

Item No	Referred from:	EXTRAORDINARY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
6	Date:	2 JULY 2024
	Title of item:	PRODUCTIVITY PLAN
To be considered alongside agenda item:		Agenda Item 6

The report considered by Extraordinary Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the meeting held on 2 July 2024 can be viewed here: [Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 2nd July, 2024, 7.30 pm | North Herts Council \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](#)

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET: That Cabinet delegates to the Leader of the Council and Managing Director authority to agree any amendments required to the Productivity Plan as a result of discussion at either Overview and Scrutiny Committee and/or Cabinet and authority to submit the Plan on behalf of the Council.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION: The recommendations are to ensure that the Council complies with the requirements set out by DLUHC to produce a Productivity Plan.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Daniel Allen, presented the report entitled 'Productivity Plan' and advised that:

- The Cabinet was required to approve the Productivity Plan, as requested by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), before returning the Plan.
- The Plan had been published on the North Herts Council website.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Jon Clayden
- Councillor Elizabeth Dennis
- Councillor Donna Wright
- Councillor Claire Strong

In response to questions, the Managing Director advised:

- There were no defined ways to measure productivity as each Council measures itself differently. At the last meeting of the committee, new measures were discussed about the performance of the Council services and these would be used to measure productivity. Due to the Council work being qualitative rather than quantitative, this made this process difficult.
- Many of the questions provided by DLUHC were not around productivity.
- When the General Election was announced, the Local Government Association (LGA), the District Council Network (DCN) and DLUHC were all contacted to confirm if the plan was still required with a possible change of government, and it was confirmed that the Plan was still required.

- It was also thought that a neat summary of information about what the Council has been working on and its achievements would not be such a bad idea for any incoming government to see.
- White papers from the LGA, Cooperative Councils Network (CCN) and DCN all came out after the plan has been drafted, therefore content from those documents were not taken into account.
- It was felt that most points in the white papers were already covered in the Plan, and those that were not covered, did not apply to this Council.
- Further clarification and statistics could be added to the report where available, including the figures around the letting of office space. If Members had any further areas where statistics could be included, they should inform the Managing Director. This needed to be balanced with keeping the plan high level.
- The plan highlighted areas, specifically within Green Spaces and the use of technology, where the Council had made improvements to productivity and further examples could be added if suggested by Members. The attempt was to highlight more recent improvements.
- Very little money had been spent by the Council on equality, diversity and inclusion training or consultants, however this was not included within the Plan due to the nature of the question posed.

Councillor Donna Wright proposed recommendation 2.1 of the report and this was seconded by Councillor Tom Tyson.

The following members took part in debate:

- Councillor Claire Strong
- Councillor Elizabeth Dennis
- Councillor Tom Tyson
- Councillor Matt Barnes

Points raised during the debate included:

- Some Members felt that Item 2.1 should be recommended to Cabinet. Officers had already carried out good work on the Productivity Plan and to add more workload was felt too much. Members felt to recommend the plan as it is now.
- Others felt that the 2.2 option would be more advantageous to the Cabinet. It did not state that items needed to be added to the plan, it just gave the option that they could if felt necessary.
- It was also noted that Cabinet could make its own decision on the plan when given the recommendations from this committee.

Having been proposed and seconded and following a vote, it was tied. The Chair cast the deciding vote and the motion was lost.

The Chair moved to a vote on recommendation 2.2 and, following a vote, it was:

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REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION: The recommendations are to ensure that the Council complies with the requirements set out by DLUHC to produce a Productivity Plan.