



Building a partnership to deliver great services: Our progress in 2021/22

PUBLICA

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Hello and welcome to the Publica Annual Report for 2021/22. This past year has seen some real development for Publica both as an organisation and partnership. We have emerged positively from the Coronavirus pandemic but still continue to operate in what is a turbulent and challenging time for local government.



Sally Walker
Chair of the Board



Jan Britton
Managing Director

We are proud to present the Publica Annual Report for 2021/22. This past year has seen some real development for Publica both as an organisation and partnership. We have emerged positively from the Coronavirus pandemic but still continue to operate in what is a turbulent and challenging time for local government. We have been able to push forward on becoming a great place to work, tackling the climate emergency, delivering for communities and supporting councils with their financial challenges. This came together in the ambitious business plan for Publica we published earlier this year. However, we still need to recognise that while the pandemic has become less of a focus, Publica and the councils have still had to work hard on Covid recovery and underlying financial challenges, while also responding to external factors such as the Afghan and Ukraine refugee schemes, distributing grants and now supporting residents with the cost of living crisis.

This year has also seen a change in administration at one partner council and updates of priorities at others to which we have had to respond, adapting our delivery in response to the requirements of our partner councils. Through all this real progress has been made both in terms of developing Publica as an employer (including being recognised with an Investors in People accreditation), improving our service delivery and also delivering some brilliant

projects that have been recognised at a national level with awards. There is no doubt we are still on a journey to improve what we do and how we do it, but this year reinforces the potential we have in our partnership. We will continue to build on the solid foundations built over the past couple of years in the work delivered through the previous Business Plan.

Our new Business Plan will guide us as we now push on to achieve greater and more exciting things in the future in partnership with our councils and partners. Our strengths are our shared knowledge, experience, creativity and resources which have served us well this past year, leading to more nationally recognised projects and service delivery. As shown in the finance section of this report, it also puts us in a strong position to manage the budget shortfalls all the councils are facing.

We would like to thank all the councils for their support over the past year through what continues to be a very challenging period and we are very excited about what the future holds for the partnership as we continue to work better together and deliver for the residents we serve. This report really highlights and celebrates what has been achieved in the context of our journey for continuous improvement. It also shows the fantastic work our staff have delivered and their dedication to delivering for local communities.

Living the Publica values

As we have set out in our business plan, we don't want to be just a standard public service provider, we want to be so much more. Publica is not about cuts; we are about delivering modern and efficient public sector services that cost less but still deliver results.

Through harnessing the power of our partnership and our unique approach we can be more than the sum of our parts, delivering much more for residents and businesses than would otherwise be possible if the councils and other public sector service providers worked alone.

Publica's operating model

To ensure we deliver great modern services for our shareholder councils, our customer first model uses automation and technology to deliver high-quality services that residents and businesses use every day to report, apply and pay for services they receive. We know that if we provide good quality digital products and services 24/7 it will provide not only

a better customer experience, but also minimise the need for customers to contact the councils to obtain information, report something, or make an application.

We also know that 10% of UK residents do not use the internet and that some residents and businesses will need to contact their council by telephone or face to face and so we need to continue to work for them as well.

This year we have made good progress on continuing to improve our services in line with our operating model. Below are some good examples of what we have achieved:



Launching the Open Portal

This year the Open Portal was launched, an online platform where residents and businesses can easily access their council tax and business rate account information 24/7. It allows people to access information and carry out actions that previously they would have needed to call customer services to access.

It was a system jointly commissioned by three of the partner councils and is expected to save more than £160,000 a year.

It means residents and businesses get better service and we can reduce demand on customer services. So far over 10,000 households and businesses have signed up across the partnership.

Delivering savings and improvements through the Environmental Services Innovation Programme (ESIP)

Waste and recycling collection represents one of the most fundamental municipal services that local government offers, presenting councils with huge challenges and potential opportunities in terms of emerging agendas around the environment, climate emergency and digital services.

