

Report to Cabinet

Subject: Council Productivity Plan

Date: 17 July 2024

Author: Chief Executive

Wards Affected

Borough-wide.

Purpose

For Cabinet to approve the Council's Productivity Plan.

Key Decision

This is not a key decision.

Recommendations

THAT CABINET:

1. Approves the Council's Productivity Plan for publication and submission to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).
2. Refers the report to full Council for information and noting.

1 Background

- 1.1 The Local Government Finance Settlement was announced by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) on 5 February 2024. As part of the speech, he announced the following:

“As part of our efforts to return the sector to sustainability in the future, we are also asking local authorities to develop and share productivity plans. These plans will set out how local authorities will improve service performance and reduce wasteful expenditure, for example on consultants or discredited equality, diversity and inclusion programmes. Government will monitor these plans, and funding settlements in future will be informed by performance against these plans.

My department will work with the local government sector on the approach to producing these plans. The plans should be short and draw on work councils have already done, identifying ways to unlock productivity improvements and setting out the key implementation milestones. Plans should be published by July 2024 before the House rises for the summer recess. They must be agreed by Council Leaders

and members and published on local authority websites, together with updates on progress. We expect them to cover four main areas:

1) transformation of services to make better use of resources;

2) opportunities to take advantage of advances in technology and make better use of data to inform decision making and service design;

3) ways to reduce wasteful spend within systems, including specific consideration of expenditure on consultants and discredited staff Equality, Diversity and Inclusion programmes – this does not include programmes designed to promote integration and civic pride, and counter extremism; and

4) barriers preventing activity that Government can help to reduce or remove.

Alongside this, we will establish a new productivity review panel, made up of sector experts including the Office for Local Government and the Local Government Association.”

- 1.2 The Council received a letter from the Minister for Local Government (Simon Hoare MP) dated 16 April 2024 which provided further information and set a return date of 19 July 2024 (attached at Appendix 2).
- 1.3 Following the declaration of a General Election on 4 July 2024, representative bodies (LGA, DCN etc) approached Government to see if any of the requirements had changed. DLUHC indicated that both the requirement for a Productivity Plan and the submission date remained unchanged as this was government policy.
- 1.4 The Council's Productivity Plan is attached at Appendix 1. It has been developed through consultation with senior officers and managers across the Council and builds upon our ambition and vision for the transformation of services. The purpose of the Plan is to be a helpful and usable document that provides a roadmap for improvement over the next three financial years. It sets out the following:
 - About Gedling;
 - Key Challenges;
 - Our Approach to Improvement;
 - Measuring our Impact;
 - Our Plan in terms of being a Connected Council, adopting Smarter Working, improving the Customer Experience, enabling Gedling Growth, and having Resilient Communities;
 - How can the Government Help?

2 Proposal

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to approve the Council's Productivity Plan. Wider member oversight and endorsement was expected prior to the calling of the General Election, and as such it was planned to refer this to full Council for final approval. However, the government imposed submission date of 19 July 2024 has deemed this to be not possible, hence it is referred to Council for information and noting only.

3 Alternative Options

- 3.1 Members could choose not to submit the Productivity Plan however this would go against government policy unless changed by any incoming government.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Any financial impacts arising from the Plan will be considered separately as actions are developed.

5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report. There is no statutory requirement to produce a Productivity Plan however it is a formal request from government to do so. The Plan is not part of the Budget and Policy framework and as such approval by the Executive is appropriate.

6 Equalities Implications

- 6.1 There are no equalities implications arising directly from this report.

7 Carbon Reduction/Sustainability Implications

- 7.1 There are no carbon reduction/sustainability implications arising directly from this report.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1: Council Productivity Plan.
- 8.2 Appendix 2: DLUHC letter from the Minister for Local Government dated 16 April 2024.

9 Background Papers

- 9.1 None.

10 Reasons for Recommendations

- 10.1 The approval of a Council Productivity Plan is set out in the government letter dated 16 April 2024 and this stipulates a submission date of 19 July 2024.