financial challenge meant that the additional savings put forward represented the minimum requirement over the next three years.

Service Performance Metrics

3.10. Annex C sets out some key performance metrics relating to the services provided to Cheltenham Borough Council by Publica. Key outcomes are summarised below:-

- ICT performance remains strong with the number of incidents halving compared to the previous year. First response performance from the IT helpdesk has improved in both incidents and service requests;
- Payroll and invoice processing performance remains above target;
- Good outcomes in respect of Insurance renewals.

4. Next Steps - possible next steps for the committee to consider eg potential witnesses, further report, site visit etc.

4.1 The Chair of the Publica Board Sally Walker and Executive Director , Frank Wilson will be attending the meeting to discuss the annual report and answer any questions the committee may have.

Contact Officer

Frank Wilson

Executive Director, Publica

01993 861291

frank.wilson@publicagroup.uk

Accountability

Gareth Edmundson, Chief Executive

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Building a partnership for the future: Progress in 2022/23

Foreword

Dear Shareholder, Welcome to the Publica Annual Report for 2022/23.

This year we have been pushing forward at pace with our transformation journey outlined in the Publica Business Plan, to both improve the performance of services we provide for the partner councils and also make the most of our partnership model to become more efficient.

As we are evolving, the benefits of our partnership approach are becoming clearer and clearer through the transformation of the dated traditional council approach into more modern, efficient services. Yet again, we have had a year of good delivery against the council priorities with many projects recognised at a national level for their innovation and impact.

The application of the Publica Operating Model is continuing to yield results with service improvements to planning, democratic services and other areas. We have seen a large increase in residents using new digital services as we transition to modern and effective service offers, showing the model is right for local residents.

We launched Future Publica this year, our approach to meeting the financial challenges set by the partner councils. By capitalising on our partnership approach we can be both more efficient and continue to improve service delivery, looking to avoid the harsh service cuts many councils have been forced into over the past decade. It is a proactive approach to making more savings and efficiencies that will limit the impact on both staff and improve service delivery. The original target was £2m of annually recurring savings although as we have progressed the work it is becoming clearer that the first stage will open new opportunities for further savings beyond the original target.

What we have seen this year is we know we can achieve more and we know we can deliver it. Our work to progress the Planet, People and Place priorities is continuing at pace with major improvements to our support for staff, continued work to reduce our carbon footprint and a huge range of work to deliver against the priorities of our partner councils.

We also know there is further work across the partnership to improve our service delivery over the coming years. In the report you will read where we have made progress in driving up service performance, setting a solid foundation for further improvements.

We would like to thank the partner councils for their continued support and we are committed to this next stage of our journey working in partnership. Once again this report highlights how much of a difference the partnership is making in every district and how through working together we are delivering more for local people.

Jan Britton - Managing Director of Publica Group (Support) Ltd
Sally Walker - Chair of the Publica Board

Working towards the Future Publica

This year, we released the Future Publica vision, which sets out how we see the company continue on its improvement and transformation journey in the face of the increasingly challenging financial positions of all four shareholder councils. Future Publica is our strategic approach to transformation over the next three years to support the councils' needs of excellent local services, at a lower cost.

It is an evolution of the very successful partnership approach that has already delivered £14M of total savings for the councils and many service improvements.

It is founded on the Publica Operating Model. Fundamentally, what the model says is that the more customer enquiries and business transactions that can be completed through self-service, or in the contact centre, the lower the cost and higher the customer satisfaction. Only the most complex and high-risk service requests that need detailed casework and/or specialist knowledge should go through to our back-office specialists.

The implementation of the operating model across the partnership is a continuing effort when applying it across more than 50 different services. This year, great progress has been made again to improve services and drive efficiency:

Channel Choice: providing residents with what they need at first contact

Our Channel Choice project is the front end of the Publica Operating Model, giving residents what they need at first point of contact and ideally for most people, on a digital, self-service platform. Progress this year shows that the operating model is not only delivering results for our partner councils but also for our residents. More residents are using our digital services and the number of people needing to call or visit the council's customer services is decreasing.

Many customers are telling us that they want to interact with us digitally at a time that is convenient for them rather than the traditional routes which are the most costly forms of contact. However, we also recognise the importance of assisting customers who cannot engage digitally and continuing a telephone and face to face service for them. Flexibility in contact channels will make sure customers can engage with council services when it suits them best, enhancing their overall convenience and satisfaction and enabling us to operate more efficiently.

This year we have made even more services available through the websites, improved legacy processes from pre-Publica and improved our web content to give residents quick, easy solutions to achieving what they need. Telephone calls now only make up 46% of our total customer contacts, down from 75% in 2021. Our customer satisfaction remains one of the best in the country.

Over 65,000 more people are now self-serving through our digital channels and the use of e-forms has tripled since 2021, proving that the operating model is meeting the needs of residents. We have been able to divert resources to support other services and spend more time handling complex, often higher risk, cases. In time this will lead to savings for the partner councils.

This work will not stop as we constantly adapt to residents' needs and new technologies. We are currently exploring the options around the use of AI, digitising more services, rebuilding legacy processes and making better use of the councils' websites.

Supporting Democratic Services across the partner councils

Working closely with council Monitoring Officers, we have applied the Publica partnership approach to our Democratic Services teams. We recruited an experienced Head of Service that a single district council might struggle to attract and implement sharing of resources to increase efficiency and improve support for the committee system and members.

The turnaround has been widely praised by councillors at all three partner councils who receive this service. More is planned to make better use of IT systems and embed new practices to improve the committee system and support members.

Improving planning services

In 2021 we launched an improvement programme for our planning services that are now all performing well based on national benchmarking. We continue to proactively address the challenges planning services across the country have faced which include a lack of trained planners, competition from the private sector making it very hard to recruit, a big increase in applications over the pandemic and difficulties delivering the services during lockdown conditions. Improvements so far include:

- We have put in career graded posts to help grow our own planning specialists in the face of a challenging recruitment market
- Improved data and monitoring to drive productivity and improve customer contact
- Put in a new partnership planning validation approach that has cut validation times by over 60%
- A new approach to working with Planning Agents to make sure our time is properly charged and they do not rely on officers to spend time amending poor applications
- New validation checklists to help professionals and residents submit correct applications first time
- Consistent performance increases in time taken to approve applications. All three partner councils receiving the service now register top quartile performance (as of September 2023)
- During the pandemic we saw a huge increase in planning enforcement cases and our teams were hampered by limits imposed by lockdown restrictions and recruitment challenges. It led to over 200 cases per officer in our small teams inherited from pre-Publica. We have responded by changing processes and managing complaints more effectively, lowering our case numbers by around 60% and this improvement process will continue, making sure that we investigate all complaints in a timely manner and reduce the backlog from the pandemic.

We are now moving to the next phase of our improvement. This will be based on advice provided by national experts in the Planning Advisory Service and led by our newly appointed Assistant Director for Planning and Sustainability. It will apply the partnership approach and Publica Operating Model to the whole service which we anticipate will deliver significant performance gains and over £400k savings for our partner councils. It will include:

- Streamlining of reports for simple applications
- Updated fee structure for paid services to bring us in line with council standards
- Update our consultation process to make sure the right consultees are engaged on the right applications
- Work with councils to review our schemes of delegation to enhance engagement with ward members and support swift decision making for customers
- Change the way applications can be negotiated to make it more efficient and limit applications that continuously change, using up officer time

Meeting the financial challenges of our partner councils

We are committed to delivering efficiencies to help the partner councils meet their financial challenge after a decade of austerity, continuing local government funding uncertainty, rapidly increasing delivery costs and high inflation putting council finances under significant strain.

The evolution of the Publica Innovation Programme in Future Publica

We launched the Publica Innovation Programme in 2022, working with the partner councils and the Shareholder Forum to look at options for increasing income and driving more efficiency while maintaining service levels, or improving them.

The savings and income we identified have now been consolidated along with the ongoing application of the Publica Operating Model into Future Publica. Future Publica will deliver an initial £2M of additional annual savings on top of the £2.9M already achieved since the partnership formed. Savings made through the Publica partnership to date have totalled £14M, almost double the target of the original business case. This has allowed the partner councils over recent years to avoid the challenging financial decisions many councils across the country have had to make, invest in their local areas and be in a better financial position than many other councils are now facing.

We estimate the partner councils would have to pay an additional £6.5M up to 2026 if they provided the same services in a standalone district council model. However, we know we now need to go

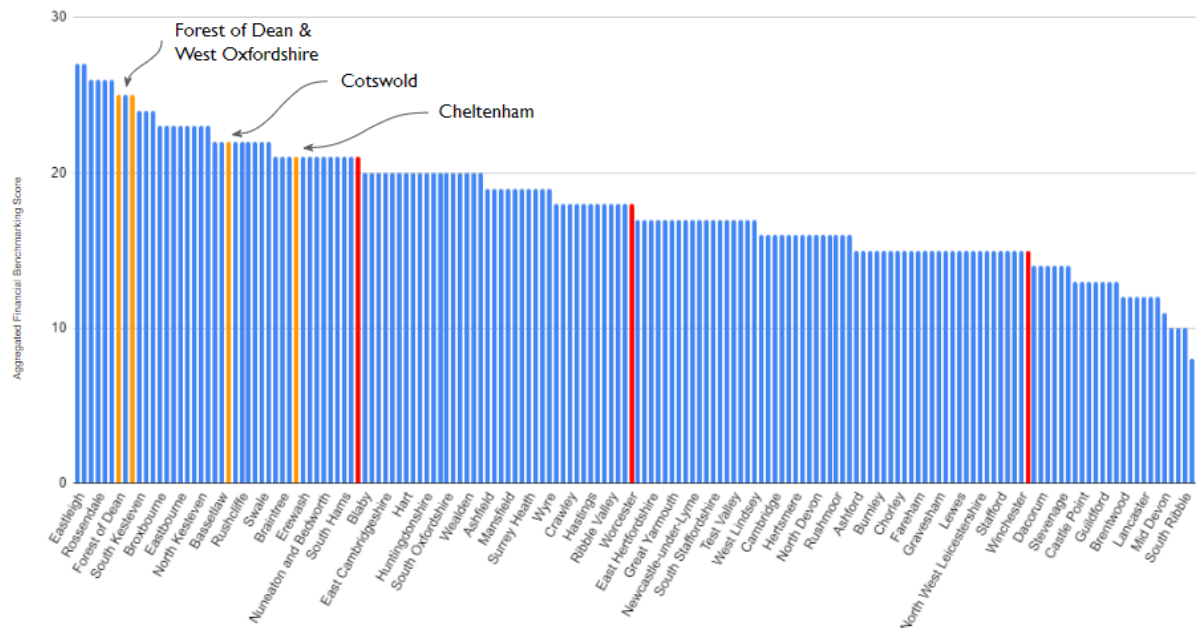
further and faster to meet the current challenge. We are committed to delivering the £2M savings set out in Future Publica and also pushing for further savings over the next three years. The delivery of Future Publica savings is now one of our highest priorities and progress is being driven forward at pace by senior management.

