

# Local Government Productivity Plan



<b>Report to:</b>	Cabinet
<b>Date:</b>	11 July 2024
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Councillor Hannah Ellis, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services and Transformation
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	Rebecca Farrant, Assistant Director – Corporate Services (01279) 446811
<b>Contributing Officer:</b>	Simon Pipe, Customer and Business Insight Manager (01279) 446544
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No
<b>Forward Plan:</b>	Forward Plan number I017170
<b>Call In:</b>	This item is subject to call in procedures
<b>Corporate Mission:</b>	Deliver High-Performing Council Services
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	None specific

## Executive Summary

- A** A productivity Plan has been produced for Harlow Council to demonstrate good practice to date in delivering service improvement along with proposals for future transformation. The specific financial aspects in relation to increasing productivity and ensuring no wasteful spend have also been addressed in the report, alongside barriers to achieving transformation. Milestones for progressing transformation have been included in the plan and will be monitored as part of the council's annual delivery plan for 2025/26. Cabinet's sign off of the plan is required before submission for review by a productivity plan panel to be set up by Department for Levelling Up, Homes and Communities (DLUHC).

## **Recommended that:**

- A** Cabinet notes the Productivity Plan to be submitted to Department for Levelling Up, Homes and Communities, at Appendix A of this report, and approves it for publication on the council's website.

## **Reason for decision**

- A** The Department for Levelling Up, Homes and Communities (DLUHC) requested submission and publication of Productivity Plans from all local authorities as part of the final Local Government Finance Settlement for 2024-25.

## **Other Options**

- A** The council could not publish or submit a productivity plan. This is not recommended as the plan will play an important part in sharing what is working well across local government as well as identifying and addressing barriers to increasing productivity. The council's corporate mission to deliver high-performing council services will be helped through the publication and monitoring of the productivity plan.

## **Background**

1. As part of the final Local Government Finance Settlement for 2024-25 the Secretary of State for DLUHC included the requirement for local authorities to produce productivity plans to be published in July 2024.
2. Productivity plans are to set out how local authorities will improve service performance and reduce wasteful expenditure. Government will monitor these plans, and funding settlements in future will be informed by performance against these plans.
3. 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.
4. Plans must be agreed by Council Leaders and Members and published on local authority websites, together with updates on progress.

## **Proposals**

5. Cross council working has produced a productivity plan for Harlow, covering the four main areas stipulated by DLUHC:

- transformation of services to make better use of resources;
  - opportunities to take advantage of advances in technology and make better use of data to inform decision making and service design;
  - ways to reduce wasteful spend within systems; and
  - barriers preventing activity that Government can help to reduce or remove.
6. Milestones for transformation will be included in the council's Corporate Plan annual delivery plan for 2025/26.
  7. Following approval the Productivity Plan will be published on the council's website and submitted to DLUHC's Productivity Plan Panel for review.

## **Implications**

### **Equalities and Diversity**

The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires the Council to consider how to positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. Officers believe it may have an impact on our equality duty and will ensure that a full impact assessment is carried out for elements of the future transformation programme to ensure accessibility and opportunity for all.

### **Climate Change**

This report has no direct impact on Climate Change.

### **Finance**

No additional resource was required for the completion of the productivity plan. The council is seeking to manage expenditure against its growth requirements; ensuring resources in its medium term financial planning are aligned to current and future service delivery requirements.  
Author: Jacqueline Van Mellaerts, Assistant Director – Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer

### **Governance**

None, this report is for noting only.

Author: Julie Galvin, Legal Services Manager and Monitoring Officer

## **Appendices**

Appendix A – Harlow Council Productivity Plan

## **Background Papers**

None

## **Glossary of terms/abbreviations used**

DLUHC - Department for Levelling Up, Homes and Communities