

PUBLICA

Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025

Publica Group (Support) Limited

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Company Information

Non- Executive Directors

Dr Christine Elizabeth Gore
Chair



Christopher Gilbert Wood
Chair Audit & Risk Committee



James Christopher Towner
Resigned 31 March 2025



Paul Gerard McCloskey
Resigned 31 May 2024



Steve Anderson-Dixon



David Leslie Powell
Commenced 1 October 2024



Executive Directors

Frank Malcolm Wilson



Claire Louise Locke
Commenced 1 May 2024



Jon Dearing
Commenced 1 May 2024



Registered Office: Council Offices, Trinity Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 1PX

Strategic Report

Business Review

The financial year ending 31 March 2025 has been a year of change for Publica and its shareholder councils. The Publica Review which sought to rebalance the services provided by Publica and those by three of the shareholding councils to a more traditional commissioning model was approved in July 2024 after a significant period of due diligence to validate the financial implications.

On 1 November 2024 Publica ceased to provide a number of services to the councils and employees delivering these services largely all transferred back to the councils who took over the management and delivery of those services directly. The impact of this was to see the budget for 276 of posts passed back to the councils to allow them to continue service delivery with a consequent full year effect reduction in the company turnover of £5.6m.

The transfer on the whole went smoothly although there were some departures within teams where employees chose not to transfer particularly where Transfer of Undertakings regulations (TUPE) did not apply due to the fragmented nature of some roles. There were also some gaps in council structures for a period where vacancy filling effectively transferred from Publica to council responsibility. A review of service performance over this transition period does not however indicate any deterioration in outcomes.

A consequence of the service transition were some significant changes to the Publica leadership structure. This encompassed Assistant Director's whose service portfolios had transferred also transferring to the councils to support those services but also included a significant reduction in the managerial capacity of Publica to deliver the savings set out in the business case for change. This delivered close to £400,000 of savings to offset some of the costs incurred by the councils by taking on the services caused by losses of economies of scale and increased pension costs. The latest enduring net cost increase for the delivery of these services from the transition is in the order of £860,000 per annum after accounting for the additional savings taken in the Publica management structure.

As anticipated a second phase of the transition was commenced with due diligence starting in September 2024. This second phase was always anticipated to be smaller in scale and incorporated services that had been delivered in a more shared way than the phase 1 services and consequently was more complex to design and cost up the consequences. During this period the government announced that it was reviewing the structure of local government as part of its devolution proposals and gave a clear steer to councils that two tier structures (county councils and district councils) would be required to amalgamate.

Naturally an announcement of this magnitude has caused the councils to reflect on the Publica transition as we and they collectively think through the ramifications for the councils and Publica. As a consequence, they have paused the second part of the phase 2 transition and in March 2025 they approved a much smaller transition phase which is targeted to complete on 1 July 2025.

For Publica the impact of phase 2 is to see some 63 of posts transferring with a full year effect contract variation of £2,201,590. The latest estimated annual cost increase to the councils of this phase is in the order of £600,000 per annum.

A consequence of these changes is that Publica has become a smaller and perhaps more focused business delivering more traditional shared services than the previous more radical approach. Clearly the outcome of changes to the structure of local government on our geographical footprint is likely to have a significant impact on our future. Whilst the impact remains unclear, we stand ready to support our shareholder councils through a difficult period of uncertainty for both employees and councillors. Our clear focus in our business plan for 2025/26 is to continue to deliver great services to residents whilst also preparing for the future structure of local government and understanding our role within it.

Strategic Report

On more operational aspects of the business over the last year, physical work to office spaces to underpin the approach to agile working and deliver financial benefits to the councils has been completed in two sites (Cotswold and West Oxfordshire). Subsequently space has been let to third parties to provide a revenue stream to the councils. Work is underway in Coleford along a similar vein. These changes also include fabric improvements which reduce the carbon footprint of the buildings and solar installations which will deliver renewable energy.

To support our work in our support of the council net zero objectives we continue to train our workforce to become carbon literate and seeking to move from our silver carbon literate employer status to gold.

Pressures persist in a number of services due to service demand, most notably in housing and homelessness, where caseload numbers have increased over the last year as supply is constrained. This has placed great strains on the team and additional resources have been provided by the councils to support this service using government grant. We continue to work with West Oxfordshire to try to identify solutions to deliver more hostel type accommodation for emergency housing need to reduce the need for costly and less than ideal bed and breakfast accommodation or 'out of district' placements.

The impact of phase I of the Publica transition led to greater challenges around recruitment and retention of employees particularly as we moved close to the transition when recruitment for transitioning services was effectively frozen. This has meant that we have had to utilise agency support to a higher degree this year and this is reflected in the financial results.

There are some notable successes during the year which warrant particular consideration including:-

- Delivery of office accommodation changes in Cotswold and West Oxfordshire enhancing revenue streams
- Procurement and transfer of a new waste management contract in Forest of Dean
- Supporting the TUPE transfer of Cheltenham Borough Homes employees into Cheltenham Borough Council together with all the associated ICT Infrastructure changes
- Letting of a dry recycling contract in West Oxfordshire delivering annual savings in excess of £300,000
- Completion of the changes to our contact centre arrangements delivering £250,000 of savings to Cotswold and West Oxfordshire whilst consistently achieving top three status in the GovMetric measure of contact centre performance for all three councils

Performance against the Business Plan and also our suite of operational performance indicators is reported to the Board and partner councils on a quarterly basis. Performance against targets set by councils has been maintained despite a period of significant change and uncertainty and thanks go to all our excellent employees who contributed to this. We continue to recognise their contribution in our recognition scheme.

We said in our Business Plan for the year that continuing to deliver great services for our residents was a priority for Publica along with supporting the transition programme. I can confidently say that we have delivered on both counts in 2024/25.