Is Publica providing value for money?

The Local Government Association (LGA) has one of the most comprehensive national benchmarking toolkits which produces headline reports for each local authority area. The LGA headline reports provide a resource for comparing district council performance and value for money.

Based on the aggregation of headline financial indicators from LG Inform, the chart below shows the shareholder council’s cost per head of population. It illustrates their financial performance is in the top quartile compared to other district authorities nationally. The Shareholder Councils all have high scores indicating that they are low cost. They are marked in orange and are located on the left of the chart with the best performing councils.

LG Inform Aggregate Financial Metric Benchmarking for District Councils (Cost Per Head of Population)



Publica financial review of 2022/23

This year we have delivered additional savings and modernisation and we are planning significantly larger savings over the next three years underpinned by our self-service web, Salesforce and Customer Portal offerings. The development in this year will pay financial dividends in 2023/24 and beyond as transactions are switched from face to face and phone to self-service. Underlying savings within the 2022/23 financial year were £70,000 as set out in the business case for Publica and in addition to that base budget reduction Publica returned a further £450,000 of one off savings back to our partner councils.

The savings made in 2022/23 bring the total underlying budget savings to £2.9m since the formation of Publica set against a target of £1.9m at this stage of the business case. In addition to this underlying budget reduction Publica has delivered back to the partner Councils a total of £2.5m of one-off savings through a six year track record of delivering the service within the budget envelope allowing partners to reinvest these funds in priorities of the councils.

Additional activities carried out over the year include administering additional residential grant streams in respect of energy and significant work to support refugee and asylum seeker programmes. As a trusted 'not for profit' partner we have sought to pick up most of the additional work within the core contract with variations only being sought where additional expenses were incurred.

Details of spend to budget are set out below.

TABLE 1 : BUDGET VS ACTUAL 2022/23

	Budget	Actual	(+) / -
	£000s	£000s	£000s
Sales			
Contract Income	29,795	29,795	(0)
Direct Costs:			
Salaries (Inc oncosts)	(25,540)	(24,134)	(1,406)
Agency Costs	(30)	(829)	799
Contractor Costs	0	(57)	57
Employee Transport & Travel	(299)	(150)	(149)
Other Staff costs	(510)	(600)	90
Gross Surplus	3,416	4,025	(609)
Administration Expenses	(1,980)	(2,189)	209
Other Operating Expenses	(4)	(4)	0
Operating Surplus	1,432	1,832	(400)
Net Interest (Payable)/ Receivable	3	76	(73)
Surplus before Tax	1,435	1,908	(473)
Tax	0	(22)	22
Contract Fee Refund	(1,419)	(1,419)	0
Retained Surplus	(16)	(16)	0
Additional Surplus / (Deficit) Distribution	0	451	(451)

Bringing in external funding

During the year Publica colleagues worked together with partner Councils to identify and access additional external funding to support delivery of new projects. Most notably in 2022/23 bids were successfully made to access funds in respect of:-

UK Shared Prosperity Fund	£3.0m
Rural England Prosperity Fund	£2.1m
Local Authority Housing Fund	£4.4m
Asylum/Ukraine Funding	£1.8m

Our performance of key services across the year (will be infographic in designed version)

<p>Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 87% of planning applications across the partnership are within agreed time limits, which is up from 75% last year Based on an analysis of national planning performance, the partnership are amongst the top 30 most improved Councils. 	<p>Waste</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recycling Rates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CDC - 57% FODDC - 54% WODC - 60% Environmental Services Innovation Programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25% reduction in missed bins from 21/22 baseline 98.6T reduction in Co2 £850k additional income and savings
<p>People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IIP Bronze Award 1 in 10 staff have been promoted/achieved career progression in the last year 40% less sickness than the most recent Local Government Benchmarks 	
<p>Customer Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> From March 23, the partnership has consistently been in the top 10 councils nationally for telephone customer satisfaction 16,000 reduction in call volumes since the last report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >50% of all customers are signed up for e-billing >15000 households use digital services to manage online council tax and benefits payments Shortlisted for 3 Local Government Chronicle national awards

Planet: Responding to the climate emergency

Tackling climate change is the challenge of our generation, and with each shareholder council declaring a climate emergency as well as an ecological/biodiversity emergency, our response is central to all we do.

Rolling out Carbon Literacy training to staff

Publica is now a Bronze Carbon Literate Organisation with more than 70 key staff, including our senior managers, participating in carbon literacy training as we look to embed our response to the climate emergency in everything we do. This will be pushed forward over the coming years as we aim for at least 50% (ideally 100%) of our staff to have participated in carbon literacy training by 2025.

Aurora Project - Working with international partners to tackle climate change in the Forest of Dean

Forest of Dean District Council has been working with local, regional and international partners over the past 18 months, exploring how local communities can lower their carbon footprint. This year the Council has been working with a local leisure centre and secondary school to help reduce carbon emissions and energy costs by installing solar panels on their roof and through a partnership with Big Solar Co-op, shares will then be available for residents and community members to purchase to work together towards a greener future.

Making sure we consider the climate impact of every decision

The innovative Climate Impact Assessment Tool is a project evaluation tool designed to embed climate and social considerations within project development and decision making processes, making sure we consider our impact on the environment in every decision. It also includes social considerations to reflect community and wellbeing priorities, equalities impacts, and Healthy Place Shaping principles - many of which are linked to climate and environment.

The purpose of the tool is two-fold: first, it will assist officers in evaluating the climate, environmental and social impacts of their projects and make improvements where needed. Second, it will assist councillors with the decision-making process as the output of the tool is appended to formal decision papers where applicable.

Supporting partnership retrofit schemes to reduce carbon emissions

The partnership has played key roles in rolling out a number of funding schemes to help local people retrofit their homes. This has included the Local Authority Delivery Scheme providing funding for insulation and low carbon heating, and the Home Upgrades Grant which helps with energy performance and heating for off gas grid homes. We estimate over 800 households have been helped through the schemes, unlocking more than £700,000 of funding and 2000 tonnes of lifetime carbon savings made.

Giving the Greenlight for community climate action

This year, in partnership with West Oxfordshire District Council, we delivered the innovative Greenlight project which provides a digital platform for residents to share best practice and come together to tackle the climate emergency. As the platform develops we hope it will provide community resources, guidance and support for residents to start their own climate action projects. Following the initial rollout in West Oxfordshire, we will look to roll it out across the other partners.

Continuing to reduce the carbon footprint of council operations

This year has seen the introduction of more electric vehicles. Following on from the successful decarbonisation schemes at the Forest of Dean Council offices and Cotswold leisure centres, we now have an agreement to install solar panels on council buildings in Cirencester and Witney. We have also secured funding to decarbonise Carterton Leisure Centre which currently accounts for 30% of West Oxfordshire District Council's emissions.

Working in an agile way to reduce our carbon footprint

Our work to create a modern, agile working environment has continued this year with all three councils agreeing to consolidate the amount of office space used by the organisation, reducing our carbon footprint and also allowing us to make better use of our estates to generate income.

We continue to improve our IT systems with the launch of Microsoft Teams this year for councillors and staff, to be followed by full integration into the Microsoft suite over the coming years. This will enable us to operate more efficiently, reduce the need for business travel and provide a more attractive work environment to help recruitment.

Securing funding to tackle climate change

This year, the Forest of Dean has been successful in securing £300,000 through the Innovate UK Fast Followers programme. As one of only 21 councils in the country to receive the funding, the money will allow the whole partnership to faster train staff in carbon literacy, bring in specialist roles to research how we overcome barriers in the community to reaching net-zero.

People: supporting staff to deliver fantastic services

We will only accomplish our aims and deliver the partner council priorities if the very best people work for the partnership. We need to use the advantages we have in our Teckal partnership model to bring in people who are enthusiastic about change and are committed to delivering great public services.

The key areas for development of our people are linked with the Investors in People framework (IIP). This nationally recognised framework assists us in continuing to improve Publica as a 'Great Place to Work' and more progress has been made this year to create an offer to prospective candidates that stands out from the standard public sector employment offer and also best supports the great staff we already have.

Rewarding and recognising high performance

Our renewed approach to recognising great performance by staff has landed very well, with many staff being nominated for awards by colleagues and it is highlighting how many dedicated, creative and hard working staff we have across the partnership working every day to deliver services for the partners councils.

Learning Champions leading the way to improve our training offer

The best candidates want to see that their employer will offer them high quality training and learning to progress their careers. Following our improvements to our training suite, this year we launched a learning champions scheme with champions coming from across the partnership to further develop the training offer and support colleagues to access training opportunities.

Providing better support for our staff

To attract the best staff and retain our current staff we need a great support and benefits offer. We have renewed the excellent Medicash offer, along with upgrading the Employee Assistance Programme through Spectrum Life, offering counselling, legal support and wellbeing services.

Our staff making a difference in communities

Many of the teams across Publica have taken up the two days free volunteering we offer to help local communities. In July, our Community Wellbeing Team based in Coleford got together to redecorate the Youth Club in Blakeney, while staff from all three councils got involved in this year's Great British Spring Clean, litter picking in their local areas. In total staff have volunteered 318 hours to support local causes this year.

Developing our leadership to improve the organisation and services

A well performing organisation is led by inspiring, dynamic and ambitious leaders. We continue to develop our leaders through our evolving leadership development programme and we have also welcomed new leaders this year in HR, Planning, corporate governance and democratic services to help apply our operating model and deliver our ambitions. We will also be looking to conduct a review of senior management in the coming year to ensure we have the right structure in place to lead the company forward.

Place: Delivering for businesses and communities

Across the partnership we all share the same ambition to not only deliver great council services, but also deliver against the local priorities for each district area. Through our partnership approach we have the capacity to do far more in both areas, being flexible where we need to be and sharing resources and ideas.

Each partner council has its own ambitions and we have made some great progress against them over the past year, making a real and measurable difference to the lives of residents and businesses.

We are incredibly proud of the amazing work that has been delivered in communities across the partnership, working hand in hand with councillors, council leadership teams, local organisations and our residents. Here we highlight just some of the fantastic work that has been done over the past year.

Becoming a national leader in delivering Local Plans

After winning initial funding to become part of the government's PropTech Fund (a national project to apply digital methods of engagement to improve local plan consultations) we have gone from strength to strength, being awarded another two rounds of funding to continue the work and we are now being held up as an example to other councils of how to run Local Plan consultations. We have seen numbers of people responding to consultations increase by over 30%. We will be applying our learning to big consultations coming up in Cotswold, Forest of Dean and West Oxfordshire next year.