The Environmental Services Innovation Programme is a partnership between the councils, Publica and Ubico (the councils' waste company) to deliver

shared innovation projects around waste and recycling management with a focus on service improvement and efficiency.

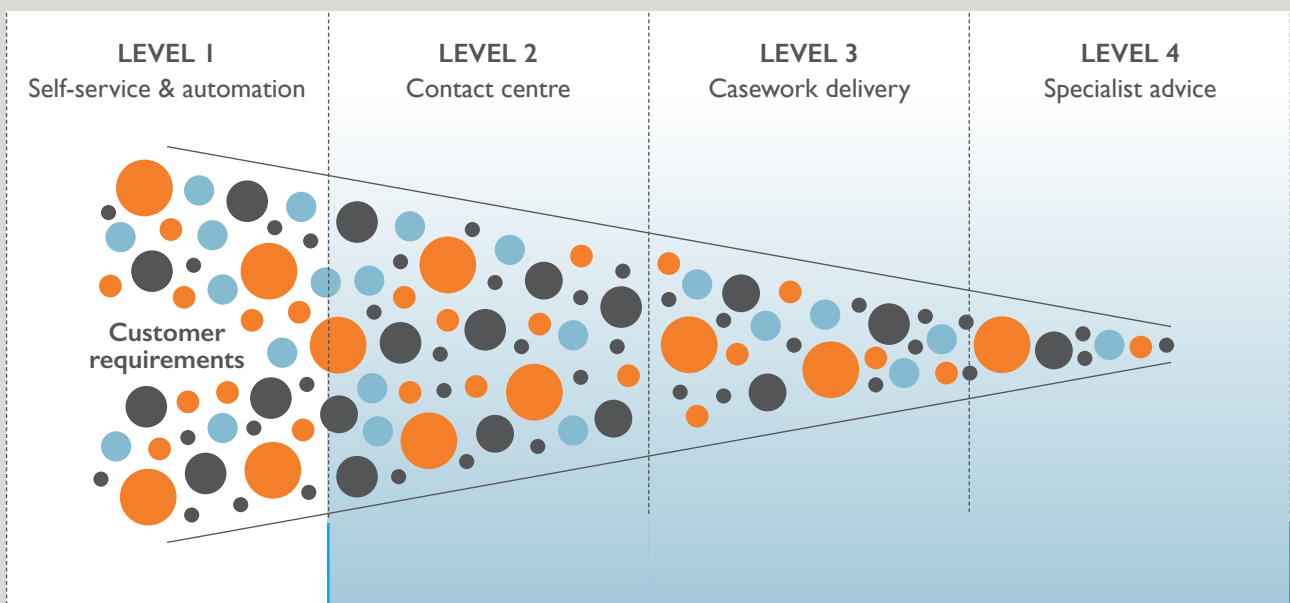
In the past year the programme has delivered over £850,000 additional income and efficiency savings delivered back to our shareholder councils including:

- New IT systems in the waste collection vehicles at Cotswold and West Oxfordshire making the collection service more efficient, delivering more than £25,000 in savings, 62 tonnes less CO2 and a 47% reduction in missed collections
- Improved approach to vehicle maintenance saving £34,000 a year
- Removal of community recycling sites in West Oxfordshire saving £112,000 in cleaning work with no impact on fly-tipping

Creating a shared planning validation service

When a planning application is submitted a wide range of information has to be provided by the applicant. Our validation service then checks all the required information has been submitted correctly so the application can be reviewed for a decision.

The validation service has been redesigned, creating a shared service across the partners councils that uses appropriate staff at each stage and a new case management system.



As a result, backlogs built up through the pandemic were reduced by 75% and processing time has dropped from 35 days to 10, providing residents with an improved service. We also introduced career graded planning posts to retain and develop good staff. We know there is more we need to do in planning as set out in our Business Plan. More work will be delivered over the coming years to improve the service.

Improving our Freedom of Information service

Across our partner councils we processed more than 1,140 Freedom of Information requests last year.

We analysed the requests we were getting and introduced a new customer journey to improve their experience. We put in place a new database to help

people access information we publish regularly in an easy way and put new processes in the back office to make it easier to process requests.

