<div align="center">**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**</div>

Executive

<div align="right">**9th July 2024**</div>

Productivity Plan

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Spilsbury – Portfolio Holder for Performance Councillor Woodall – Portfolio Holder for Finance
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Sue Hanley – Chief Executive Pete Carpenter – Deputy Chief Executive
Report Author	Job Title: Business Improvement Manager Contact email: H.mole@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel:
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	All
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1.   RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive RECOMMEND that:

1) **The Productivity Plan, as set out in Appendix A, to be approved, the plan to be published on the Council's website and forwarded to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities before the 19th July 2024.**

2.   BACKGROUND

2.1   On the 16th April 2024, The Minister for Local Government Simon Hoare MP wrote to Chief Executives. In this letter he thanked Local Government for the huge amount that it had delivered in recent years to improve productivity and efficiency.

2.2   He also set out that Government was reviewing productivity across all public services, including local government, and they were now looking at new ways to go further. These new plans would help the Government understand what was already working well across the whole country, what the common themes are, whether there are any gaps and what more we can do to unlock future opportunities.

2.3   The purpose of these plans is to ensure we as a sector, and the Government overall provide value for money for Residents. These plans do not have a formal template to follow or criteria to meet but are limited to 3-4 pages in length. The plans must

- Set out what Councils have done in recent years, alongside current plans, to transform themselves and their services.
- The plans need to set out how Councils will monitor and assess themselves to assure delivery.
- Plans must be returned to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) by the 19th July.

2.4 The Government guidance suggested that the plans should consider the following themes and if possible should reference work the Council undertakes alongside other public services:

- 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.

2.5 Redditch Borough Council's response, covering these themes, is set out in Appendix A which forms the Councils formal Productivity Plan.

2.6 The Key points of these plans are:

- We already undertake significant Shared Service work and have done so since 2008.
- We are leveraging Towns Fund Funding to regenerate the Town Centre.
- We are using ICT to drive service efficiencies.
- Partnerships drive our effective Service Delivery.
- We link finance and performance monitoring with regular reporting.
- We are using Benchmarking and data to drive service improvement.
- Staff, and their skills, are core to delivery.
- We listen to our communities' requirements.

3.   FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The initiatives set out in appendix A reflect where the Council is at the moment. Investment will be required, over and above what is in the Capital and Revenue Budgets, to drive transformation at the Council forward. This will be project specific and these requirements will have individual business cases.

4.   LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1   There are no direct legal implications arising as a result of this report. The Productivity Plan has been requested by DLUHC, it is not a statutory requirement.

5.   **STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS**

        Relevant Strategic Purpose

5.1   The current Strategic purposes are included in the Council's Corporate Plan and guides the Council's approach to budget making ensuring we focus on the issues and what are most important for the borough and our communities.

        Climate Change Implications

5.2   The Climate Change green thread runs through the Council Plan. Any future options that relate to climate will be individually evaluated.

6.   **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

        Equalities and Diversity Implications

6.1   There are no direct equalities implications arising as a result of this report.

        Operational Implications

6.2   Operational implications have been dealt with as part of the 2023/24 Budget process.

7.   **RISK MANAGEMENT**

7.1   Non delivery of savings options (efficiencies as requested by the Minister), depending on their financial magnitude can have either a small or significant effect on the Council's finances. As such mitigations need to be in place to deal changes to what was agreed by Council in February 2024.

8.   **APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

        Appendix A – Productivity Plan

9.   REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Splisbury Cllr Woodall	
Lead Director / Head of Service	Pete Carpenter	
Financial Services	Debra Goodall	
Legal Services	Claire Felton	
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)		
Climate Change Officer (if climate change implications apply)		

Executive   **9th July 2024**

Appendix A – Redditch Productivity Plan

1. How have you transformed the way you design and deliver services to make better use of resources?

We are pleased to share our progress in transforming the way we design and deliver services, optimising the utilisation of resources effectively. Through analysis, strategic planning, and innovative approaches, we have embarked on a journey towards enhancing efficiency, transparency, and accessibility across all facets of service provision, namely.

- Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) and Redditch Borough Council (RBC)have shared a leadership team since 2008.
- RBC still has a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) which is not a shared service.
- Implemented agile working. We have not imposed targets for being in the office. Work patterns are based on business need, whilst ensuring enhanced face-to-face contact with customers. This has led to less travel (reduced carbon footprint).
- Establishing a Town Hall Hub to improve Town Centre Regeneration with sharing of workspace with other Local Government/Government/voluntary sector bodies.
- Established Rubicon Leisure, an arms-length delivery vehicle of leisure services (not Parks, Green Spaces & Development Services).
- Implementation of an updated Workforce Strategy in the summer 2023 - including updated working culture (4Ps – Purpose, People, Pride & Performance.
- Housing and Community Services working closely with NHS, Starting Well fund and other funding partnerships to tackle homelessness, anti-social behaviour (ASB), community housing, through establishing a comprehensive strategic partnership.
- Land and Building Asset Group (LBAG) - looking at the effective use of surplus assets across the council's brownfield sites.
- Towns Fund (£16m) to regenerate the town centre of Redditch and deliver a Digital Manufacturing and Innovation Centre by 2026.
- Data use includes National Fraud Initiative (NFI) and other sharing initiatives with Government Departments.