Leading the way in tackling sewage in our waterways

West Oxfordshire District Council has made significant strides in limiting sewage pollution in waterways across the district through close working with Thames Water and local organisations. A new planning condition has been applied, requiring new homes to have suitable sewage treatment capacity. Thames Water are better at engaging with planning applications and the council held a sold out Waterways Day bringing local organisations together to explore how to tackle the issue. This approach is being rolled out across the partnership with activity expected in Cotswold this coming year.

Delivering affordable housing for local people

All the partner councils want to deliver affordable housing where the market is not delivering sufficiently to meet the needs of local people. We have continued to deliver affordable housing in partnership with developers and housing providers, pushing the boundaries with exemplar design to maximise the delivery of development schemes that are sustainable and align with net-zero carbon ambitions. This year has seen over [awaiting figure] affordable homes built across Cotswold, Forest of Dean and West Oxfordshire districts.

Providing leisure services for local residents

A lot of work has gone on across the partnership this year to help people improve their health, wellbeing and fitness. On top of new playing pitch strategies being approved at all three councils there have also been other significant successes:

- West Oxfordshire has also secured just over £1M through developer contributions to improve the provision of sport and leisure facilities in the district.
- Cotswold has seen ongoing delivery against the ambition of the 'Active Cotswold' programme with 'fit kits' being introduced in care homes to allow people with limited mobility to exercise and a joint exercise programme being launched district wide in partnership with Mr Motivator.
- The Forest of Dean Communities Team has worked with Freedom Leisure to deliver free, fully inclusive Gentle Games sessions down or standing up. Games include curling, skittles and golf and are a great way to socialise and play games in a relaxed environment.

Bringing in funding through the Prosperity Funds

Over the past year the partnership has been successful in securing £5,139,952 in funding through the Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund. We were able to lean on our partnership model and put project teams in place to ensure the funding was secured and we can use it to support local businesses.

The funding will deliver a wide range of support including grant schemes for local businesses, work to improve connectivity by installing new infrastructure and transport options, and work to upgrade and improve village halls.

Partnership fundraising projects go from strength to strength

The incredibly successful Crowdfund Cotswold continues to generate funding for amazing local projects, with many coming to fruition this year, including a new skate park in Fairford, wildflower planting, solar panels for an open air pool, a community energy project and support for isolated, elderly residents. This year, West Oxfordshire also agreed to adopt this model with the Westhive crowdfunding platform launched in October 2023. The lottery approach at Forest of Dean also continues to provide valuable support to local organisations, with more than £43,000 raised for local causes and over £6,000 won by local residents.

The power of partnerships

Working in partnership, whether across the Publica partnership, or with external partners, is delivering results across our communities. Here are just a few examples from this year:

Inspiring our next generation

The Inspiring the Forest project is being delivered across the Forest Economic Partnership involving local businesses, the district council, schools and other partners. It aims to raise career aspirations for young people and prepare them for a future career. This year we launched the project with an event at Gloucestershire College in Coleford with over 700 Year 10 students meeting business from across the Forest of Dean's diverse economy.

Helping families with activities for children

The Holiday Activities Fund (HAF) and YouMove projects in Cotswold District and West Oxfordshire are both partnership schemes providing support for families with children on free-school meals, helping the children access activities and learning they may otherwise not be able to afford. They both receive significant support from officers to be delivered in our districts and this year has been another successful year for both with over 2000 children attending the HAF sessions.

Supporting our economies to grow

In all three districts the partnership is making a meaningful impact supporting local economies. West Oxfordshire District Council completed the purchase of Marriotts Walk Shopping Centre in Witney to help boost the town centre with new tenants already on board along with displays that have made a positive impact in the local community

At Cotswold we have seen the Green Economic Growth Strategy continuing to deliver with the new businesses popping up across the district and the council supporting the exciting Innovation Village at the Royal Agricultural University.

In the Forest of Dean the council is being held up as a case study for its delivery of the £20M Levelling Up Fund improvements which have seen really positive progress this year. The Business Start Up Grants offered by the council continue to get traction, supporting new local start-ups get off the ground with six businesses supported this year.

Doing more to manage the risk of flooding

Over recent years all three districts have experienced flooding events affecting property, residents and businesses. We have been working hard to do more within the district council remit to prevent flooding introducing a new inspection approach for critical watercourses on private land and exploring flood prevention schemes.

Award winning partnership recognised for best practice

Over recent years we have seen many projects delivered across the partnership nominated for and winning awards, staff contributing to national discussions and teams being held up for best practice. Here are some of the examples from this year:

The Publica partnership at the Local Government Chronicle Awards

Following the award win last year for the Crowdfund Cotswold campaign, the partnership was once again well represented at this year's LGC Awards, often against councils many times the size and with far more resources. We were shortlisted for Campaign of the Year (WODC LoyalFree campaign),

Public/ Public Partnership (FODDC Destination Lydney Harbour) and Environmental Services (CDC/ FODDC/ WODC Environmental Services Improvement Programme)

Destination Lydney harbour wins CPRE Gloucestershire Award

The Destination Lydney Harbour project to regenerate the popular historic area in the Forest of Dean won the Campaign to Protect Rural England award, recognising the 'outstanding' contribution to the county and project's work to protect and regenerate the area.

Communications and Marketing Team continues to win awards

Following a number of award wins and nominations over the past two years, the Communications and Marketing this year won the Silver Award for the best Public Sector Campaign at the CIPR PRide awards.

Building Control wins Best High Volume New Housing Development award

The team won the Local Authority Building Control award for supporting Hills Homes Developments deliver a housing development in Tetbury. The award recognises best practice in delivering new homes. The Cotswold District Council Building Control team have also been nominated for the Local Authority Building Control Team of the Year award via nomination(s) from customers!

Publica held up as best practice example of a Teckal company used for public services

This year Publica was part of a series of podcasts by renowned legal firm Trowers and Hamblins looking at different public service delivery models. Our executives were interviewed about how the partnership was 'making a real difference' and the benefits the partnership Teckal approach has brought to service delivery and the shareholder councils.

Leading the way on supporting mental health

Our officers Philippa Lowe and Gary Deighton spoke at the national Kings Fund integrated care in practice conference about the work of the Forest of Dean Integrated Locality Partnership to support people with mental health.

Innovating on tackling the climate emergency

Our Climate Impact Assessment Tool won a bronze innovation award at the iESE Public Sector Transformation Awards 2023 and has been shared with over 40 local authorities nationally to be adapted and used.

Areas of focus for the coming year

Over the coming year we have a number of areas of focus where we will be continuing to improve service delivery, meet our council priorities and enhance our role as an employer. These areas of focus are rooted in delivery of our Business Plan along with delivering Future Publica and the Council Corporate Plans.

Delivering Future Publica and the Business Plan

- Improvements in Planning Services including Development Management and Planning policy. This will include changes to processes, enhanced collaboration and improving structures to make the teams more efficient. We are also exploring a range of new self-serve

digital functions to improve the experience for customers and residents at the same time. These improvements aim to deliver top quartile performance alongside a reduction in operating costs of at least £400K.

- Making more services available online. Our work has already delivered a significant shift in how customers contact the councils. We have introduced new ways for customers to report concerns, reply and pay for services online. As more customers use these new communication channels, fewer will contact us by telephone or come into reception, saving at least £250k, and allowing us to focus those traditional channels for the people who need them and for the most complicated enquiries.
- Modernising our approach to Asset Management. The scale of the Publica partnership has enabled the creation of a more resilient and capable organisation and partnership, which would not have been possible at a single district council. We have seen a significant acceleration in our ability to effectively manage and optimise the councils' assets over the last year. As this team matures it will be able to reduce its dependency on external advisors, reduce its operating costs and increase income, delivering £200k in additional revenue and savings.
- We have built a strong relationship with Ubico. This has already delivered significant financial and service-related benefits through the Environmental Services Innovation Programme but we know there is more we can do. We will continue to develop and grow this partnership, we have already identified further potential savings for the councils, this is over and above the savings that Publica can deliver.

A Great Place to Work

Over the coming year we have more significant improvements planned through a new HR strategy which is focussed on:

- Improving our culture through a new behaviours competency framework for staff alongside an improved appraisal process
- Further developing our offer to staff by offering more employee wellbeing support, making sure we have proper succession planning and talent mapping in place, improving our work around equality and diversity inclusion and also reviewing our approach to pay and reward
- Building talent in-house and improving recruitment through focussed leadership development, growing our in-house recruitment team and continuing to improve our learning offer
- Making sure we are compliant as an organisation by renewing our HR policies, training our managers and putting in place a gender pay gap action plan.
- Conducting a senior management review to ensure we have the right management structure to lead the company

Tackling the climate emergency

- Continuing our staff carbon literacy training rollout
- Continuing to reduce our carbon footprint by enhancing the agile working approach, adapting our buildings and looking at different fleet options
- Supporting council priority climate projects across the partnership

Place: delivering for businesses and our communities

The Place agenda is largely set through the partner council corporate plans and we will support the councils in developing those plans where needed and then delivering the priorities set within them. This will develop over the year with Forest of Dean and Cotswold expected to update their plans, but some of the major projects as of September 2023 include:

- Updates to Local Plans at Cotswold, Forest of Dean and West Oxfordshire

- Delivery of the projects funded through the SPF and REPF funding
- Working to tackle waterway contamination
- Delivery of community funding schemes
- Changes to waste services at Forest of Dean District Council and working with Cotswold and West Oxfordshire on future options for their service
- Major regeneration schemes across the partnership
- Delivery of affordable housing schemes and exploration of how to best do this
- Supporting residents through the continuing cost of living crisis
- Support for health, wellbeing and community cohesion across the partnership
- A new depot and waste service at Forest of Dean District Council
- A strategic review of Leisure at West Oxfordshire District Council

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Future Publica

The Publica Board's three-year vision

Delivering more locally by working together

PUBLICA

June 2023



The Challenge

We have listened to our partner councils and absolutely understand the challenges they face. They need to deliver excellent local services – in a challenging financial environment – while delivering their priorities to residents.

Future Publica is our strategic approach to transformation over the next three years to support the councils' needs. As a start we will deliver at least £2M of annual savings as well as service improvements. This is the next phase of our transformation journey and we are committed to working with you to deliver more.

Publica has a track record of addressing financial challenges – and delivering results. We have delivered cumulative savings of £14M (£2.9M annually recurring savings), three years ahead of schedule, by applying the principle that we can deliver more locally by working together.

Our operating model is driving out efficiencies, providing more flexibility and delivering greater resilience, but we know we need to do more. Our model is founded on recruiting great people, building smart systems, delivering cashable savings and sustained improvements in performance. We will take care of day-to-day services - giving the councils greater flexibility to deliver their priorities.

Future Publica outlines our strategic direction for the next three years. We recognise that responding to the constantly changing challenges which impact local communities is hard – from the cost-of-living crisis to supporting refugees, keeping our rivers clean, delivering affordable housing and tackling the climate emergency - our people are committed to delivering these. At a national level, the partnership is already recognised as an industry leader in providing district council services through award nominations and successful grant bids.