Strategic Report

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The recognition and understanding of risks relevant to the company and the services it provides is key to the successful management of the business and the delivery of the vision and objectives.

A register of business risks is maintained and reviewed quarterly by the executive management team. This is accompanied by action plans to mitigate identified risks. The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee receives quarterly monitoring reports on the company's finances and the key risk areas of the business. The company has appropriate insurance cover for assets and business operations, including directors' and officers' indemnity.

It is clear that the Publica Review and perhaps more significantly Local Government Reorganisation form the two key risks over the next two to three years with the potential for destabilisation of the employee base due to the uncertainty that changes of this magnitude bring. In addition to this the directors have identified the main risks remain as previously being changes to Local Government finance (e.g. outcomes from future Spending Reviews, new legislation) or other budget pressures driven by pay inflation which may result in councils having to reduce budgets which in turn may impact on Publica's ability to maintain service quality.

Whilst the company's ability to continue as a going concern is intrinsically linked to that of our member councils who continue to support the company via the member agreements in place it is clear that the Publica Review will have an impact on this. It is currently anticipated that Publica will continue to deliver the services not due to transfer as part of the transition plan set out by Local Partnerships and the pausing of further phase 2 transition. Local Government Reorganisation is not anticipated until 2028 at the earliest but will be high on the risk agenda moving forward.

On the basis of the above, the ongoing cash positive position of the company and letters of support from member councils including approval of the Business Plan, directors have a reasonable expectation that the company has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for a period of 12 months post financial statement signature. Thus, they continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements. Further detail is included within the going concern accounting policy.

Financial Key Performance Indicators

Our savings and modernisation plans for 2024/25 included the second half year savings of the Customer Experience Improvement Programme amending our operating hours and focusing resources to match service demand. Overall savings planned for 2024/25 were £170,000 and these were achieved as set out above. In addition to this the first five months of savings from the Publica senior leadership were delivered post the 1 November phase 1 transition date. These savings amounted to a further £170,000 of base budget recurring savings. The balance of the management savings to full year effect of £400,000 will be delivered in 2025/26.

In addition to this base budget reduction Publica returned a further £878,000 of one-off savings back to its partner councils so that they could reinvest in service delivery.

The savings made in 2024/25 bring the total underlying annual budget savings to £3.5m since the formation of Publica set against a target of £2.1m at this stage of the business case. In addition to this underlying budget reduction Publica has delivered back to the partner councils a total of £4.3m of one-off savings through a seven-and-a-half-year track record of delivering the service within the budget envelope allowing partners to reinvest these funds in priorities of the councils. Total cumulative savings over the period since Publica was formed have now reached £22.3m.

Strategic Report

Summary Financial Performance Indicators: April 2024 to March 2025

Target Operating Surplus

Actual Operating Surplus



The return is calculated as the Operating Surplus as a percentage of turnover, excluding the contract fee refund.

There are no other financial or non-financial key performance indicators the directors wish to disclose.

This report was approved by the board on 8 August 2025 and signed on its behalf on 8 August 2025.

Frank Wilson
Frank Wilson
Interim Managing Director

Directors' Report

Financial Review

Over the full financial year Publica has met its budget targets. The budget target for 2024/25 incorporated an additional savings target of £170k, this has been met together with an additional in year savings target of a further £170k from a management restructure and £878k of one-off (non-recurring) savings.

In service delivery terms the financial year has been characterised by managing the conflict between business as usual with the requirements to support the Publica Review and phase I transition. For services transitioning and supporting services such as HR and ICT this has meant increased challenges and has required additional resources to support these changes. These have been funded through specific funding streams by those partners requesting the changes.

As a trusted 'not for profit' partner we have sought to pick up most of the additional work within the core contract with variations only being sought where additional expenses were incurred.

Details of spend to budget are set out below.

BUDGET VS ACTUAL 2024/25

	Current Budget Q4	Actual / Accrued Q4	(+) / -
	£000s	£000s	£000s
Sales			
Contract Income	27,710	27,710	0
Direct Costs:			
Salaries (Inc oncosts)	(23,838)	(21,905)	(1,933)
Agency Costs	(30)	(1,108)	1,078
Contractor Costs	0	0	0
Employee Transport & Travel	(165)	(127)	(38)
Other Staff costs	(402)	(453)	51
Gross Surplus	3,275	4,117	(842)
Administration Expenses	(2,018)	(2,072)	54
Other Operating Expenses	0	0	0
Operating Surplus	1,257	2,045	(788)
Net Interest (Payable)/ Receivable	76	202	(126)
Surplus before Tax	1,333	2,247	(914)
Tax	(14)	(50)	36
Contract Fee Refund	(1,319)	(1,319)	0
Retained Surplus	0	0	0
Additional Surplus Distribution	0	878	(878)

Directors' Report

Events since the Balance Sheet date

On 1 July 2025 the phase 2 transfer of services and employees back to the councils' direct provision was completed. This will have a material impact on the company's turnover in 2025/26 and could lead to an increased risk with regard to termination payments.

Future Developments and Financial Risk

A new one-year Publica Business Plan has been approved by the shareholders which recognises the issues raised in the Publica Review and also issues raised as a consequence of the government announcement on Local Government Reorganisation.

The phase 2 transition was more complicated by a significantly increased number of fragmented roles, but the smaller scale of the phase ensured the transition was completed effectively. As any future transition phases have been paused whilst we better understand the impact of reorganisation on the council and Publica it is likely in the short term to have little further impact. Should however the emerging councils start to take decisions with regard to Publica not being a delivery vehicle for their ambitions and a decision is made to close Publica then this will increase the risk of additional termination payments should employees not be found suitable alternative employment opportunities.

The financial risks to Publica remain intrinsically linked to those of our member councils as is the nature of all 'Teckal' companies. Any increased termination payments, should they fall on Publica, will need to be financed by the shareholder councils.

