

## **PRODUCTIVITY PLANS**

### **Report of the Deputy Chief Executive**

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Earlier this year the local government finance settlement announced that all Councils would be asked to produce productivity plans. On 16<sup>th</sup> April 2024 all Councils received a letter from the minister for Local Government setting out the guidance for completion and submission of these plans.
- 1.2 There is no formal template for the completion of productivity plans, nor is there a list of metrics that we must include. Local authorities are being asked to produce a short 3-4 page document which sets out what has been done in recent years alongside our current plans to transform our services and organisation. There is a specific focus on delivering value for money for residents and how we will monitor performance against these plans.
- 1.3 The purpose of this document is to provide CRMG with some further information about what is contained within the guidance and to share the proposed approach and governance that Stockport will take.

#### **2. Productivity Plan Guidance**

- 2.1 The guidance document notes that productivity is not one dimensional, local authorities are asked to consider the various facets that encompass the drive for greater productivity. In doing so we are encouraged to look broadly, not only referencing how we run our organisation but also how we run public services and deliver place based leadership.
- 2.2 The guidance document which is appended to this report, contains four key themes, each of which have a number of sub questions. Local authorities are advised to use this as a guide when producing the productivity plan, none of the information is mandated. In addition to the four key themes we are encouraged to reference the work that we undertaken with other key public services for example, the Police and NHS. The key themes are;

**How have you transformed the way you design and deliver services to make the best use of resources?**

**How do you plan to take advantage of technology and make better use of data to improve decision making, service design and the use of resources?**

**What are your plans to reduce wasteful spend within your organisation and systems?**

**What are the barriers that prevent progress that government can help to reduce or remove?**

- 2.3 There is no specified list of metrics that must be included in the productivity plan, however there is an expectation that plans will be supported by data. The guidance states that productivity plans should identify how local authorities will monitor and assess plans to assure themselves and residents that they will be delivered.

### **3. Timelines and Governance**

- 3.1 Local authorities are required to submit their productivity plan via email by Friday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2024. It must also be published on the council website for residents to view.
- 3.2 The letter received indicates that it was proposed that a productivity panel, chaired by Simon Hoare MP (Minister for Local Government), will bring together experts from the sector, including Oflog and the Local Government Association to review the plans and consider common themes and issues from across local government. It is expected that the first meeting of this panel will take place in October 2024 and thereafter will be held quarterly. We will be monitoring closely what effect, if any, the General Election 2024 may have on this process.
- 3.3 The productivity panel will review the content of the plans to identify common themes and issues across the sector. They are keen to highlight best practice and areas that other individuals can learn from. Individual plans will not be rated or scored, there are no plans to produce any kind of league tables.
- 3.4 Local authorities are required to ensure that the productivity plan has member oversight before publication. It is proposed that member oversight is provided by the portfolio holder for Finance and Resources, supported by the Deputy Chief Executive (S151 Officer). Due to the timelines for submission and the business programme of the Council the submitted productivity plan will be presented to CRMG and Cabinet as an appendix to the Medium Term Finance Plan papers in October.

### **4. The Stockport Productivity Plan**

- 4.1 The Stockport productivity plan will describe our strategic ambitions and what we will deliver in the medium term as described in our system wide One Stockport Borough Plan. We will then described our ambitions for the future though One Stockport, One future. The plan will reference the importance of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) programmes as we strive to support diverse communities across Stockport.
- 4.2 The plan will also describe the financial landscape in which the productivity plan is set, one of increasing demand for public services, increasing financial pressures and the cost of living crisis. It will recognise that we have been on this journey for a long time, delivering efficiencies and value for money and that this is getting more difficult. We will reference the annual Value For Money external audits that take place as one of the ways that we demonstrate productivity.
- 4.3 It will then go on to describe the approach that we have taken in recent years to deliver efficient and effective services, providing some specific service based

examples and linking to the approach we have taken in our Council Plan and the findings from the Peer Review. We will link to the work that we contribute to as part of GM, we will seek to collaborate with GM to identify common themes within the region.

- 4.4 The plan will contain a number of links to other documentation, for example the Council Plan and MTFP documents. The data we will use will be that which is already in the public domain and is monitored through our robust governance and performance frameworks.

## **5. Conclusions & Recommendations.**

- 5.1 Members of CRMG are invited to comment on the proposed Stockport approach and provide their approval or otherwise to the governance arrangements detailed in section 3.4.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Guidance Letter from DLUHC (Appendix 1)

Anyone wishing to inspect the above background papers or requiring further information should contact Emma Bowe by email on [emma.bowe@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:emma.bowe@stockport.gov.uk)