

Meeting of:	GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	1 JUNE 2023
Report Title:	CORPORATE SELF-ASSESSMENT 2022/23
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CHIEF OFFICER- LEGAL, HR AND REGULATORY SERVICES
Responsible Officer:	ALEX RAWLIN, POLICY AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS MANAGER
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	Council priorities arising from the self-assessment inform Service Plans and the Annual Improvement Plan which form part of the Policy Framework.
Executive Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report reflects on the Council's self-assessment for 2021/22 and presents the Governance and Audit Committee with a proposed approach, process and timeline for the development of the self-assessment for 2022/23. • The approach will be simpler and more streamlined than the previous year's with templates now being completed as part of regular quarterly performance monitoring arrangements. • Challenge sessions will take place earlier and consultation will be more comprehensive.

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to reflect on the Council's self-assessment for 2021/22 and present the Governance and Audit Committee with a proposed approach, process and timeline for the development of the self-assessment for 2022/23.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 which received royal assent in January 2021 set out a new local government improvement regime. One of the requirements of the Act is for the council to make and publish a self-assessment report once each financial year. 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 -

- Are we exercising our functions effectively;

- Are we using our resources economically, efficiently and effectively;
- Is our governance strong.

2.2 The Council published its first self-assessment in October 2022 based on performance in 2021/22. The process was new, but based on existing data, reports and review / challenge meetings where possible. Feedback on the report was generally positive in terms of the honesty and transparency of ratings, length of the report and simplicity of the language. Although, some Elected Members felt that annual performance data should have been published alongside the self-assessment.

2.3 Many parts of the self-assessment process have now been embedded in the Council's regular performance management process, for example the regulatory tracker and inclusion of consultation, engagement and involvement exercises in the quarterly dashboard. By design, it is intended that the process for 2022/23 will be simpler and less resource intensive than the previous year.

3 **Current situation/proposal**

3.1 It is proposed that the existing, end of year performance process and timelines are also used to capture Directorate self-assessments of performance to satisfy the first performance requirement (as in 2021/22). However, a simpler template has been designed with the previous year's information pre-populated for Directorate Management Teams (DMTs) to update. It will be crucial that Directorates provide a realistic assessment of their progress, continue to use plain english to outline their challenges and achievements, retain the format of the information and keep contributions brief and to the point. The 4 templates will then be collated by the Performance Team for scrutiny and challenge.

3.2 The one proposed addition to this section is the inclusion of case studies. Having reviewed all other self-assessments in Wales, this is the one feature that stood out. Around half of local authorities included case studies, and they added an extra dimension to the reports.

3.3 It is proposed that the second performance requirement, on use of resources, also follows a similar process to last year. Firstly, it is proposed that the 7 use of resources templates are reviewed and updated by the lead officers. All of the 7 areas have been included in the work of Audit Wales in the past year, and in many cases reviewed and discussed by the Governance and Audit Committee, or are included in the year ahead, so there is significant additional evidence to draw on. These 7 will then be collated by the Performance Team for scrutiny and challenge.

3.4 The third performance requirement, on governance, is largely covered by the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) which is scrutinised and approved by the Governance and Audit Committee. It is proposed that this document will be summarised, and used to inform the self-assessment.

3.5 The draft findings from each of the three performance requirements will be brought together into a single presentation for a full-day Corporate Performance

Assessment (CPA) meeting on 14 June 2023 and considered alongside end of year performance and the Corporate Plan Delivery Plan.

- 3.6 Comments and changes from CPA will be used to inform the draft self-assessment report, which it is proposed will be presented to the Governance and Audit Committee on 26 July 2023 as required by the Act.
- 3.7 Following engagement and consultation over the summer, it is proposed that the final self-assessment be presented to Cabinet and Council in September 2023.
- 3.8 The below timeline is proposed –

What	Who	By when
Directorate performance self-assessments	Directorates	Early June
Use of resources self-assessment	Lead officers	Early June
Annual Governance Statement	Finance Team	Early June
Officer scrutiny and challenge	Corporate Management Board (CMB) / Heads of Service (HoS) joint meeting	7 June
Member scrutiny and challenge	CPA	14 June
Use findings to develop a draft self-assessment report	Performance team	June / July
Consultation on draft report	Performance Team	Summer
Self-assessment sign-off	GAC	26 July
	Cabinet	15 September
	Council	16 September

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 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. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

- 5.1 This report proposes an approach to measure progress against the following corporate well-being objectives under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 that formed part of the Council's Corporate Plan 2018-23:-

1. Supporting a successful sustainable economy
2. Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient
3. Smarter use of resources

5.2 The 5 ways of working set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act form a key part of the key lines of enquiry for officer and member challenge of the self-assessment findings. The annual wellbeing assessment will be merged with the annual self-assessment for 2022/23, as it was for 2021/22.

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 There are no specific implications of this report on climate change. However, the self assessment will consider the Council's performance and progress on specific climate change related commitments and targets in the Corporate Plan 2018-23.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no specific implications of this report on safeguarding or corporate parenting. However, the self assessment will consider the Council's performance and progress on specific safeguarding and corporate parenting related commitments and targets in the Corporate Plan 2018-23

8. Financial implications

8.1 There are no financial implications associated with these arrangements.

9. Recommendation

9.1 The Governance and Audit Committee is recommended to: -

Discuss and agree the proposed processes and arrangements for the corporate self-assessment 2022/23.

Background documents

None.