We measure productivity through: -
- Quarterly Finance and Performance Reporting to Executive, linked to strategic objectives.
- Members' corporate dashboard is available online.
- Line Management one to ones - measuring progress against specific, measurable, achievable, timely (SMART) targets.
- MTFP follows a two-tranche process and links finance to strategic direction.
- Services detail methods of operation i.e. agile, timesheets, workstreams and KPI's are detailed in Service Business Plans (360 view with feedback).
- The appointment of a new portfolio for performance on the Executive.

To improve services, we have:
- Joined up/collaboration of enabling services (with Service Protocols for Support Service).

- Strengthened procurement protocols for Officer Key Decision Notices, and created a fully updated Contract Register.
- Updating of Members as part of the quarterly Finance and Performance Report on upcoming procurements over the next year.

Our plans for transformation over the next two years are:
- Data Prioritisation Programme to establish clean data and inform effective decision-making using clean data (measure cleanliness pre and post).
- Performance reporting review will include a summary sheet and detail using Power Bi) clean data to measure progress against key performance indicators (KPIs) and comparison with other similar authorities.
- Digital Improvements through robotics, artificial intelligence (AI), and the customer portal.
- Progressing the ABCD Community Builder approach.
- Introduce updated Service Business Planning in 2024/5, using the LGA Transformation Tool to measure pre and post implementation (measure).
- New Strategic Objectives are being formulated with Executive for implementation in 2024.
- Community Engagement Proposal through the introduction of Citizens' Assemblies and moving to quarterly targeted surveys and quarterly performance reporting, including "You said, we did" reports.
- Full establishment review carried out in May 2024 - with the aim to reduce the current reliance of consultants which currently stands at circa 18% of the workforce and establish a workforce that reflects the Council's needs.
- Monthly Officer Assurance meeting, reviewing performance and learning from issues.

Looking ahead, our greatest potential for savings is:
- Use of LG Futures and Performance/Benchmarking Data to target high cost services.
- Reviewing housing structures and linking these to productivity gains from using new technology for service improvements.
- Review of the Waste Service considering the impending changes to regulations and use of technology to implement route optimisation / integration of street scene tasks.
- Reviewing structures of enabling services to ensure cost effective and supporting front line services requirements.
- Progress workforce planning.

We have used capital spend to boost growth and/or improve services. Examples include:
- Investment in Redditch Town Hall of £6.2m to utilise excess capacity post C-19 with other Government/Voluntary Sector Agencies (DWP/NHS) reducing costs to the Council.
- Utilising regeneration and Towns' Fund to regenerate the town centre and boost growth.
- Section 106 funding used on capital projects such as Morton Stanley Park Cafe to boost growth and generate income for the council.
- Garden waste - additional fleet / staff to deliver a new service in Redditch, which in turn will generate income. Energy efficiency measures installed at the town hall, funded by government grants, including new windows, boiler and polar panel, which has resulted in

a reduction in repairs, savings in utilities charges and making the building more attractive to rent out.
- Investment in the Waste Fleet - once Government requirements have been finalised.
- Use of more Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) Fuel in Waste Fleet, which although more expensive, significantly reduces carbon emissions.

We have undertaken the following preventative approaches:
- 'No procurement, No order' initiative – implemented April 23 to control expenditure.
- Contracts are linked to finance system to monitor spend and only raise orders on approved contracts - April 2023.
- ICT Phishing tests - to increase staff awareness and reduce potential downtime.
- Investment in ICT Cyber Security to reduce downtime and risk of catastrophic failure.

Locally-led reforms that help deliver high-quality public services and improve the sustainability and resilience of RBC are:
- Joined-up working between RBC and Worcestershire County Council.
- Closer collaboration between council and central government departments such as DWP and Health Services- as many services link closely to each other.
- Promotion of the One Public Estate (OPE) initiative - and ensuring the best decision is made - not requiring all parties to have savings.

2. How you plan to take advantage of technology and make better use of data to improve decision making, service design and use of resources.

