

Corporate Policy and Resources Committee



Date of meeting Monday 8 July 2024

Title	<i>Productivity Plan</i>
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report Author	<i>Sandy Muirhead Group Head Commissioning and Transformation Lee O'Neil Deputy Chief Executive</i>
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Exempt	No
Exemption Reason	N/A
Corporate Priority	Services
Recommendations	Committee is asked to: Agree to submission of the Productivity Plan (Appendix B) to DLUHC
Reason for Recommendation	<i>The Government has asked all local authorities to submit by Productivity plans by 19 July as outlined in the Local Government Finance Settlement 24/25.</i>

1. Summary of the report

What is the situation	Why we want to do something
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All local Government as outlined in a letter from the Minister for local Government on 16 April 2024 (Appendix A) have been requested to produce productivity plans as part of the Government's review of productivity in public services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a government request but also provides Spelthorne with an opportunity to demonstrate our own productivity and forward thinking actions.
This is what we want to do about it	These are the next steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To comply with the Government request Spelthorne needs to produce its own productivity plan. in line with Government guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To agree the productivity plan for submission to Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) by 19 July 2024

1.1 This report seeks agreement by the Committee to the Spelthorne productivity plan as provided in Appendix B which endeavours to address all the points of a plan as listed in the Minister for Local Government's letter of 16 April 2024 (Appendix A).

2. Key issues

2.1 On 24 January 2024 to accompany additional funding measures for the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2024/25, the Government announced a new efficiency drive for local government as part of the effort to 'return the sector to (financial) sustainability in the future'. Local authorities have been asked to produce 'Productivity Plans' setting out 'how they will improve service performance and reduce wasteful expenditure'.

2.2 The plan's scope is all Council activity. DLHUC is encouraging local authorities to take a wide view of productivity including service delivery.

2.3 The plans are to be submitted to DLHUC by 19 July 2024 and will then be published on the Spelthorne Borough Council website.

2.4 The plans will be reviewed by an expert panel, to be established by the DLUHC, which will include the Office for Local Government (OFLOG) and the Local Government Association (LGA). The exact composition of the review panel is currently unknown and with a general election it maybe sometime before such a panel is convened. The reviewed plans will be monitored, and future funding settlements will be informed by performance against these plans. This panel will also consider emerging themes and issues from the plans and advise the government and the sector on future national policy design.

2.5 On 16 April 2024 DLUHC provided full guidance. This guidance set a three/four-page expected length for the plan and contained twenty-four prompting questions to inform content. To fulfil the content requirements in 4 pages is very difficult without losing meaning and depth of what we have achieved and our future plans.

2.6 DLUHC expect the plans to cover four main areas:

- Theme 1 - Transformation of services to make better use of resources.
- Theme 2 – Opportunities to take advantage of advances in technology and make better use of data to inform decision making and service design.
- Theme 3 - Ways to reduce wasteful spend within systems, including specific consideration of expenditure on consultants and discredited staff Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) programmes.
- Theme 4 - Barriers preventing activity that Government can help to reduce or remove.

2.7 The guidance stressed that councils should update the published plans and report on progress on a regular basis. This will involve including relevant metrics and key performance indicators. This requirement is to effectively monitor whether the transformation projects stated in the plans are being carried out and the anticipated benefits realised. Regular monitoring will be provided going forward.

3. Options analysis and proposal

3.1 **Preferred option** to agree the proposed productivity plan to meet the Government's criteria and timelines.

3.2 Not to submit the plan and fail to meet Government requirements.

4. Financial management comments

4.1 The report itself does not have financial consequences but delivery is covered by various projects and services accounted for separately.

5. Risk management comments.

5.1 Risk in this case relates to possible comments from DLUHC and future use by Government of the plans (currently unknown).

6. Procurement comments

6.1 Not applicable.

7. Legal comments

7.1 None at this stage

8. Other considerations

8.1 N/A

9. Equality and Diversity

9.1 Individual activities within the plan will take into account equality and diversity issues.

10. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

10.1 Activities within the plan will take account of any sustainability and climate change implications.

11. Timetable for implementation.

11.1 Submission of plan to DLUHC by 19 July 2024

12. Contact

12.1 Sandy Muirhead Group Head Commissioning and Transformation 01784 446318

12.2 Lee O'Neil Deputy Chief Executive 01784 446377.

Background papers: There are none.

Appendices:

Appendix A, DLUHC letter of 16 April 2024

Appendix B Productivity Plan.