Our Approach to Employees

As part of our key objective of being a 'great place to work' we have identified four strategic actions to deliver this outcome which in summary terms are:-

- Supporting the Health, Wellbeing and Safety of our employees;
- Implementing a modern pay framework with trade union support;
- Implementing a leadership development programme across all levels;
- Using the Investors in People framework to embed continuous improvement in our employment practices

We continue to support the member councils' previous approach to support the disabled workforce by being positive in this regard and we are a 'Disability Confident Employer'. This is further supported by our approach to agile working which supports a varied and flexible approach to both workplace and workday. In 2021/22 we also received accreditation as a "Real Living Wage" employer paying a minimum wage as set out by the Living Wage Foundation and in 2022/23 we achieved our first accreditation under the IIP framework. In 2023/24 we have achieved Silver Carbon Literacy status underpinning our approach to supporting the councils net zero targets.

From 1 April 2025 we also improved our pension scheme offer by match funding increased member contributions beyond the base 5% up to 7%.

The average number of employees during the year was 516 (2023/24: 633).

Directors’ Report

Employee Engagement

As part of our workforce relations we recognise two trade unions, GMB and Unison, and continue to have a very positive and constructive relationship with them both. The company also uses a range of other tools to engage with its workforce including regular workforce surveys which over the last year have been used to assess the wellbeing of employees during the pandemic.

In 2022/23 we refreshed our employee recognition scheme which allows any employee (or councillor) to put forward a colleague for recognition on a bi-monthly basis with awards presented at on-line or in person sessions at offices.

We continue to run regular all employee staff briefing sessions and open Q & A sessions on a range of subjects that may be of interest or are requested by employees.

Given the ongoing Publica Review and Local Government Reorganisation we recognise the increased need to engage with employees over the detail of the review as it progresses and have dedicated portal pages to support this.

Financial Instruments

The company has a low risk approach to financial instruments and the only instruments used are bank deposit accounts, call accounts and AAA money market liquidity accounts. The company does not operate any hedging instruments.

Details of Directors

The directors during the year were:

Executive Directors

Frank Malcolm Wilson	
Claire Louise Locke	(appointed 1 May 2024)
Jon Dearing	(appointed 1 May 2024)

Non-Executive Directors

Dr Christine Elizabeth Gore	Chair
Christopher Gilbert Wood	Chair Audit and Risk Committee
Steve Anderson-Dixon	
David Leslie Powell	(appointed 1 October 2024)
Paul Gerard McCloskey	(resigned on 31 May 2024)
James Christopher Towner	(resigned 31 March 2025)

Directors' Report

Directors Responsibilities Statement

The directors are responsible for preparing the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland'). Under company law, the directors must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company and of the profit or loss for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the directors are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable UK accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The directors are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the company's transactions, to disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The directors are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the company's website.

Governance and Risk

Publica Group (Support) Limited is a company, limited by guarantee, operating with mutual trading status to deliver the Services to the Members under contracts.

The company is a Teckal company fulfilling the conditions set out in Regulation 12(4) of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. The company is subject to management supervision by the Members. As such, the company is a body governed by public law as defined in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

The Publica Board is made up of three Executive Directors and four Non-Executive Directors. The balance of experience that makes up the board provides a great balance of accountability, council knowledge and external experience and business insight.

Directors' Report

Internal Audit

The Internal Audit service for Publica is provided by SWAP Internal Audit Services Limited (SWAP). SWAP is a local authority controlled company. SWAP has adopted and works to the Standards of the Institute of Internal Auditors, further guided by interpretation provided by the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS). The Partnership is also guided by the Internal Audit Charter which is reviewed annually. Internal Audit provides an independent and objective opinion on the organisation's control environment by evaluating its effectiveness through the work based on the Annual Plan agreed by Senior Management and the Publica Board.

Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit

Publica also contracts with the Gloucestershire Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit, through Cotswold District Council. The Fraud Unit work closely with the Human Resources team on internal investigation work on issues of staff misconduct and works proactively to prevent fraud and corruption or investigate potential areas of risk. Publica has a zero-tolerance policy and investigates any staff wrongdoings in these areas.

The Counter Fraud Manager reports directly to the Executive Director with responsibility for Finance and attends Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meetings regularly.

Whistleblowing

Publica has its own whistleblowing policy and encourages any member of staff to report their concerns.

Statement on disclosure of information to the auditors

In so far as each of the directors is aware:

- There is no relevant audit information of which the company's auditors are unaware; and
- The directors have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

Directors' Report

Re-Appointment of Auditors

The auditor, Grant Thornton UK LLP, will be proposed for reappointment in accordance with section 485 of the Companies Act 2006.

This report was approved by the board on 8 August 2025 and signed on its behalf on 8 August 2025.

Frank Wilson

Frank Wilson
Interim Managing Director

Independent Auditor's Report to the members of Publica Group (Support) Limited

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Publica Group (Support) Limited (the 'company') for the year ended 31 March 2025, which comprise the statement of comprehensive income, the statement of financial position, the statement of changes in equity, the statement of cashflows and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion:

- the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of the company's affairs as at 31 March 2025 and of its result for the year then ended;
- the financial statements have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the 'Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements' section of our report. We are independent of the company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

We are responsible for concluding on the appropriateness of the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify the auditor's opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our report. However, future events or conditions may cause the company to cease to continue as a going concern.

In our evaluation of the directors' conclusions, we considered the inherent risks associated with the company's business model including effects arising from macro-economic uncertainties such as current inflationary pressures, we assessed and challenged the reasonableness of estimates made by the directors and the related disclosures and analysed how those risks might affect the company's financial resources or ability to continue operations over the going concern period.

