

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

Corporate Leadership Team's Report to Cabinet

16 July 2024

Report Title: Productivity Plan 2024-25

Submitted by: Corporate Leadership Team

Portfolios: One Council, People & Partnerships, Finance, Town Centres & Growth

Ward(s) affected: All

Purpose of the Report

To seek approval for the submission and publication of a Productivity Plan, as required by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

Recommendation

That Cabinet:

- 1. Approve the Productivity Plan for publication on the Council's website and for submission to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities by July 19th 2024.**

Reasons

The development of a Productivity Plan is a new requirement placed on local authorities by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in April 2024 following the Local Government Finance Settlement.

1. Background

- 1.1 In a letter to all local government Chief Executive's in April 2024, the then Local Government Minister at DLUHC issued a request for Productivity Plans as previously outlined in the earlier Local Government Finance Settlement. In it, the Minister stated that:

"Local government has already done a huge amount in recent years to improve productivity and efficiency. However, lockdown and post-lockdown has proved challenging, and you are looking for new ways to go further. These new plans will help us understand what is already working well across the whole country, what the common themes are, whether there are any gaps and what more we need to do to unlock future opportunities. We will share these important lessons across the sector".

- 1.2 Although no template or set criteria was provided to prescribe the content of the new Productivity Plans, DLUHC did provide some broad themes to cover:

- How you have transformed the way you design and deliver services to make better use of resources
- How you plan to take advantage of technology and make better use of data to improve decision making, service design and use of resources

- Your plans to reduce wasteful spend within your organisation and systems
- The barriers preventing progress that the Government can help to reduce or remove

1.3 The Plan, which should be short, can cover 'recent years' alongside current plans, and once received will be reviewed by an expert panel to identify common themes and issues across the sector. DLUHC are also keen to highlight best practice that others can learn from. Individual plans will not be rated or scored and DLUHC will not produce any kind of league table.

1.4 The Council's new Productivity Plan meets the requirements proposed and includes the following sections:

- Introduction and Local Context
- Performance Productivity
- Transforming Service Delivery
- Regeneration – Economic Productivity
- Sustainable Financial Management
- Data and Technology
- Productivity through Prevention
- Productive and engaged workforce
- Environmental Productivity – Net Zero
- Productivity Challenges – Walleys Quarry

1.5 Appendix 1 of this report is the draft Productivity Plan for Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council.

2. **Recommendation**

That Cabinet:

1. Approve the Productivity Plan for publication on the Council's website and for submission to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities by July 19th 2024.

3. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

3.1 Central government has placed a new requirement on local government to publish and submit Productivity Plans in July 2024.

4. **Equality Impact Assessment**

4.1 Local authorities have a responsibility to meet the Public Sector Duty of the Equality Act 2010. The Act gives people the right not to be treated less favourably due to protected characteristics. There are no differential equality issues arising directly from this report.

5. **Financial and Resource Implications**

5.1 There are no direct implications from this report.

6. **Major Risks**

6.1 No new major risks have been identified through the process of developing the Productivity Plan.

7. **UN Sustainable Development Goals and Climate Change Implications**



8. **Key Decision Information**

8.1 This is not a key decision.

9. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

9.1 Not applicable

10. **List of Appendices**

10.1 Productivity Plan 2024-25 (Appendix 1).

11. **Background Papers**

11.1 Working papers held by Policy and Strategy Business Manager.