As a result we have made it easier for people to access what they need and had a 70% reduction in requests we have to process, freeing up officer capacity.

Preparing for emergencies

Over the past year we have had to respond to multiple severe weather emergencies including the red warning for wind issued by the Met Office where the response included evacuating a care home during the night. We have also been doing additional work to improve our resilience including improving our cyber security following recent local government cyber attacks in the region.



Staying true to the Publica Values

The values developed at the company's inception hold strong today and continue to help guide us to achieve our purpose and improve our services. They are:

Authentic

We act genuinely and transparently. We do the right thing for our customers, our organisation and each other.

Modern

We are not set in our ways. We are constantly looking to find ways to innovate and do things smarter.

Flexible

We are agile and we adapt how and what we do to meet the demands of our customers, our colleagues, our local communities and the needs of the modern world.

Thoughtful

We take pride in delivering a great service, taking the time to understand and care about the planet and the environment, as well as our customers and their needs.

Managing our finances and supporting the councils with theirs

A decade of austerity, continuing local government funding uncertainty, rapidly increasing delivery costs, increased cost of fuel to operate the councils waste fleet and heat leisure centres and income shortfalls during the pandemic is putting council finances under great strain. The scale of the challenge is very significant with the latest forecasts suggesting that our shareholder councils collectively will need to fill an emerging funding gap of £15m by 2026, this represents some 30% of their net revenue budget.



Publica is working hard to support the councils in this challenge through a number of different ways outlined in our Business Plan. Over this year we have made good progress and many of the projects highlighted in this report, such as the Cotswold Climate Investment, which we helped Cotswold District Council to deliver, and the Environmental Services Innovation Programme, are generating significant savings and/or income for partner councils. Some of our other work includes:

Bringing in external funding for the partner councils

We have worked with external partners and applied for funding to bring in millions of pounds to the partner councils over the past year. Some examples are:

- Over £382,000 was brought into the partner councils via Government funding to improve accessible toilet facilities. The new funding will support accessible, step-free access to toilet and baby change facilities at key locations.
- Working with health delivery partners we have brought in over £500,000 across the partnership to deliver local health improvement projects such as YouMove, that helps low income families get active, social prescribers and support for people with diabetes.

- Working with partners we brought in over £1.7m across the partnership to support Covid recovery including marketing for town centres, active travel schemes, community food projects, debt and welfare support, mental health support among many other projects.

Launching the Publica Innovation Programme

This year saw the launch of the Publica Innovation Programme where the organisation will be proactively working with shareholder councils and looking at opportunities to generate additional income and improve services in the context of the need to significantly reduce council revenue expenditure in the coming years. The aim is to make the savings through more efficient working and income generation to preserve service delivery.

£382,000

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Working together to deliver efficient services: Publica's progress since 2017

In 2015 the four partner councils started their journey of joint working with the ambition to save money and operate more efficiently, with Publica created in 2017 as part of the project. By March 2022 the partnership had delivered £5.83m of recurring annual revenue savings, meeting its target six years ahead of schedule. Publica has also delivered

£1.8m in one-off savings that the councils have been able to reinvest in services for residents. In total the cumulative savings since 2015 have reached almost £27m. By the end of the forecasted period up to 2028, it is estimated the partnership will have saved £63m, a tenfold return on the initial investment of £6.1m from the partner councils.

Financial Review 2021/22

Over the full financial year Publica has met its budget targets. The budget target for 2021/22 incorporated an additional savings target of £500k, this has been met together with an additional £215k of one-off (non-recurring) savings.

The financial year has been another difficult one for all partners with continued demands being placed on local government from central government to play a range of roles outside of the norm for local government as a consequence of the global pandemic. As one of the major delivery partners, Publica has had to be 'fleet of foot' to pick up these new roles whilst also delivering core services for the councils and residents. Additional activities carried out

over the year include administering business grant payments, supporting Covid 19 testing/vaccination centres and supporting refugee programmes.