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Independent Auditor's Report to the members of Publica Group (Support) Limited

Conclusions relating to going concern (continued)

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the directors with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report and accounts, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The directors are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report and accounts. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the strategic report and the directors' report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the strategic report and the directors' report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matter on which we are required to report under the Companies Act 2006

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the strategic report or the directors' report.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of directors' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Independent Auditor's Report to the members of Publica Group (Support) Limited

Responsibilities of directors

As explained more fully in the directors' responsibilities statement set out on page 9, the directors are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the directors are responsible for assessing the company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the directors either intend to liquidate the company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists.

Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below:

- The Company is subject to many laws and regulations where the consequences of non-compliance could have a material effect on amounts or disclosures in the financial statements. We identified Financial Reporting Standard 102 and the Companies Act 2006 as those most likely to have a material effect if non-compliance were to occur;
- We have obtained an understanding of how the Company is complying with significant legal and regulatory frameworks through inquiries of management;
- We assessed the susceptibility of the Company's financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur. We considered the opportunity and incentives for management to perpetrate fraud, and the potential impact on the financial statements;
- Audit procedures performed by the engagement team included:
 - testing of manual journal entries, in particular journal entries relating to management estimates and entries determined to be large or relating to unusual transactions; and
 - identifying and testing related party transactions,
- These audit procedures were designed to provide reasonable assurance that the financial statements were free from fraud or error. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error and detecting irregularities that result from fraud is inherently more difficult than detecting those that result from error, as fraud may involve collusion, deliberate concealment, forgery or intentional misrepresentations. Also, the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations is from events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely we would become aware of it;

Independent Auditor's Report to the members of Publica Group (Support) Limited

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements (continued)

- The engagement partner's assessment of the appropriateness of the collective competence and capabilities of the engagement team included:
 - consideration of the engagement team's understanding of, and practical experience with, audit engagements of a similar nature and complexity
 - appropriate training, knowledge of the industry in which the Company operates; and
 - understanding of the legal and regulatory requirements specific to the Company.
- We communicated relevant laws and potential fraud risks to all engagement team members and remained alert to any indicators of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit;

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the company and the company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Grant Thornton UK LLP

Dylan Rees BSc ACA
Senior Statutory Auditor
for and on behalf of Grant Thornton UK LLP
Statutory Auditor, Chartered Accountants
Cardiff

Date: 8 August 2025

Statement of Comprehensive Income

	Note	2024/25 £	2023/24 £
Turnover	4	25,527,024	29,128,071
Cost of Sales	5	(23,593,677)	(27,089,307)
Gross Profit		1,933,347	2,038,764
Administrative expenses		(2,085,834)	(2,201,780)
Other operating expense	6	-	(3,719)
OPERATING PROFIT / (LOSS)		(152,487)	(166,735)
Interest receivable and similar income	17	202,473	206,208
Interest payable and similar charges	7 / 17	(239)	(294)
Profit on ordinary activities before taxation		49,747	39,179
Tax on profit on ordinary activities	9	(49,747)	(50,895)
Profit / (deficit) for the financial year		-	(11,716)
Total comprehensive income / (expenditure) for the financial year		-	(11,716)

The notes on pages 20 to 37 form part of these financial statements.

Statement of Financial Position

Company Registration No. 10580349

	Note	31-Mar-25 £	31-Mar-24 £
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible fixed assets	10	-	-
Intangible assets	11	-	-
		-	-
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors (amounts due within one year)	12	765,419	460,028
Cash and cash equivalents	13	2,086,452	3,559,819
		2,851,871	4,019,847
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Creditors (amounts due within one year)	14	(2,376,426)	(3,878,513)
Provisions	15	(334,111)	-
		(2,710,537)	(3,878,513)
Net Current Assets		141,334	141,334
NET ASSETS		141,334	141,334
CAPITAL AND RESERVES			
Retained surplus / (deficit)		141,334	141,334
TOTAL RESERVES		141,334	141,334

The notes on pages 20 to 37 form part of these financial statements.

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Board and were signed on its behalf.

Frank Wilson

Frank Wilson
Interim Managing Director
8 August 2025

Statement of Changes in Equity

	Retained Surplus £
Balance as at 1 April 2023	153,050
Changes in equity 2023/24	
Profit / (loss) for the year	(11,716)
Other comprehensive income	-
Balance as at 31 March 2024	141,334
Changes in equity 2024/25	
Profit / (loss) for the year	-
Other comprehensive income	-
Balance as at 31 March 2025	141,334

The notes on pages 20 to 37 form part of these financial statements.

Statement of Cashflows

	Note	2024/25 £	2023/24 £
Net cash flow from Operating Activities	19	(1,675,601)	2,022,469
Investing Activities			
Interest received	17	202,473	206,208
Disposal of tangible fixed assets		-	-
Net cash flow from Investing Activities		202,473	206,208
Financing Activities			
Interest paid	7 / 17	(239)	(294)
Net cash flow from Financing Activities		(239)	(294)
NET INCREASE / (DECREASE) IN CASH & CASH EQUIVALENTS		(1,473,367)	2,228,383
Cash and Cash Equivalents at 1 April		3,559,819	1,331,436
Cash and Cash Equivalents at 31 March		2,086,452	3,559,819

The notes on pages 20 to 37 form part of these financial statements.

Notes to the accounts

1. Legal Status and General Information

The Company is registered in the United Kingdom under the Companies Act 2006, and was incorporated on 24th January 2017. The accounting period covers the 12-month accounting period, from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

The Company is a private company limited by guarantee and is incorporated in the United Kingdom.

The registered office is:- Council Offices, Trinity Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 1PX

Cotswold District Council, West Oxfordshire District Council, Forest of Dean District Council and Cheltenham Borough Council have jointly set up Publica Group (Support) Limited, a wholly owned company, operating with Mutual Trading Status to deliver the services to the Member Councils and to other Members under contracts. The principal activity of the Company is the provision of general public administrative services.

