



# Public Document Pack **STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Council Offices • Ebley Mill • Ebley Wharf • Stroud • GL5 4UB  
Telephone 01453 766321  
www.stroud.gov.uk      Email: democratic.services@stroud.gov.uk

Wednesday, 12 May 2021

To all Members of Stroud District Council

You are hereby summoned to attend the Annual General Meeting of the **STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL** in the Main Hall, Stratford Park Leisure Centre on **THURSDAY 20 MAY 2021 at 7.00 pm.**

Kathy O'Leary  
Chief Executive

**Please Note:** Public access to this meeting is available, the meeting is being held at Stratford Park Leisure Centre, public should report to the reception area.

## **AGENDA**

- 1      **CHAIR OF COUNCIL**  
To elect a Chair of Council for the Civic Year 2021/22.
- 2      **VICE-CHAIR OF COUNCIL**  
To elect a Vice-Chair of Council for the Civic Year 2021/22.
- 3      **APOLOGIES**  
To receive apologies for absence.
- 4      **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**  
To receive declarations of interest.
- 5      **MINUTES (Pages 5 - 14)**  
To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 29 April 2021 as a correct record.
- 6      **ANNOUNCEMENTS**  
To receive announcements from the Chair of Council and the Chief Executive.
- 7      **APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEES (Pages 15 - 22)**  
To confirm the membership of each committee.

In accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the allocations are as per the relevant 2016 AGM report. The 2021/22 nominations received by Democratic Services from Group Leaders will be reported to or otherwise made at the AGM.

- 8      **APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND VICE-CHAIRS**  
To appoint the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the following committees:

- a. Audit & Standards Committee
- b. Community Services & Licensing Committee
- c. Development Control Committee
- d. Environment Committee
- e. Housing Committee
- f. Strategy & Resources Committee

Nominations received by Democratic Services from Group Leaders will be reported to or otherwise made at the AGM.

## **9 OTHER APPOINTMENTS**

- a. To appoint one lead and one substitute Member representative for the following bodies which are led by Gloucestershire County Council:
  - i. Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee
  - ii. Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel
  - iii. Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee
  - iv. Gloucestershire Covid-19 Outbreak Engagement Board
- b. To appoint three Mental Health Champions (as per the Mental Health Challenge motion resolved by Council on 26 April 2018).
- c. To appoint 5 cross-party Members to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group.

Nominations received by Democratic Services from Group Leaders will be reported to or otherwise made at the AGM.

## **10 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES**

### **10a AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE - 27 APRIL 2021**

The Chair of Audit and Standards Committee will present this item.

#### **AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21 (Pages 23 - 38)**

The Annual Report summarises the activities of the Audit and Standards Committee during 2020/21 and sets out its plans for the next twelve months. This report provides Council with an independent assurance that the Council has in place adequate and effective governance, risk management and internal control frameworks; Internal and External Audit functions; and financial reporting arrangements that can be relied upon and which contribute to the high corporate governance standards that this Council expects and maintains.

### **11 UBICO FIVE YEAR VISION AND BUSINESS PLAN 2021/22 (Pages 39 - 60)**

To provide an update on the Ubico Five Year Vision and Business Plan 2021/22.

### **12 AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION (Pages 61 - 62)**

To make an amendment to the Constitution to formalise the position of Deputy Leader of the Council.



# STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council Offices • Ebley Mill • Ebley Wharf • Stroud • GL5 4UB

Tel: (01453) 754 351/754 321

www.stroud.gov.uk

Email: democratic.services@stroud.gov.uk

## COUNCIL MEETING

29 April 2021

7.00 - 11.15 pm

Remote Meeting

### Minutes

#### Membership

**Councillor Gary Powell  
(Chair)**

**Councillor Steve**

**Robinson (Vice-Chair)**

Councillor Martin Baxendale

Councillor Dorcas Binns\*

Councillor Catherine Braun

Councillor Chris Brine

Councillor Miranda Clifton

Councillor Nigel Cooper

Councillor Doina Cornell

Councillor Gordon Craig

Councillor Rachel Curley

Councillor Stephen Davies

Councillor Paul Denney

Councillor Jim Dewey

Councillor Jonathan

Edmunds

\*= Absent

Councillor

#### Officers in Attendance

Chief Executive

Strategic Director of Place

Strategic Director of Change &  
Transformation

Strategic Director of Resources

Strategic Director of Communities

Monitoring Officer

Councillor Chas Fellows\*

Councillor Colin Fryer

Councillor Lindsey Green

Councillor Trevor Hall

Councillor Nick Hurst

Councillor George James

Councillor Julie Job

Councillor Haydn Jones

Councillor John Jones

Councillor Norman Kay

Councillor Darren Loftus\*

Councillor Steve Lydon

Councillor John Marjoram

Councillor Karen McKeown\*

Councillor Jenny Miles

Councillor Dave Mossman

Councillor Gill Oxley

Councillor Keith Pearson

Councillor Simon Pickering

Councillor Nigel Prenter

Councillor Skeena Rathor

Councillor Sue Reed\*

Councillor Mark Reeves

Councillor Mattie Ross

Councillor Tom Skinner

Councillor Nigel Studdert-  
Kennedy

Councillor Haydn Sutton

Councillor Brian Tipper

Councillor Jessica Tomblin

Councillor Chas Townley

Councillor Ken Tucker

Councillor Martin Whiteside

Councillor Tim Williams\*

Councillor Tom Williams

Councillor Debbie Young\*

Head of Planning Strategy

Principal Planning Officer

Interim Planning Strategy Manager

Senior Democratic Services & Elections

Officer Democratic Services & Elections  
Officer

The Chair announced that, following discussions with the Chair of Audit and Standards Committee Councillor Studdert-Kennedy, it had been decided that agenda

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item 9ai the Audit and Standards Committee Annual Report 2020/21 would be deferred until Council (AGM) on 20 May 2021. This was to allow sufficient discussion time for agenda item 9bi, the Pre-Submission District Local Plan.

The Chair then informed Members that agenda item 9bi would also be brought forward in the running order and be heard following agenda item 6.

### **0059 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Binns, McKeown, Fellows, Reed and Young.

### **0060 Declaration of Interests**

Councillor Denney raised a point of order, which had also been raised at the Environment Committee on 20 April 2021, regards the interests of Councillor Tomblin in relation to agenda item 9bi, the Pre-Submission District Local Plan. This was with reference to Rocket Rentals, the business that Councillor Tomblin owned together with her husband, and the land it was situated on, which was within the curtilage of the Wisloe development PS37 in the Pre-Submission District Local Plan. A Companies House check had confirmed that Councillor Tomblin and her husband received an income of £75,000 in 2020 from the land where the business was sited. Councillor Denney highlighted that, if the development were to go ahead, it would surround and likely affect Councillor Tomblin's business and land, and therefore an interest should be declared. Councillor Tomblin declared this interest and took no further part in the meeting.

### **0061 Minutes**

**RESOLVED**            **That the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2021 are approved as a correct record**

### **0062 Announcements**

The Chief Executive expressed thanks to all Councillors, particularly the 19 who would be standing down, for their service and support for the district's communities and the Council's staff during their term of office, especially through recent challenging times. The Leader conveyed gratitude to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council and marked the achievements and contributions of Councillors Rathor, Curley, Lydon, Townley, Denney and Clifton who would be standing down. Councillor Whiteside then spoke about the accomplishments of Councillors Green, McKeown, Dewey, Pickering and Marjoram, who would all continue to be active in the community. Councillor Davies recalled the service of Councillors earlier in the administration of and advised that Councillor Loftus would be standing down along with further gratitude to Councillors Fellows, Cooper, Young, Skinner, Reeves and Tomblin whose service and participation was also detailed. Councillor Tucker then completed thanks to all Members standing down by also thanking Councillor Whiteside for his tenure. The Chair summed up by expressing his thanks to all Members.

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The Chair announced that the Monitoring Officer had advised that, since the Local Plan item was to be considered and debated in this meeting during the pre-election period, it was requested that political comments be measured, with the avoidance of any overt party political references. Councillor Haydn Jones raised a point of order to ask for further clarification on this. The Monitoring Officer stated that it was overt party political references which were to be limited, but that Council could still hold the full debate to which it was entitled to do so regards this item at this time.

### **0063 Public Question Time**

Neil Leighton joined the meeting to ask three submitted questions on behalf of Berkeley and Sharpness Residents' Action Group. Sue Leleu joined the meeting next to ask a question submitted on behalf of Wisloe Action Group. Answers were delivered by Councillor Pickering. Supplementary questions were also raised and answered. (Please see attached PDF)

### **0064 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

It was confirmed that Councillor Hall had stood down from the Environment Committee, and Councillor Lydon had been appointed in replacement.

### **0065 PRE-SUBMISSION DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN**

Councillor Pickering presented the report, which had been presented to the Environment Committee on 20 April 2021. The decision made in favour of the recommendations had not been an easy one and thanks were due to all Council Officers past and present who had worked so hard on developing the draft Local Plan. The government expectation for Local Planning Authorities was to require an update to the Local Plan every five years. An update to the District's current adopted Local Plan was now due as it was over five years old and the housing requirements it set out were no longer up to date. Any further delay, additional to the recent delays already experienced due to the pandemic and possible changes in government policy, would increase the risk of the occurrence of planning by appeal. A series of measures to implement the Carbon Neutral 2030 Strategy were embedded throughout the plan: net carbon zero construction standards, carbon zero heating systems, identification of suitable areas for renewable energy, at least 10% new biodiversity gain, multifunctional green space and tree-planting, reuse and regeneration of brownfield land, planning for exemplar carbon neutral settlements, support for active travel and walking and support for the reopening of two new rail stations at Stonehouse and Sharpness.

The government had set out the minimum number of new houses to be provided in the district, which had been raised from a minimum of 456 to 630 homes per annum to be built, largely by private developers, which was an increase of 38%. There was therefore a need for some more new housing, particularly to support longer life expectancy, improvements in the status of women and the need for affordable houses for younger adults, three of the key drivers in the need for more housing. A buffer was required by the government and therefore Officers were advising an overall housing supply of 14,935 homes. Although covering just under 187 square miles, approximately half the district was an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and a

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considerable area was now at risk of flooding, therefore only roughly one third of the district remained available for allocation. Reducing the need to travel by private car, the single largest source of greenhouse emissions in the district, had been a primary factor in the development strategy towards delivering the Carbon Neutral 2030 Strategy. Extensive public consultation and work had so far been carried out by Officers and this, along with the significant contribution of the all-party Members on the Planning Review Panel in enabling consensuses to be reached, was formally acknowledged and thanked.

Councillor Pickering summarised the main objectives of the strategy which set out to:

- concentrate housing growth at population centres with best access to services and facilities
- develop new settlements where there was potential to create more sustainable communities
- regenerate the canal corridor through the Stroud Valleys, and Berkeley and Sharpness
- maximise the use of previously developed land
- provide strategic employments accessible within the M5/A38 corridor
- support the development and social sustainability of small towns and villages

It was essential that a sound Local Plan would stand up to scrutiny and that decisions on the choices of sites were transparent, logical and underpinned by evidence. The assessment of potential sites to meet the plan requirements had been rigorously tested. The Council could only consider sites supported by landowners as they must be deliverable. All sites were subject to public consultation and then progressed through the sustainability appraisal process, selected on their performance in that assessment, and also their ability to deliver the Local Plan Strategy. The broad locations resulting were highlighted in maps within the report. Gloucester City Council had identified a shortfall of 6,000 dwellings to meet future housing needs and had asked for help from neighbouring authorities with fulfilling this. It was both a national policy requirement and legal duty that Stroud District Council work co-operatively to accommodate unmet need in the most sustainable places. Following a joint assessment, a site at Whaddon had been identified for up to 3,000 dwellings. Councillor Pickering underlined that the proposal at this stage was not to allocate this site, but to safeguard it. The site would only be allocated subject to Gloucester City wanting the site to be allocated and providing up to date evidence of need at the Local Plan Examination.