In June 2023 the partnership was shortlisted for three national Local Government Chronicle Awards.

Overcoming the key challenges facing councils in the future therefore requires more collaboration between councils, more transformation and capitalisation on the partnership. Now is not the time to change track; now is the time to reap the benefit of the investment already made.

The original logic behind the partnership was to save money and improve services through collaboration. This holds up to an even greater extent in the face of today's challenges – we estimate that the shareholder councils would have to pay an additional £6.5M up to 2026 if they provided the same services in a standalone District Council model. Our partnership model delivers:

**Economies of scale
Retained sovereignty
Increased operational resilience**

Our Plan

Our plan is straightforward: we will reduce our costs by over £2m a year by implementing the Publica operating model. Picking up the pace on this transformation is the highest priority for our senior team and needs to be the main focus for the partnership as a whole. We have already created a strong senior team to lead this change who will be given transformation support to accelerate the delivery of the benefits.

The formula is simple – Modern, efficient services equate to more focus on council priorities and/or delivering a balanced budget.

We believe that the solution to the challenge facing the partner councils is to invest in Publica and partnership work. The Partnership needs to empower our people, giving them the space to transform services and deliver council priorities. We want shareholder councils to be proud of the company they own and the staff who work hard to deliver their services.

Partner councils can hold the Publica Board and Executive Management to account for delivery of this approach through local Transformation Boards and the Shareholder Forum as well as the control provided by the Teckal arrangements. The Publica Board contains a diverse range of experts who are committed to working in partnership with partner councils to deliver Future Publica.

We have made much of the partnership's strengths and its future potential. To unlock this potential, we understand the need to continuously improve fundamental capabilities that support every part of the partnership and are critical to our success including:

A clear approach to digital and customers

Making more services available online, delivering great services to residents every time they contact the councils.

A Partnership Transformation Team to deliver change at pace

Creating the momentum for organisation-wide change and modernisation through dedicated resources is at the heart of the operating model. Service modernisation is the key to unlocking the necessary funding to deliver council priorities and support the delivery of balanced budgets.

A partnership approach to business information, and performance management

Performance management is becoming part of the partnership's DNA. Live business information is already used to track performance and we want to go further to create a performance ecosystem with partner councils.

Defining the partnership's approach to cost and quality

Working together to understand what is important in relation to optimising the Cost of Quality and delivering improved value for money services. As 90% of the partnership contract is used to fund salaries, optimising productivity and quality will have a fundamental impact on the number of staff needed to deliver services. Even very marginal gains in productivity are important, a 1% gain in productivity equates to a saving of £250k annually.

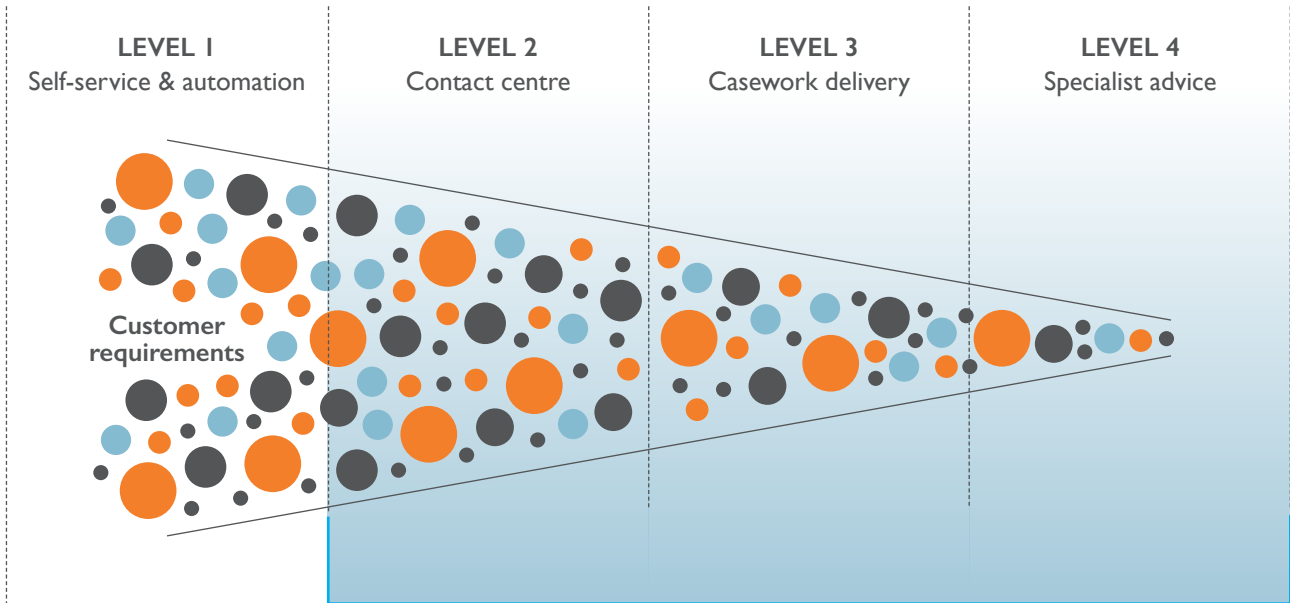
A more joined up approach to partnership leadership and management

We will only be successful if all elements of the partnership work together to achieve the benefits outlined in Future Publica.

Delivering our Plan

Our People and The Publica Operating Model

The Publica Operating Model is a formula that can be applied to every service area. Fundamentally, what the model says is that the more customer enquiries and business transactions that can be completed through self-service, or in the contact centre, the lower the cost and higher the customer satisfaction. Only the most complex and high-risk service requests that need detailed casework and/or specialist knowledge should go through to our back-office specialists.



The model does not just work in theory, Publica already uses the system to practically transform services for customers and save money for our partner councils. An example of this is that 90% of residents now order and pay for green waste licenses online on our digital platform.

We will focus forensically on resource management which will enable us to deliver more workplace pension savings (c. £200K),

improve our vacancy management using business information (c. £300K) and implement the operating model and service redesign across the partnership. By moving transactional work to customer services and caseworkers, there will be a reduced demand on half of our people, who are highly skilled specialists. This will deliver shorter customer journeys, better customer experience, and savings of over £500k.





The Partnerships success will depend on the ability of our people to lead positive cultural change, continue to transform services, and deliver council priorities.

Publica's solution to sector wide challenges is to build on the key partnership strengths:

The scale to employ the people that the councils would not be able to recruit or afford individually, people like Mark Prichard and Andrew Brown who would not have applied for roles with a single District Council and have already transformed Communications and Democratic Services.

Modern hybrid working from any location, at a time that meets customer and personal needs.

Accelerated career progression - over 10% of our staff have been successful in achieving promotion or career progression in the last year alone.

We are creating an increasingly attractive place to work, with flexible modern benefits package giving our people many advantages over traditional local government employers. More than 50% now receive the new workplace pension, demonstrating that not offering LGPS is not a universal impediment to recruitment. At the same time this has delivered savings of £1.2M a year for the councils and will deliver another £200k over the next three years.

We will continue developing our people to focus more on customers' needs in a digital world, be more business-like and work together across boundaries to solve local issues will be at the heart of making public services successful.



Key projects we will deliver

In addition to our focus on resource management, the key projects that will deliver shareholder ambitions and modernisation include:

Improvements in Planning Services with investment in a new cloud-based platform

This will enable us to re-engineer business processes and open a range of new self-serve digital functions for customers. This improvement will result in top quartile performance alongside a reduction in operating costs of at least £300K.

Making more services available online

Our work has already delivered a significant shift in how customers contact the councils. We have introduced new ways for customers to report concerns, reply and pay for services online. As more customers use these new communication channels, fewer will contact us by telephone or come into reception, saving at least £250k, and allowing us to focus those traditional channels for the people who need them and for the most complicated enquiries.

Reviewing Planning Policy

Following the completion of multiple Local Plan reviews, we have an opportunity to share specialist expertise, reducing duplication while

maintaining the local focus of a core team for each council. This approach will increase support for major developments and wider council priorities in areas such as affordable housing and climate change as well as delivering at least £100K of savings. The reference model is the communications team, with its hybrid structure of local council-specific and shared specialist staff working together.

Modernising our approach to Asset Management

The scale of the Publica partnership has enabled the creation of a more resilient and capable organisation and partnership, which would not have been possible at a single District Council. We have seen a significant acceleration in our ability to effectively manage and optimise the councils' assets over the last year. As this team matures it will be able to reduce its dependency on external advisors, reduce its operating costs and increase income, delivering £200k in additional revenue and savings.

Outline of initial £2M savings

PRODUCT	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Effective resource management	200	500	300
Making services available online	101	150	-
Modernising our approach to Asset Management	61	62	78
Implementing improvements in Planning Services	-	251	77
Reviewing Planning Policy	-	50	50
Technology Changes (Microsoft 365/MFD)	75	45	-
Total	437	1058	505

Working with Ubico

We have built a strong relationship with Ubico. This has already delivered significant financial and service-related benefits through the Environmental Services Innovation Programme

but we know there is more we can do. We will continue to develop and grow this partnership, we have already identified c. £1.8m of further potential savings for the councils, this is over and above the savings that Publica can deliver.

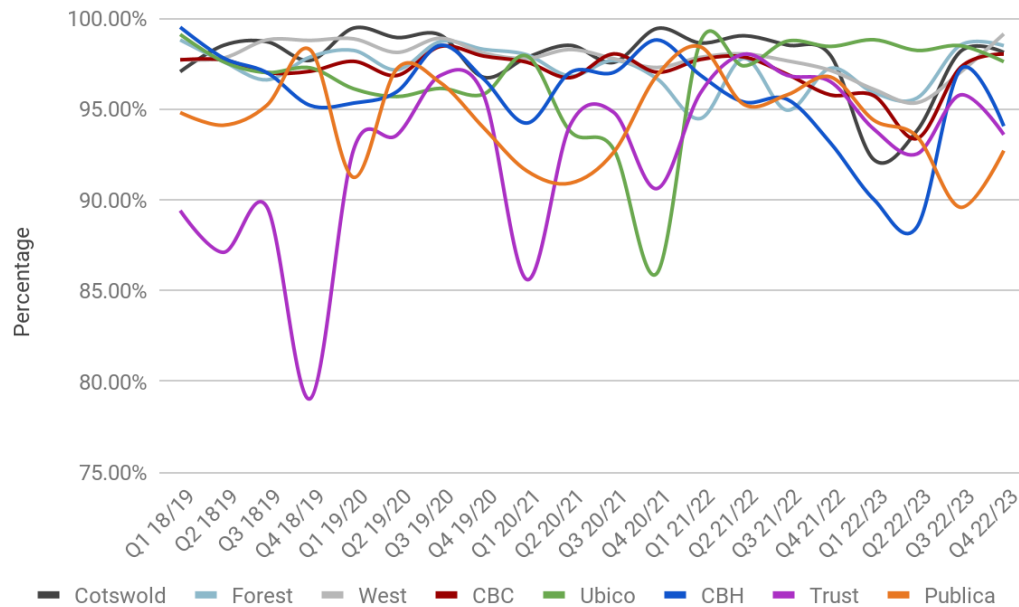
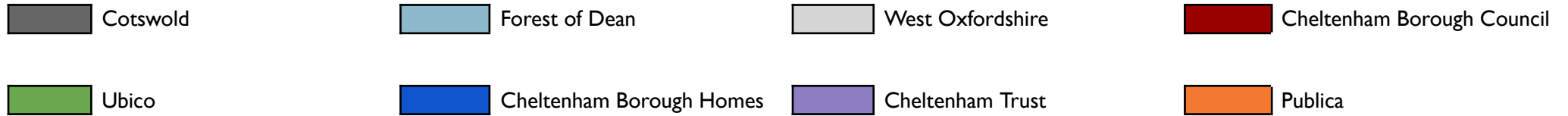
PUBLICICA

