

Decision Report

Committee: Executive

Meeting or Proposed Decision Date – 15th

July 2024

Key Decision – no



Somerset Council – Productivity Plan for DLUHC

Chair of Committee: Cllr Bill Revans

Executive Member(s): Cllr Theo Butt Philip, Lead Member for Transformation and Human Resources

Local Member(s) and Division(s) affected: ALL

Executive Director: Alyn Jones, Executive Director for Strategy, Workforce and Localities

Executive Summary

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 19th July 2024. The purpose of this report is to ask Executive to agree and adopt the Somerset Productivity Plan.

Recommendations

Executive are asked to agree and adopt the plan attached as Appendix A, prior to submission to DLUHC and subsequent publishing on the Councils internet site. Executive are also asked to delegate authority to the Executive Director for Strategy, Workforce and Localities, in consultation with Lead Member for Transformation and Human Resources, to make any minor amendments prior to submission.

Reasons for Proposals

In the guidance provided to Chief Executives by DLUHC, Councils were advised that productivity plans must have member oversight and endorsement before submission and publication.

Report Author: Sara Cretney, Service Director Strategy & Performance and Nicola Miles, Corporate Performance & Planning Manager

Contact Details: sara.cretney@somerset.gov.uk; nicola.miles@somerset.gov.uk

Main report and supporting information



Background and purpose of report

1. As part of central Government's review of productivity across all public services and local government, all local authorities have been asked to produce productivity plans.
2. 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. DLUHC confirmed that councils would have flexibility in how they structure their plans and how they decided to approve their plans, as long as there was member oversight and endorsement. It was suggested that plans did not exceed four pages. There is a requirement for submitted plans to be published by each council on their website.
4. There was an expectation that plans would cover four main themes –
 - a. Theme 1 – Transformation of services to make better use of resources
 - b. Theme 2 – Opportunities to take advantage of technology and make better use of data to improve decision making, service design and use of resources.
 - c. Theme 3 – Plans to reduce wasteful spend within organisations and systems.
 - d. Theme 4 – Barriers preventing progress that the Government can help to reduce or remove.
5. It is the intention, as shown in Appendix A, to outline 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.
6. Work took place 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.
7. 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.

Links to Council Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan

8. The creation of the Somerset Productivity Plan was part of the Local Government Finance Settlement 2024/25 and highlights the work that Somerset is carrying out in relation to MTFP and transformation.
9. The productivity plan highlights the importance of the Council Plan and the 'golden thread' that runs through the organisation.

Other options considered

10. None considered.

Key considerations for the Council

Scrutiny comments / recommendations:

11. The barriers highlighted during the production of the plan were presented to Corporate and Resources Scrutiny committee on 19th June 2024 and considered in the productivity plan.

Consultation and feedback

12. None

Financial and Risk Implications

13. There are no direct financial implications from Members adopting this plan

Legal and Procurement Implications

14. None

HR / Workforce Implications

15. There are no direct implications as a result of the submission of the productivity plan.

Equalities Implications

16. There are no direct implications as a result of the submission of the productivity plan.

Community Safety Implications

17. There are no direct implications as a result of the submission of the productivity plan.

Climate Change and Sustainability Implications

18. There are no direct implications as a result of the submission of the productivity plan.

Health and Safety Implications

19. There are no direct implications as a result of the submission of the productivity plan.

Health and Wellbeing Implications

20. There are no direct implications as a result of the submission of the productivity plan.

Social Value

21. There are no direct implications as a result of the submission of the productivity plan.

Background Papers

22. UK Parliament Statement re Productivity Plans [Written statements - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament](#)

23. Letter to Chief Executives

Appendices

- Appendix A – Productivity Plan

**Report assurance checklist ahead of report publication
(for Audit, Executive, Full Council and Scrutiny Committees)**

	Officer Name	Date Completed
Legal & Governance Implications	David Clark	03/07/2024
Finance & Procurement	Nicola Hix	04/07/2024
Workforce (*)	Dawn Bettridge	N/A
Asset Management (*)	Oliver Woodhams	N/A
Executive Director	Alyn Jones	03/07/2024
Executive Lead Member	Cllr Theo Butt Philip	04/07/2024
Consulted:	Councillor Name	
Local Division Members	List local members	N/A
Opposition Spokesperson(s) Informed	Cllr Faye Purbrick	04/07/2024
Relevant Scrutiny Chair(s) circulated	Cllr Bob Filmer	04/07/2024

Note:

Directors may nominate additional officers to act on their behalf

(*) – these areas only need to be consulted on proposals if the proposals have workforce or asset management implications

Reports will not be published if assurance checklist has not been adequately completed – report author to liaise with Democratic Services well ahead of publication deadline,