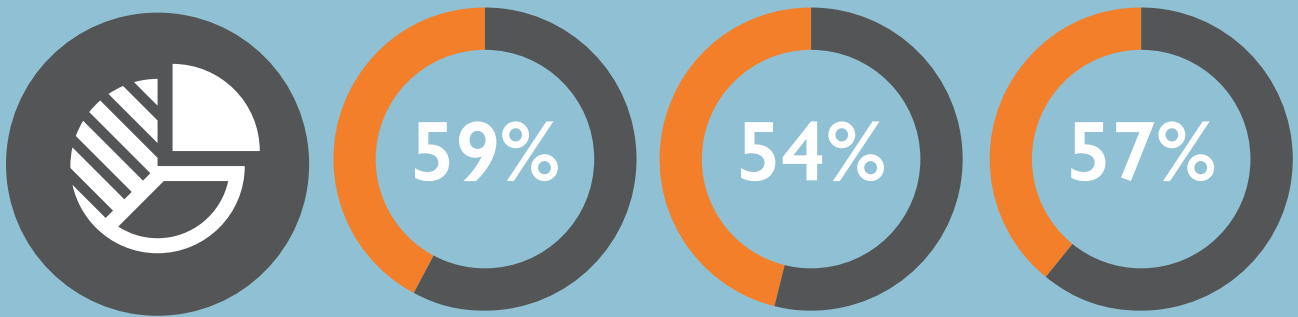
As a trusted 'not for profit' partner we have sought to pick up most of the additional work within the core contract with variations only being sought where additional expenses were incurred. For example, the various business grant schemes which have been largely run by core staff but with a small amount of additional resource organised by Publica being billed directly to councils and therefore not impacting on contract values.

The outturn position is shown below:

BUDGET VS ACTUAL 2021/22	BUDGET Q4	ACCRUED Q4	(+) / -
	£000s	£000s	£000s
SALES			
Contract income	27,028	27,028	0
DIRECT COSTS			
Salaries (Inc. oncosts)	(22,994)	(22,349)	(645)
Agency costs	(15)	(473)	458
Contractor costs	(65)	(77)	12
Employee transport and travel	(300)	(126)	(174)
Other staff costs	(496)	(509)	13
GROSS SURPLUS	3,158	3,494	(336)
Administration expenses	(1,852)	(1,965)	113
Other operating expenses	(12)	(12)	0
OPERATING SURPLUS	1,294	1,517	(223)
Net interest (payable)/ receivable	10	2	8
SURPLUS BEFORE TAX	1,304	1,519	(215)
Tax	0	0	0
Contract fee refund	(1,288)	(1,288)	0
RETAINED SURPLUS	16	16	16
Additional surplus / (deficit) distribution	0	215	(215)

Delivery in numbers across the partnership (August 2021-2022)

Working in partnership with Ubico and Biffa we have delivered some of the highest recycling rates in the country - Cotswold 59%, Forest of Dean 54% and West Oxfordshire 57%



2,530



food hygiene checks and inspections

Over 832 reported abandoned vehicles investigated

832+

4,550



planning applications processed

Working with Ubico and Biffa we have collected over 28 million waste bins with a collection rate of over 99%

28m



51
car parks managed



2,172

vulnerable people helped to stay independent through our alarm monitoring service

276 disabled facilities grants approved

81,040

benefits and financial support claims processed

1,286



households supported to find a new house through Homeseeker Plus

3,698

fly tips responded to



Over 10,000 households signed up to our new OpenPortal

10,000+

£12,122,250

distributed in council tax energy support grants



377

sponsors supported on the Homes for Ukraine scheme

£306m

collected in council tax and business rates

Over 1,780 pre-application enquiries supported

1,780+

421



taxis licensed

770+

Over 770 affordable homes completed



255,994

calls answered by customer services on behalf of the councils

Over 671 placements were made into emergency accommodation to make sure people always had somewhere to stay

671+

£4,717,364

Distributed £4,717,364 in Omicron Business Grants

Planet: How we are tackling climate change

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

We are making progress towards our target of being net zero by 2030. This includes:

Working in an agile way to reduce our carbon footprint

We have reinforced and updated our approach to agile working during the pandemic recovery, making sure that we are delivering a working approach for staff that is flexible for them and also helps to reduce our carbon footprint by reducing travel and building usage.

