

**Cheltenham Borough Council**  
**Overview and Scrutiny committee– 9 January 2014**  
**Progress report on recommendations from Ubico Task Group**

<b>Accountable member</b>	<b>Councillor Roger Whyborn, Cabinet Member Sustainability</b>
<b>Accountable officer</b>	<b>Jane Griffiths, Commissioning Director</b>
<b>Ward(s) affected</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Executive summary</b>	<p>The Overview and Scrutiny Committee established a task group to review Ubico and this group made a number of recommendations, relating to both the borough council and Ubico, which were approved by Cabinet in 16 April 2013. This committee had requested a progress report to be presented so that the committee could satisfy themselves that the recommendations had been actioned.</p> <p>Set out in the report is progress against each of the specific recommendations. As members will see from this report actions have been progressed and the cabinet member and officers valued the review as it identified a number of issues which have lead to improvements.</p> <p>Work will continue to be undertaken on the outstanding matters. Where the actions are ongoing these recommendations have been embedded into working practices.</p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>To consider progress against the recommendations and identify any issues where the committee have concerns that recommendations are not being progressed as planned.</b>
<b>Financial implications</b>	<p>There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.</p> <p><b>Contact officer: Des Knight, GO Shared Services Finance</b></p> <p><b>des.knight@cheltenham.gov.uk, 01242 264124</b></p>

## 1. Background

- 1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee set up a task group looking at Ubico. The working group involved officers in the discussions so that there was a consensus on the approach which was outlined within their report and considered by Cabinet in April 2013. During the course of the review there was a period of snow so the working group also considered the way in which this was dealt with and asked that their initial findings be considered by the waste and recycling cabinet member working group.
- 1.2 A briefing report was brought back to cabinet at the same meeting as the task group recommendations were considered. This briefing note set out the lessons learnt from the service disruption and at the end of October 2013 the cabinet member approved a revised policy for dealing with service disruptions. This has recently been tested through a desk top exercise, which was useful as it highlighted some practical issues which have been addressed.
- 1.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting in March 2013 indicated that they wanted to see a progress report brought back to them. Set out below are the recommendations and the progress to date along with other issues which may have arisen since the original work was undertaken.

## 2. Strategic context

- 2.1 As members will be aware the council is now part of the Joint Waste Committee, which was established in April 2013. The committee is supported by the joint waste team, who manage the contract with Ubico. There are good working relationships with the team and the council has access to a wider group of officers who can support us with waste and recycling.
- 2.2 The committee is currently setting its business plan for 2014/15, a draft of which was discussed at the committee on 19 December 2013 and available on the county council website. A hard copy has been placed in the members' room. Relevant actions will be picked up within the corporate strategy to be discussed at council in March, but should members of the O&S committee have any views then these may be fed into the process at this stage.

## 3. Progress against the recommendations

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| <p>3.1 Review the decision not to nominate any borough councillors to the Board by September 2013</p> <p>3.2 <i>The leader of the council (as shareholder) has considered the matter but since the suggestion does not have the support of Cotswold, as the other shareholder, is not proposing a change to the board structure at this stage. A higher priority is for Tewkesbury to join Ubico which will in any case involve negotiation as to how the board will operate in future. Grahame Lewis who is the council board member will be retiring at the end of March 2014, and it is currently proposed that the CEX will be the board member for Ubico. Colin Hay as this council's member observer on the board has indicated he intends to stand down shortly</i></p>  |
| <p>3.3 Review the customer service arrangements at an appropriate time, but no later than by the end of September 2013 and consider whether delivery of this service should return to the depot</p> <p>3.4 <i>A systems thinking review has been undertaken and identified a number of improvements to the current working practices. Sessions have also been held between key staff from both Ubico, customer services and public protection to ensure an alignment to the service outcomes and weekly meetings have been set up between customer services and operational managers at the depot to ensure that operational issues are resolved.</i></p> <p>3.5 <i>The location of the waste and recycling elements of customer services within the main customer services team, has led to more resilience and an ability to streamline processes. The review of processes via the systems thinking review, identified that no advantage can be demonstrated from moving the call centre back into Ubico.</i></p> |

<p><b>3.6</b> Review internal and external communication strategies by September 2013 .</p> <p><b>3.7</b> <i>Ubico have reviewed their communication strategy within the company and measures put in place to ensure that crews are well briefed. The systems thinking review also highlighted areas where improvements could be made to communications between internal departments and Ubico.</i></p> <p><b>3.8</b> <i>Working with the joint waste team and Ubico, the council has reviewed its communication strategy for service disruptions, including media statements and information it would place on the website. The website also has an FAQs with regards to severe weather arrangements. The webpages for waste and recycling have also been improved so it is easier for people to find the information that they require. Work has also been undertaken on the telephony system and recorded messages can now be used to provide information to callers in respect of service disruptions.</i></p>
<p><b>3.9</b> Review the emptying frequency timetable for the bring site facilities as part of the review of bring sites by September 2013 .</p> <p><b>3.10</b> <i>A review of the bring sites is currently ongoing. Data has been captured as to tonnage levels from the sites and identifying whether there are opportunities to collect other materials given that there is kerbside recycling.</i></p> <p><b>3.11</b> <i>During the period around Christmas and New Year the bring sites are under pressure due to increased recycling and fewer working days. Consideration has been given as to whether additional resources could be deployed but this would be expensive due to labour costs and vehicle hire. However once the ongoing bring site review has been completed it is hoped that it will identify how capacity may be optimised.</i></p> <p><b>3.12</b> <i>There was also some concern that at one site traders may have been using the facilities, as the facilities were being filled very quickly once they had been emptied. The public protection team spent some time in the area talking to traders and also checking the bring site, and the situation seems to have improved.</i></p>
<p><b>3.13</b> Consider the adoption of waste and recycling literature (bin tags) which include information including collection dates, bin information and key messages, as produced by Tewkesbury Borough Council by September 2013</p> <p><b>3.14</b> <i>This was reviewed but it was considered that this was not a cost effective means of getting messages to the public. Instead there is now more targeted communications for those who are not recycling. A new leaflet has been produced setting out what can and cannot be recycled and this is being given to those who are persistently leaving side waste.</i></p> <p><b>3.15</b> <i>The website has been improved so that there is more information for residents about the waste and recycling service.</i></p>
<p><b>3.16</b> At the end of the season (end of April 2013) assess the overall impact of the decision by the senior football league to cease coordination of their sports pitch bookings and if this has had a largely negative impact on resources within the customer services team ask the senior football league to reconsider their decision .</p> <p><b>3.17</b> <i>The problem which had been highlighted during the review has now been addressed and the processes for pitch bookings have been improved.</i></p>
<p><b>3.18</b> Consider providing additional marketing resource on an invest to save basis for the promotion of the trade waste service by September 2013 .</p>
<p><b>3.19</b> <i>An evaluation has been completed, with a recommendation based on modest growth to the service, with appropriate marketing investment. This was brought to the cabinet member working group on waste and recycling on 28 September and is currently being further evaluated. A report will be brought to cabinet on 18</i></p>

March 2014.

<b>Report author</b>	<b>Contact officer: Jane Griffiths, director of commissioning, jane.griffiths@cheltenham.gov.uk,  01242, 264126</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	1.