

Report to Cabinet

17 July 2024

Subject:	Productivity Plan
Cabinet Member:	Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, Cllr Paul Moore
Director:	James McLaughlin, Assistant Chief Executive
Key Decision:	Yes
Contact Officer:	Senior Lead Officer, Service Improvement Jane Alexander Jane_Alexander@sandwell.gov.uk



1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That approval be given to the Productivity Plan attached at Appendix 2.
- 1.2 That the Assistant Chief Executive be authorised to submit the Productivity Plan to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.





2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 Government have requested that all local authorities submit a Productivity Plan by 19 July 2024.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	The Best Start in Life for Children and Young People	The Productivity Plan sets out the council's approach to driving productivity and service performance across all directorates and
	People Live Well and Age Well	



	Strong Resilient Communities	therefore across all priorities of the Council Plan
	Quality Homes in Thriving Neighbourhoods	
	A Strong and Inclusive Economy	
	A Connected and Accessible Sandwell	

4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 DLUHC has encouraged authorities to take a wide view of productivity. The plans are expected to cover productivity in relation to:
- How the organisation is run.
 - Service delivery.
 - Place leadership.
- 4.3 The plans are expected to be submitted before the parliamentary summer recess (23 July 2024).
- 4.4 The Productivity Plans will be reviewed by an expert panel, to be established by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (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. 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.

- 4.5 On 5 February 2024, DLUHC provided further details; 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'; published with progress updates on council websites, and agreed by council Leaders and elected members.
- 4.6 DLUHC confirmed that councils have flexibility in how they decide to approve their plan, as long as there is member oversight and endorsement.
- 4.7 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 (with a particular focus on expenditure on Equality, Diversity)
 - Theme 4 - Barriers preventing progress that Government can help to reduce or remove.
- 4.8 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. (Letter attached in appendix 1).
- 4.9 The Council's proposed Productivity Plan is contained in appendix 2. The approach taken has been to describe the improvement journey the council has been on in recent years and our future plans for further transformation and moving towards excellence. Rather than repeat information on service performance, transformation and productivity, the plan provides links to the key documents where this information can be found.



5 Alternative Options

5.1 The proposed Productivity Plan follows the guidance as set out by the DLUHC.

6 Implications

Resources:	The Productivity Plan does not have any direct resources implications
Legal and Governance:	Submission of the Productivity Plan is not a legal requirement. However, the plans may be used in future to monitor local authority progress.
Risk:	There are no risk implications arising from this report
Equality:	DLUHC have specifically asked for information relating to the use of resources for Equality Diversity and Inclusion. This is contained in the Productivity Plan.
Health and Wellbeing:	None
Social Value:	None
Climate Change:	None
Corporate Parenting:	There are no implications for Corporate Parenting responsibilities

7. Appendices

Appendix 1- DLUHC letter to local authorities on requirements for Productivity Plans

Appendix 2 – Sandwell Council’s proposed Productivity Plan

8. Background Papers

None