2. Accounting Policies

Basis of preparation of the financial statements

These financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard 102, The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, and with the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements are presented in Sterling (£).

The preparation of financial statements in compliance with FRS 102 requires the use of certain critical accounting estimates. It also requires management to exercise judgement in applying the Company's accounting policies (see note 3).

The following principle accounting policies have been applied:

Going Concern

The Financial statements have been prepared on a 'going concern' basis and whilst uncertainties exist about the future size and shape of Publica due to the current review, there remains a role for Publica to deliver a reduced range of shared services on behalf of the partner councils following conclusion of the review. Therefore, the Director's believe this approach is appropriate. Publica's viability as a 'going concern' is closely tied to the support provided by its member Councils through existing agreements, as well as the letters of ongoing support they all have supplied to the Directors, which cover a period of at least 12 months from the approval of the financial statements. Moreover, all the member Councils' medium term financial plans are being reviewed and they all have benefited substantially from government support with a cash positive grant settlement albeit at a time of significant inflationary pressures.

In December 2024 the government announced a desire to see a widespread reorganisation of local government replacing county and district councils with unitary councils. This will have a significant impact on the shareholders of Publica should changes be approved. The current timeline for this change is 1 April 2028.

Based on the aforementioned factors, including the company's positive cash position, the letters of support from member Councils, and the approval of the Business Plan, Publica is confident in its ability to continue operating as a going concern for at least 12 months following the approval of the financial statements.

Notes to the accounts

2. Accounting Policies - continued

Turnover

Turnover comprises of revenue generated from member council contracts, and is recognised when services are provided against the contracts. Revenue is recognised to the extent that it is probable that the economic benefits will flow to the Company and the revenue can be reliably measured. Revenue is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable and represents amounts receivable for services provided in the normal course of business, net of discounts, rebates, refunds, VAT and other sales related taxes.

Tangible fixed assets

Fixed assets are capitalised at cost/purchase price, comprising purchase price and any costs directly attributable to bringing the asset into use, and stated at historical cost less accumulated depreciation and any accumulated impairment losses.

Assets will be capitalised where they will provide economic benefit to Publica for more than one accounting period. Assets with a cost of less than £10,000 will be treated as de-minimis and may not be capitalised, except where the sum of a group of similar assets together (for example ICT equipment) have a value in excess of this.

Intangible assets

Intangible assets are initially recognised at cost. After recognition, under the cost model, intangible assets are measured at cost less any accumulated amortisation and any accumulated impairment losses.

All intangible assets are considered to have a finite useful life. If a reliable estimate of the useful life cannot be made, the useful life shall not exceed ten years.

Financial Instruments

The Company only enters into basic financial instrument transactions that result in the recognition of financial assets and liabilities like trade and other debtors and creditors, and loans from banks and other third parties.

Debt instruments (other than those wholly repayable or receivable with one year), including loans and other accounts receivable and payable, are initially measured at present value of the future cash flows and subsequently at amortised cost using the effective interest method. Debt instruments that are payable or receivable within one year, typically trade debtors and creditors, are measured, initially and subsequently, at the undiscounted amount of the cash or other consideration expected to be paid or received. However, if the arrangements of a short-term instrument constitute a financing transaction, like the payment of a trade debt deferred beyond normal business terms or financed at a rate of interest that is not a market rate or in the case of an out-right short-term loan not at market rate, the financial asset or liability is measured initially, at the present value of the future cash flow discounted at a market rate of interest for a similar debt instrument and subsequently at amortised cost.

Financial assets that are measured at cost and amortised cost are assessed at the end of each reporting period for the objective evidence of impairment. If objective evidence of impairment is found, an impairment loss is recognised in the Statement of comprehensive income.

Notes to the accounts

2. Accounting Policies – continued

Leases (and Licences): the Company as lessee

Rental paid under the operating leases are charged to the Statement of comprehensive income on a straight line basis over the lease term.

Benefits received and receivable as an incentive to sign an operating lease are recognised on a straight line basis over the lease term, unless another systematic basis is representative of the time pattern of the lessees benefit from the use of the leased asset.

The Company has taken advantage of the optional exemption available on transition to FRS 102 which allows lease incentives on leases entered into before the date of transition to the standard 24 January 2016 to continue to be charged over the period to the first market rent review rather than the term of the lease.

Provisions for liabilities

Provisions are made where an event has taken place that gives the Company a legal or constructive obligation that probably requires settlement by a transfer of economic benefit, and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation.

Provisions are charged as an expense to the statement of comprehensive income in the year that the Company becomes aware of the obligation, and are measured at the best estimate at the Balance Sheet date of the expenditure required to settle the obligation, taking into account relevant risks and uncertainties.

When payments are eventually made, they are charged to the provision carried in the Balance sheet.

Amortisation and Depreciation

Depreciation is charged so as to allocate the cost of fixed assets (less their residual value) over the estimated useful life of the asset. Assets are normally depreciated over the following lives, using the straight-line method as follows:

ICT Equipment	20% straight line (5-years)
Vehicles and Other Equipment	20% straight line (5-years)

At the point Publica began trading, assets were acquired from the Council clients. Asset valuations and useful lives were estimated at the point of transfer. Assets acquired after 1 November 2017 will be capitalised at their purchase price.

For any purchases of used (second-hand) assets, the useful life of the asset will be determined at the point of acquisition.

Taxation

Publica is a local authority company wholly owned by its partner councils. It operates under a mutual trading status with the councils. This status means that any surplus generated by Publica in-year is treated as an in-year contract price reduction and returned to the partner Councils at the end of the year. Any retained surplus which is generated from contract sums is not assessed for corporation tax due to Publica's mutual trading status with the Councils.

