

Adur & Worthing Councils Productivity Plan

The following is a response to the outgoing Government's request for all councils to produce a Productivity Plan based on the following questions. Given the change in Government, the Councils will work with the new Government to ascertain if the Productivity Plan approach as developed by the previous Government developed is still relevant.

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

Single Organisational Work Programme

The development of a single organisational work programme and a single organisational design programme has enabled better prioritization and management of projects aligned with council priorities. This programme ensures a sustainable workload, tracks progress effectively, and improves resource allocation.

Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDTs)

Implementing MDTs has streamlined service delivery, enhanced adaptability, and fostered resilience. This approach has reduced duplication of efforts and ensured resources are directed to where they are most needed.

Community Engagement

The redesign of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) fund allocated £575,000 to 45 community groups, supporting local projects and enhancing community well-being. This initiative demonstrates effective resource use by leveraging community strengths.

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

Digital Transformation

Investments in digital infrastructure, have improved real-time tracking of project progress across all mission areas. This technology facilitates informed and timely decision-making.

Data-Driven Decision Making

The councils utilize advanced data analytics to inform decisions, optimize resource allocation, and enhance service delivery. The proactive homelessness

prevention programme uses data to prioritize early help, effectively reducing homelessness.

Improving Digital Skills

The development of a Skills Framework and Capabilities Model ensures staff are well-equipped to use new technologies and data tools effectively, leading to improved service outcomes.

3. What are your plans to reduce 'wasteful spend' within your organisation and systems?

Financial Savings Tracker

A robust financial savings tracking process monitors performance against savings targets on a monthly basis. This includes cost centre analysis and monitoring resource utilization, operating expenditures, and income to ensure financial sustainability.

Practices

By conducting regular audits to identify inefficiencies and implementing improved practices, the councils have streamlined operations and reduced unnecessary costs.

Performance and Governance Improvements

Strengthening governance through new boards and regular updates has improved the management of programmes and performance tracking, ensuring efficient use of resources. For example, the Major Programmes Board oversees major programmes, ensuring they reflect the risk appetite and capacity of the organisation.

4. What are the barriers preventing progress that the Government can help reduce or remove?

The most significant barrier to productivity is single-year finance settlements. Without a clear indication about funding for multiple years, councils cannot effectively plan and deploy their resources.

We have also been hampered by the tendency of Whitehall to design and decide policy that affects councils without engaging the sector properly. This has resulted in initiatives and funds that are more complicated than necessary and that are difficult and, in some cases costly, for councils to implement. We strongly

support much closer policy co-design between central government and local councils.

We would also benefit from much greater flexibility for our council (and all councils) to decide how to spend and raise money locally. Central prescription and ringfencing constrain our ability to allocate our resources effectively.

We incur unnecessary spending and waste valuable officer time complying with rules, requirements, restrictions and processes imposed by central government and regulators. These include:

- The number of specific, formula-based revenue grants and their separate reporting requirements – it would be much simpler and more efficient to roll all specific grants into a single provision in the Local Government Finance Settlement.
- The wide range of separate one-off revenue and capital grant pots with onerous, costly and counter-productive bidding processes.
- Complicated, inconsistent, and misaligned processes for submitting data returns to central government.
- Lack of join-up between central government departments on issues including housing, homelessness prevention and asylum dispersal.
- Numerous statutory requirements to place notices in newspapers or issue written copies of routine notices.
- Excessive amount of information that is required in annual accounts or has to be published under the transparency code.
- Statutory overrides such as the requirement to value assets for accounts every year.
- Regulatory bodies seeking “to the letter” compliance with their statutory codes.

Beyond these challenges faced across the sector, coastal communities are structurally disadvantaged. They face higher child poverty, lower household incomes, and higher rates of low-wage jobs, and often fragmented transport networks. Disabled individuals struggle to find work, and educational and health outcomes are poorer. They also face continually increasing housing demand and movement of people who are homelessness. However, they are also the future of

the UK's economy as an island, with the potential to be at the forefront of experiments that adapt and transition to a net zero economy.

There are significant reforms needed to better empower local places.

Background papers all published at the Joint Strategic Committee July 2024.

- [Update on the Organisational Design](#)
- [Joint Priorities for the Adur & Worthing Councils](#)
- [Annual Performance Update](#)