Delivering great services locally

PERFORMANCE REPORT
CBC SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Financial Year to March 2023

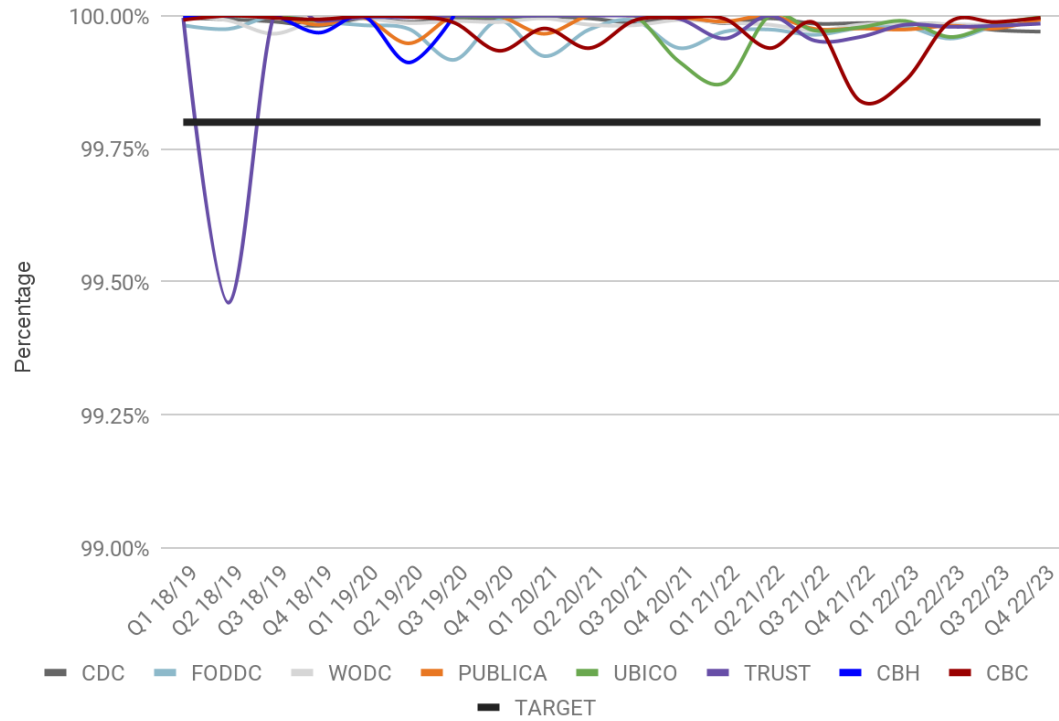
KEY PERFORMANCE METRICS - ARE WE DOING THE 'DAY JOB' REALLY WELL FOR ALL CLIENTS

Percentage of invoices paid within 30 days



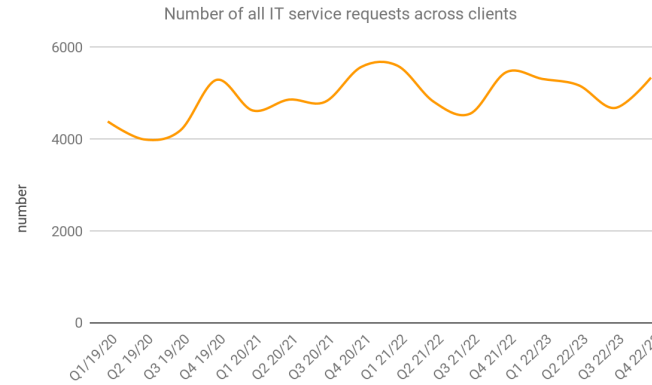
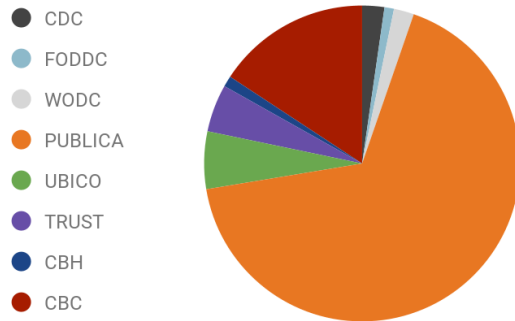
OBSERVATION:
All partner sites achieved the 90% target in Q4

Percentage uptime for IT servers and network equipment



OBSERVATION:
From 2019/20 Q4 CBH is no longer hosted on our network

IT service requests and response times



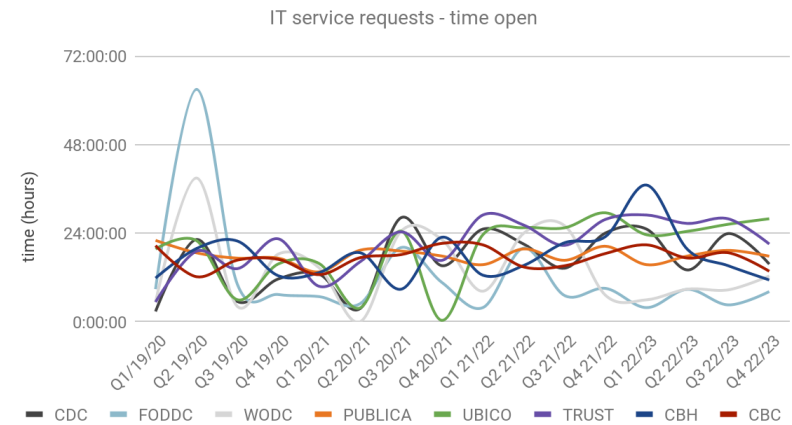
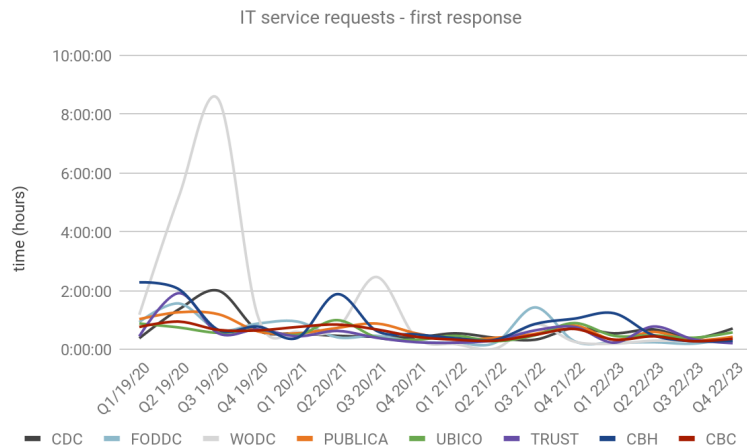
OBSERVATION

These charts show the overall number of service requests, and the proportion per council/client and the average first response and open time. The number of requests has continued to reduce throughout the year

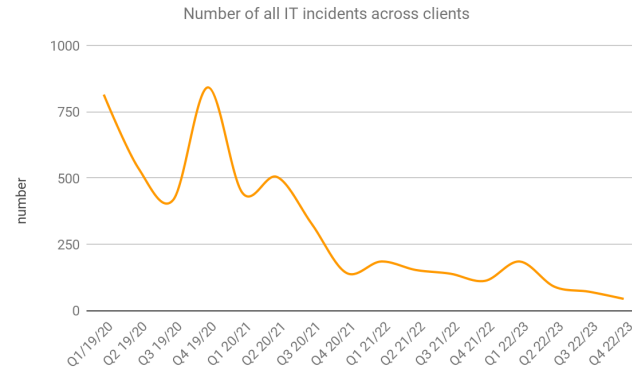
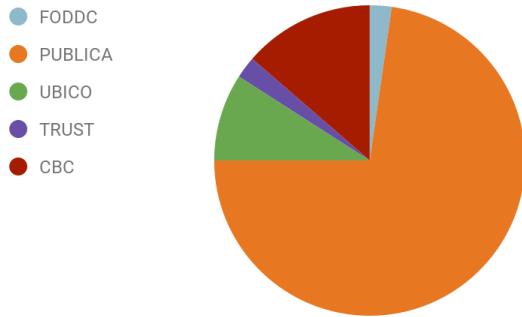
Service request = an end user request for information, advice or a change to IT services

Average first response time = time it takes for an ICT technician to interact with the incident or service request

Average time open = average amount of time the service request has a status other than closed. This is not calculated in working hours e.g. an incident raised over the weekend is treated in the same way as an incident at 9am on a Monday morning.