At Environment Committee, two public questions had been asked and answered and a wide range of questions had been raised by both Committee and another Member in attendance and addressed. An amendment to remove the strategic site at Wisloe was proposed but defeated and the substantive recommendations had been approved. Officers had also agreed to make a number of minor changes in response to requests from Councillors Townley and Tomblin. These were:

- to refer to accommodation for older people as independent living not sheltered housing
- to remove all references to Cam as a town
- to include a glossary

After the reports had been published, other minor corrections had been identified by Officers such as site number consistencies, minor textual formatting changes, and

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finalised map and diagram amendments. These would be carried out by the Head of Planning Strategy and team under delegation, before publication. The recording of the Environment Committee had been broadcast live and had been available for all Members to watch in preparation prior to the current meeting.

Councillor Pickering proposed the motion, which was seconded by Councillor James.

Councillor Lydon requested confirmation regarding the rules by which the Local Plan was drawn up and what consequences could result from non-compliance. Councillor Pickering confirmed that all district councils must comply with the national planning guidance set down by the government. The numbers had been set and were very high. Compliance with the strict guidance was mandatory to avoid being penalised and there was always a risk of planning by appeal, as happened in 2013- 14 when a number of significant planning applications refused through the Development Control Committee were then subsequently lost at appeal. The Head of Planning Strategy added that the government figure of 630 was not a target, but a minimum.

Councillor Tipper enquired about dwellings to be built in the Cam area and whether the 38% increase had already been well exceeded in this location. Councillor Pickering informed that this increase would be applicable from the point of adoption of the new, rather than the existing, plan. The Head of Planning Strategy added that the minimum national government requirement of homes per year would have to be spread across the district and it was at the Council's discretion as to how the total minimum of 12,600 should be distributed. There were much larger allocations in other parts of the district, but the assessment work had shown that Cam and other settlements such as Stonehouse could take some of this growth. It was not an increase that had to be applied to each parish or town individually, it was a case of distributing the increase across the district and would tend to relate to the existing towns and larger villages and not in the countryside locations.

Councillor Craig asked how the public transport infrastructure proposals tied in with the industrial strategy and Gloucestershire 2050 Vision. In response, Councillor Pickering highlighted the support of the Local Economic Partnership (LEP) and the Head of Planning Strategy added that the GFirst LEP supported economic growth at the new settlement and at the Gloucestershire Science and Technology Park at Berkeley, so it was in accordance with the Local Industrial Strategy. Regarding the 2050 Vision, there had been an initial visioning document, but this had not developed yet into an approved plan or strategy so had no formal status. In response to further questions from Councillor Craig regarding the ammonium nitrate store, a topic which had also been raised at the Environment Committee, Councillor Pickering and the Head of Planning Strategy confirmed that the allocation of the new settlement at Sharpness was out of the consultation zone, bar a tiny part of the foreshore which was not part of the built development part of the allocation. The draft Local Plan, and the Sharpness allocations within it, were in conformity with the current Health and Safety Executive (HSE) advice and current legislative requirements. If these were to change, the Local Plan Inspector could consider this at examination. Examination was scheduled to commence towards the end of 2021 and most Local Plans took 9 to 12 months to go through this process, therefore it would be at least 18 months until adoption. This would give time for the Inspector to consider any changes to government policy before then. The Sharpness Docks site and its allocation had been rolled forward from the current adopted Local Plan and had therefore already been

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through a public examination in 2014-15. There had been no known changes in the legislative framework since. A government white paper in 2020 had proposed changes for new-style Local Plans to be reviewed every 3 years, giving assurance that the planning process would be flexible enough to deal with any changes in national legislation which might occur in the future.

Councillor Pearson asked for clarification in relation the current adopted Local Plan approved in 2015, which covered the period to 2031, and whether the 12,600 figure set out in the latest draft plan now being considered was additional to those dwellings required to be built by 2031, or did it include some of the houses already assigned within the 2015-2031 timescale. The Head of Planning Strategy confirmed that houses remaining to be built that were part of the 2015-2031 plans could be counted towards the delivery of housing in the 2020-2040 timescale, so these were different time periods but there was a crossover and advantage could be taken regards the good current position on the local housing land supply. Ongoing review of the Local Plan was important to keep the supply topped up and to avoid any future shortfall. Councillor Pearson further asked how many extra houses were to be found within the years 2031 to 2040. Members were referred to Table 1 in the Environment Committee report regards housing requirement and supply, which included a total of 4,595 homes already accounted and planned for. The requirement for further housing to be found in addition to this figure was approximately 8,000 houses. The supply already counted was therefore part of the future supply, but more would still need to be found.

Councillor Fryer asked about trigger points for infrastructure in the bigger developments. The Head of Planning Strategy explained that for new major developments it was important for infrastructure to be delivered in a timely manner to avoid dwellings being built without the necessary infrastructure being in place. Phasing development had been detailed in the various large site policies included within the plan, to ensure co-ordination between housing and employment, and the timely provision of local centres with community facilities such as schools, shopping and health amenities, to avoid any infrastructure deficit. The Local Plan established this as a principle and further detail, including numbers of houses for trigger points to be reached, would be set out in the subsequent master plan, development brief and series of supplementary planning documents, incorporating stakeholder and community involvement in the process. Drafts of these would be made available to the Inspector at the examination to demonstrate that each site was deliverable. In response to an additional question on this topic from Councillor Green, Members were informed that an Infrastructure Delivery Plan had been prepared setting out all infrastructure requirements and the views of statutory providers. This would be updated following the decision at the meeting and would then go to the examination, giving an up to date position on what infrastructure was needed, with regard to delivery and policy requirements. This would aim to provide satisfaction that there would be a reasonable prospect that development would take place in accordance with the plan.

A five-minute break was then called and the meeting resumed at 8.39pm.

Councillor Haydn Jones asked whether the train speed for the Sharpness service would permanently be limited to 15mph. Members were informed that the 15mph limit was for the heritage railway-run pilot scheme, and that the commercial service would be faster. The pilot service on the Vale of Berkley railway could be run from 2025 and



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the commercial service, after upgrading of the track and signalling, was expected to start in 2029, and would be at normal commercial speed. The second train would then be introduced in 2035. In response to a second query raised with regard to Cam and a question mark over additional land, the Head of Planning Strategy clarified that a mistake had been made in the Environment Committee, in a reference to Cam North West increasing in size. The correct position was that there hadn't been any increase to the amount of land, but the point that an increase to the number of dwellings needed to achieve efficient use of land remained valid. In terms of net density, 700 dwellings per hectare would be a low level and 900 would be needed in order to achieve efficient use of land and an average density across the development of around 30 dwellings per hectare. Increasing the number of dwellings to 900 would also ensure that the appropriate level of infrastructure could be provided including the proposed new primary school.

Councillor Hall asked about the creation of jobs and whether criteria for employers coming to the area would include requirements for trade-union recognised jobs paid at least at the living wage and protected by trade union conditions, especially in light of needing to provide opportunities for young people to live and work in the area. Councillor Pickering advised that the local plan cannot have control or any influence over these aspects. Councillor Green enquired about the employment land allocated at Sharpness and what was in the pipeline for that. The Head of Planning Strategy highlighted the widening of proposed employment usage for land at Sharpness Docks in the adopted local plan, to attract more general usage in association to the regeneration of the docks promoted by the Canal and Rivers Trust, rather than dock-related usage as previously specified in older plans. In terms of the new settlement, additional employment development and uptake would be supported by proximity to new residential areas and there was also an expectation that land would be available as grow-on space for incubator companies, based at the Gloucestershire Science and Technology Park. There would need to be more evidence provided and put forward at the Local Plan examination that this market was developable and that this aspiration would be achievable.

An amendment to recommendation a) was proposed by Councillor Mossman as follows:

- a) Subject to the removal of Wisloe (PS37) and the insertion of Moreton Valence (PGP2), approve the draft Local Plan (appendix A) for publication (and so on)

This was seconded by Councillor Cooper. Councillor Mossman addressed Members giving explanation of the proposed amendment and asking Members to consider it for a number of reasons, in comparison of the two sites, considering location, the Council's climate change strategy and sustainability agenda, infrastructure, community and developers' commitments to these aspects. The anxieties of the local community raised by the Wisloe Action Group were also referenced. Councillor Pickering expressed sympathy with the amendment but asserted that all sites had been looked at in great detail by Officers, Members and professional advisers. The amendment was debated by Members with input from Councillors Denney, Hurst, Lydon, Cooper, Pearson, Haydn Jones, Tipper, Cornell and Davies.

On being put to the vote, the amendment fell with 10 votes for, 26 votes against and 6 abstentions.

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Members then debated the substantive motion with input from Councillor Pearson before an amendment was proposed by Councillor Craig and seconded by Councillor Green as follows:

- a) Subject to the removal of PS34 and PS36 and them being replaced with Moreton Valence and Whitminster, approve the draft Local Plan (appendix A) for publication (and so on).

Councillor Craig gave context for the proposed amendment including comparative examples of risks, infrastructure costs, potential railway and traffic issues, poor air quality and concerns around the lack of revisions to the consultation distances, given the ammonium nitrate stores.

Councillor Lydon spoke in debate before proposing that the question be put. This was seconded by Councillor Brine. On being put to the vote, this proposal was carried with 26 votes for, 15 votes against and 1 abstention. Councillor Craig gave a reply.

On being put to the vote, the amendment fell with 9 votes for, 27 votes against and 6 abstentions.

In response to a proposal from Councillor Lydon, seconded by Councillor Brine, to move straight to the vote on the substantive motion, the Chair asserted that sufficient debate had not yet been conducted.

A vote was then taken regards continuing past 10.00pm. Agreement for this was carried with 39 votes for, 3 votes against and no abstentions.

Debate on the substantive motion followed with contributions from Councillors Davies, Studdert-Kennedy, Lydon, Tipper, Hurst, Braun, Denney, Haydn Jones, Green, Whiteside, Tom Williams, Cornell, Mossman, Craig and Hall. Councillor Pickering summed up.

On being put to the vote, the motion was carried with 26 votes for, 7 votes against and 8 abstentions.

### **RESOLVED**

- a) **To approve the draft Local Plan (appendix A) for publication, in accordance with Regulations 19 and 20 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and subsequently submit to the Secretary of State in accordance with Regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012;**
- b) **To approve the public consultation reports (appendices B and C) for publication, and**
- c) **To delegate to the Head of Planning Strategy authority to make minor map, textual and formatting changes to the draft document before publication.**

The Chair confirmed that, with consent of the relevant Members, it was decided that Item 7 the Ubico Five Year Vision and Business Plan 2021-22, would be deferred.

**0066 UBICO SHAREHOLDER DECISION**

The Strategic Director of Resources introduced the report and outlined that Gloucester City Council (GC) had voted to join the Ubico Partnership. A majority decision was now being sought on whether to accept this, through votes with existing shareholders. The Ubico board had defined four tests to decide on acceptance of new members and the report set out how these four tests had been met. Members were being asked to resolve that the Chief Executive, in her role as the Council's Ubico shareholder, can vote for GC to join the Ubico Partnership.

Councillor Pickering proposed the motion, which was seconded by Councillor Whiteside.

Councillor Denney asked whether Officers were satisfied, given the recent known issues with the waste collection and disposal service at GC, that they would be able to be productive members of the partnership. The Strategic Director of Resources informed that the previous issues were due to disputes with the contractor at the time. Ubico had taken a prudent and risk averse approach to the business plan, allowing plenty of capacity, and had worked hard on the operational plans. Throughout the mobilisation process it would be ensured that arrangements were in place to manage the contract effectively. Councillor Hurst enquired, because of aspects such as timescales and vehicle compatibility, whether GC could be adequately integrated into the existing partnership without affecting problems further down the line. Members were informed that vehicle compatibility would not be an issue given GC vehicles would be delivering the GC service and their vehicles were a mix of being owned outright (Ubico would take over these) and by the current contractor. Following the hard work and recent improvements with the waste collection service at Stroud District Council, and the experience of the Council's Officers and Members involved in this process, help and support as part of the mobilisation process had been offered to Ubico and GC and both parties were really happy to work in this way.

