

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT TO GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE
22 JUNE 2022

REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER
CORPORATE SELF-ASSESSMENT

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, specifically self-assessment requirements.

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives / other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:-

1. **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focussed on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.
2. **Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient** - taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.
3. **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

- 2.2 The Authority's self-assessment and improvement planning process contributes to the achievement (and reporting) of the corporate well-being objectives.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, which received royal assent in January 2021, sets out a new local government improvement regime, which puts more onus on the council to demonstrate improvement rather than on Audit Wales and other regulators. One of the requirements in the Act is for the council to produce and publish a self-assessment report for each financial year – with effect from 1 April 2021.
- 3.2 The self-assessment report has to set out conclusions on whether the council met the 'performance requirements' during that financial year, and actions needed to improve. The 'performance requirements' focus on :-

1. Are we exercising our functions effectively;
2. Are we using our resources economically, efficiently and effectively;
3. Is our governance strong.

3.3 To do this, the Welsh Government statutory guidance and (Welsh Local Government Association) WLGA guidance tell us that the council should use evidence; internal evidence (performance and financial data we collect around different parts of the council); external evidence (including audit and inspection reports, ombudsman / Health and Safety Executive reviews); and the views of stakeholders (through engagement with local people, businesses, council staff and trade unions).

3.4 The Welsh Government guidance requires the council to make a draft of its self-assessment report available to its governance and audit committee. The committee must review the draft report and may make recommendations for changes to the conclusions or action the council intends to take. We will bring the report to GAC's September meeting.

4. Current situation/proposal

4.1 The guidance encourages us to use existing data, reporting and challenge processes as much as possible. So we propose to assess and test each question in the 'performance requirements' in the following ways –

Question 1 – Performance and outcomes	We have an existing process for monitoring, review and challenging performance. We will supplement this with a new template to summarise and add to quarter 4 performance data and support directorates to make a judgement on their performance in 2021/22. It will look at both corporate plan priorities and other directorate information. This will be collated to represent whole council performance and presented to the Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) panel made up of corporate management board, Cabinet members and Scrutiny Chairs, on 20 June alongside annual performance data .
Question 2 – Use of resources	We do not have an existing process for doing this comprehensively across all resource types, so have established a number of officer workshops for July, baselining our work on – finances, procurement, corporate planning, performance management, risk management, workforce planning and asset management. The findings from these workshops will be presented to a further CPA in late July.
Question 3 – Governance	This assessment is already completed annually through the annual governance statement (AGS) which is scrutinised and approved by the Governance and Audit Committee (GAC). We propose that this document will also be scrutinised by the late July CPA meeting.

4.2 The approach and process for self assessment have been raised with Bridgend community cohesion and equality forum, and will engage with local people, businesses, council staff and trade unions in September.

4.3 The findings and judgements from each of the three questions will be collated into a single, simple, accessible report. In line with the WG and WLGA guidance, the self-assessment report and annual wellbeing assessment will be merged into a single document.

4.4 Proposed key dates are as follows –

Process		Dates
Test self-assessment process	Cabinet / Corporate Management Board (CCMB)	14 June
Test self-assessment process	Governance and Audit Committee (GAC)	22 June
Question 1 (performance) templates completed	Directorate business managers	By 14 June
Test findings of Q1	CPA	20 June
Q2 workshops completed	Workshops	Early July
Test findings of Q2	CPA	End July
Test findings of Q3	GAC (and CPA for completeness)	End July
Collate draft report	Corporate policy team & teams	August
Test draft report	CMB / CCMB	Early September
Engagement	Staff Trade Unions Citizens Businesses	September
Test draft report, discussion / approvals	CCMB / Cabinet	Late-September
Test draft report, discussion / approvals	GAC	22 September
Publication		October

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

5.1 There will be no effect on the policy framework and procedure rules.

6. Equalities Act 2010 Implications

6.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales, the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. A full EIA will be carried out as part of the development of the self assessment report. This will be considered as part of the approval of the report.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

7.1 The 5 ways of working – long-term, integration, involvement, collaboration and prevention - form a key part of the key lines of enquiry for the workshops in July. The annual wellbeing assessment will be merged with the annual self-assessment for 2021/22.

8. Financial implications

8.1 There are no financial implications associated with these arrangements. The cost of consultation / engagement and publication will be met from within existing budgets.

9. Recommendation

9.1 Governance and Audit Committee is recommended to: -

Review and approve the proposed processes and arrangements for corporate self-assessment 2021/22.

K Watson
CHIEF OFFICER - LEGAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES, HR AND CORPORATE
POLICY
14 June 2022

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Background documents

None.