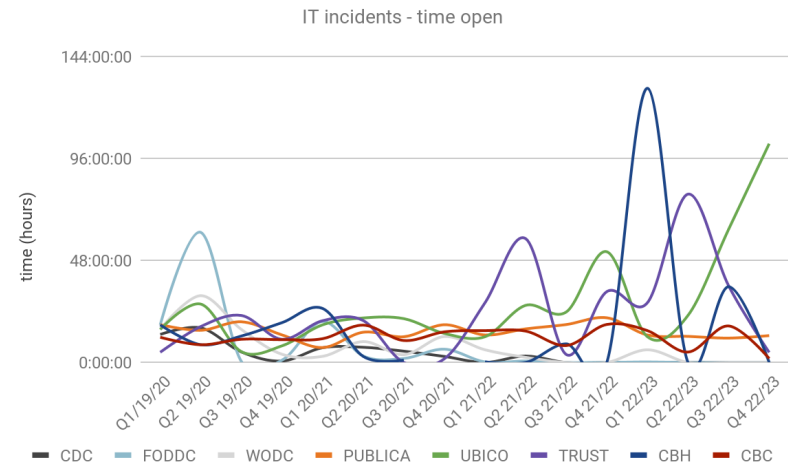
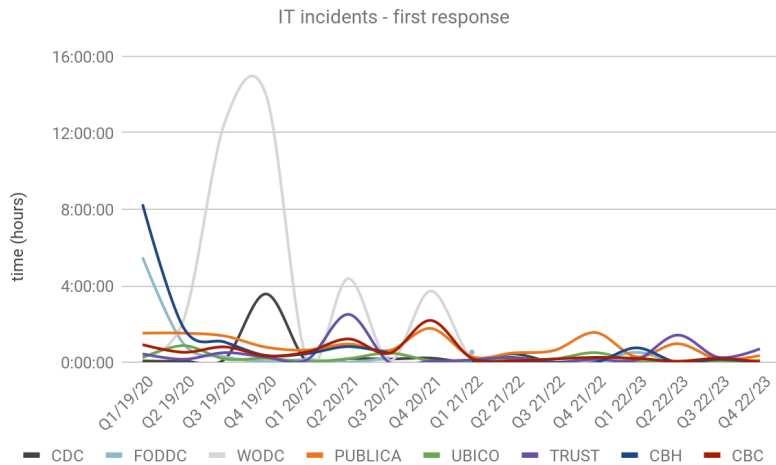


IT incidents and response times

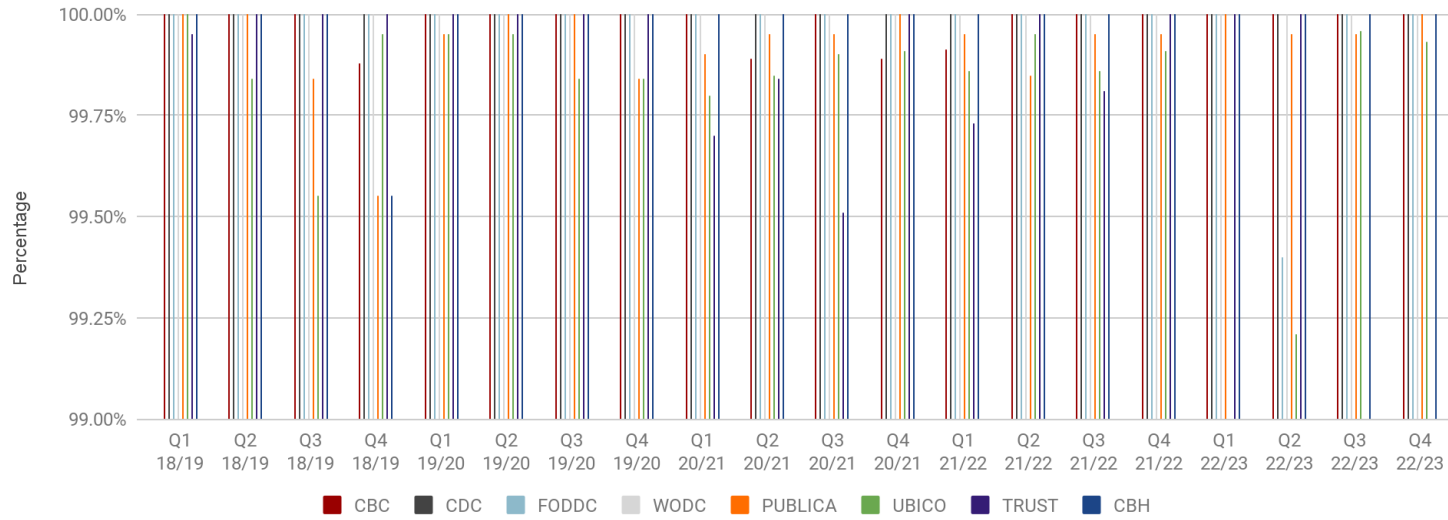


OBSERVATION

These charts show the overall number of IT incidents and proportion per council/client, and the average first response and open times. The total number of incidents across all sites has fallen since the peak at the beginning of Covid-19 and home working; and has stayed low over the last year. Improved communications from lessons learned and anticipation of potential issues is helping to keep the number of incidents down. The average open time for Ubico increased in Q3 and Q4 due to delays in receiving responses from a third party provider on two separate issues with the network



Payroll accuracy

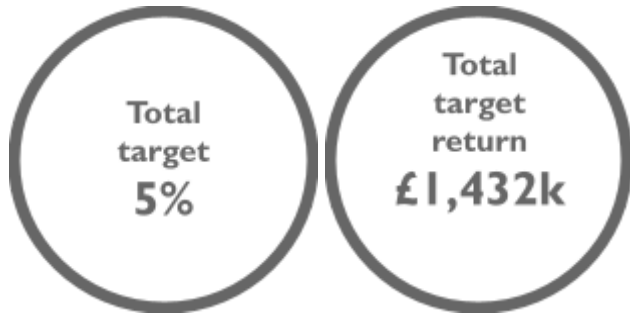


OBSERVATION:
 Performance continues to be strong across all partner sites.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE: April 2022 to March 2023

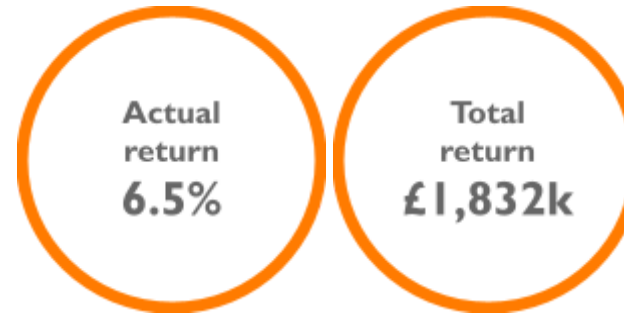
TARGET OPERATING SURPLUS

Full year



ACTUAL TO DATE

Against Q4 Budget



QUARTER 4



KEY VARIANCES

Salary Costs	-1,406k
Agency & Contractor	+856k
Transport	-£149k
Admin Expenses	+£209k

Information / Discussion Paper

Overview and Scrutiny

Monday 30 October 2023

Christmas in Cheltenham 2023

This note contains the information to keep Members informed of matters relating to the work of the Committee, but where no decisions from Members are needed.

1. Why has this come to scrutiny?

1.1 Members have asked for a report about plans for promotion of Christmas in Cheltenham and delivery of Christmas events in the town to help them “understand what the plans are, what remains to be done and where the risks are. To include an update on the ice rink (power and recovery).”

2. Summary of the issue

2.1 The Christmas trading period is extremely significant in the retail and hospitality sector. High Street Christmas shopping is a big part of the festive season for millions of people and staff Christmas parties provide an important economic boost for the hospitality sector.

2.2 Across the UK in 2022, November and December accounted for almost a quarter of the total year’s sales in non-food stores, over £41 billion of sales, with £24 billion of these being in December¹.

2.3 Christmas is a competitive time in the place marketing profession. Destinations will compete with each other to attract visitors both from the local area and wider region. Shoppers are discerning and will have a range of reasons for choosing a location in which to do their Christmas shopping, for example, convenience, ease of access, and places which have a festive atmosphere, Christmas events and markets, or a good range of shops. An effective place marketing promotional campaign, supported by a programme

¹ Source:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/retailindustry/datasets/poundsdatatotalretailsales>

of festive activities can encourage these shoppers to choose to visit Cheltenham.

2.4 Acknowledging the importance of the season to the local economy, the council's place marketing and inward investment team, via the [Visit Cheltenham](#) brand, have a comprehensive promotional campaign with the tagline "Christmas – spend it somewhere special" and details of this are included in section 3.1.

2.5 Cheltenham Borough Council, its partners, and the wider business community also carry out a wide range of activities to generate footfall to the town over the Christmas period, including the Christmas Ice Rink in Imperial Gardens. Further details of these activities, including an update on progress with the ice rink, are in section 3.2.

3. Summary of evidence / information

3.1 About the Place Marketing and Inward Investment service ("Marketing Cheltenham")

- The Place Marketing and Inward Investment service area sits within the Communities and Place Directorate and has been defined as a service since July 2022 following the initial phase of the wider organisational review.
- The council has taken ownership of tourism promotion for the town since 2017 when the Visit Cheltenham brand was developed by an external agency commissioned by the council. Since then, the team's remit has developed to include responsibility for events, economic development and inward investment.
- The service is part-funded by base budget contribution from the council and part-funded by generating commercial income via advertising, sponsorship opportunities, delivery of commercial events and the Marketing Cheltenham partnership scheme.
- Throughout the year, the team works closely with Cheltenham BID to deliver and promote a wide range of activities designed to benefit the town, as both partners share an objective to boost the economy and support local businesses. Marketing Cheltenham promote BID activities and events, adding value to their marketing and increasing visitor numbers.
- The BID also commissions the council to deliver a series of town centre events on their behalf. The council's events manager allocates time to BID work and works closely with the BID team to ensure objectives are delivered and the town benefits from well-organised and strategically

planned events.

- The Visit Cheltenham brand is an important part of the marketing mix for the town. In 2022, there were almost 2 million page views on the Visit Cheltenham website and the brand has around 60,000 social media followers across all formats. This compares favourably with similar towns and provides a powerful way to share key messages about the town and the many events, attractions and businesses here. There is significant engagement from both visitors and residents.

3.2 Strategic Engagement

- Many organisations within Cheltenham will deliver activities during November and December designed to encourage footfall to their businesses and seek to benefit from the Christmas trading period.
- The council engages with stakeholders within the town to ensure a strategically planned programme of Christmas events and activities is offered to visitors and residents. A good example of this is the partnership with Cheltenham Trust as early engagement took place to ensure that the launch of Christmas in the town centre, the opening weekend of the ice rink, the Cheltenham Races, and the Pittville Pump Room switch on party did not take place on the same day. This leads to multiple opportunities for residents and visitors to celebrate the start of Christmas and boosts footfall to each of the individual events, avoiding audience confusion.

3.3 Christmas in Cheltenham marketing campaign

- A £17,300 marketing budget has been allocated from council resources to promote Christmas in Cheltenham. This has been enhanced by a contribution of £5,000 from the BID and in-kind support from several partners, leading to a campaign which is worth significantly more and maximises the return on investment for the town.
- The Marketing Cheltenham team promotes the whole town offer at Christmas, with all event organisers and businesses encouraged to add their events to the Visit Cheltenham website for free.
- A comprehensive marketing campaign has been developed to promote all Christmas events and activities, shopping, and food and drink options. The campaign will target visitors and residents and will include:
 - Dedicated web pages,
 - PR campaign with local, regional and national press,

- An event leaflet distributed via businesses and through letterboxes,
 - Sponsored social media posts,
 - Frequent newsletters to Visit Cheltenham subscribers,
 - Heart FM Radio campaign,
 - Posters on bus rears and digital screens in Cheltenham venues,
 - Christmas giveaways in association with Cheltenham businesses.
- It is anticipated that this campaign will reach hundreds of thousands of people within the region and beyond.

