

Somerset Council  
Corporate and Resources Scrutiny Committee  
– 19<sup>th</sup> June 2024



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## **Productivity Plan**

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Executive Lead Member: Lead Member for Transformation and Human Resources

### **1. Summary**

**1.1.** Local authorities have been asked by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) to produce ‘Productivity Plans’ setting out ‘how they will improve service performance and reduce wasteful expenditure’, to be submitted by Friday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2024. The purpose of this report is to seek the views and input of Scrutiny Committee on the barriers to be highlighted to Government that have been identified in the Productivity Plan.

### **2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations**

**2.1.** Scrutiny Committee are asked to note the contents of the Productivity Plan proposed in Appendix A and, in particular provide feedback on barriers to local authority productivity that Government can help remove.

### **3. Background**

**3.1.** On 24th 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’.

The plans are expected to be submitted before the parliamentary summer recess (23rd July 2024) and will then be reviewed by an expert panel, to be established by DLUHC, which will include the Office for Local Government (Oflog) and the Local Government Association (LGA).

**3.2.** DLUHC have confirmed that councils will have flexibility in how they structure the

plans and how they decide to approve their plans, as long as there is member oversight and endorsement. It is suggested that plans do not exceed four pages. There is a requirement for submitted plans to be published by each council on their website.

**3.3.** There is an expectation that plans will cover four main themes

- 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 reduce or remove

**3.4.** Work is underway with Executive and Service Directors to develop the content of the plan. Officers have also contributed to conversations in networks and groups to identify common themes and barriers to maximise the effectiveness of producing these plans.

**3.5.** It is the intention, as shown in Appendix A, to identify and address the financial situation of the authority and to show examples of where improvements have been identified and can be shown to have outcomes attached to them. Where possible, measurable outcomes will be included.

**3.6.** The work undertaken through producing this plan can also be carried forward and contribute to any future reviews, such as an LGA Corporate Peer Challenge, that may take place in the future.

**4. Consultations undertaken**

**4.1.** None

**5. Implications**

**5.1.** It is an expectation from DLUHC that all Local Authorities complete and submit a Productivity Plan regardless of the General Election called for the 4<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

**6. Background papers**

- 6.1.** UK Parliament Statement re Productivity Plans [Written statements - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament](#)
- 6.2.** Letter to Chief Executives

**Note** For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author