



CABINET

17th July 2024

Subject Heading:

DLUHC Productivity Plan

Cabinet Member:

Councillor Ray Morgon

ELT Lead:

Kathy Freeman, Strategic Director,
Resources

Report Author and contact details:

Louise.warner@havering.gov.uk

Jodie.Gutteridge@havering.gov.uk

Policy context:

The recent Local Government Finance Settlement announced that all councils would be asked to produce productivity plans.

Financial summary:

There are no specific financial issues arising from the approval of the plan. It is expected that the Productivity Plan will be delivered within approved budgets. Financial implications of specific proposals will be assessed on an individual basis as part of the relevant decision-making process.

Is this a Key Decision?

No

When should this matter be reviewed?

Reviewing OSC:

Overview and Scrutiny Board

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

People – Supporting our residents to stay safe and well x

Place - A great place to live, work and enjoy x

Resources – Enabling a resident-focussed and resilient council x

SUMMARY

The Government is reviewing productivity across all public services and local government is included in this exercise. The recent Local Government Finance Settlement announced that councils would be asked to produce productivity plans. A letter received 16th April 2024 formally started that process with a submission deadline for plans on the 19th July 2024.

Local Government have done a huge amount in recent years to improve productivity and efficiency, however, lock down and the more recent cost of living crisis have proved challenging. The productivity plan has been requested of all councils and will help DLUHC understand what is working well, and what more is needed to unlock future opportunities and any gaps.

This is a particular challenge for Havering council, due to the significant systemic underfunding since 2020 and the low costs, actions already taken to date.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is asked to make the following recommendations:

1. Approve the Productivity Plan.

REPORT DETAIL

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the content of the Council's Productivity Plan in response to the Local Government request from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).
- 1.2 DLUHC have asked all councils to complete a Productivity plan. The plan must have member oversight and endorsement of the plan before it is submitted and published on our website by the 19th July.
- 1.3 Although the plans were not expected to be written in a particular template they were expected to be around three or four pages in length and set out what the council has done in recent years, alongside current plans to transform the organisation and services.

1.4 The plan should consider 4 themes, and reference the work we, the council, undertakes alongside other public services.

Theme one: How we have transformed the way we design and deliver services to make better use of resources.

Theme two: How we plan to take advantage of technology and make better use of date to improve decision making, service design and use of resources.

Theme three: Our plans to reduce wasteful spend within our organisation and systems.

Theme four: The barriers preventing progress that the Government can help to reduce or remove.

1.5 The Council's Productivity Plan will respond to the four themes with an independent approach with language appropriate to the Council Plan and associated processes that are already delivering productivity.

1.6 The plans will be used to identify common themes and issues across the sector to highlight best practice, but the plans will neither be rated nor scored, nor will there be any league tables.

1.7 For Havering, the Productivity plan will align with the Councils Improvement and Transformation Plan, which is one of the Conditions of the Capitalisation Direction the Council applied for in February 2024.

REASONS AND OPTIONS

Reasons for the decision:

All councils must provide a productivity plan, which has received member oversight, by the 19th July 2024 as set out in the letter to all chief executives on the 16th April 2024.

Other options considered:

Do not approve the productivity plan. This option was quickly dismissed as if Cabinet do not approve we will miss the submission deadline of the 19th July.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

There are no immediate additional financial implications arising from approving the Productivity Plan. It is expected that the work identified within the Productivity Plan will be delivered within approved Revenue and Capital budgets in this financial year

and any issues arising will be flagged as part of the normal budget monitoring process. The Financial implications of specific proposals will be assessed on an individual basis as part of the relevant decision-making processes. Additional future costs and any new savings or benefits delivered will be considered as part of the annual MTFFS (Medium Term Financial Strategy) cycle.

Legal implications and risks:

There are no immediate legal implications arising from this report.

Human Resources implications and risks:

There are no major direct HR implications or risks from this report. Any HR issues which occur will be managed in accordance with the Council's HR policies and procedures and any change processes that are required will be managed in accordance with both statutory requirements and the Council's Organisational Change Policy and Procedure and associated guidance.

Equalities implications and risks:

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have due regard to:

- (i) the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (ii) the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not, and;
- (iii) foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not.

Note: 'Protected characteristics' are: age, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

The Council is committed to all of the above in the provision, procurement and commissioning of its services, and the employment of its workforce. In addition, the Council is also committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all Havering residents in respect of socio-economics and health determinants.

Equality impact assessments are systematically carried out for any services, projects or other schemes that have the potential to impact on communities and / or staff on the grounds of particular protected characteristics or socio-economic disadvantage.

Equalities assessment is normally required for significant impacts upon ANY of the "protected characteristics". As this is a Plan that pulls together the work that is

already being completed or due to start, an assessment is not required at this stage, but will be considered for any future projects.

Health and Wellbeing implications and Risks

Under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 the Council is responsible for improving and protecting the health and wellbeing of local residents. Havering Council is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all residents.

There are no health and wellbeing implications arising from the proposed decision to approve and publish this Productivity Plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The Council has committed to taking action towards the organisation and the borough becoming carbon neutral by 2040.

According to figures from Google, one internet search produces 0.2g of CO₂. The average website produces as much as 1.76g of CO₂ per page view. An average website with 10,000 page views per month could generate 211kg of CO₂ per year, which is the same as would be absorbed by 105 trees in a year. It is not envisioned that the productivity plan on the council's website will reach 10,000 views per year, so by approving and publishing the productivity plan is unlikely to make a significant impact on the climate.

No detrimental climate change implications or risks are expected as a direct outcome of this plan.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1: Havering Productivity Plan 2024