3.4 Christmas activities in Cheltenham

Events and activities organised by, or in partnership with the council:

3.4.1 Cheltenham Ice Rink.

- Organised by Cheltenham Borough Council, the ice rink will return to Imperial Gardens from Friday 17 November 2023 – Monday 1 January 2024 (not open Christmas Day).
- In 2021, over 43,000 ice rink tickets were sold and the event, along with the associated market, contributed an additional £3 million to the local economy from people shopping and eating in the town.
- In 2023, prices start from £11.50 for adults, £10.50 for concessions and £9.50 for children. Family tickets are discounted, and carers are free. The ice rink is fully wheelchair accessible. Discounts are also available for schools and large groups.
- There are dedicated SEND sessions (fewer tickets sold, more relaxed atmosphere) and pre-school sessions.
- Tickets went on sale on Monday 25 September and key dates like Christmas Eve and weekends are proving popular. Tickets are available here: <https://www.visitcheltenham.com/ice-skating>.
- A catering concession opportunity has been promoted to local businesses as both a service to ice rink users and as income generation for the event. It is important that local businesses benefit from the opportunities the ice rink will bring and therefore the concession will only be permitted to offer hot and cold soft drinks alongside cold snacks, encouraging visitors to attend local businesses for a more comprehensive offering or hot meals.
- The environmental impact of the ice rink is, understandably, under considerable scrutiny, and officers are putting in place measures to mitigate or reduce this as much as possible. This includes the use of HVO instead

of traditional diesel and a modern Stage 5 generator which will reduce emissions when compared with older technology. Officers have also commissioned the innovative use of a mobile battery to restrict the requirement to operate the generator overnight (reducing the noise impact locally). At the moment battery technology is so expensive it's not a viable option for most events but fortunately, the council have been able to partner with "Konik", a subsidiary company of Noriker, who have recently moved into the Quadrangle.

- This combined use of battery and HVO represents a significant innovation in event delivery and the impact of this will be included as part of the comprehensive review of the ice rink impact undertaken during and after the event.
- Residents' concerns are at the heart of the planning for this event and every effort is being made to minimise or avoid entirely any disruption and inconvenience throughout. Residents have been sent a letter which details the plans for the event and includes contact details for officers. During operation, 24/7 security will be in place onsite to respond immediately to any emergencies.
- The announcement of the return of the ice rink has been met with a lot of positive feedback from both Cheltenham residents and those in the wider region. It is a popular attraction, providing an excellent reason to visit the town over the Christmas period.
- Key risks:

Risk	Mitigation
Supplier failure	Due diligence has been carried out and references obtained for suppliers.
Lack of ticket sales	A comprehensive marketing campaign has been put in place to ensure that residents and visitors are aware of the event. Tickets have been set at a fair price for the attraction, based on comparable events around the country. Offers are available for families, groups and concessions. Peak and off-peak times have been set to make visits outside of the busiest hours slightly cheaper.
Power supply and emissions	An innovative power supply solution has been selected, working closely with industry experts to reduce both emissions and noise impacts.
Damage to Imperial Gardens	Trackway will be installed to protect the ground from compaction during build and break. Heavy plant to sit on trackway pad throughout. Re-turfing is already

	booked and is scheduled for w/c 8 Jan. Bed planting is scheduled for w/c 5 February.
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3.4.2 Christmas lights in the town centre.

- The council provides an annual grant of £47,000 to Cheltenham BID to commission and deliver the installation of Christmas lights for the town centre and provide entertainment for the launch event. The BID must at least match this to enhance the scheme and is contributing in excess of £50,000 this year.
- Following a procurement process, The BID has selected The Festive Lighting Company to supply the lights for the main shopping areas and vehicular routes of the town from 2023/24-2025/26.
- The scheme will be unique to Cheltenham and will enhance and be sympathetic to the Regency surroundings of the town. It will also offer points of interest to be included in a town-wide light trail.
- The lights will be switched on from 4pm until 11pm each day from Thursday 16 November to Tuesday 2 January 2024.

3.4.3 Christmas launch event – town centre.

- Thursday 16 November 2023
- Organised by Cheltenham BID (via the council’s events manager), the town centre Christmas launch will not take the form of a traditional switch on, but instead will be a community-oriented event which is longer in duration and encompasses more of the town than previous years.
- This will benefit businesses by encouraging more dwell-time and will reduce the infrastructure pressures associated with switch on events.
- The event will incorporate a wide variety of entertainers arranged at various locations throughout the town, The Quadrangle, High Street and The Promenade.

3.5 Promotion of the wider Christmas offer.

3.5.1 Please read on for a selection of other activities taking place in Cheltenham which are promoted via the Visit Cheltenham Christmas Events Guide: www.visitcheltenham.com/whats-on/monthly-highlights/christmas

- Christmas Light Trail (Cheltenham BID)

- Elf Trail (Cheltenham BID)
- Roaming performers at weekends (Cheltenham BID)
- Christmas markets (various organisers and locations)
- Christmas Lights Switch On Party at Pittville Pump Room (Cheltenham Trust)
- Brewery Quarter Christmas Launch
- Regent Arcade Christmas Activities and Entertainment
- The Cheltenham Trust Christmas programme
- The Christmas Meeting and New Years Day races (The Jockey Club)
- Everyman Theatre Pantomime (Mother Goose)
- Playhouse Theatre Pantomime (Aladdin)
- Santa Express (GWSR steam train)
- Spectacle of Light (Sudeley Castle)
- Many in-house events at local businesses including afternoon teas, breakfast with Santa, live music, comedy, shopping evenings, and much more.

4. Next Steps - possible next steps for the committee to consider eg potential witnesses, further report, site visit etc.

4.1 As with any programme of activity carried out by the council, the Christmas programme will be monitored throughout, and a review carried out which can be made available to members upon completion.

4.2 Tourism provision for Cheltenham is the subject of Overview and Scrutiny in February 2024 so an update on the outcomes of the Christmas programme will be provided there.

4.3 Officers would encourage members to promote Christmas in Cheltenham to constituents to encourage them to shop, eat and visit local.

Background Papers

Contact Officer

Helen Mole, Head of Place Marketing and Inward Investment, 01242 246122,
helen.mole@cheltenham.gov.uk

Accountability

Cllr Max Wilkinson, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Culture, Tourism and Wellbeing

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Information / Discussion Paper

Overview & Scrutiny

Monday 30th October 2023

CBC Performance Report 2023

This note contains the information to keep Members informed of matters relating to the work of the Committee, but where no decisions from Members are needed

1. Why has this come to scrutiny?

1.1 For information.

2. Summary of the Issue

2.1 In 2020 CBC started to introduce some wider performance indicators to monitor organisational performance. Previous performance monitoring had been mostly qualitative in nature leading to the possibility of subjective interpretation of performance. During 21/22 Managers were asked to pull together a set of indicators for their service that could demonstrate how it was performing.

2.2 Managers were asked to consider the data they took into account when making decisions for their service when selecting their performance indicators.

2.3 A list of indicators were produced and monitored quarterly and the 21/22 Performance report was presented to Overview and Scrutiny last year.

2.4 The indicators were reviewed and adjusted and then monitored quarterly during last year.

3. Summary of evidence/information

3.1 The end of year performance report for 22/23 is attached as a supporting paper.

3.2 The report this year contains performance information for each quarter and in

most cases a comment from the relevant Service Manager.

- 3.3. Overall the performance in most areas has exceeded targets but there are a number of areas where performance has fallen below target and these include:

MTFS – A difficult year with excessive energy costs meant that we were not able to deliver all the savings identified. Work has been undertaken with Managers and the Cabinet to rectify the situation for the coming year.

Exit Interviews – Few exit interviews were undertaken during the year due to refusals. The new inhouse HR team understand the importance of gathering exit information and are working to achieve a higher performance level.

Marketing Cheltenham – Income was down due to the fact we did not have the ice rink in place as anticipated over the Christmas Period. For 2023/24 an Ice Rink has been procured and tickets are Plans are in place to achieve income in this area for the coming year.

Complaints Upheld – Just over half of the complaints that were upheld or partially upheld were complaints regarding Ubico that had either been escalated from the cleansing team or which met the criteria for a corporate complaint. The remainder of the upheld/partially upheld complaints were spread evenly across all service areas with no one area highlighted area for concern.

4. Next Steps - possible next steps for the committee to consider e.g. potential witnesses, further report, site visit etc.

- 4.1 What has been clear over the past few years is the journey to embedding an effective PI framework has not quite been as fast as anticipated but we are making progress.
- 4.2 Real cultural change always takes time and with the PI selection for this year we are starting to see a more mature, data aware approach demonstrating a difference in understanding from previous years.

Background Papers

CBC End of Year Performance Scorecard March 2022/23

Contact Officer

Ann Wolstencroft, Head of Corporate Services,
ann.wolstencroft@cheltenham.gov.uk

Accountability

Rowena Hay, Leader

DRAFT

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Report to 30 October 2023 Meeting of CBC Overview and Scrutiny Committee**Summary of October 2023 Meeting of GCC Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

A full recording of this meeting is available in the “Online meetings” section of the GCC website. The public information pack which includes all presentations is also available on this website. The minutes are not yet available, so this paper is based solely on notes I took at the time.

1. Scrutiny Items –**1.1 NHS Gloucestershire Winter Sustainability Plan 2023-24 & Update on Urgent and Emergency Care Transformation Programme**

Pages 23 to 39 of the agenda pack give details of how each member of the integrated care system (ICS) plans to improve capacity and flow to deal with the upsurge in patients likely to be experienced in the coming months. The lack of a real seasonal pattern that Covid is now exhibiting along with the current low occupancy of ITU suggesting the new variant is not having too bad an impact should make winter 2023/24 less demanding on the healthcare system than many recent ones.

Page 37 onwards describes the work being carried out with Newton Europe to bring about improvements in the urgent and emergency care pathways. Five areas have been identified with plans in place to improve each:

1. Prevention
2. Community urgent response
3. Hospital flow and decision making with a key focus on additional support for ward rounds and MDTs.
4. Intermediate care, particularly reablement.
5. Access to packages of care

2. Information Items – see presentations for full details:**2.1 Gloucestershire Integrated Care System (ICS) Performance Report**

- No patients waiting for CT & MRI at GHNHST more than 6 weeks ranking it in first place nationally but issues still with ECGs and colonoscopies.
- Patients waiting for planned care have dropped slightly since the last report but still very high at 80,522.
- ED & MIU performance against the 4-hour target has dropped to 72.7% in August but remained slightly better than the national average and ambulance response times have maintained recent improvements with Cat 1 response at 9.5 mins and Cat 2 at 29.8 mins
- Demand for primary care services remains very high with 352,531 appointments carried out in July meaning that year to date there have been 93,000 more appointments than planned.
- Waits for mental health services for children and young people remain high across all providers.

- More positively the 2 week wait and faster diagnostic cancer waiting times targets are now being met but the 62-day referral to treatment target has been missed though performance is in line with most acute trusts.

