

**Public
Key Decision - No**

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Productivity plan

Meeting/Date: Overview and Scrutiny 10th July 2024
Cabinet 16th July 2024

Executive Portfolio: Sarah Conboy (Executive Leader)

Report by: Oliver Morley, Corporate Director (People)

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

As part of this year's Local Government Finance Settlement, it was announced that all councils would be asked to produce productivity plans. This request was formally made on the 16th April by Minister for Local Government Simon Hoare. These plans form part of the continued focus on efficiency within the public sector, and all local authorities have been asked to submit these plans by the 19th July.

Huntingdonshire District Council has worked hard to ensure we continue to deliver efficient and effective services and been subject to external scrutiny to review the effectiveness of this approach. Attached to this report is the productivity plan that we propose submitting to the department for levelling up, outlining our approach.

Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. Comment on and approve the Productivity plan for Huntingdonshire District Council which will form the Council's submission to the department for Levelling Up
2. Comment on and endorse the Council's Continuous Improvement plan.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To present the Councils proposed productivity plan for comment and feedback, prior to submission to the Department for Levelling Up by the deadline of the 19th July 2024.

2. BACKGROUND TO THIS WORK

- 2.1 Local Government is subject to the Best Value duty, and in being held accountable for the value for money test on its activity as part of its budget and overall management. This has been combined with resource challenges, and demand pressures, which have made a culture of continuous improvement core to the way in which local government operates both internally and with partners.
- 2.2 As part of the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2024/25, the Government has asked Councils to produce and submit a “productivity plan” outlining the steps we have taken to monitor and improve our productivity. No formal template or detailed list of criteria has been provided, rather the Government are seeking a plan of “three to four pages in length, (which) set out what you have done in recent years, alongside your current plans, to transform your organisation and services”. The request includes four themes:
 - 2.2.1 How have you transformed the way you design and deliver services to make better use of resources.
 - 2.2.2 How you plan to take advantage of technology and make better use of data to improve decision making, service design and use of resources.
 - 2.2.3 Your plans to reduce wasteful spend within your organisation and systems.
 - 2.2.4 The barriers preventing progress that the Government can help to reduce or remove.
- 2.3 The minister has been clear that “Individual plans will not be rated or scored”, and that the plans are being commissioned to provide an “understanding of what is happening across the sector”.
- 2.4 As with other Councils Huntingdonshire District Council utilizes a range of frameworks, to monitor and oversee our efficiency and effectiveness. These include our performance framework, our project management methodology, our financial management and budget setting processes, and our overarching governance frameworks, several of which have been fundamentally refreshed recently, and all have been subject to independent external review via the LGA Peer Challenge process.
- 2.5 As part of the preparation for the LGA peer challenge process the council produced a continuous improvement plan which summarized the activity that has taken place over recent years to improve the productivity of the council. This is attached as appendix 1. This document lays out how we have established and managed three elements.
 - 2.5.1 Clear prioritization
 - 2.5.2 Financial and performance management and benchmarking
 - 2.5.3 Transformation of services to boost efficiency and effectiveness.

3. PRODUCTIVITY PLAN

- 3.1 The letter from Minister for Local Government, identified four areas that the productivity plan should respond to. These are broad areas, and hard to address fully in 3-4 pages. A number of these are also responded to within our continuous improvement plan, and it may be useful to read the documents alongside each other. The four questions are: namely:
- 3.1.1 How you have transformed the way you design and deliver services to make better use of resources
 - 3.1.2 How you plan to take advantage of technology and make better use of data to improve decision making, service design and use of resources.
 - 3.1.3 Your plans to reduce wasteful spend within your organisation and systems.
 - 3.1.4 The barriers preventing progress that the Government can help to reduce or remove.

- 3.2 Subject to feedback from Members, the Productivity plan will be submitted to the Department for Levelling Up by the deadline of the 19th July, and uploaded to our website so that residents can see it.

We will review this plan as part of our commitment to develop a transformation plan within the municipal year, building on the work in the continuous improvement plan. It will then form part of the ongoing reporting of this programme. Link to the corporate plan, strategic priorities and/or corporate objectives

- 3.3 The productivity plan links closely to Priority 3 of our Corporate Plan and our commitment to “Doing our core work well”, and ensuring we deliver efficient and effective services.

4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The continuous improvement plan plays a key part in enabling us to demonstrate the fulfilment of our best value duty, and value for money assessment.

5. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 – Continuous Improvement Plan
Appendix 2 – Productivity Plan.