This year we have progressed plans to change the way we use our buildings across the partnership, looking to reduce our carbon footprint by around 100 tonnes of CO₂ annually. By allowing staff to work more flexibly we expect to reduce travel by around 90,000 miles a year, saving another 350 tonnes of CO₂. This is in addition to the councils' own carbon reduction plans.

“By continuing to build on the new ways of working the pandemic accelerated, we can operate in a much more efficient way for the councils and the environment. By making the best use of technology and our buildings, we can reduce our carbon footprint by minimising staff travel, work more effectively across the wide geographical footprint Publica covers and also free up space in council buildings for other uses. Not only this, we are providing staff with the working arrangements people have now come to expect with a hybrid approach to office and home working. Without this we will not be able to attract or retain great staff.”

Sue Pangbourne, Executive Director



Working together to reach a target
of net zero carbon by

2030

Our electric vehicle car scheme

A new Green Car Scheme has been introduced for staff at Publica to allow them to more easily afford electric vehicles through NHS Fleet Solutions. On top of this we are also offering staff £750 to purchase charging points to make it more financially achievable for staff to own an electric vehicle. So far eight staff have taken up the scheme in the first few months.

Rolling out Carbon Literacy training to staff

To date, 60 key staff from across the organisation have participated in Carbon Literacy training as we embed our response to the climate emergency in everything we do. This will be pushed forward over the coming years as we aim for at least 50% of our staff to have participated in Carbon Literacy training by 2025.

Staff using corporate volunteering days to support biodiversity and carbon reduction activities

Staff are now actively encouraged to use their two days a year they have available for local volunteering activities that support biodiversity or carbon reduction. In the past year staff have spent 310 hours taking part in tree planting, clearing local waterways and conservation work at country parks among other activities.

Tackling the climate emergency within our communities:

Electric Vehicle charging points installed across the partnership

The past year has seen electric vehicle charging points being installed across the Publica partnership either through local schemes or in partnership with county councils. 72 charging bays are now live.

Supporting biodiversity and protecting open space

In West Oxfordshire officers have been working hard to protect and enhance biodiversity. This has included working with local communities to protect local wildlife in Kilkenny County Park. Not only that, the Council has purchased Langel Common in Witney to maintain it as open space for use by wildlife and the public and protect it from development.

Exploring a Biosphere Reserve

Working with Forest of Dean District Council we have been exploring the options of creating a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve covering the Forest to protect the local environment, help the economy and promote learning and education. If agreed by the Council the Forest of Dean would become one of more than 720 Biospheres worldwide.

720

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Cotswold Climate Investment - using community investment to fund local initiatives

Cotswold District Council was one of the first five UK councils to become part of the Green Finance Institute and Abundance Investment's Local Climate Bond campaign. The first Local Climate Bond was very successful raising £500,000, which will fund Electric Vehicle Charging Point roll-out and decarbonisation of Trinity Road office. New investment opportunities will be rolled out in the future.



**INVEST LOCALLY TO CREATE
A GREENER COTSWOLDS**



Decarbonising buildings

This year saw the completion of a decarbonisation scheme in the Cotswold leisure centres which included the installation of solar panels and air source heat pumps in the main leisure centre in Cirencester; reducing the Cotswold District Council emissions by 30% and saving £20,000 per year in running costs. Also the Forest of Dean Council Office in Coleford has had solar panels installed and cavity wall insulation installed that will significantly reduce the carbon footprint of the building.

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

Forest of Dean Council has been successful in being selected to take part in a European project, working with partners across the continent to explore how we can help local communities lower their carbon footprint. The project will bring in up to £250,000 investment to the area for engaging communities to reduce their carbon footprint and installing solar panels.

