

Report to: Council 9th July 2024

Report of: Managing Director

Subject: PRODUCTIVITY PLAN

1. Recommendation

1.1 That the Council approves the Productivity Plan for submission to DLUHC.

2. Background

2.1 As part of the Local Government Settlement in February 2024, The Secretary of State for Levelling Up stated that in return for additional resources receivable as part of the settlement, councils will need to produce a Productivity Plan.

2.2 Guidance on the proposed content and intentions of the Productivity Plans was issued by the Department of Levelling Up (DLUHC) on 16 April. This confirmed that the Submission date for the plans was 19 July and that that the plan must have formal approval of the Council.

2.3 It is important that the plan has the approval of the Council subsequent to the local elections in May. The earliest date for which formal approval can be obtained by the Policy and Resources Committee is the date of the meeting of 30 July. Therefore, in order to comply with the second requirement, the Plan is presented to Council prior to consideration by Committee. No further communication about submission arrangements has been received from the Department other than the requirement to submit it by email by 19 July.

3. Information

3.1 The draft Productivity Plan is provided at **Appendix 1**. This was discussed with Group Leaders at a meeting of 1 July. It follows the format suggested by the guidance published on 16 April which is annexed as **Appendix 2**.

3.2 In summary, the guidance is not prescriptive or detailed. It suggests that councils should “think broadly and include reference to:

- how you run your organisation
- how you run local services
- how you provide place leadership”

These matters are set out in the introductory section of the Plan.

3.3 No template of detailed criteria is provided in the guidance. The Plan is expected to be three to four pages in length and set out:

- What you have done in recent years to transform your organisation and services
- Current plans
- How you will monitor and assess the plans and ensure yourselves that the plan will be delivered
- How you have working with partners such as the NHS.

3.4 Councils should also consider the following themes:

- How have you designed and transformed the way you design and deliver services to make better use of resources?
- How you plan to take advantage of technology and make better use of data to improve decision making, service design and use of resources?
- Your plans to reduce wasteful spend within your organisation and systems?
- The barriers preventing progress that the Government can help to reduce or remove.

3.5 The Productivity Plan has been drafted in accordance with these themes to demonstrate clearly how the guidance has been followed.

4. Preferred Option

4.1 To approve the draft Productivity Plan for submission to DLUHC.

5. Alternative Options Considered

5.1 To consider the draft Productivity Plan at Policy and Resources Committee prior to consideration by Council. This would allow more detailed consideration of the draft. However, it would have required the administration in place before the May elections to approve the plan and could not, therefore, have taken into account any changes in political balance as a result of those elections. The meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee of 21 May would not have allowed sufficient time for the new administration to consider the draft in detail.

5.2 Alternative formats have been considered. The format and content proposed have been developed in consultation with the Leadership Group and follows the guidance issued by the Department.

6. Implications

6.1 Financial and Budgetary Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from the report. Actions identified in the Plan have been included in the Medium Term Financial Plan. The Policy & Resources Committee will be advised of any financial implications arising from specific actions that follow.

6.2 Legal and Governance Implications

In order to meet the requirement that the Plan has formal approval of the Council, the requirement to provide the Plan by 19 July has meant that it is presented to Council prior to consideration by the relevant committee. Guidance provided by DLUHC has not set out any implications of not meeting the submission date.

6.3 Risk Implications

There are no direct risk implications arising from this report.

6.4 Corporate/Policy Implications

The Productivity Plan has been drafted in the context of the Council's overall strategic approach and in line with the expectations set out in the City Plan and other key strategies.

6.5 Equality Implications

There are no direct equalities implications arising from the report. Changes to the range of services delivered by the Council, as far as these are indicated in the Productivity Plan, will be subject to equality impact assessments as individual reports are brought forward to Committee.

6.6 Human Resources Implications

There are no Human Resources implications arising from the report.

6.7 Health and Safety Implications

There are no health and safety implications arising from the report.

6.8 Social, Environmental and Economic Implications

There are no social, environmental or economic implications arising from this report.

Ward(s):

All Wards

Contact Officer:

Shane Flynn – Corporate Director Finance and Resources.

shane.flynn@worchester.gov.uk. Tel: 01905 722536

Background Papers:

None