Councillor Pickering summed up and expressed support for the motion. He added that he had carried out discussions at a political level with the relevant lead Councillors at GC. Officers in the Council's Finance Team, including the Accountant, were thanked for hard work in analysing and investigating all the financial aspects of the Ubico contract and also the Head of Community Services and Community Services Manager for their technical input. This would be a good step towards a unified collection system which would be of benefit to residents across the whole county.

A number of Councillors had left the meeting and did not vote on this item.

On being put to the vote, the motion was carried unanimously.

**0067 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

Member questions had been submitted and were asked by Councillor Davies and Councillor Lydon. These were answered by the Chair of Housing Committee and the Leader. Supplementary questions were also answered (Refer to the [recording of the meeting](#)).

**0068 NOTICE OF MOTION**

Council  
Thursday, 29 April 2021

Minutes approved: 20 May 2021  
next meeting

### Motion regarding support of the Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) Bill

The motion was presented by Councillor Pickering, who informed Members that this motion encouraged the government to move with the process and join in helping the Council, who were showing leadership as one of the local authorities leading on climate change, in delivering the targets set out in the Carbon Neutral 2030 Strategy. This needed to be done in partnership with citizens and business and the government must also play their part.

The motion was moved by Councillor Pickering and seconded by Councillor Cornell.

Councillor Rathor proposed a friendly amendment that the Council consider invoking a citizens' assembly as part of the action around supporting the CEE bill. This was seconded by Councillor Kay, accepted by Councillors Pickering and Cornell, and confirmed by the Chair as a friendly amendment. Councillor Rathor gave further context about the magnitude of the task, and highlighted the requirement for human brilliance, speed, commitment, vision and togetherness. A citizens' assembly would help facilitate this togetherness. So much more was needed than that which the Council could do alone.

Councillor Davies expressed opposition to the motion, despite the Conservative Members' absolute commitment to the cause of climate change, because this was not considered part of the District Council' business. The bill also mandated natural climate solutions at the exclusion of technological solutions such as direct air capture and carbon capture.

Councillor Whiteside spoke in favour of the motion, offering that it was necessary to work together to get this done, and quickly, and to do everything within the Council's power to move this forward. The Council were already doing this within the 2030 Strategy and the Green group hoped that the government would support the Council all the way.

Councillor Cornell added that the CEE was quite a specific and extremely rigorous bill and councils across the country were being asked to support it. If the motion was agreed tonight, it would next be discussed with the local MP to ask for support. The bill had been written and informed by the top scientific and academic leaders in the UK. Our entire carbon footprint must now be considered and support for this bill would set a standard, as well being ambitious. The Labour group held to the importance that this would become law. It was good that the issues of climate and ecological emergency were being brought together in one place.

Councillor Pickering summed up and noted that motions like this are valuable. The example of the Climate Change Act 2008 was given, which started life as a private Members' bill. If carried, this motion would provide an opportunity for the government to build upon it and a basis to develop legislation. It was important to act now and work together.

A further number of Councillors had left the meeting and did not vote on this item.

Upon the vote the motion, including the friendly amendment that the Council consider invoking a citizens' assembly as part of the action around supporting the CEE bill, was carried with 25 votes for, 9 votes against and no abstentions.

### **RESOLVED**

#### **To note that:**

- i. This Council has declared a climate and ecological emergency;**
- ii. There is a Bill before Parliament - the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill (published as the "Climate and Ecology Bill") - according to which the Government must develop an emergency strategy that:**
  - 1. requires that the UK plays its fair and proper role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions consistent with limiting global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees C above pre-industrial temperatures;**
  - 2. ensures that all the UK's consumption emissions are accounted for;**
  - 3. includes emissions from aviation and shipping;**
  - 4. protects and restores biodiverse habitats along overseas supply chains;**
  - 5. restores and regenerates the UK's depleted soils, wildlife habitats and species populations to healthy and robust states, maximising their capacity to absorb CO2 and their resistance to climate heating;**
  - 6. sets up an independent Citizens' Assembly, representative of the UK's population, to engage with Parliament and Government and help develop the emergency strategy.**

#### **And therefore to:**

- 1. Support the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill;**
- 2. Consider invoking a citizens' assembly;**
- 3. Inform the local media of this decision;**
- 4. Write to local MPs, asking them to support or thanking them for supporting the Bill; and Write to the CEE Bill Alliance, the organisers of the campaign for the Bill, expressing its support ([campaign@ceebill.uk](mailto:campaign@ceebill.uk))**

The meeting closed at 11.15 pm

Chair

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## STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

AGENDA  
ITEM NO

## COUNCIL AGM

## 7

20 MAY 2021

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES</b>
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To update the allocation of seats in accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and appoint Councillors to committees with effect from 20 May 2021 in response to a change in membership of a political group.
<b>Decision(s)</b>	The Council <b>RESOLVES</b> to appoint Councillors to the committees and positions set out in the report and agree an additional seat on Environment Committee.
<b>Consultation and Feedback</b>	The proposed appointments have been subject to consultation with Group Leaders.
<b>Legal Implications</b>	The Council is required to appoint Councillors to committees in accordance with the proportionality rules.
<b>Report Author</b>	Jenna Day, Senior Democratic Services & Elections Officer  Email: <a href="mailto:jenna.day@stroud.gov.uk">jenna.day@stroud.gov.uk</a>
<b>Options</b>	Members may make alternative nominations to the places available on committees subject to compliance with the allocation rules.
<b>Appendices</b>	Appendix 1 – tables of nominations received

1. **Political Composition:** The Council consists of a number of political groupings. The various groups comprise the following Members.

<b>Conservative Group Councillors (19)</b>		
Jason Bullingham	Nick Housden	Lorraine Patrick
Gordan Craig	Nick Hurst	Keith Pearson
Stephen Davies	Julie Job	Mark Ryder
Trina Davis	Haydn Jones	Haydn Sutton
Chris Evans	John Jones	Brian Tipper
Victoria Gray	David Mossman	
Lindsey Green	Gill Oxley	
<b>Labour &amp; Cooperative Group Councillors (15)</b>		
Paula Baker	Helen Fenton	Jenny Miles
Natalie Bennett	Colin Fryer	Nigel Prenter
Chris Brine	Jessie Hoskin	Steve Robinson
Doina Cornell	Trevor Hall	Mattie Ross
Laurie Davies	Robin Layfield	Ashley Smith

## Agenda Item 7

<b>SDC Liberal Democrat Group Councillors (3)</b>		
George James	Ken Tucker	Rich Wilsher
<b>Green Group Councillors (13)</b>		
Beki Aldam	Jonathan Edmunds	Lucas Schoemaker
Martin Baxendale	Steve Hynd	Chloe Turner
Catherine Braun	Chris Jockel	Tricia Watson
Martin Brown	Norman Kay	
Kate Crews	Martin Pearcy	

**Note:** In addition to the above, there is one Independent Member, namely, Councillor Nigel Studdert-Kennedy (known as 'Conservative - No Group').

**2. Committees:** The committees which are subject to political balance requirements currently comprise the following.

<b>Committee</b>	<b>No. of Members on the committee</b>
Community Services & Licensing	12
Environment	13
Housing	12
Strategy and Resources	13
Audit & Standards	9
Development Control	12

**3. Allocations to committees subject to political balance requirements:** The seats on each committee must be allocated to each political group as required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. On the basis of the existing committee structure, the allocations are as set out below.

<b>Total no. of councillors 51</b>	<b>Conservative (19 Cllrs)</b>	<b>Labour (15 Cllrs)</b>	<b>Liberal Democrats (3 Cllrs)</b>	<b>Green (13 Cllrs)</b>	<b>Total seats available</b>
<b>Community Services &amp; Licensing</b>	4	3	1	4	<b>12</b>
<b>Environment</b>	5	3	1	4	<b>13</b>
<b>Development Control</b>	5	4	0	3	<b>12</b>
<b>Strategy &amp; Resources</b>	5	4	1	3	<b>13</b>
<b>Housing</b>	4	5	0	3	<b>12</b>
<b>Audit &amp; Standards</b>	4	2	1	2	<b>9</b>
<b>Seats to be allocated per Group</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>71</b>

3.2 Each political group was asked to provide its allocations for the committees. The nominations are shown in the tables in Appendix 1 to this report.



The following nominations have been received from the Group Leaders.

### **Nominations for committee membership**

<b>(a) Audit and Standards Committee (9 seats)</b>				
Conservative (3 seats)	Labour (2 seats)	Lib Dem (1 seat)	Green (2 seats)	No Group (1 seat)
Keith Pearson	Chris Brine	Rich Wilsher	Martin Pearcy	Nigel Studdert-Kennedy
Stephen Davies	Doina Cornell		Norman Kay	
Nick Hurst				
<b>(b) Community Services &amp; Licensing Committee (12 seats)</b>				
Conservative (4 seats)	Labour (4 seats)	Lib Dem (1 seat)	Green (3 seats)	No Group (0 seats)
John Jones	Chris Brine	Ken Tucker	Jonathan Edmunds	
Gordon Craig	Nigel Prenter		Beki Aldam	
Julie Job	Jessie Hoskin		Kate Crews	
Gill Oxley	Steve Robinson			
<b>(c) Development Control Committee (12 seats)</b>				
<b>NB. members must have attended the compulsory annual training before they may sit on the committee</b>				
Conservative (5 seats)	Labour (4 seats)	Lib Dem (0 seats)	Green (3 seats)	No Group (0 seats)
Haydn Jones	Trevor Hall		Martin Baxendale	
Jason Bullingham	Ashley Smith		Lucas Schoemaker	
Victoria Gray	Chris Brine		Martin Brown	
Mark Ryder	Helen Fenton			
Lorraine Patrick				

**(d) Environment Committee – To agree an increase to (13 seats)**

Conservative (5 seats)	Labour (3 seats)	Lib Dem (1 seat)	Green (4 seats)	No Group (0 seats)
Haydn Jones	Robin Layfield	George James	Chloe Turner	
David Mossman	Natalie Bennett		Norman Kay	
Brian Tipper	Ashley Smith		Martin Brown	
Trina Davis			Tricia Watson	
Chris Evans				

**(e) Housing Committee (12 seats)**

Conservative (4 seats)	Labour (5 seats)	Lib Dem (0 seats)	Green (3 seats)	No Group (0 seats)
Lindsey Green	Mattie Ross		Chris Jockel	
Trina Davis	Colin Fryer		Steve Hynd	
Nick Housden	Jenny Miles		Lucas Schoemaker	
Lorraine Patrick	Paula Baker			
	Laurie Davies			

**(f) Strategy and Resources Committee (13 seats)**

\* Automatic appointment on basis of such councillors also being a Group Leader

\*\* These appointments are conditional on such councillors being appointed as the Chair of the Community Services & Licensing, Environment or Housing Committees.