Delivering low-carbon homes

Across the partnership Publica staff have been working with developers to look at ways we can introduce more low-carbon homes. This has resulted in the development of a number of national firsts including the zero carbon self-build scheme in Chipping Norton and the low-carbon development in Down Ampney.

£20,000

Installation of solar panels and air source heat pumps in the main leisure centre in Cirencester, has reduced the Cotswold District Council emissions by 30% and saving £20,000 per year in running costs.

People: Being a ‘Great Place to Work’

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



We are continuing to build our reputation as a great employer; a great place to work and somewhere people can be ambitious and fulfil their full potential. Our employees need to feel well-led, supported, rewarded and empowered within a healthy workplace culture.

The key areas for development of our people are linked with the Investors in People framework (IIP) which will assist us in continuing to develop the right conditions for improving services and delivering services and key projects for our shareholder councils.

This year we have made some fantastic progress improving Publica as a ‘Great Place to Work’, however we know we are on a journey with far more to do which is outlined in the Business Plan.

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INVESTORS IN PEOPLE™ We invest in people Standard

We are now an Investors in People (IIP) accredited employer

In July we were delighted to receive IIP Standard Accreditation meaning we meet the international standard for the scheme. We are using the IIP framework to continue our journey as set out in the Business Plan and we will now be aiming to meet their Silver standard to continue our improvement as an employer.

“We opted in to Investors in People not because of the allure of an award but because IIP really does provide a comprehensive framework for good people management. Achieving the accreditation this year was a boost. We have always said that the journey is more important than the destination but the award itself does no harm as a tangible sign of progress and recognition of the hard work by staff. The higher Silver accreditation is our motivational target for reassessment in two years time”.

Jan Britton, Managing Director of Publica

Closer working between our staff and leadership team

The Staff Forum was introduced in the last year which discusses key issues and topics affecting the business, providing feedback and working with our senior leadership to deliver the best outcomes. We have also introduced a Shadow Board who attend Publica board meetings, observing and providing feedback on the strategic leadership of the company from a staff perspective.

Our new mental health first aiders

There are now 13 mental health first aiders across the business who provide additional support for staff on top of the corporate support package available to all our people. All the mental health first aiders are Publica staff who have been trained to provide support and signpost to sources of help for colleagues if it is needed.

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Improving professional development, training and career progression

Offering professional development, training and progression is key to retaining great staff. This past year has seen the introduction of career-graded posts in planning and other areas where staff can grow and develop with us, providing them a clear career path and helping us retain officers. We have also introduced new peer coaching groups, professional development courses, a new google classroom for all staff and have carried out a review on what training is needed across the organisation to help structure our new approach to organisational development.

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Growing our leaders

We completed our Leadership Development Programme in partnership with Oxford Brookes University to grow our senior leaders across Publica and retained staff in the partner councils. Our next step will be rolling out a wider leadership programme for more staff members over the coming year.





“The benefit of the Leadership Development Programme will be growing leaders who collaborate, have honest conversations and use a coaching style of leadership. By operating in this way across the organisation we will better enable staff to maximise their potential and feel valued and motivated. Leadership isn’t about a job title; it is about the attitude and behaviours we all bring to a situation. This training will help boost our leadership skills across Publica.”

Philippa Lowe, Business Manager for Localities,

Improving our recruitment in a challenging market

Across 2021 and 2022 the recruitment market has been challenging with many organisations across different sectors struggling to recruit. Publica has been no different but we have been working hard to improve our processes and offer to help attract the best staff. We have introduced a new recruitment

system to make it simpler and easier for candidates to apply. We will be continuing our development in this area over the coming year with improvements to our employment package, website and systems.

Introducing our new Group Manager for Organisational Effectiveness

Zoe Campbell is new to this role which is a real investment in our people and her priority will be to help us move from good to great as we improve our business and the services we provide for our councils and other partners.

2021 / 22

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LGO Awards 2022

West House, London



Place: Delivering for businesses and communities

We are committed to providing great services to local communities and delivering key projects with the shareholder councils, being flexible where we need to be and sharing resources and ideas.