Notes to the accounts

2. Accounting Policies - continued

While Publica may have mutual trading status with the partner councils for the surplus generated from contract sum, it is still subject to corporate tax for the interest income and income generated from third parties. This means any profit generated from these source is taxable, and Publica is responsible for reporting and paying corporate tax on that income. Publica includes the estimated tax payable to HMRC as a current liabilities in the account at end of the year.

Value Added Tax

The Company charge value added tax (VAT) where applicable on its income and is able to recover VAT on the majority of its expenditure. The balance of VAT payable to HMRC at year-end is included in the accounts as a current liability.

Pension Schemes

The Company participates in several separate pension schemes; two defined benefit pension schemes for transferred employees, based upon the terms and conditions of the Local Government Pension Schemes (LGPS) and a defined contribution scheme for 'new' Publica employees (employed after 1 November 2017).

The defined benefit scheme is part of the Local Government Pension Scheme. Publica takes deductions from eligible Publica staff and pay over contributions to the respective Gloucestershire or Oxfordshire LGPS. Contributions are paid to the scheme in accordance with the recommendations of an independent actuary in order that the benefits accruing in respect of current and future service can be met. The risk and rewards for these schemes are held with the host Councils and hence they are accounted for as defined contribution schemes. Consequently, legacy LGPS pension scheme assets and liabilities are all included on the partner Council's balance sheets and are not accounted for as part of these accounts.

The defined contribution scheme for employees engaged post 1 November 2017 is a pension plan under which the company pays contributions into a separate entity. Once the contributions have been paid the company has no further payment obligations.

Contributions for all schemes are recognised as an expense in the income and expenditure account and amounts not paid are shown as accruals on the balance sheet. The assets of the plan are held separately from the company in independently administered funds.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash is represented by cash in hand and deposits with financial institutions repayable without penalty on notice of not more than 24 hours. Cash equivalents are highly liquid investments that mature in no more than three months from the date of acquisition and that are readily convertible to know amount of cash with insignificant risk of change in value.

Debtors

Short term debtors are measured at transaction price, less any impairment. Loans receivable are measured initially at fair value, net of transaction costs, and are measured subsequently at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less any impairment.

Creditors

Short term creditors are measured at the transaction price. Other financial liabilities, including bank loans, are measured initially at fair value, net of transaction costs, and are measured subsequently at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Notes to the accounts

3. Judgements in Applying Accounting Policies and Key Sources of Estimation Uncertainty

Preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgements and estimates. The items in the financial statements where significant estimates have been made are as follows:

- Defined benefit pension schemes**
Management has reviewed the TUPE agreements between the Council and Publica Group (Support) Limited and considers the balance of risks and rewards sits with the Council clients.

As such, the net pension liability on the LGPS sits solely in the Council accounts and no net defined benefit pension liability in relation to the LGPS sits on the Company’s balance sheet. The schemes are accounted for as defined contribution schemes in the Company’s financial statements.

4. Analysis of Turnover

	2024/25	2023/24
	£	£
Turnover by shareholders		
Cheltenham Borough Council	770,577	805,750
Forest of Dean District Council	6,045,292	7,181,608
West Oxfordshire District Council	9,984,405	10,871,922
Cotswold District Council	8,726,750	10,268,791
	25,527,024	29,128,071
Third party work	-	-
	25,527,024	29,128,071

All turnover is generated from the company’s principal activity within the United Kingdom.

Notes to the accounts

5. Analysis of Cost of Sales

	2024/25	2023/24
	£	£
Salaries and employment on-costs	(21,905,564)	(25,405,495)
Other employment costs	(1,558,548)	(1,530,344)
Transport costs	(126,820)	(149,653)
Equipment and Materials	(2,745)	(3,815)
	(23,593,677)	(27,089,307)

6. Operating Profit / (Loss)

Operating profit / (loss) is stated after charging the following:

	2024/25	2023/24
	£	£
Depreciation & amortisation of tangible/intangible assets	-	(3,719)
External Audit fees	(36,256)	(34,505)

There is no non-audit remuneration for both financial years.

7. Interest Payable

Interest payable and similar costs comprise of bank service charges.

8. Employees and Directors Remuneration

Salaries and employment on-costs, including directors' remuneration during the year were as follows:

	2024/25	2023/24
	£	£
Staff salaries and allowances	(17,948,597)	(20,799,230)
Employer's NI contributions	(1,774,016)	(1,982,312)
Employer's superannuation contributions	(2,182,951)	(2,623,953)
	(21,905,564)	(25,405,495)

Notes to the accounts

8. Employees and Directors Remuneration - continued

Remuneration in respect of Publica's directors was as follows:

	2024/25	2023/24
	£	£
Emoluments	(335,622)	(241,234)
Employer's superannuation contributions	(60,065)	(26,801)
	(395,687)	(268,035)

Post-employment benefits are accruing for three directors (2023: one) under a defined benefit scheme. No directors (2023: one) were members of defined contributions schemes.

Amounts in respect of the highest paid director are as follows:

	2024/25	2023/24
	£	£
Emoluments	(148,050)	(127,638)
Employer's superannuation contributions	(26,057)	(21,404)
	(174,107)	(149,042)

Board members allowances and expenses for the accounting period were as follows:

	2024/25	2023/24
	£	£
Non-Executive Director Allowances	(39,065)	(39,425)
Board Member Expenses	(1,133)	(739)
	(40,198)	(40,164)

The average monthly number of employees, including directors, during the period was as follows:

	2024/25	2023/24
	£	£
Average number of staff employed	516	633

Notes to the accounts

9. Taxation

Tax on profit on Ordinary Activities

Publica Group (Support) Limited has mutual trading status and is therefore not liable to pay tax on trading profits that arise from mutual trade. Publica does not get relief for trading losses arising and from capital allowances on assets provided for their mutual trade. There were no trading activities outside of the mutual trade group in this reporting period.