Conservative (5 seats)	Labour (4 seats)	Lib Dem (1 seat)	Green (3 seats)	No Group (0 seats)
Stephen Davies*	Doina Cornell*	Ken Tucker*	Catherine Braun*	
Nick Hurst	Mattie Ross**		Chloe Turner**	
Gordon Craig	Chris Brine**		Martin Percy	
Keith Pearson	Steve Robinson			
Nick Housden				

## Nominations for Chair and Vice Chairs of Committees

<b>(g) Audit and Standards Committee</b>				
Conservative	Labour	Lib Dem	Green	No Group
<b>CHAIR</b>				
				Nigel Studdert-Kennedy
<b>VICE-CHAIR</b>				
			Martin Pearcy	

<b>(h) Community Services &amp; Licensing Committee</b>				
Conservative	Labour	Lib Dem	Green	No Group
<b>CHAIR</b>				
	Chris Brine			
<b>VICE-CHAIR</b>				
			Jonathan Edmunds	

<b>(i) Development Control Committee</b>				
Conservative	Labour	Lib Dem	Green	No Group
<b>CHAIR</b>				
			Martin Baxendale	
<b>VICE CHAIR</b>				
	Trevor Hall			

<b>(j) Environment Committee</b>				
Conservative	Labour	Lib Dem	Green	No Group
<b>CHAIR</b>				
			Chloe Turner	
<b>VICE-CHAIR</b>				
		Robin Layfield		
<b>(k) Housing Committee</b>				
Conservative	Labour	Lib Dem	Green	No Group
<b>CHAIR</b>				
	Mattie Ross			
<b>VICE-CHAIR</b>				
			Chris Jockel	
<b>(l) Strategy and Resources Committee</b>				
Conservative	Labour	Lib Dem	Green	No Group
<b>CHAIR</b>				
	Doina Cornell			
<b>VICE CHAIR</b>				
			Catherine Braun	

## Appointments to other bodies

<b>(i) Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>				
Conservative	Labour	Lib Dem	Green	No Group
<b>LEAD</b>				
	Helen Fenton			
<b>SUBSTITUTE</b>				
	Natalie Bennett			

<b>(ii) Gloucestershire Police and Crime Panel</b>				
Conservative	Labour	Lib Dem	Green	No Group
<b>LEAD</b>				
Keith Pearson	Chris Brine			
<b>SUBSTITUTE</b>				
Lindsey Green			Martin Pearcy	
<b>(iii) Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee</b>				
Conservative	Labour	Lib Dem	Green	No Group
<b>LEAD</b>				
			Chloe Turner	
<b>SUBSTITUTE</b>				
	Ashley Smith			

<b>(iv) Gloucestershire Covid-19 Outbreak Engagement Board</b>				
Conservative	Labour	Lib Dem	Green	No Group
<b>LEAD</b>				
	Doina Cornell			
<b>SUBSTITUTE</b>				
			Catherine Braun	

**Appoint three Mental Health Champions**

<b>Mental Health Champions</b>				
Conservative	Labour	Lib Dem	Green	No Group
Victoria Gray	Jenny Miles		Tricia Watson	

**Appoint five Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Working Group**

<b>Equality, Diversity &amp; Inclusion Working Group</b>				
Conservative	Labour	Lib Dem	Green	No Group
Gill Oxley	Robin Layfield		Norman Kay	
	Natalie Bennett		Beki Aldam	

## STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

AGENDA  
ITEM NO

## COUNCIL

20 MAY 2021

**10a**

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21</b>
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	<p>The Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants (CIPFA) 'Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police – 2018 Edition' includes a position statement which states that audit committees should:</p> <p>'report regularly on its work to those charged with governance [Full Council], and at least annually report an assessment of their performance. An annual public report should demonstrate how the committee has discharged its responsibilities'.</p> <p>This Annual Report fulfils the above requirement.</p> <p>The Annual Report summarises the activities of the Audit and Standards Committee during 2020/21 and sets out its plans for the next twelve months.</p> <p>This report provides Council with an independent assurance that the Council has in place adequate and effective governance, risk management and internal control frameworks; Internal and External Audit functions; and financial reporting arrangements that can be relied upon and which contribute to the high corporate governance standards that this Council expects and maintains.</p>
<b>Decision(s)</b>	<b>The Council RESOLVES that the Audit and Standards Committee Annual Report 2020/21 be approved as recommended by the Audit and Standards Committee at their meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2021.</b>
<b>Consultation and Feedback</b>	All Members of the Audit and Standards Committee have been consulted on the report content.
<b>Report Author</b>	<p>Piyush Fatania, Head of Audit Risk Assurance Tel: 01452 328883 Email: <a href="mailto:piyush.fatania@gloucestershire.gov.uk">piyush.fatania@gloucestershire.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Councillor Nigel Studdert-Kennedy, Chair of Audit and Standards Committee Email: <a href="mailto:cllr.nigel.studdert-kennedy@stroud.gov.uk">cllr.nigel.studdert-kennedy@stroud.gov.uk</a></p>
<b>Options</b>	Consideration has been given to not producing an Annual Report however this has been discounted due to the requirement stated above.

## Agenda Item 10b

<b>Background Papers</b>	Relevant public reports presented to the Audit and Standards Committee during 2020/21 and minutes of those meetings can be found via the following link: <a href="https://www.stroud.gov.uk/council/meetings/audit-standards-committee">https://www.stroud.gov.uk/council/meetings/audit-standards-committee</a>			
<b>Appendices</b>	Appendix A – Audit and Standards Committee Annual Report 2020/21			
<b>Implications (details at the end of the report)</b>	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	No	No	No	No

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Stroud District Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is responsible for putting in place the proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs.
- 1.2 A sound corporate governance framework involves accountability to service users, stakeholders and the wider community, within which the Council takes decisions and leads and controls its functions to achieve stated objectives and priorities. It thereby provides an opportunity to demonstrate the positive elements of the Council's business and to promote public confidence.
- 1.3 Audit Committees are widely recognised as a core component of effective governance. Their key role is independently overseeing and assessing the internal control environment, comprising governance, risk management and control and advising the Council on the adequacy and effectiveness of these arrangements.
- 1.4 In response to the above, the Audit and Standards Committee was established in September 2009 in line with guidance issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). This guidance recommends that audit committees should prepare an annual report to the full Council, which sets out the Committee's work on how they have discharged their responsibilities.

### 2.0 MAIN POINTS

- 2.1 The Committee undertakes a substantial range of activities and works closely with the Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer) and both Internal and External Auditors, in achieving the Council's aims and objectives. The Committee has developed and implemented a work plan for the year to enable key tasks to be considered, undertaken and delivered. To summarise, through the work plan the Committee has:
- Provided independent assurance on the adequacy of the governance, risk management framework and associated control environment;



- Provided independent scrutiny of the Council's financial and non financial performance to the extent that it affects the Council's exposure to risk and weakens the control environment; and
- Overseen the statutory financial reporting process.

### **3.0 CONCLUSION**

- 3.1 The Audit and Standards Committee has had a successful year in providing the Council with assurances on the strength of its governance and stewardship arrangements and in challenging those arrangements.
- 3.2 The Committee's work programme is a dynamic programme and will continue to be reviewed to ensure the Committee maximises its contribution to the governance and control framework at the same time managing agendas to ensure that all meetings are focused on the key issues.

### **4.0 IMPLICATIONS**

#### **4.1 Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Andrew Cummings, Strategic Director of Resources  
Email: [Andrew.cummings@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:Andrew.cummings@stroud.gov.uk)

Risk Assessment:

Failure to deliver effective governance will negatively impact on the achievement of the Council's objectives and priorities.

#### **4.2 Legal Implications**

There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

Patrick Arran, Monitoring Officer  
Email: [patrick.arran@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:patrick.arran@stroud.gov.uk)

#### **4.3 Equality Implications**

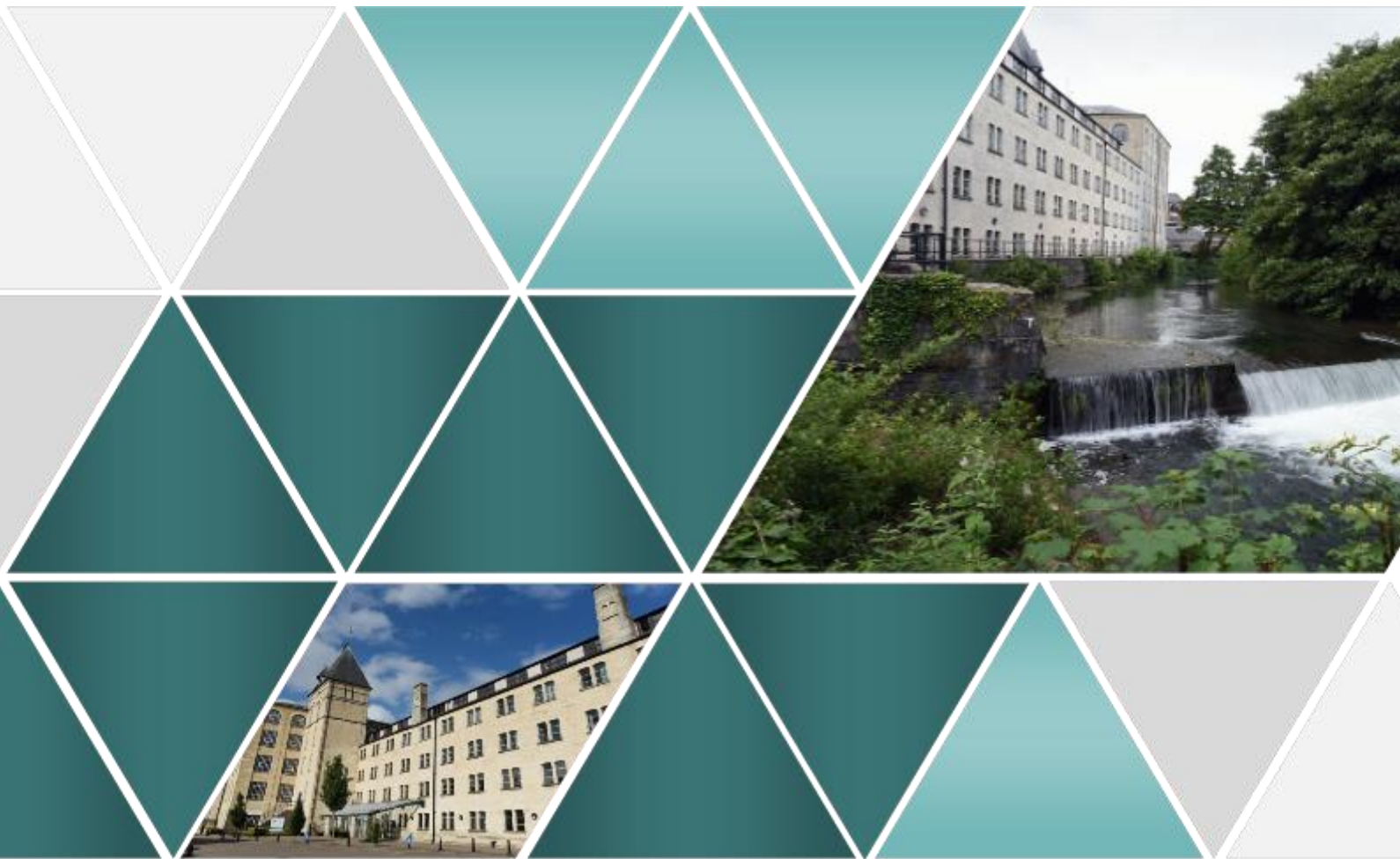
There are no equality implications as a result of the recommendations made within this report.

#### **4.4 Environmental Implications**

There are no environmental implications as a result of the recommendations made within this report.

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# Audit and Standards Committee Annual Report 2020/21



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## Statement from the Chairman of the Audit and Standards Committee

The committee has met formally six times via the Zoom link. Despite the restrictions placed on it by the pandemic considerable progress was made. Meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2020 approved the Internal Audit Plan subject to caveats regarding redeployment of officers to Pandemic duties and changing requirements. At the meeting in July 2020 it was confirmed by the Monitoring Officer that the Code of Conduct was in the remit of the Audit and Standards Committee. It was also confirmed that it had been agreed at Council that the draft Code of Conduct and the arrangements under which allegations under the Code of Conduct were investigated was to be reviewed by the Audit and Standards Committee. An extraordinary meeting took place on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> August 2020 to review and make recommendations in this regard. The Interim Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer confirmed that the Committee were being asked to consider the draft amended Code of Conduct and Arrangements for Investigating Complaints appended to the report and, subject to any changes it wished to make:

- a) Recommend them to the next meeting of Council for adoption; and
- b) Authorise the Monitoring Officer to provide town and parish councils with the proposed process for investigating complaints for information and comment prior to consideration by Council at its next meeting.

