

Board/Committee:	Policy and Organisation Board
Date of meeting:	3 rd July 2024
Title:	Productivity plan for 2024/25
Author:	Head of Finance
Status:	For Decision

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to advise the Board that a letter has been received from DLUHC asking for information around 'Productivity in Local Government'. The paper seeks to approve the recommended way forward in terms of collation of information, approval and submission of the GBC return to DLUHC.

Recommendation

That the Board:

- i) Considers the contents of the draft plan; and
- ii) Delegated authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader to finalise the contents of the plan for submission, incorporating any changes/additions agreed by the Board.

1.0 Background

1.1 On 6th February 2024, a ministerial letter was issued confirming that local authorities would be required to produce productivity plans to set out how the local authority will improve service performance and reduce 'wasteful' expenditure.

1.2 The letter indicated that Government will monitor these plans, and funding settlements in future will be informed by performance against these plans, although no information was provided about how this will work. The letter state that 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.

1.3 An expectation was set that plans would cover 4 main areas:

- 1) Transformation of services to make better use of resources;
- 2) Opportunities to take advantage of advances in technology and make better use of data to inform decision making and service design;
- 3) ways to reduce wasteful spend within systems, including specific consideration of expenditure on consultants and discredited staff Equality, Diversity and Inclusion programmes – this does not include programmes designed to promote integration and civic pride, and counter extremism; and
- 4) Barriers preventing activity that the Government can help to reduce or remove.

1.4 On 16th April, a further letter was issued providing more detail on the

requirements. This confirmed that plans should be 3-4 pages in length, and set out what has been done in recent years, and is planned for the future, to transform services. It is not required to provide metrics, but we are required to provide assurance that plans are monitored. A list of things that might be considered in the plan was set out under the thematic headings.

1.5 The plans should be returned by 19th July, with member 'signoff', and will not be scored or rated but will be considered by a panel to identify key themes and therefore to inform future policy.

1.6 Advice from DLUCH following the announcement of the general election is that we should still proceed to the timetable and guidance issued.

2.0 Report

2.1 The draft response and letter dated 16th April 2024 from DHLUC are both attached as Appendices for reference.

2.2 Gosport Borough Council approach

In order to achieve the timescale, a draft plan has been prepared in consultation with the Council's Corporate Management Team and others involved in key areas relevant to the headings in our return.

2.3 It is requested that Members consider the contents of the draft report and with authority delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader to make any adjustments and finalise its contents.

2.4 Given that the plan should address a large number of points in a brief document, the expectation is that this will largely reference other existing documents and point to the content of these.

Key documents that will be referenced include:

- Corporate Plan
- Annual Governance Statement
- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Capital Strategy
- Economic Development Strategy
- Digital Strategy

3.0 Conclusion

It is recommended that authority be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council to make any adjustments and finalise the contents of the report before submission is made to DLUHC.

4.0 Appendix

DLUHC letter to Chief Execs



2024 04 16 - DLUHC
letter co Chief Execs

GBC response to the request – to follow

Financial Services comments:	<i>Approved</i>
Legal Services comments:	<i>[Contained within the report?] – as per the Financial Services comments.</i>
Equality and Diversity:	<i>N/a</i>
Climate Change implications:	<i>Crime and Disorder and Climate Change impacts N/A</i>
Crime and Disorder:	<i>Crime and Disorder and Climate Change impacts N/A</i>
Service Improvement Plan implications:	<i>N/a</i>
Corporate Plan:	<i>N/a</i>
Risk Assessment:	<i>N/a</i>
Background Papers:	<i>N/a</i>
Appendices:	<i>Copy of letter dated 16th April 2024 from DHLUC</i>
Report Author/Lead Officer:	<i>Chief Executive</i>