Our shareholder councils share some ambitions but they also each have local needs and priorities that will deliver against their own corporate plans. Publica respects their individual identities, while also making the most of delivery through the partnership. We achieve more together by collaborating and pushing the boundaries of what we do to showcase the very best in place-based delivery. Over the past year some amazing work has been delivered in communities across the partnership.

Crowdfund Cotswold win Local Government Chronicle Award

Publica has been proud to support the delivery of Cotswold District Council's Crowdfund Cotswold project which won the 'Community Involvement' award at this year's prestigious Local Government Chronicle Awards. The project is a crowdfunding approach to generate funding for local projects. To date more than £400,000 has been raised for 24 different projects with the council putting in £130,000 funding to help.

Cost of Living crisis

The rising cost of living has hit communities hard. In response, work has been started to see how the partnership can respond. It has initially included:

- Advice on shareholder councils websites and leaflets produced for all three councils advising residents on how and where to get support
- Reviewing the council tax support schemes to see how more people can be helped
- Administering the Government's £150 energy rebate scheme, distributing over £12m across Cotswold, Forest of Dean and West Oxfordshire
- Distributed more than £700,000 of Household Support Funding, with a primary focus on households with children and pensioners
- Working with county partners to deliver the Holiday Activity and Food Programme

Work in this area will continue over the coming months as the country responds to continuing increases in costs to households.

Recovering from the Coronavirus Pandemic

While the direct response to coronavirus has become less of a focus, councils have still been working hard to help local people and businesses recover from the impact of two years of restrictions.

Our teams have provided a wide range of support including helping local community groups with funding and supporting health initiatives. For example in West Oxfordshire we launched the Be Kind to Your Mind campaign to support people's mental health and we worked in partnership with Citizens Advice West Oxfordshire, the Housing team and the Community Food Network to distribute £126,000 of Household Support Funding to families and individuals struggling to afford food.

We have also continued to provide financial support. We distributed:

- The Omicron Business Grants totalling £4,717,364
- Additional support for businesses through the Covid-19 Additional Relief Fund of £4,282,013
- Additional support to those having to self-isolate through the administration of the Test and Trace reliefs totalling £914,500

£914,500

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Supporting Ukraine and Afghan refugees

In response to the crises in Afghanistan and Ukraine all partner councils were asked to be part of the national and local response to supporting refugees coming into the country. Teams across Publica have worked hard coordinating local support, making sure housing was safe and appropriate, handing out funding, supporting host families and many other tasks to make the refugees feel welcome and hosts for the Ukraine scheme feel supported.



FOREST OF DEAN DISTRICT COUNCIL
OUR LOCAL PLAN
WORKING TOGETHER FOR A BETTER FUTURE

YOUR
COTSWOLD
YOUR **PLAN**
CREATING A FUTURE
THAT IS GREEN TO THE CORE

Developing Local Plans with our partner councils

Forward planning is a key activity for any district council and we have been working hard to do so in a different way that better engages local communities in the future of their area.

We have been successful in round one and two of the Governments Proptech Fund, bringing in

£171,000 to use new digital tools to engage local communities. This has led to the award nominated local plan consultation at Cotswold District Council and a new approach in West Oxfordshire. We have also worked closely with the lead member in Forest of Dean to deliver the 'Our Plan' consultation, changing the narrative on how a local plan can be delivered in partnership with communities.

Regenerating local areas

Great progress has been made this year by all the partner councils on projects to regenerate key areas or buildings to boost local communities and economies:

Destination Lydney Harbour

The project has made fantastic progress with the opening of a new cafe and toilets for the public and the installation of public artworks to local and regional acclaim. The planned highway improvements are currently in progress and the premises for the community-led boat building project has been identified.

Bringing the Old Station back to life

A project has started to regenerate the Old Station building in Cirencester with a partnership formed with Historic England to use it as a test for how to regenerate an old building in a way that is environmentally friendly.