At the next meeting of Council, held on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020, the Proposed Amendments to the Code of Conduct for Members and the Arrangements under which Allegations Can Be Investigated were proposed. Upon being put to the vote the Motion was unanimously carried: *'RESOLVED To adopt the amended Code of Conduct and Arrangement for investigation alleged breaches of the Code with immediate effect.'*

The Committee has also considered regular reports on Treasury Management and Risk Management, Procurement, Fraud and Internal Audit Progress Reports and the Annual Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Report.

During the year we said goodbye to Cllrs Rachel Curley and Trevor Hall who moved to different duties and welcomed Cllr. Miranda Clifton and the return of Cllr. Colin Fryer. We thank all of them and wish them well.

We also said goodbye to Theresa Mortimer, Head of A.R.A., the author of many Internal Audit Reports and procedures, who retired in December 2020.

We also welcomed Theresa Mortimer's successor in post, Piyush Fatania who joined us in January 2021.

Finally, I would like to convey my thanks to all the members of the Committee, both current and recent, and to the officers for all the work done during the past year. While the work was performed under somewhat challenging circumstances the results have justified the effort.

I would also like to thank Democratic Services without whom neither visual nor written communication would have been so smooth, if possible at all.

Cllr. Nigel Studdert-Kennedy,

Audit and Standards Committee

09/03/2021

### Background

The Council entered the 2020/21 financial year in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. In its response to this, the Council has followed guidance from the government. This has included:

- (i) Asking the majority of staff to work from home;
- (ii) Redeploying a number of staff from their normal roles to assist in the Council's response; and
- (iii) Paying emergency and discretionary grants to local businesses on behalf of the government.

Internal Audit provided assistance in the work for (iii) above with pre and post payment checks.

The Committee has continued throughout the pandemic to oversee the Council's work on risk management, capital projects, treasury management and anti-fraud. The Committee delivered this through holding virtual meetings within the year, in line with the dates confirmed in the 'Membership and Meetings' report section.

The pandemic has necessitated the amendment of the Annual Internal Audit Plan and this has been overseen and agreed by the Committee.

Stroud District Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is responsible for putting in place the proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs.

A sound corporate governance framework involves accountability to service users, stakeholders and the wider community, within which the Council takes decisions and leads and controls its functions to achieve stated objectives and priorities. It thereby provides an opportunity to demonstrate the positive elements of the Council's business and to promote public confidence. Audit Committees are widely recognised as a core component of effective governance.

The Audit and Standards Committee is responsible for overseeing the Council's corporate governance, audit and risk management arrangements. The Committee is also responsible for approving the Statement of Accounts and the Annual Governance Statement. The Committee's specific powers and duties are set out in Council's Constitution.

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) issued guidance to local authorities to help ensure that Audit Committees are operating effectively<sup>1</sup>. The guidance recommends that audit committees should report annually on how they have discharged their responsibilities. The key benefits to the Council of operating an effective Audit and Standards Committee are:

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<sup>1</sup> CIPFA – Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police, 2018

- Maintaining public confidence in the objectivity and fairness of financial and other reporting;
- Reinforcing the importance and independence of Internal and External Audit and any other similar review process;
- Providing a focus on financial reporting both during the year and at year end, leading to increased confidence in the objectivity and fairness of the financial governance arrangements operating within the Council;
- Assisting the co-ordination of sources of assurance and, in so doing, making management more accountable;
- Providing additional assurance through a process of independent and objective review, via the Internal Audit function;
- Raising awareness within the Council of the need for governance, including ethical governance, internal control and the implementation of audit recommendations; and
- Providing assurance on the adequacy of the Council's risk management arrangements, including the risk of fraud and irregularity.

## Membership and Meetings

The Committee has enjoyed the benefit of a relatively settled membership over the last three years. This has helped to build and retain the expertise within the Committee, which has led to the Committee being able to demonstrate that they are operating within a best practice framework.

There are nine Members of the Audit and Standards Committee namely:

- Councillor Nigel Studdert-Kennedy (Chair)
- Councillor Tom Williams (Vice Chair)
- Councillor Dorcas Binns
- Councillor Colin Fryer
- Councillor Stephen Davies
- Councillor Keith Pearson
- Councillor Miranda Clifton
- Councillor Mark Reeves
- Councillor Karen McKeown

During the 2020/21 financial year, the Audit and Standards Committee has met on six occasions, in accordance with its Programme of Work:

- 26<sup>th</sup> May 2020
- 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020
- 25<sup>th</sup> August 2020
- 6<sup>th</sup> October 2020
- 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020
- 26<sup>th</sup> January 2021

# Agenda Item 10b

## Appendix

In addition, the Annual Report is being presented to the 27<sup>th</sup> April 2021 Audit and Standards Committee meeting.

The Committee is also supported by Council officers, principally the Chief Financial Officer (S151 Officer), Monitoring Officer, Head of Audit Risk Assurance (Chief Internal Auditor) and the Council's External Auditors (Deloitte).

## Work Programme

During this period, the Committee has assessed the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's risk management arrangements, control environment and associated counter fraud arrangements through regular reports from officers, the Internal Auditors (Audit Risk Assurance) and the External Auditors (Deloitte).

The Committee has sought assurance that action has been taken, or is otherwise planned by management to address any risk related issues that have been identified by the auditors during this period.

The Committee has also sought to ensure that effective relationships continue to be maintained between the Internal and External Auditors and between the auditors and management. The specific work undertaken by the Committee during 2020/21 is set out below.

### Internal Audit Activity

With effect from May 2016, the Internal Audit service is provided by Audit Risk Assurance under a shared service agreement. The Committee has continued to monitor the work of Internal Audit and has:

- Considered the effectiveness of the Audit Risk Assurance Shared Service;
- Contributed towards, received and approved the Internal Audit Plan for 2020/21. The same actions have been completed by Committee for the Revised Internal Audit Plan 2020/21. Covid-19 has placed significant pressures on Council services and has impacted (and continues to impact) the Council's priorities, objectives and risk environment. Due to the changing position and to ensure that the Risk Based Internal Audit Plan met the assurance needs of the Council, the Revised Risk Based Internal Audit Plan 2020/21 was approved by Audit and Standards Committee on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2020. The plan ensures that Internal Audit resources are prioritised towards those systems, processes and areas which are considered to be deemed high risk, or which contribute most to the achievement of the Council's corporate objectives;
- Participated in the 2021/22 Internal Audit Risk Based Planning workshop to contribute towards the Internal Audit plan and audit resource allocation to support assurance needs;
- Monitored the delivery of the annual Internal Audit Plan through regular update reports presented by the Head of Audit Risk Assurance;



- Received, considered and monitored the results of internal audits performed and high risk activity identified, in respect of specific areas where a limited opinion on the control environment has been provided, e.g. the Electrical Works Contract activity and monitored the progress made by management, during the period, to address identified control weaknesses;
- Approved the Council's overall counter fraud arrangements and response in the light of national guidance Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally – The Local Government Counter Fraud and Corruption Strategy which is supported by CIPFA Counter Fraud Centre, with the principles reflected in the Council's updated Anti Fraud and Corruption Strategy 2020 - 2023;
- Received updates on the outcomes of special investigations undertaken by Internal Audit, along with progress made in the investigation of queries arising as a result of the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) data matching exercise;
- Furthered discussion on relevant key themes, following consideration and approval of the report of the Head of ARA on the service's purpose, authority, role and function in January 2020.; and
- Considered the Internal Audit Annual Report 2019/20 of the Head of Audit Risk Assurance, which provided a satisfactory opinion on the effectiveness of the Council's internal control environment and summarised the Internal Audit activity upon which that opinion was based. The Committee can therefore take reasonable assurance that there is a generally sound system of internal control in place at the Council.

In addition, the Committee received the outcomes from the External Quality Assessment of the Effectiveness of Internal Audit within year.

There is a requirement under the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) i.e. Standard Ref '1312 External Assessments' for Internal Audit to have an external quality assessment which must be conducted at least once every five years by a qualified, independent assessor or assessment team from outside the organisation. The Standards require the Head of Audit Risk Assurance (the Chief Internal Auditor) to discuss the following with the relevant Audit Committee:

- The form of external assessment; and
- The qualifications and independence of the external assessor or assessment team, including any potential conflict of interest.

The latest review was undertaken during May 2020 by the Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors (CIIA) and reported to Audit and Standards Committee within 2020/21. The relevant 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020 Audit and Standards Committee minutes document the following:

**'AC.013: INTERNAL AUDIT EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSESSMENT (EQA) - OUTCOME**

*The Approved Reviewer for the Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors (CIIA) informed Members of the outcome of the independent assessment of the Internal Audit function. The output report provided an opinion on how well the audit service worked in line with these standards. The review was undertaken in May by a survey of and interviews with key stakeholders that was a very detailed and diligent exercise.*

# Agenda Item 10b

## Appendix

*The end result was that the Council have an excellent Internal Audit service providing them with a good range of consultation as the team undertake their work. The results of the quality assessment showed that this was one of the best Internal Audit services he had had the privilege of reviewing. This was a good news story that the service were operating fully within the international standards. Congratulations were conveyed by the Approved Reviewer, the Chair and Committee to the Head of Audit Risk Assurance (ARA) and her team.'*

### Activity relating to Treasury Management

During the year, the Audit and Standards Committee have:

- Received and approved the quarterly and half yearly Treasury Management activity reports which monitor treasury activity against the 2020/21 strategy.
- Also considered and recommended to full council the annual report setting out the Treasury Management Strategy, the Annual Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement 2021/22. This report also set the Council's prudential indicators for 2021/22.
- Treasury Management is a key area for the Committee to monitor and they continue to consider and recommend to full Council for approval amendments to the investment strategy in response to constantly changing market conditions. The 2019/20 Investment Strategy recommended by Committee included a number of new investment options as the Council increased its risk appetite, and the Committee is monitoring the £10m of longer term investments in property funds and multi-asset funds arising from that change.

### External Audit Activity

Deloitte was appointed as the Council's External Auditors for the financial years 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21. The Committee (either via full Committee and/or delegated responsibility of the Chair) has monitored the work of the Council's External Auditors and has:

- Considered and accepted the Annual Audit Letter 2019/20 (through the November 2020 Committee meeting). This letter summarises the outcome from audit work at the Council during this period;
- Considered the Internal Audit / External Audit joint working arrangements;
- Received and considered regular External Audit progress reports; and
- Considered the draft Statement of Accounts for 2019/20 of the Council (through the November 2020 Committee meeting) and have received verbal updates on the position of External Audit.

It is noted that at the point of drafting the Audit and Standard Committee Annual Report 2020/21, the 2019/20 Statement of Accounts and relevant External Audit opinions and External Audit Report 2019/20 (the 'Report to those charged with Governance' in accordance with the requirements of International Standard on Auditing 260) are due to be concluded.

## Risk Management Activity

During the year the Committee has:

- Received regular risk management relevant update reports; and
- Included risk management as a standing agenda item for all Audit and Standards Committee meetings.

## Corporate Governance

In relation to corporate governance the Committee:

- Has continued to lead the review of the effectiveness of the Audit and Standards Committee and progression of the identified improvement actions i.e. the key proposed actions relating to the appointment of an independent member to the Committee and refresh of the Committee's terms of reference to reflect the revised CIPFA guidance (with further update to Committee expected in July 2021); and
- Considered and approved the Council's 2019/20 Annual Governance Statement and Local Code of Corporate Governance. The Committee also reviewed the progress made by management to address the required actions identified in the 2019/20 Annual Governance Statement Improvement Plan.

