

## **Cabinet – July 2024**

### **Productivity Plan**

**Portfolio:** Councillor Perry, Leader

**Related portfolios:**  All

**Service:**  Council Wide

**Wards:**  All

**Key decision:**  No

**Forward plan:**  Yes

#### **1. Aim**

- 1.1 The report presents the draft Council Productivity Plan for consideration and approval. The Plan consists of a high-level narrative report that highlights the progress made by the Council in terms of transformation, change, effective use of resources and value for money and outlines some key actions we will undertake as we continue our improvement journey.

#### **2. Summary**

- 2.1 The Government is reviewing productivity across all sectors and as part of this the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities have asked each Local Authority to produce a short productivity plan to outline what work has already been undertaken and what is planned to ensure increased efficiency, effectiveness and productivity demonstrating value for residents.
- 2.2 DLUHC have provided a list of considerations for Councils in crafting the productivity plan which broadly fall along the key themes of transformation, data, service design and delivery, strategic focus, partnership working and financial sustainability. Walsall Council draft Productivity Plan takes the form of an LGA style 'lite' assessment document with an accompanying action plan to help inform DLUHC of our progress to date and plans as a continuously improving Council.

#### **3. Recommendations**

- 3.1. That Cabinet note and celebrate the successes highlighted by the Productivity Plan.

3.2. That Cabinet approve the Council's Productivity Plan and note the plans and work already underway to continue the Council's improvement journey and continue to deliver value for money in the delivery of effective services.

#### **4. Report detail - know**

4.1 In February 2024 during the announcement of the Local Government Finance Settlement 24/25 the Government announced a new requirement for Local Authorities to produce Productivity plans as part of its efforts to return the local government sector to sustainability.

4.2 The announcement outlined that plans must be produced/published by July 2024 and must be agreed by Council Leaders and members and published on local authority websites, together with updates on progress.

4.3 Plans are asked to cover four primary areas:

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

4.4 Alongside this ask, the Government is establishing a new productivity review panel, made up of sector experts including the Office for Local Government and the Local Government Association. It is expected this panel will review plans from each Local Authority and make recommendations.

4.5 During mid-April the Council received further correspondence from DLUHC clarifying the ask of the Councils and specifying for plans to be approved by Members and submitted to DLUHC by 19 July 2024. In the letter Councils were provided several prompts and considerations to help guide the crafting of the response/productivity plan.

4.6 The considerations for Councils broadly fall within the following themes:

- Transformation journey to date, current and plans
- Data and technology usage to increase efficiency and effectiveness.
- Service design and delivery plans to increase efficiency effectiveness and value for money.
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion
- Strategic plans and partnership working.

4.7 DLUHC have not specified a template or specific approach for these productivity plans and are allowing each Council to create its own flexible approach to outlining its narrative and plans.

- 4.8 Discussion with other municipal Local Authorities has supported the approach that this Council is taking- crafting a short and sharp 'lite' narrative of our productivity and improvement journey alongside a supporting action plan. Within the narrative document live weblinks will be supplied to publicly available strategies, reports, and documentation to provide a clear supporting evidence base to validate our improvement journey.
- 4.9 The Walsall Council narrative outlines many of the key achievements noted in our recent LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Self-Assessment document. It contains a succinct summary of progress against our Proud Transformation journey, our focus on customer, move towards being a digital Council and our insight led and resident focussed approach through our 2040 ambitions. The supporting action plan is an articulation of work we have already underway or planned to continue this improvement journey.
- 4.10 The Government have outlined their expectation that we publish a regular update against our Productivity Plan. As such it is anticipated that a six-monthly update will be produced for Cabinet and published on the Council's website.

#### ***Risk management***

- 4.11 There are no significant risks associated with the Productivity Plan. The Government anticipates that these may be used as a reference to gauge Council Performance and to inform future funding settlements. As such it is imperative that the Council outlines the huge strides we have made and ongoing trajectory of improvement.

#### ***Financial implications***

- 4.12 There are no direct financial implications related to the report.

#### ***Legal implications***

- 4.13 There are no direct legal implications from this report.

#### ***Procurement Implications/Social Value***

- 4.14 There are no direct procurement implications from this report.

#### ***Property implications***

- 4.15 There are no direct property implications from this report.

#### ***Health and wellbeing implications***

- 4.16 There are no direct implications in this report.

### ***Staffing implications***

- 4.17 There are no direct staffing implications from this report.

### ***Reducing Inequalities***

- 4.18 Our EDI (Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion) activities highlighted in the Productivity Plan align to Our Council Plan and We are Walsall 2040 borough plan which both have reducing inequalities and addressing social justice at their heart.

### ***Climate Change***

- 4.19 There are no direct implications.

### ***Consultation***

- 4.20 The report highlights the fantastic engagement and consultation work carried out by the Council in recent years, most notably in the development of We are Walsall 2040.
- 4.21 There is no public consultation required in the production of the Council Productivity Plan. It articulates previous, current, and already planned work to continue the Council's improvement journey.

## **5. Decide**

The report presents a draft Productivity Plan for consideration and approval by Cabinet prior to submission to DLUHC for review.

## **6. Respond**

The Council is already undertaking programmes and activities that support productivity, improvement, and value for money. This existing and planned work will continue under current Governance arrangements. It is anticipated that following a review of all plans OFLOG may engage with Councils specifying further focus for improvement.

## **7. Review**

It is currently anticipated that the Productivity Plan actions will be reviewed six monthly and an update published in line with Government expectations.

**Background papers –  
Annexes:**

Appendix 1 Productivity Plan Narrative  
Appendix 2 Productivity Plan

**Author**

Judith Greenhalgh  
Executive Director Resources  
✉ [judith.greenhalgh@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:judith.greenhalgh@walsall.gov.uk)

Dr Karen Griffiths  
Head of Policy & Strategy  
✉ [karen.griffiths@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:karen.griffiths@walsall.gov.uk)



Signed

Judith Greenhalgh  
Executive Director  
Resources and Transformation  
9th July 2024



Councillor Perry  
Leader of the Council

9<sup>th</sup> July 2024