Publica has received some interest income, which is outside the mutual trade agreement. The government has increased the Corporation Tax from 1 April 2023. Companies with profits between £50,000 and £250,000 will pay tax at the main rate, reduced by a marginal relief. The tax on the interest income for the reporting period is £49,905.

	2024/25	2023/24
	£	£
Corporation tax		
Current tax on Profit for the year	49,905	50,895
Adjustments in respect of prior periods	(158)	-
Total tax charge for the year	49,747	50,895

Factors affecting tax charges for the year

Profit on ordinary activities before tax	49,747	39,179
Profit on ordinary activities multiplied by the standard rate of corporation tax in the UK of 25% (2023/24: 25%)	12,437	9,795
Add:		
Non taxable income	38,181	41,758
Other movements	(713)	(657)
Adjustments in respect of prior periods	(158)	-
Total tax charge for the year	49,747	50,895

Notes to the accounts

10. Tangible Fixed Assets

Publica Group (Support) Limited has no land or property assets. All fixed assets shown below are motor vehicles.

	2024/25	2023/24
	£	£
Cost or valuation		
Balance at 1 April	53,388	72,692
Disposals	(20,606)	(19,304)
Balance at 31 March	32,782	53,388
Depreciation		
Balance at 1 April	(53,388)	(68,973)
Charge for the period	-	(3,719)
Eliminated on disposal	20,606	19,304
Balance at 31 March	(32,782)	(53,388)
Net Book Value 31 March	(0)	(0)

Notes to the accounts

11. Intangible Assets

All of the values below represent the cost of ICT software. Publica Group (Support) Limited has no other intangible assets such as goodwill or trademarks.

	2024/25	2023/24
	£	£
Cost or valuation		
Balance at 1 April	59,000	59,000
Additions	-	-
Disposals	-	-
Balance at 31 March	59,000	59,000
Amortisation		
Balance at 1 April	(59,000)	(59,000)
Charge for the period	-	-
Eliminated on disposal	-	-
Balance at 31 March	(59,000)	(59,000)
Net Book Value 31 March	-	-

12. Debtors – amounts due within one year

	2024/25	2023/24
	£	£
Balances due from Member Councils		
Cheltenham Borough Council	800	1,409
Forest of Dean District Council	203,953	223,096
West Oxfordshire District Council	292,174	32,062
Cotswold District Council	212,438	51,246
	709,365	307,813
Prepayments	44,264	94,899
Other debtors	11,790	57,316
	765,419	460,028

Notes to the accounts

13. Cash and Cash Equivalents

	2024/25	2023/24
	£	£
Bank current accounts	2,086,452	2,809,819
Business call account	-	750,000
	2,086,452	3,559,819

14. Creditors – amounts due within one year

	2024/25	2023/24
	£	£
Amounts due to Member Councils		
Cheltenham Borough Council	(75,367)	(89,714)
Forest of Dean District Council	(342,982)	(345,804)
West Oxfordshire District Council	(548,399)	(653,279)
Cotswold District Council	(477,882)	(858,981)
	(1,444,630)	(1,947,778)
Trade creditors	(43,077)	(307,768)
Other Tax and Social Security	(400,992)	(909,572)
Accumulated Absences	(252,852)	(370,418)
Other creditors	(234,875)	(342,977)
	(931,796)	(1,930,735)
	(2,376,426)	(3,878,513)

Notes to the accounts

15. Provisions

The total redundancy costs for the period amount to £700,680, which includes:

- Statutory and /or enhanced redundancy payments
- Payment in Lieu of Notice (PILON)
- Early retirement pension cost for members of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)

Additionally, a provision of £334,111 has been included in relation to the agreed termination of employment contract for a senior member of staff.

These costs are primarily a direct result of the Publica review. It has been agreed that the reduction costs will be shared among Cotswold District Council, Forest of Dean District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council.

	2024/25
	£
Statutory redundancy payments	220,099
Payment in Lieu of Notice (PILON)	90,507
Early retirement pension costs	390,074
	700,680

Notes to the accounts

16. Related Party Transactions

Services provided by Publica Group (Support) Limited

Publica Group (Support) Limited (the Company), is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee with no share capital.

Cotswold District Council, West Oxfordshire District Council, Forest of Dean District Council and Cheltenham Borough Council have jointly set up Publica Group (Support) Limited, a wholly owned company, operating with Mutual Trading Status to deliver the services to the Member Councils and to other Members under contracts similar to this Agreement.

During the period the Company supplied services to its partner the Councils totalling £25,527,024 (2023/24: £29,128,071). An analysis of this turnover is provided in note 4 of the financial statements, along with an analysis of the amounts due from each Member Council at year-end in note 12 of the financial statements.

The Company is a Teckal company fulfilling the conditions set out in Regulation 12(4) of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. The Company is subject to management supervision by the Members. As such, the Company is a body governed by public law as defined in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

Publica additionally provides services to the Cheltenham Trust, Cheltenham Borough Homes and UBICO (an environmental services local authority company) via the Council contracts.

Services provided to Publica Group (Support) Limited from the partner Councils

The following services are provided to Publica (for a fee):

- Counter Fraud Support from the Gloucestershire Counter Fraud Unit – who are employed by Cotswold District Council.
- ICT office accommodation (desk fees) from each of the partner Councils.

2024/25		
Fees From Member Councils	Licence fees	Counter Fraud Unit
		£
Cheltenham Borough Council	(20,508)	(1,410)
Forest of Dean District Council	(195,278)	(10,991)
West Oxfordshire District Council	(238,795)	(16,770)
Cotswold District Council	(256,479)	(16,205)
	(711,060)	(45,376)

Notes to the accounts

Related Party Transactions (continued)

		2023/24	
Fees From Member Councils	Licence fees	Counter Fraud Unit	
		£	£
Cheltenham Borough Council	(35,726)		(1,425)
Forest of Dean District Council	(192,023)		(11,109)
West Oxfordshire District Council	(306,228)		(16,950)
Cotswold District Council	(290,621)		(16,379)
	(824,598)		(45,863)

An analysis of amounts due to Member Councils at the year-end is included in note 14 of the financial statements.