## Training

The following training was made available to Members of the Audit and Standards Committee in 2020/21 to support the Committee in discharging its responsibilities:

- Equality and Diversity Training - Online training provided by LGA  
Mandatory for all Members  
17th June 2020
- GDPR - Online GDPR course provided by MY Learning via SDC  
Mandatory for all Members who hadn't completed it in the last 12 months  
30th June 2020
- Race Relations and Inclusive Leadership – Zoom training session delivered by ENEI (Employer)  
Mandatory for all Members  
21st, 27th and 28th July 2020
- Lothbury Property Trust Fund Briefing  
Open to all Members  
6th October 2020
- Planning White Paper and Local Plan Briefing  
Open to all Members  
7th October 2020

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## Appendix

- CIL Strategic Infrastructure Funding – Members Information Session  
Open to all Members  
25th November 2020
- Fusion Briefing  
Open to all Members  
15th December 2020
- Risk Based Internal Audit Planning Workshop  
Open to Audit and Standards Committee  
26th January 2021
- Strategy for Leisure, Health and Wellbeing Consultation Briefing  
Open to all Members  
28th January 2021
- Ascend Organisational Development Programme – Fit for the Future  
Open to all Members  
February-March 2021
- Census 2021: All-Member Briefing  
Open to all Members  
2nd March 2021
- UBICO Seminar  
Open to all Members  
4th February 2021
- Brimscombe Port Redevelopment Update  
Open to all Members  
17th February 2021
- Beyond Covid: Race, Health and Inequality in Gloucestershire - All-Member Briefing with Director of Public Health, Gloucestershire  
Open to all Members  
9th March 2021
- Fusion Briefing - Fusion Power Plant and opportunities at Berkeley and Oldbury  
Open to all Members  
16th March 2021
- Informal briefing on the Youth Service being led by Youth Representatives and Youth Officers of Stroud District Council  
Open to all Members  
15th April 2021

## Future Work

During 2021/22, the Audit and Standards Committee will continue with the existing aim of being an important source of assurance about the organisation's arrangements for managing risk, maintaining an effective control environment, and reporting on financial and other performance.

In particular, they will continue to support the work of Internal and External Audit and ensure appropriate responses are given to their recommendations and continue to monitor any actions arising from the Annual Governance Statement action plan 2020/21, to ensure the Council's governance arrangements are effective.

In addition, with risk management being a key contributor to good governance the Committee will be seeking independent assurance from Internal Audit that risk management continues to be embedded within the Council's key business processes.

## Conclusion

The Audit and Standards Committee has had a successful year in providing the Council with assurances on the strength of its governance and stewardship arrangements and in challenging those arrangements.

The Committee's work programme is a dynamic programme and will continue to be reviewed to ensure the Committee maximises its contribution to the governance and control framework, at the same time managing agendas to ensure that all meetings are focused on the key issues.

Details of all reports as noted within the Audit and Standards Committee Annual Report 2020/21 can be found at: <https://www.stroud.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/meetings/audit-standards-committee>

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**STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**COUNCIL**

**AGENDA  
ITEM NO**

**20 MAY 2021**

**11**

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>UBICO FIVE YEAR VISION AND BUSINESS PLAN 2021/2022</b>			
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To provide an update on the Ubico Five Year Vision and Business Plan 2021/2022.			
<b>Decision(s)</b>	<p><b>The Council RESOLVES to:</b></p> <p><b>a. Note the Five Year Vision and Business Plan for 2021/22</b></p> <p><b>b. Note that the Chief Executive, as Ubico shareholder representative, proposes to sign the written resolution to approve the Ubico Five Year Vision and Business Plan in due course.</b></p>			
<b>Consultation and Feedback</b>	Officers and shareholders; Environment Committee in December 2020, Alliance Group Leaders and Chair of Environment Committee.			
<b>Report Author</b>	Kathy O’Leary, Chief Executive Email: <a href="mailto:kathy.oleary@stroud.gov.uk">kathy.oleary@stroud.gov.uk</a>			
<b>Options</b>	The report is for information only.			
<b>Background Papers</b>	None			
<b>Appendices</b>	Appendix A - Ubico Five Year Vision and Business Plan 2021/2022			
<b>Implications (further details at the end of the report)</b>	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	No	No	No	No

## 1. INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Stroud District Council has a multi-service contract with Ubico to provide the collection of waste and recycling, street cleaning, grounds maintenance and building cleaning. Ubico is a teckal company wholly owned by local authorities including Stroud District Council.
- 1.2 The annual business plan is produced by Ubico and taken to the Directors and Shareholders meetings in February / March of each year for agreement for the following financial year. Directors and Shareholders meet quarterly to progress the business plan and monthly meetings are held with officers to discuss operational performance. The Head of Community Services sits as a director on the Ubico Board and the Chief Executive fulfils the shareholder function for the Council.

## Agenda Item 11

- 1.3 Whilst the Chief Executive has authority as the shareholder representative to approve the business plan, it is being brought to Council for Members to note and consider.

### **2. BUSINESS PLAN 2021/2022**

- 2.1 In 2019, it was agreed that the Council's Environment Committee would have early sight of the draft business plan prior to its consideration by director and shareholder sign-off meetings, to allow for Members' comments to be considered prior to the plan being finalised and endorsed by shareholders.
- 2.2 At the Environment Committee on 3 December 2020, Ubico's Managing Director gave a presentation which included outlining the Five Year Vision and the business plan themes for 2021/2022. Similar presentations were made to groups and committees at each Ubico council.
- 2.3 The proposals contained in the business plan are built around the four key pillars of People, Operations, Climate and Business Development and focus on the following themes:
- Leveraging synergies and economies of scale
  - Harnessing opportunities to deliver back to partners
  - Using technology to drive operational efficiency
  - Understanding our communities' needs
  - Inspiring our workforce to be committed to providing value for money and carbon neutral services.
- 2.4 The written version of the Five Year Vision and Business Plan for 2021/2022 was shared with the board of directors and shareholders in February / March and councils were asked for any further feedback. The Chief Executive consulted the Group Leaders and Chair of Environment Committee so that any further comments could be fed back to Ubico by the end of March.
- 2.5 The resulting final version of the business plan is attached here. It is intended to publish the plan in May 2021 once the shareholders have signed off the written resolution to approve it.
- 2.6 Ubico will submit individual business cases for approval as appropriate to support potential investment proposals within the 2021/2022 Business Plan, to develop areas of the business identified as having potential to deliver greater value for shareholders.

### **3. CONCLUSION**

- 3.1 Members are recommended to note the Ubico Five Year Vision and Business Plan for the financial year 2021/2022 appended here.



## **4. IMPLICATIONS**

### **4.1 Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Contract sums are set annually with Ubico through a partnership approach.

Andrew Cummings, Strategic Director of Resources

Email: [andrew.cummings@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.cummings@stroud.gov.uk)

### **4.2 Legal Implications**

There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report

One Legal

Email: [patrick.arran@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:patrick.arran@stroud.gov.uk)

### **4.3 Equality Implications**

Ubico's Business Plan promotes equality of access to essential services.

### **4.4 Environmental Implications**

The Ubico Five Year Vision and Business Plan supports the Council's environmental and climate change priorities.

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# **Company 5 Year Vision and 2021/22 Business Plan**

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# 1 Business Overview

## 1.1 Introduction

Ubico is a successful and well-respected local authority owned company operating across Gloucestershire and West Oxfordshire. Our success is underpinned by a commitment to delivering safe and high quality services that meet the needs of our Local Authority shareholders and the residents they serve.

2020 has brought us a considerably different challenge to anything we have ever faced before; a global pandemic, with us continuing to deliver essential front line services throughout. In 2021/22 we will still be working in the presence of the virus and much ongoing work will still be needed to meet the challenges that that brings.

Against an already challenging backdrop of stretched public finances, the impact of the pandemic has also brought additional financial challenges for our local authority shareholders. In 2021/22 we will continue to support our partners in meeting these challenges by exploring synergies and opportunities for collaboration across our operating area which should deliver efficiencies.

Our contracts with our existing shareholder authorities will be renewed or extended in 2021/22 and, should we be successful in our tender for delivering services for Gloucester City from 2022, a large element of the work that we undertake will be around the integration of our eighth shareholder and preparing for mobilising their services. The addition of Gloucester City will deliver many benefits and opportunities for all of our shareholding authorities.

We will continue to invest in and support our people, who are the key to Ubico's success, and will seek to modernise our working practices and improve our use of technology to support them in delivering efficient, effective services. Health and Safety remains our number one priority, and we will seek to continuously improve our performance, gaining re-accreditation to ISO 45001 for our Health and Safety Management System and increasingly seeking to benchmark our performance against the market. We will continue to drive positive engagement with our staff in the area of health and safety to improve our health and safety culture and will continue our focus on wellbeing and mental health.








## 1.2 Our Shareholders

Ubico is a wholly-owned local authority company with seven shareholders, Cheltenham Borough Council, Cotswold District Council, Forest of Dean District Council, Gloucestershire County Council, Stroud District Council, Tewkesbury Borough Council and West Oxfordshire District Council.



### 1.3 Our services

We deliver front line environmental services including waste and recycling collections, street cleaning and grounds maintenance. The full list of the services we provide on behalf of each of our shareholding local authorities is shown in the table below.

	 CHELTENHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL	 COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL	 Forest of Dean DISTRICT COUNCIL	 Gloucestershire COUNTY COUNCIL	 Tewkesbury Borough Council	 WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	 STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Fleet Management and Maintenance							
MOT and Taxi Testing							
Street Cleaning							
Recycling Centre Management							
Recycling Collections							
Refuse Collections							
Cemetery Maintenance							
Garden Waste Collections							
Public Toilet Cleaning							
Building Cleaning							
Pest Control							
Bring Bank Operations							
Winter Maintenance (gritting)							
Caretaking Services							
Car Park Cleaning							
Trade Waste / Recycling Collections							
Grounds Maintenance							
Bulky Waste Collections							
Clinical Waste Collections							
Land Drainage Ditch maintenance							
Street name plates and road signs							
Recycling Bulking and Transfer							

## 1.4 Looking Back: 20/21 Review

### 2020: Our COVID Response

COVID safety measures were introduced across the business



- Hand sanitisers installed
- Rigorous vehicle cab cleaning regimes followed
- Enhanced PPE provided to all staff
- Perspex screens installed at all our sites
- Offices reorganised to enable social distancing and one way systems introduced
- Staff bubbles created and maintained and staff working from home where possible



Frontline services were largely maintained as usual



We collected up to 35% more recycling and 7% more refuse compared to 2019



Business Continuity Plans regularly reviewed and updated in partnership with commissioners



Dedicated COVID response task forces established for all areas of the business



686 employees and all our union representatives kept informed through regular communications



We maintained our compliance audits virtually and undertook 11 health, safety and environment audits and 22 fleet audits

## 2020: Our Achievements

### Health, Safety, and Environmental Management

We achieved reaccreditation to:

- ISO14001 for our Environmental Management System
- ISO45001 for our Health and Safety Management System
- The Contractors Health and Safety Scheme (CHAS)
- The Alcumus Group Safe Contractor Scheme (formerly EXOR)



### Our Performance

Compared to 2019, in 2020:

Accidents accounting in lost time were reduced by



Property accidents reduced by



Overtime hours worked reduced by



Service complaints reduced by



Non conformities in internal compliance audits reduced by



## Our People

We improved our support for our staff in the area of mental health and wellbeing through:

- Production of our first Wellbeing and Mental Health Policy and key objectives
- Greater promotion and easier access to our Employee Assistance Programme
- Increasing general staff communications and awareness of mental health and wellbeing



In 2020 we set up the Ubico Training Centre



We are exploring expanding our apprenticeship opportunities to reach more individuals and incorporate more roles.