2.2 NHS Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board (ICB) Update – this report is now divided into 3 sections

- Section 1 an update on national and local commissioning issues
- Section 2 an update on primary care issues from the commissioner perspective
- Section 3 an update from the 3 provider Trusts; Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust (GHC), Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (GHT) and South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SWAST)
- Of note, given the recent motion at Council about birthing services at CGH, here is a direct quote from the GHNHST report:

“Despite sustained efforts by the Recruitment and Retention team midwifery vacancies remain of concern. The vacancy rate remains consistently high at 14.41%. The midwifery service remains under establishment (under-staffed) at 36.85 WTE in Band 5, 6 and 7 (based on July 2023 data). More broadly, turnover combined with absence and sickness means that there was a shortage of 63.57 whole time equivalents (WTE) or full-time staff (based on July 2023 data). Positively, 4.1 WTE Band 5 Registered Nurses commenced in July 2023. At the time of writing this report 14 new starters have been lined up to join in September with a further 9 WTE starting between October and January 2024.”

Finally, in light of the motion concerning the closure of the Aveta Birthing Unit at CGH at the July full Council meeting which requested referral of our concerns regarding its closure to HOSC, I attach below for information, a minute of the July HOSC meeting (agreed at this, the October meeting) which refers to the scrutiny of this issue at the May and July HOSC meetings and to the update due in November.

“GLOUCESTERSHIRE HOSPITALS TRUST MATERNITY (TEMPORARY CHANGES) UPDATE

5.1 The committee received an update on the delivery of maternity services at Cheltenham General Hospital and Stroud Maternity Unit, including the actions taken to progress midwifery recruitment and retention.

5.2 Members recalled that at the committee meeting in May 2023, the committee had received information on Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust’s maternity service staffing position and the actions associated with consideration of alternative staffing models to support the opening of the birth centre in Cheltenham and post-natal beds in Stroud.

5.3 Dr Simon Pirie, (Chief of Service: Women & Children) and Lisa Stephens, (Director of Midwifery), for NHS Gloucs joined the meeting via remote access to respond to questions. For further information an update is also due to be received at the November HOSC meeting.”

I will of course feedback the November update as soon as I have it.

Adrian Bamford

GEGSC - Report to Overview & Scrutiny of 21st September 2023 meeting

The full agenda and papers are here:

[Agenda for Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee on Thursday 21 September 2023, 10.00 am](#)

I'd particularly like to point members to item 5; the minutes read:

5.1 Brendan Walsh, Interim Director of Place, was invited to give an update on Tewkesbury's Garden Town. He was also supported by Colin Chick, Director of Economy, Environment and Infrastructure at Gloucestershire County Council. The key information highlighted was:

There was a plan for a garden town to be created in Tewkesbury with the first phase being concentrated around Junction 9 of the M5. The garden town would create 10000 additional homes and infrastructure for new places of employment. It was emphasised that this was one of the biggest home building projects in the country.

Tewkesbury Borough Council created a Gateway Review Team under the company, Cratus to create a report which outlined recommendations for what Tewkesbury Borough Council would need to do to make the project happen. The report contained 17 recommendations which had begun being implemented. (See here for the full report:

<https://minutes.tewkesbury.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=256&MId=4219&Ver=4> its item 7a.)

The members were informed that a Local Plan had to be created to encompass how the garden town would fit with the rest of Tewkesbury. It was stated that this would take 3 years to complete and was pivotal to the garden town being created.

Brendan was fascinating; he has 30 years of experience in placemaking. A wide-ranging insight into the way thinking is developing nationally.

Lots of learning that would be applicable to Golden Valley and Tewkesbury Road. (And he thinks that Gloucestershire needs another 7 or 8 Garden Towns to cope with the 100-150k houses Gloucestershire will need in the future.)

[Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee - Thursday 21 September 2023, 10:00am - Gloucestershire County Council Webcasting \(public-i.tv\)](#)

The item starts 23 minutes 47 seconds in.

Other Agenda items worth a look are:

Item 4: High St Heritage Action Zone

Item 7: Growth Hub Update

Item 8: Exec Director's Report (Colin Chick) As ever lot's of detail on what GCC is doing across the County.

I'd start with the minutes and the background papers for these last 3 items. You have to listen to Brendan Walsh's intervention.

Councillor Paul McCloskey



(DRAFT) SCRUTINY REVIEW – ONE PAGE STRATEGY

FOR COMPLETION BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	
Broad topic area	Winding up of Cheltenham Borough Homes
Specific topic area	Transition, consultation framework and future governance framework
Terms of Reference for the review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To receive integration action plan. Actively contribute to the creation of a consultation framework in order to develop a Tenant Offer which will provide tenants and leaseholders with the opportunity to provide their view on the proposed change in management, state their priorities in shaping the future housing service provision, ensure their continued involvement, and complement the new consumer standards. Actively contribute to the development of the future governance framework.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be assured that the integration action plan is effective and being followed. To have contributed to a consultation framework which provides the opportunity for tenant and leasehold engagement both now and in the future. Be confident that the future governance framework will provide the council with the assurance required to meet its regulatory requirements.
How long should the review take?	The task group will operate for the period of the integration action plan.
Recommendations to reported to:	Scrutiny and then Cabinet
Membership:	TBC
FOR COMPLETION BY OFFICERS	
Officers experts and witnesses	Gareth Edmundson, Paul Jones, Claire Hughes, Martin Stacy, Ann Wolstencroft
Sponsoring officer	TBC
Facilitator	Bev Thomas
FOR COMPLETION BY THE SCRUTINY TASK GROUP	
Are there any current issues with performance?	N/A
Co-optees	
Other experts and witnesses	
Other consultees	

Background information	
Suggested method of approach	
How will we involve the public/media? Or at what stages	
Preferred timing for meetings	

DRAFT

Overview and Scrutiny Committee work plan – 2023-24

Title	Objective	Format & expected date	Author
Monday 20 November 2023 (deadline 8 November)			
Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) / Operational Policing (30 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current position of levels of criminality in Cheltenham with a particular focus on anti-social behaviour and organised crime. - How is success measured and how are they performing against it in a Cheltenham context? 	Discussion paper	Police and Crime Commissioner Chief Inspector Gav Morgan, Gloucestershire Police
Homelessness (30 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the approach in Cheltenham for tackling homelessness and rough sleeping including how we work with partners? - What is the current level of homelessness in Cheltenham? - What support is being provided, how are you performing and how is success being measured? 	Discussion paper	Martin Stacy (Housing Strategy and Partnerships Manager), Emma Wall, Executive Director (Property and Communities) Cheltenham Borough Homes, Cabinet Member Housing, Councillor Victoria Atherstone
LGA Peer Review (20 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What progress is being made on the implementation of the recommendations from the Peer Review ? 		Gareth Edmundson (Chief Executive)

Overview and Scrutiny Committee work plan – 2023-24

Title	Objective	Format & expected date	Author
Update on CBH-CBC Transition/Consultation Framework/Assurance Regulations (20 mins)	Update		Claire Hughes (Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer)
Monday 15th January 2024 (deadline 20th December)			
Business continuity	To consider the robustness of CBC business continuity arrangements.	Discussion paper	Claire Hughes (Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer)
Gloucestershire Airport (GAL)	Looking at GAL’s financial sustainability, both in relation to recent improvements and in the long term.	Discussion Paper	Jason Ivey, (Director GAL) Mike Morton (GAL Chair) GAL (Head of Finance) Paul Jones (Executive Director Finance, Assets and Regeneration)
Monday 26th February 2024 (deadline 14th February)			

Overview and Scrutiny Committee work plan – 2023-24

Title	Objective	Format & expected date	Author
Tourism	<p>To consider CBC’s current tourism and town marketing provision, how effective is it, how is success measured and what plans are there are for further development?</p> <p>To include :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The inclusivity of the tourism offer • Influence CBC have on Chelt Festivals 	Discussion paper, visitor economy data	<p>Helen Mole (Head of Place Marketing and Inward Investment)</p> <p>Cllr. Max Wilkinson (Cabinet Member Economic Development, Culture, Tourism and Wellbeing)</p>
Monday 25th March 2024 (deadline 13th March)			
Flooding	Examining the role of CBC in national and local flood risk management plans and strategies. Progress on mitigations since 2007 and CBC role in flood mitigation (to include biodiversity and nature based solutions) and involvement in the planning process.	Discussion paper	<p>James Mogridge (Flood Risk and Drainage Engineer)</p> <p>Lucy McNabney (Flood Officer)</p> <p>Partner Representatives</p>
Planning Peer Review Update	To consider the progress made on the recommendations	Discussion paper	Tracey Birkinshaw, (Director of Community and Economic Development)

Overview and Scrutiny Committee work plan – 2023-24

Title	Objective	Format & expected date	Author
			Xxxxx Head of Planning
Monday 3rd June 2024 (deadline 21st May)			
Culture Board	Consider its effectiveness, successes and difficulties faced	TBD	Tracey Birkinshaw (Director of Community and Economic Development) Richard Gibson, Head of Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships Chair of Culture Board
Monday 1st July 2024 (deadline 19th June)			
Tackling Multiple Deprivation	Report back on progress on recommendations of the Scrutiny Task Group report submitted to Cabinet in July 2024	Discussion Paper	Richard Gibson, Head of Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships

Items for future meetings			
Title	Objective	Format and Expected Date	Author
LGA Peer Review (Nov)	To assess progress against the action plan once it is available	LGA Peer Review Action Plan	Gareth Edmundson, Chief Executive
Accessibility	How does the council ensure that accessibility is always carefully considered in CBC’s decision-making, and implemented wherever possible ? Invite Cllr Tooke to next Chair’s briefing (Dem Services attending designing accessible public meetings)	Discussion Paper TBD	TBD
Building Control	Overview and Performance	TBD	Building Control Manager
Community Infrastructure Levy Neighbourhood Panels	Cabinet Member to respond to questions on allocation decisions Impact of allocations made		Cabinet Member Customer and Regulatory Services Tracey Birkinshaw (Director of Community and Economic Development)

Overview and Scrutiny Committee work plan – 2023-24

Annual Items		
Budget proposals for coming year	January	Chair of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group
End of year performance review	July/September	Ann Wolstencroft (Head of Performance, Projects and Risk)
Gloucestershire Airport	June/July	GAL representatives
UBICO annual report	September	Karen Watson (Environmental Partnerships Manager), Cllr. Iain Dobie (Cabinet Member Waste, Recycling and Street Services), UBICO representative
Overview & Scrutiny annual report	September /October	Democracy Officer
Annual report of the Police and Crime Commissioner	September	PCC (Chris Nelson)
Publica annual report	October (after Publica AGM)	Jan Britton (Managing Director)
Climate Pathway	July/September	Climate Change Team, Cabinet Member Climate Emergency

Overview and Scrutiny Committee work plan – 2023-24

CIL Neighbourhood Panels	End 2023/beginning 2024	Cllr. Martin Horwood (Cabinet Member Customer and Regulatory Services), Tracey Birkinshaw (Director of Community & Economic Development)
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