Publica Executive Directors and Senior Officers

All Executive Directors and senior officers within Publica have made declarations as to any potential conflicts of interest within their roles within Publica and their private lives. A close family member of a director is employed by the Company. They receive a salary on an arm's length basis, comparable to other employees in similar roles.

A number of Publica staff have the ability to commit to expenditure on behalf of the Council clients, as well as Publica. While a number of these officers have operational responsibility within both the Company and the client clear distinctions remain between the organisations with separate accounting policies, financial rules and general ledger systems to ensure the organisations remain separate and are accounted for as such.

Details of Executive Directors remuneration is included in note 8 of the financial statements.

Notes to the accounts

17. Financial Instruments

The following categories of financial instrument are recognised in the Statement of Financial Position:

	2024/25	2023/24
	£	£
Financial Assets at Amortised Cost		
Cash and cash equivalents	2,086,452	3,559,819
Debtors	721,155	365,129
Total Financial Assets	2,807,607	3,924,948
Financial Liabilities at Amortised Cost		
Creditors - Current	(1,975,434)	(2,968,941)
Provisions	(334,111)	-
Total Financial Liabilities	(2,309,545)	(2,968,941)

All instruments are current and as such the carrying values are deemed a reasonable approximation of fair value. Financial assets include cash & cash equivalents, balances due from Member Councils and other debtors. Financial liabilities include amounts due to Member Councils, overdraft balances, trade creditors, accruals, provisions and other creditors.

The items of income, expense, gains and losses recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income in relation to financial instruments consist of the following:

	2024/25	2023/24
	£	£
Financial Assets at Amortised Cost		
Interest receivable and similar income	202,473	206,208
Interest payable and similar charges	(239)	(294)
Net gains for the year	202,234	205,914

Notes to the accounts

18. Licences

Publica Group (Support) Limited makes use of office facilities and ICT equipment from its Member Councils under licence. The licences are for 5 or 10 year periods commencing 1 November 2017. The future operating licence obligations are as follows:

	2024/25	2023/24
	£	£
Not later than one year	392,974	719,916
Later than one year but not greater than five years	229,325	1,138,059
Later than five years	-	-
	622,299	1,857,975

19. Reconciliation of Net Movement in Funds to Net Cash flow from Operating Activities

	2024/25	2023/24
	£	£
Net movement in funds	-	(11,716)
Reversal of interest (receivable) / payable	(202,234)	(205,914)
Reversal of asset depreciation and amortisation	-	3,719
Reversal of proceeds from disposal of fixed assets	-	-
Decrease / (increase) in debtors	(305,391)	877,010
(Decrease) / increase in creditors	(1,502,087)	1,368,929
(Decrease) / increase in provisions	334,111	(9,559)
Net cash flow from Operating Activities	(1,675,601)	2,022,469

Notes to the accounts

Net Debt Movement

Publica Group (Support) Limited has no long term borrowings.

	2024/25	Cash flows	2023/24
	£	£	£
Cash and cash equivalents			
Cash	2,086,452	(1,473,367)	3,559,819
Bank Overdraft	-	-	-
	2,086,452	(1,473,367)	3,559,819
Borrowings	-	-	-
Net debt	2,086,452	(1,473,367)	3,559,819

20. Pension Schemes

Employees are entitled to participate in a retirement benefit scheme. The Company participates in three schemes:

- The Local Government Pension Scheme ('LGPS') for Gloucestershire and the LGPS for Oxfordshire, both of which are a defined benefit schemes. The scheme is a closed scheme for new employees unless the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 applies.
- Stakeholder pension administered by Royal London. Employee contributions are matched by employer's contributions to a maximum of 5% (7% from 1 April 2025).

The Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire Local Government Pension Schemes

The defined benefit scheme is part of the Local Government Pension Scheme. Publica takes deductions from eligible Publica staff and pays over contributions to the respective Gloucestershire or Oxfordshire LGPS. Contributions are paid to the scheme in accordance with the recommendations of an independent actuary in order that the benefits accruing in respect of current and future service can be met. The risk and rewards for these schemes are held with the host Councils and hence they are accounted for as defined contribution schemes. Consequently, LGPS pension scheme assets and liabilities are all included on the partner Council's balance sheets and are not accounted for as part of these financial statements.

Royal London Stakeholder Pension

The Company offers a Stakeholder pension for employees employed post 1st November 2017. The scheme is administered by Royal London. Employee contributions are matched by employer's contributions (at 5% currently). The cost of pension contributions is included within these accounts as part of the 'Cost of Sales' line within the Statement of Comprehensive Income.

Total contributions payable by the Company for the year amounted to £381,608 (2023/24: £411,551). Contributions totalling £24,572 (2023/24: £35,773) were payable to the scheme at the balance sheet date and are included in creditors.

Notes to the accounts

21. Vehicle Leases

The Company has initiated new operating leases with two companies to lease 7 electric vans for duration of 2 and 3 years. Upon the conclusion of leasing agreements, all the vans will be returned to the lessors. Lease payments under the operating leases are charged to the Statement of comprehensive income over the lease term.

Future minimum lease payment under non-cancellable operating leases are as follows:

	2024/25	2023/24
	£	£
Not later than one year	23,133	35,745
Later than one year but not greater than five years	6,870	30,057
	30,003	65,802

22. Controlling Parties

The Company is wholly owned by Cotswold District Council, West Oxfordshire District Council, Forest of Dean District Council, and Cheltenham Borough Council.