## Operations

In March 2020 we launched a new waste and recycling service in the Cotswolds



## Productivity

We undertook a trial of a shared, cloud-based workspace to incorporate and link online forms and dashboards



An 'In-cab' technology project is underway in the Cotswolds for implementation in Spring 2021, to help connect our workforce



We launched a Fleet Management System in our Cheltenham workshop



We introduced new working patterns in our vehicle workshops, improving resilience and reducing vehicle downtime

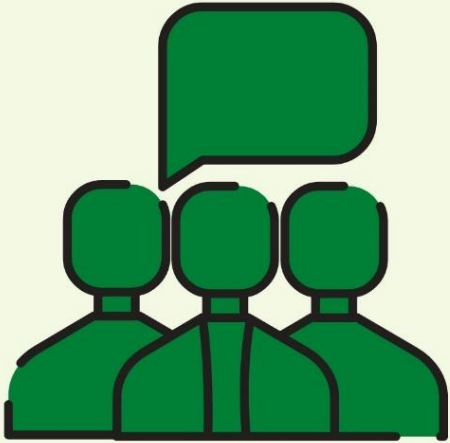
## Carbon Reduction

- We engaged with industry experts to ensure our vehicles are specified to achieve the best possible environmental performance, in line with available budgets.
- We undertook a driver performance pilot with 5 drivers which saw a 10% improvement in MPG in just 8 weeks, saving 0.9t of carbon dioxide and over £300 in fuel costs.
- We purchased a hybrid van in the Cotswolds and an electric car was brought on fleet with an electric sweeper due later in 2021 in West Oxfordshire.
- We undertook demonstrations of electric refuse vehicles and electric sweepers
- We are currently undertaking a joint procurement project with 3 of our partners for 9 electric vans
- Our new tyre policy and supply contract saved the equivalent of over 30 tonnes of CO2 in it's first 8 months



## Company Governance and Shareholder Engagement

- 3 Independent Non Executive Directors joined Ubico's Board in February 2020
- 2 Board sub-committees created in the areas of governance and nominations and risk and audit
- Shareholder engagement policy developed
- Annual appraisals introduced for Board members
- Annual Report produced to support Annual Statement of Accounts
- New Five Year Vision proposed to Shareholders



## 1.5 Looking Forward: Our five-year vision

In 2020, Ubico's Board of Directors developed a Five Year Vision for Ubico:

*Recognised by our customers and employees as a quality provider of sustainable services for our local communities, delivering best value and reliability*

**Through:**

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

2021/22 is year one of this five year vision and this document articulates the year one activities. Ongoing development of the strategy to support years two through five will continue throughout the year, including, where necessary, the presentation to our Shareholder councils of business cases for investment requirements and opportunities.

### 1.5.1 Strategic Pillars of our vision

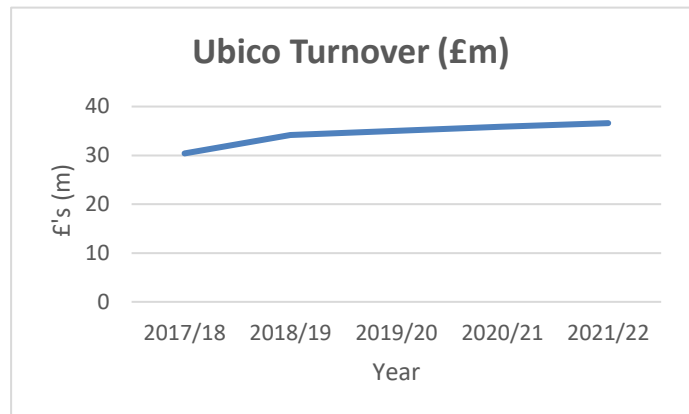
Ubico's 2021/22 business plan and our 5-year vision is built around four key pillars:

People	Operations	Climate	Business Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We will have a well-trained, supported and engaged workforce who live our values and are proud to work for Ubico.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We will deliver high quality services which remain safe and compliant, seeking continuous improvement in productivity, value and service excellence. We will harness innovation where appropriate and will explore synergies and opportunities for partnership and cross boundary working.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We will minimise our environmental impact and support our shareholders to meet their carbon neutral targets, integrating carbon reduction opportunities wherever reasonably possible in both our fleet and non-fleet activities.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We will build business development capability which enhances our partnerships and allows for effective identification, analysis and presentation to shareholders of potential new business opportunities. We will explore opportunities that aren't simply about profit, including those that would deliver greater value, help our communities or improve services.</li></ul>

## 1.5.2 Turnover and Performance 2021-2026

### Historic and Projected Turnover

The increase seen between 2017/18 and 2018/19 is the result of both the full year operation of West Oxfordshire Waste and Recycling (this service had transferred to Ubico from the private sector in Autumn 2017) and normal inflationary factors (for example pay awards, fuel prices).



In March 2020, a redesigned kerbside collection scheme was launched in Cotswolds and the increased partnership sum is reflected in the 2020/21 and 2021/22 figures. For all other contracts, increases are largely inflationary factors including a necessary increase in training budget and more accurate asset recharges.

### Performance Scorecard

Pillar	Measure	2021	2026
People	Vacancy fill rate (advertisement closed to acceptance)	<1 month	<1 month
	Annual training budget utilisation	80% of annual training budget	100% of annual training budget
	Conformance to mandatory training to schedule	>90%	>95%
	Staff turnover	<14% attrition	<12% attrition
Operations	Service KPIs - Missed Bins (per 100,000 collections)	<0.05 %	<0.05 %
	Service complaints & compliments	Maintain & improve	Maintain & improve
	Fleet Compliance	Fleet Audit Scores >90%	Fleet Audit Scores >95%
	RIDDOR Occurrence	<12 per year	<9 per year
	Deliver to set budget	Within 5% set budget	Within 3% set budget
Climate	Reduced carbon emissions	Benchmark in 2021/22	
Business Development	% Service coverage of core services to existing shareholders		For Discussion
	Savings or returns on investment proposals	>5%	>5%

## 2 Business Plan 2021/22

### 2.1 People

#### 2.1.1 Objective

*We will have a well-trained, supported and engaged workforce who live our values and are proud to work for Ubico.*

#### 2.1.2 Key Activities in 2021/22

##### **Agile Leadership Teams**

- Embed a staffing structure that can adapt to growth and has capacity to deliver projects and transformational change
- Ensure that the management team have the skills to drive continuous improvement, safety, innovation and efficiency
- Offer opportunities to support internal staff progression
- Leverage diversity and inclusion which will bring diversity of thought and perspective to improve organisational excellence

##### **Supported, Engaged Staff**

- Continuous improvement in Health and safety culture through ongoing staff engagement and consultation
- Continue to deliver focused staff engagements around wellbeing and mental health, and provide appropriate training for line managers in this area, ensuring support mechanisms continue to be easily accessible for all staff
- Embed performance management process across the company
- Consider long term, post-Covid flexible working options, considering both office-based and front line operational staff
- Build on induction / early engagement program for new staff
- Continue to reduce our reliance on agency staffing where possible
- Enhance staff communication, engagement and commitment

##### **Excellence in Training and Development**

- Embed and develop the Ubico Training Academy to deliver effective and appropriate staff training
- Increase the number and variety of apprenticeships offered
- Continue to explore options for a formal learning management system

#### 2.1.3 Key Risks

Our key 'People' risks are outlined below. These are risks which, if borne out, could impact cost and/or service deliverability.

- Ongoing impact of Covid-19 on our staff; their availability, wellbeing, personal circumstances and morale

- Brexit may bring changes to the employment market, affect legislation and necessitate unforeseen changes to be made
- National driver shortages, ageing driver profile and our reliance on agency staffing
- Succession planning particularly in Grounds Maintenance
- Increases in instances of stress and anxiety (not related to workplace, also general Covid-19 impact on mental health)
- Operations managers and HR services under pressure to operate effectively whilst trying to navigate through staffing issues and handle additional challenges presented by Covid-19.
- Possibility of competitors and market conditions taking key staff either by enhanced pay or employee satisfaction levels

### 2.1.4 Risk Mitigation

These risks will be mitigated through the delivery of our People Strategy, with a focus on ensuring staff wellbeing and satisfaction. We are committed to maintaining strong relationships with our recognised Trade Unions and working in partnership to address any issue which arise.

## 2.2 Operational Excellence

### 2.2.1 Objective

*We will deliver high quality services which remain safe and compliant, seeking continuous improvement in productivity, value and service excellence. We will harness innovation where appropriate and will explore synergies and opportunities for partnership and cross boundary working.*

### 2.2.2 Key Activities in 2021/22

#### **Excellence in service standards**

- Seek continuous improvement and maintain high standards of service delivery, evidenced in our performance indicators
- Communicate and celebrate our successes, both internally and externally and in partnership with our shareholder councils
- Seek to understand customer feedback and identify areas for improvement

#### **Safe and Compliant**

- Maintain high standards of safety and compliance, demonstrated through reduced personal and vehicle accidents, consistent and satisfactory compliance audit scores and outcomes of risk based audits, and satisfactory internal audit outcomes
- Explore opportunities to benchmark our performance in Health and Safety against similar organisations
- Retain our ISO45001 certification to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to continuous improvement in Health and Safety

- Improve our H&S reporting systems and processes in order to maximise efficiency, reduce our reliance on manual data entry and evaluation and automate the production of reports where possible
- Ensure the requirements are met for both our Operator's Licence (for operating our fleet) and our environmental permits (for operating our licensed waste and recycling sites)

### Technology

- Explore options for digitisation and modernisation, to enhance productivity, efficiency and customer service levels
- Embed the Fleet Management System introduced in 2020 to ensure our fleet maintenance provision is efficient, and expand its use across all our workshops

### Embrace Opportunity

- Explore opportunities for cross-boundary working and increased integration and collaboration across our operating area that could deliver efficiencies
- Continue to work in partnership with our Shareholders to develop a strategic approach to depot and facilities provision and management
- Develop proposals for vehicle asset ownership to maximise efficiency

### Digitisation and modernisation

- Develop an IT strategy to inform our technology journey
- Increase our use of technology to support efficient, effective services, adopting digital solutions to streamline processes, enhance collaboration and drive efficiency
- Choose technology that offers best value, is scalable, and straightforward to use whilst delivering performance improvements
- Upskill staff where necessary so that they are able to leverage the benefits of any such new software

### Finance

- Continue to explore options to help partners meet budget pressures
- Maintain clear, timely and appropriate financial reporting for ourselves and our shareholder partners
- To look further ahead in our financial planning for the benefit of both the company and our partners

### Marketing

- Promote our strong reputation, including producing a communications strategy
- Leverage partnerships to support our communications and promotion

### 2.2.3 Key risks

Our key operational risks are outlined below. These are risks which, if borne out, could impact our ability to continue to effectively deliver services and could impact costs

- The health, safety and compliance of our operation
- Covid-19, including

- The risk, despite all mitigating measures in place, of a more infectious strain(s) and its resulting increased transmission rate causing absence rates to increase to such a point that only essential services can be delivered
  - The reputational risk to Ubico and our shareholders when service performance is impacted
  - Cost of provision of mitigating resources such as PPE, cleansing equipment, additional vehicles
  - Increased pressure on resources due to higher arisings of waste and recycling, and exceptionally high use of our parks and open spaces
  - Limited ability to draw on agency staff, or utilise our own staff usually available to flex across working teams, due to the need to maintain the integrity of team 'bubbles'
  - Diversion of resources, across the company, to responding to Covid-related demands and reducing capacity to deliver business plan objectives
- Maintaining our fleet while minimising service disruption
  - Inflationary cost pressures, in particular insurance and uncertainty around diesel prices post-pandemic
  - Property growth out strips resources across the region
  - Poor recycling presentation slowing down operations

### 2.2.4 Risk Mitigation

These risks will be mitigated through our robust management systems, including regular reporting and early engagement around any emerging risks with the relevant Shareholders in order to develop an agreed partnership approach to their mitigation. For Health and Safety risks, these are mitigated through our commitment to the 'Plan, Do, Check, Act' process for managing Health and Safety as outlined in our Corporate Health and Safety Policy. One of our company Values, 'Be Safe' is universally recognised by our staff as being the most important behaviour that we must expect everyone to recognise and adopt. Working in line with this value helps to reinforce a positive organisational culture that places continuous improvement in health and safety at its core.

