

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	6 April 2021
Subject:	Depot Services Working Group Working Group
Report of:	Head of Community Services
Corporate Lead:	Chief Executive
Lead Member:	Lead Member for Clean and Green Environment
Number of Appendices:	One

Executive Summary:

In July 2019, this Committee agreed to establish the Depot Services Work Group in order to facilitate a better understanding of the operational, financial and governance aspects of Ubico and their partnership relationship with the Council.

The Working Group has met on seven occasions throughout the period since it was established and considered a wide range of subjects including Ubico's business plan, financial budget setting and operational arrangements. The group also considered other matters such as the trade waste service and proposals for a new depot project. The group's work was slightly hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic but has still made good progress in its considerations as set out in the body of the report.

The Working Group considers that due to the amount of ongoing work in this area there is an ongoing role for the group and recommends to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that its work continues into the next Municipal Year as set out in the report.

Recommendation:

- 1. To NOTE the progress of the Depot Services Working Group.**
- 2. To AGREE that the group continues to meet for the forthcoming Municipal Year.**

Reasons for Recommendation:

To allow Councillors further opportunity to scrutinise the Ubico operations and management and to continue to oversee ongoing projects in the field of waste management.

Resource Implications:

None arising directly as a result of this report.

Legal Implications:

None arising directly as a result of this report.

Risk Management Implications:

None arising directly as a result of this report.

Performance Management Follow-up:

The Working Group will operate within the Terms of Reference. The Working Group will report back to this Committee at the end of the Municipal Year.

Environmental Implications:

None arising directly as a result of this report.

1.0 INTRODUCTION/ BACKGROUND

1.1 At its meeting of 23 July 2019 this Committee agreed to establish the Depot Services Working Group. The reason for establishing the group was set out in a report to this Committee of July 2019 and, in part, included the fact that Members have, at times, expressed frustration about a perceived lack of control and transparency with Ubico. It was considered important that Councillors understand how Ubico operates and the relationship between the Council and the company.

1.2 The stated aim of the Working Group was to receive reports and information pertinent to the operation and strategic direction of waste and recycling, street cleansing and grounds maintenance services.

1.3 The Terms of Reference for the Working Group are set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

2.0 WORKING GROUP CONSIDERATIONS

2.1 A considerable amount of work has been undertaken with the Working Group having met on seven occasions between September 2019 and March 2021. It has considered a wide range of topics including:

- An overview of Ubico including partnership arrangements and governance.
- Ubico's and the Council's relationship with the Joint Waste Team.
- Trade Waste Review.
- Extension of the Ubico Contract.
- Strategic Waste Site (Depot Project) Update.
- Operational Review – Vehicle procurement etc.
- Annual Budget Setting.
- Draft Ubico Business Plan.

2.2 Due to the COVID-19 pandemic a number of meetings were cancelled and the group did not meet at all between March and September 2020.

3.0 WORKING GROUP OUTCOMES

3.1 Despite being slightly hampered by the pandemic, the Working Group has made good progress and has overseen a considerable amount of progress on projects and in gaining a better understanding of Ubico as a company and the arrangements with the Council for delivering the services it is responsible for.

- 3.2** Through the work of the group, it is considered that the Councillors involved have a much better understanding of the partnership arrangements between the Council and Ubico. Councillors also have a much better understanding of how Ubico's finances are managed and the Council's part in monitoring those finances.
- 3.3** Following significant work of this group, the Council has taken the decision to extend its contract with Ubico for a further five years from 2022.
- 3.4** The trade waste project has moved forward considerably to a point where a high-level operational business plan is in place and resources have been identified to take this project forward under the oversight of this Committee.
- 3.5** The Council has entered into a new partnership arrangement with all of the Districts in the County and left the old Joint Waste Committee which only included four of the Districts.
- 3.6** Councillors are sighted on very high-level proposals for a new depot facility which is a project led by Cheltenham Borough Council.

4.0 NEXT STEPS

- 4.1** At its final meeting in March 2021, the group considered the work that is still ongoing including the trade waste project, oversight of the street cleansing review, the proposed in-cab technology project and the depot project and agreed that there is still a role for the Working Group.
- 4.2** As a result of this, the group is recommending to this Committee that it continues to meet under the same Terms of Reference for the next Municipal Year. It is proposed, if agreed, that meetings would take place on a quarterly basis with the option to call further meetings if any urgent matters arise, for example, if a service area required greater attention from Members i.e. if there were an increased number of complaints or service failures under one element of the Ubico service.

5.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

- 5.1** None.

6.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

- 6.1** Waste and Resources Strategy 2020.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

- 7.1** None.

8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)

- 8.1** Service changes or improvements relating to waste collections will be in line with the Waste Framework Directive and the Waste Hierarchy and aim to deliver more sustainable waste and environmental frontline services.

9.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)

- 9.1** None.

10.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS

10.1 None.

Background Papers: Overview & Scrutiny Report – Ubico Working Group July 2019.

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Appendices: 1. Depot Services Working Group - Terms of Reference