We recognise data as an asset and are committed to implementing robust systems for collection, analysis, and interpretation. By leveraging advanced analytics and artificial intelligence, we aim to gain deeper insights into community needs, trends, and preferences. This proactive approach will enable us to make informed decisions, tailor services to meet evolving demands, and allocate resources more efficiently. We plan:
- A new customer-facing interface which ensures that data input duplication is reduced, increasing efficiency and data quality at the council and improving the stakeholder customer experience, which could produce20% efficiency savings.
- Revised processes to ensure data is clean (single source) and links across the council to maximise the functionality of ICT system changes and upgrades.

Our existing plans are to improve the quality of the data we collect:
- The extensive data prioritisation project will identify data quality, programme validation, data cleansing and invest in customer portal to enable "one account."
- Continue with gold standard quality recognition Geographic Information System (GIS), achieved throughout 2023/24.

Barriers we experience from our legacy systems are:
- Configuration restrictions (which are historic but costly to change).
- Reporting duplication - similar systems reporting on same customers in different ways.
- Lack of standardisation of data requirements.
- Updating and data progression is limited and not standardised across the council.
- Limited budget to invest in quality systems with required capabilities to improve.

We regularly share data with our partners, DWP, HMRC, Police, Cabinet Office. This is useful as it enables collaborative decision making, improved service delivery, resource optimisation (avoiding duplication), enhanced problem solving and transparency and accountability (track progress, evaluate outcomes and hold each other accountable for their actions). Opportunities we are driving forward to use new technology are:

- Data Prioritisation/audit/standards to improve data quality and validity / importance of data, single source, sharing and reducing repetition and promote blended data for better insight and understanding across services and partners.
- Implementation of a new Customer Interface.
- Systems audit - targeted on systems where there are higher risks.
- GIS Gold Standard.
- Robotics and AI work programme including:

> Human Resources / Finance – Establishment accuracy & updating.
> Housing – communications relating to:
> - Aids & Adaptions, Disrepair Claims, Complaints, Councillor and General Enquiries.
> Revs and Bens scoping out opportunities for:
> - Council Tax Recovery, EBilling, the National Fraud Initiative.

3. **Your plans to reduce wasteful spending within your organisation and systems. (You should set out your plans to reduce wasteful or "gold-plated" spending.)**

Our approach to identifying and reducing waste include:
- Performance Dashboard (real time) & Quarterly Performance reporting via Corporate Management Team (HoS) and then Executive.
- Updating Performance Indicators/Format reflecting new Corporate Strategy and Business Plans to enable senior fficers and elected members to monitor the delivery of service and evaluate impact, benchmarking performance against other similar authorities.
- Revised Strategic Priorities to focus on political priorities.
- Data - Single source data (across multiple systems)

Invest to save:
Only Towns Fund schemes can be seen as "Invest to save"; however, funding is from the Government with tight reporting requirements and a high bar to reach to obtain it.
We moved to Opus platform in May 2023 for hiring agency workers, spend to end March 2024 has been £3,203.453. The number of agency workers more than 12 months placement is 18. RBC will invest in our own housing stock to reduce the reliance on private, expensive, temporary accommodation and BNB (currently c £500k). This will reduce the amount of housing stock taken out of use and reserved for temporary accommodation and through this investment, RBC will generate income.

To ensure we have accountability of spend, we have:
- A two-tranche budget process, challenged by cross-party Budget Working Group.
- Budget managers received training, and refresher training, on the financial systems.
- Quarterly formal finance reporting to members.

- Full demarcation of duties in the finance system between budget managers, approvers and requisitioners. All transactions, including monitoring, delivered online.

4. The barriers preventing progress that the Government can help to reduce or remove.

Examples of service-wide barriers preventing us from improving productivity further are:
- Recruitment difficult in some areas i.e.: ICT / Planning/ Housing.
- Silo working with other local authorities and government bodies.
- Lack of flexibility in recruiting competent workforce - consider market supplements etc.
- Limited investment in training and progression historically /potential incentive for growth and development.
- Capacity / resources (both at the Council and in Worcestershire)
- Capability issues, right people in right job at right time (especially current data skills)
- Compliance to documented process.
- Impact of reduced funding and the need to ensure investment is cost effective.

To remove these barriers, we will need to:
- Invest in recruiting the right people for the right jobs at the right time, including apprenticeships.
- Invest in opening career and development pathways and opportunities.
- Invest in staff and managerial training, succession planning and progression training.
- Further embrace automation and AI.
- Ability to have autonomy to change.
- Reduce bureaucracy and some processes while still being compliant.
- Ensure ownership and robust accountability.
- Use of packages such as Modern.Gov to encourage members and officers to access data electronically.

To achieve transformation, we must enhance data quality, improve systems and processes, as well as invest in staff training, succession planning, recruitment, and automation, government funds are imperative. Additionally, allocating resources towards AI integration would significantly streamline and enhance processes and accuracy across various services.