### 2.2.5 Key procurement activity

- Complete key procurement activity carried forward from 20/21 due to the impact of Covid-19 (extensions formally secured to cover the carry forward where required):
  - Agency Staff Contract
  - Occupational Health and Job Screening
  - PPE Footwear and gloves
  - Vehicle parts
  - Vehicle Procurement Framework / Refuse Vehicles Framework
  - Weed control operations
  - Cleaning products, grounds maintenance and street cleaning chemicals
  - Site Fire and Security Contracts
- Complete key procurement activity due in 2021/22

- In-cab / connected workforce technology system
- Liquid Fuels
- Perm Recruitment Services
- Waste Tipping
- Public toilet locking/unlocking (FoD)
- Hooklift vehicle provision (HRC's) (work to commence 21/22 for contract commencement in July 2022)
- Workshop equipment service and repair
- Interceptor / drainage tank emptying

Our current agreements for support services for HR and payroll, ICT, legal, finance, internal audit and procurement expire at the end of March 2022. Work will be undertaken in 21/22 to assess the available options for future delivery of these services, with a view to ensuring that appropriate agreements are in place from April 2022, and giving particular consideration of how best these are resourced to support delivery of our longer-term strategy for delivering our five year vision.

We will also complete the necessary legal work to confirm the contract extensions/renewals sought by each of our individual shareholders with effect from August 2021 for Gloucestershire County Council, and April 2022 for all other shareholders.

## 2.3 Climate

### 2.3.1 Objective

*We will minimise our environmental impact and support our shareholders to meet their carbon neutral targets, integrating carbon reduction opportunities wherever reasonably possible in both our fleet and non-fleet activities.*

#### **Carbon Reduction Strategy**

- Develop a Carbon Reduction Strategy for Ubico which supports the ambitions of our Shareholder councils and identifies carbon reduction objectives and targets which are practicable and measurable

#### **Compliance and Performance**

- Demonstrate our continued commitment to protecting our environment by retaining our ISO14001 accreditation for our Environmental Management System
- Maintain excellent standards at our permitted sites to both manage and minimise their environmental impact
- Support our professional drivers to deliver excellence in driving standards in order to improve fuel efficiency to both reduce carbon emissions and deliver cost savings for tax payers

#### **Partnership working**

- Work with partners to identify and further explore fleet options which deliver carbon reduction



- Engage with our partner councils to identify opportunities for joint climate/carbon reduction projects (non-fleet)
- Explore opportunities for cross-boundary working and integration which would contribute to a reduction in our carbon emissions

### 2.3.2 Key risks

Our key climate risks are outlined below. These are risks which, if borne out, could impact our ability to deliver carbon reduction goals, or increase costs associated with doing so.

- Geographic challenges of operational area may prevent the early introduction of electric fleet
- Current asset infrastructure cannot support a fully electric fleet
- Kerbside sort services create up to three times more carbon than co-mingled collections
- Older vehicles not specified with technology to deliver on some objectives
- Competing priorities divert resources and attention away from carbon reduction focus

### 2.3.3 Risk Mitigation

These risks will be mitigated through careful consideration of the appropriateness of any alternative fuel vehicle, and the impact on required infrastructure ahead of their purchase. All projects, including those reviewing service design, will include carbon reduction considerations and implications.

## 2.4 Business Development and Financing

### 2.4.1 Objective

*We will build business development capability which enhances our partnerships and allows for effective identification, analysis and presentation to shareholders of potential new business opportunities. We will explore opportunities that aren't simply about profit, including those that would deliver greater value, help our communities or improve services.*

#### **Increased Shareholding**

- If successful in our tender, integrate Gloucester City as our eighth shareholder and prepare for mobilising to delivery their services from April 2022
- Undertake a project to understand and evaluate near-geography opportunities for future expanded shareholding

#### **Increased operational services for Shareholders**

- Embed the delivery of services in Stratford Park, Stroud, which commenced in December 2020
- Explore further opportunities to increase the portfolio of work we deliver to existing partners, both those that we currently deliver and those that may be synergistic

**Commercial**

- Build business case(s) for expanding our vehicle maintenance offering from our fleet workshops to increase income from external sources
- Restart the trade waste pilot delayed by Covid with Cheltenham Borough Council to identify return on investment (ROI) for consideration of future rollout across the wider shareholder base
- Evaluate market opportunities that would sit within our 20% teckal 'headroom' to deliver returns, clearly articulating and assessing risks and benefits
- Continue to develop relationships with our partners through timely and effective communication
- Explore funding mechanisms, asset ownership and investment appetite to support investment in capability or access to funds

**2.4.2 Key risks**

Our key business development risks are outlined below. These are risks which could impact our ability to seek or realise opportunities for development.

- Commercial activity is restricted by available resource and their capacity.
- Greater commercial returns will require shareholder investment
- Commercial activity negatively impacts core service to shareholders
- Risk appetite of shareholders and commissioners

**2.4.3 Risk Mitigation**

These risks will be mitigated through having an agreed resourcing approach to the development of any proposals brought forward, as well as ensuring that capacity and core business considerations are made before any commercial activity is proposed. For any proposal to be taken forward, a detailed business plan will be presented to and approved by Board and Shareholders prior to project commencement.

## 3 CSR and Governance

### 3.1 Corporate and social responsibility

Ubico Ltd is committed to adopting best practice in this area and continues to ensure that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is embedded into our policies, plans and business practices to the benefit of staff, the wider community and the environment. CSR is at the heart of our vision and corporate values.

The Board of Directors, managers and employees at all levels will have regard to the social and environmental impacts of the company's business. In 2021/22, we will:

- continue to use procurement opportunities to gain social, economic and environmental benefits for the communities we serve;
- locally source goods and services wherever economical and practical;
- provide local employment opportunities with good employment standards and practices;
- provide apprenticeship opportunities;
- provide opportunities for learning and development and support disadvantaged groups;
- support community initiatives and events;
- explore the potential to work in partnership with the voluntary and community sector; and
- encourage voluntary participation in national and local initiatives.

We recognise that our business operations have an impact on the environment through emissions to land, air and water, the consumption of resources and the generation of waste. We are committed to minimising any adverse impacts on the environment and preventing pollution associated with our activities through continual improvement to our operational methods and working practices. We will comply with environmental regulations and other external requirements in order to minimise our environmental impact. We hold and seek to retain ISO 14001 certification for our environmental management system.

### 3.2 Governance

Good corporate governance and the continued professional development of the Board of Directors and the Senior Management Team is a key objective. To safeguard the future of the company we must ensure appropriate competency standards and qualifying criteria are applied to all Directors and follow the spirit of the UK Corporate Governance Code. At all times the company will remain open, transparent and accountable. The Board and its members will operate as a cohesive team, with its priority at all times to further the aims, goals and values of the company, whilst always having risk and risk management at the forefront of discussions.

We regularly review our policies, procedures and governance arrangements to ensure they are fit for purpose, represent good practice and meet all relevant legislative and regulatory requirements. The Executive Directors and Legal Advisor will continue to meet regularly to

monitor and review to ensure that our governance arrangements are fit for purpose for a company of Ubico's size.

Further to a Board Effectiveness Review carried out in 2018, Ubico has implemented considerable internal changes since 2018, improving the reporting of risks and audit reports to the Board, increasing the frequency of Board meetings and re-designing management information and financial information to commissioners and shareholders.

Consultation with Shareholders resulted in the design of a new board structure to fill skills gaps identified in the Effectiveness Review, with the redesigned board comprising three Executive Directors, three Non-Executive Directors from local authority shareholders, and three independently appointed Non-Executive Directors including an independent Chair of the board.

The new Board structure came into effect in February 2020, with an immediate focus on delivering further on the improvements suggested in the Board Effectiveness Review. During 2020 the board has formed two new sub-committees; a Risk and Audit Committee and a Governance and Nominations Committee. These committees provide support to the Board in key governance areas, for example, better understanding of business risk, and ensuring the processes to mitigate risk are effective and there is compliance.

The board has also adopted a new process for annual performance reviews for all Non-Executive Directors, and has produced and adopted a Shareholder Engagement Policy in order to help ensure that the correct processes and procedures are in place to reflect robust governance and engagement.

An internal audit plan is completed annually with Audit Risk Assurance (ARA) continuing to deliver Ubico's audit services throughout 2021/22. A full annual audit plan is agreed by the Board and all audit findings are sent to Directors to review and scrutinise.

External audit of the company's accounts is determined by Shareholders at the Annual General Meeting.

## COUNCIL

20 MAY 2021

**12**

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION</b>			
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To make an amendment to the Constitution to formalise the position of Deputy Leader of the Council			
<b>Decision(s)</b>	<b>Council RESOLVES to Amend the Constitution in accordance with the recommendation made in paragraph 3 of the report</b>			
<b>Consultation and Feedback</b>	None			
<b>Report Author</b>	Patrick Arran, Monitoring Officer Email: <a href="mailto:Patrick.arran@stroud.gov.uk">Patrick.arran@stroud.gov.uk</a>			
<b>Options</b>	Council can accept the recommendation, make amendments to the recommendation, or refuse to make the amendment.			
<b>Background Papers</b>	None			
<b>Appendices</b>	None			
<b>Implications (further details at the end of the report)</b>	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	No	No	No	No

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Since reverting to a committee system, Stroud District Council has mandated the Chair of Strategy & Resources Committee to be the Leader of the Council. [See here](#). The role profiles for councillors also set out the responsibilities of the Leader in Section 16 which can be viewed [here](#).

- 1.1 Whilst it has been an accepted convention that the Vice Chair of Strategy & Resources Committee has been considered to be the Deputy Leader, this has not been formalised in the Constitution. The purpose of this report therefore is to regularise the position of the Deputy Leader.

**2. BACKGROUND**

As the Council operates a Committee System, no formal legal powers and duties are vested in a Leader or Deputy Leader under the Local Government Act 1972 or the Local Government Act 2000. In practice, however, all local authorities appoint a councillor to hold the most significant elected member role within the Council, to be seen as the political head of the Council and to provide a focal point for political leadership and strategic direction for the Council, both within the Authority but also to outside organisations, partners, governmental bodies, and the community at large.

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- 2.1 Likewise, there are several other roles that involve political leadership and representation of the Council, beyond civic or formal functions and the role of a councillor as a member of the Authority. The Role Profiles set out the role of the Leader but there is no reference to a Deputy Leader.
- 2.2 The Constitution Working Group has been considering draft Articles for the Constitution which includes provision for the appointment and responsibilities of the Leader and Deputy Leader, but this document is not quite ready and needs further work.
- 2.3 In the meantime, elections have taken place, an Alliance has been formed and there is a need to formalise the position of Deputy Leader who
  - shall be the Vice-Chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee
  - will assist the Leader in representing the Council to its residents, stakeholders, and partners and in providing political leadership for the Council and the District
  - undertake the responsibilities of the Leader in their absence.

### 3. PROPOSED AMENDMENT

It is therefore recommended that the Constitution is amended to formally recognise the vice chair of Strategy & Resources Committee as the Deputy Leader of the Council. This will be achieved by amending Section 2, Meetings of the Council, Summary of Council Bodies, Strategy and Resources by adding the text as follows:

The chair of this committee is the Leader of Council. The Vice Chair of this committee is the Deputy Leader of Council

### 4. IMPLICATIONS

#### 4.1 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations made in this report.

Andrew Cummings, Strategic Director of Resources  
Email: [Andrew.cummings@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:Andrew.cummings@stroud.gov.uk)

#### 4.2 Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report save that any amendments to the Constitution must be agreed by Council.

Patrick Arran, Monitoring Officer  
Email: [patrick.arran@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:patrick.arran@stroud.gov.uk)

#### 4.3 Equality Implications

No equality implications arise from the recommendations in this report.

#### 4.4 Environmental Implications

No environmental implications arise from the recommendations in this report.