

REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

Date of Meeting: 25 June 2024

Report of: Director, Jo Yelland

Title: Productivity Plan

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Executive

1. What is the report about?

1.1 All councils have been asked by the Government to produce productivity plans, ensuring that there is member oversight and endorsement of their plan before it is submitted by the deadline of 19 July 2024. This report sets out the background to the Government's requirements for productivity plans and presents a draft plan for member approval.

2. Recommendations:

2.1 It is recommended that Executive:-

- 1) notes and approves the 2024 productivity plan; and
- 2) grant delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council to make any necessary drafting amendments before publication.

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

3.1 To endorse publication of the plan and enable submission to Government by the required deadline.

4. What are the resource implications including non financial resources

4.1 There are no resource implications.

5. Section 151 Officer comments:

5.1 There are no financial implications arising from the report. The figures quoted in the Productivity Plan reflect the quarterly reporting in the Council's Budget Monitoring report in respect of the delivery of cost reductions annually.

6. What are the legal aspects?

6.1 The provision of a Productivity Plan to be submitted to the Department for Levelling Up, Homes and Communities (DLUHC) is not a statutory requirement. The Minister for Local Government, Homes and Communities announced on 5 February 2024 in the context of the Local Government Finance Settlement that local authorities would have to draft productivity plans. Subsequently the Minister for Local Government wrote to the Chief Executive (and other local authority Chief Executives throughout the country) on 16

April 2024 concerning the issue of productivity in local government and the requirement to produce productivity plans. The letter states that the government will consider the productivity plans submitted by local authorities by setting up a panel ‘...to consider the themes and evidence that comes from the plans...[t]hey will consider the issues emerging from the plans, the implications for future national policy, design, the role of government in supporting further change and the role of the sector in going further.’

7. Monitoring Officer’s comments:

As stated in the legal aspects above, the requirement for a Productivity Plan is not a statutory requirement but rather a requirement made by a government minister. The extent to which the plans are scrutinised and proposals made will not doubt be reviewed following the general election.

8. Report details:

8.1 In 2024 all local authorities are required for the first time, as a condition of the 2024/25 Finance Settlement, to submit a high level “Productivity Plan”. The Department for Levelling Up, Homes and Communities (DLUHC) requires these plans to be formally adopted by each individual Council, submitted to DLUHC by 19th July 2024 and subsequently published on the Council’s website.

8.2 DLUHC have stated the purpose of these plans is to enable them to “... **understand what is already working well across the whole country. What common themes are, whether there are any gaps and what more we need to do to unlock future opportunities**”.

8.3 In his letter to local authorities dated 16 April 2024, the Minister states that the lessons learnt will be shared with the sector, but the plans will not be rated, scored or compiled into league tables and, whilst he does provide a list of themes, he expects a local Productivity Plan to include, there is no clear definition of productivity.

8.4 The Minister states that: “**Productivity is not one-dimensional, and I would encourage you to consider the various facets that encompass the drive for greater productivity. When developing your plans, please think broadly and include reference not only to how you run your organisation, but also how you run the public services you provide and how you provide place leadership. It is with this wide view that we can ensure we are providing value for money for residents**”.

8.5 The Minister’s letter goes onto say Productivity Plans should be 3 or 4 pages long and set out what local authorities have done in recent years, alongside current plans to transform our organisation and services in future and an overview of our local governance arrangements for monitoring our plans and providing assurance to ourselves and residents that we are providing value for money. The Minister sets out a number of themes to consider including:

- How we have transformed the way we design and deliver services and what more we intend to do to make better use of resources.

- How we plan to take advantage of technology and make better use of data to improve decision making, service design and use of resources.
- Our plans to reduce wasteful spend within our organisation and systems (use of agency, consultants, Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) roles, shared services).
- Barriers to productivity and what government, or the market, could do to help.

8.6 Based on this limited guidance, a copy of the council's draft productivity plan is attached at Annex A. Members will note that improved productivity is a the core of the Council's ongoing transformation programme.

9. How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan?

9.1 The Corporate plan is cross-referenced in the productivity plan.

10. What risks are there and how can they be reduced?

10.1 No risks have been identified.

11. Equality Act 2010 (The Act)

11.1 Under the Act's Public Sector Equalities Duty, decision makers are required to consider the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct;
- advance equality by encouraging participation, removing disadvantage, taking account of disabilities and meeting people's needs; and
- foster good relations between people by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

11.2 In order to comply with the general duty authorities must assess the impact on equality of decisions, policies and practices. These duties do not prevent the authority from reducing services where necessary, but they offer a way of developing proposals that consider the impacts on all members of the community.

11.3 In making decisions the authority must take into account the potential impact of that decision in relation to age, disability, race/ethnicity (includes Gypsies and Travellers), sex and gender, gender identity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, pregnant women and new and breastfeeding mothers, marriage and civil partnership status in coming to a decision.

11.4 In recommending this proposal no potential impact has been identified on people with protected characteristics as determined by the Act because the report documents existing activity. does not set policy and there is no negative impact.

12. Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

12.1 No direct carbon/environmental impacts arising from the recommendations.

13. Are there any other options?

No other options available.

Director: Jo Yelland

Author: Jo Yelland

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

Letter from Minister for Local Government, Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) dated 16 April 2024

Contact for enquires:
Democratic Services (Committees)
Room 4.36
01392 265275