Levelling up the Forest Of Dean

Following the successful bid for £20m to the Government's Levelling Up Fund, the implementation has progressed at pace with the demolition of the old buildings on the Five Acres site and engagement on the new designs taking place. Work is also well underway with LUF partners. Hartpury University/ College have almost finished construction of their new EVCP car park and Cinderford Town Council have completed their first solar PV installation at Rheola House.

Protecting open space to enhance local areas

Public officers worked with councillors and local residents in West Oxfordshire to purchase part of Langel Common in Witney. The addition to this popular open space was bought by the council in collaboration with local residents to preserve the meadow, maintain public access and protect it from future development.



Delivering affordable housing

All the shareholder councils want to deliver affordable housing where the market is not delivering sufficiently to meet the needs of local people. We have continued to deliver affordable housing in partnership with developers and housing providers, pushing the boundaries with exemplar design to maximise the delivery of development schemes that are sustainable and align with net-zero carbon ambitions.

National first self-build scheme in Chipping Norton

The scheme at Walterbush Road in Chipping Norton will be the first of its kind in the country with the council providing land and funding for net-zero carbon, self-build affordable homes.

30% affordable housing scheme in Lydney

The Mirum Park scheme in Lydney will provide 30% of the total houses built as affordable, either for social rent or shared ownership, helping local people purchase a local home. It is one of many across the partnership where we are pushing the limits of including affordable housing in developments.

Developing a net zero scheme in Down Ampney

The groundbreaking scheme in Down Ampney will be the first in partnership with Bromford to develop a truly low carbon affordable housing estate, making use of the latest technologies to demonstrate how this sort of scheme can be delivered using the councils' nationally recognised Net-Zero Carbon Toolkit.

770+

This year has seen more than 770 affordable homes built across Cotswolds, Forest of Dean and West Oxfordshire.

Helping build local communities

Our Community Builders Team has been working across the Cotswolds, Forest of Dean and West Oxfordshire to bring together local people and help set up local initiatives such as in Worcester Road, Cinderford, where community builders went into a community with known issues around anti-social behaviour and drug and alcohol mis-use to use an asset based approach to talk to residents and help facilitate a community meeting. The engagement highlighted a need for more exercise classes which were delivered. Also a local business connected with the community to provide its corporate volunteer day to redecorate the underused community centre.

As the contact on the ground, community builders empower individuals and groups to work together to take action and enable community driven initiatives.

Supporting local economies

Our teams at Cotswold, Forest of Dean and West Oxfordshire continue to work closely with local businesses to support the local economies. This includes helping the Royal Agricultural College to access additional funding towards a new innovation village, working with town centres across West Oxfordshire to help them survive and running business start-up grants in the Forest of Dean to help grow local businesses.



The Publica partnership

Publica is a not-for-profit company owned by Cotswold District Council, West Oxfordshire District Council, Forest of Dean District Council and Cheltenham Borough Council. We are a partnership, working together to share skills and resources to allow us to deliver more for the councils and residents we serve.

Each of the partner councils and organisations retain their independence and identity, but by working together and sharing resources, we seek to maximise mutual benefit for all. Set up in 2017, we are on a journey of continued improvement, and we are looking for new ways to effectively deliver local services for each council and the communities they represent.

So far we have transformed the way services are delivered within the three districts, helping the councils deliver great services for local residents. Over the coming years we will strive to deliver even better services, innovate in the way we deliver them and continue to deliver the council priorities.

Putting residents at the heart of what we do

Publica is a customer focused organisation driven by real user needs. We are here to deliver great public services for the councils and residents we work for. In all our work we strive to:

- Deliver services to a high standard that are responsive, flexible and focused on individual and community needs
- Staff who are warm and approachable, who take the time to listen and understand people's needs
- Have a seamless approach to handling complex service requests that cut across more than one team
- Be open and honest about what we can and cannot provide/deliver
- Be willing to hear and consider ideas about how we can improve services and work collaboratively and in partnership



PUBLICA

Building a partnership to deliver great services: Our progress in 2021/22