

Meeting of:	CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	24 JULY 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 outlines the process and findings of the Council’s self-assessment for 2022/23. • The approach is considerably more embedded in regular quarterly reporting than in the previous year. • The main differences in the final report from last year’s final report are – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Challenge sessions took place earlier in the year ○ Case studies are included ○ More comprehensive coverage of consultation and engagement throughout the year is included ○ Annual performance data will be published alongside the self-assessment ○ Planned consultation is more comprehensive. • The self-assessment judgements are – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wellbeing Objective One – Good ○ Wellbeing Objective Two – Adequate ○ Wellbeing Objective Three – Good ○ Use of resources – Adequate ○ Governance – Good

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Council’s second corporate self-assessment report and judgements, and to seek comments on the draft report in **Appendix 1**.

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. However, some Elected Members felt that annual performance data should have been published alongside 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 was intended that the process for 2022/23 should be simpler and less resource intensive than the previous year.
- 2.4 Existing end of year performance process and timelines have been used to capture Directorate self-assessments of performance to satisfy the first performance requirement (as in 2021/22). However, this year a simpler template was designed with the previous year's information pre-populated for Directorate Management Teams (DMTs) to update. Directorates were asked provide a realistic assessment of their progress, 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 were then collated by the Performance Team for scrutiny and challenge.
- 2.5 The main change 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.
- 2.6 The second performance requirement, on use of resources, also followed a similar process to last year. The 7 use of resources templates were 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 Scrutiny Committees, or are included in the

year ahead, so there is significant additional evidence to draw on. These 7 were then collated by the Performance Team for scrutiny and challenge.

- 2.7 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. This document was summarised, and used to inform the self-assessment.

3 **Current situation / proposal**

- 3.1 The draft findings from each of the three performance requirements were pulled 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. Comments and changes from CPA have been used to inform a draft self-assessment report, which is included at Appendix 1.

- 3.2 The Council's proposed self-assessment judgements for 2022/23 are –

Wellbeing Objective One	Good
Wellbeing Objective Two	Adequate
Wellbeing Objective Three	Good
Use of resources	Adequate
Governance	Good

- 3.3 Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee may want to reflect on the fact that these are exactly the same scores as last year. There are numerous reasons for this, including the short time since consideration of the Council's previous self-assessment in October 2022, turnaround time for significant improvement in use of resources, for example performance management and asset management, issues with workforce capacity and financial constraints included at the start of the self-assessment report for context. On balance therefore, while there have been improvements in some elements of the self-assessment judgements, it is felt that there has been insufficient change to alter the overall judgement.
- 3.4 Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee may also want to reflect on the addition of case studies and whether this adds value to the report, and whether the publication of quarter 4 performance information alongside the report adds context and value to the self-assessment.

3.5 Following consideration at Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Governance and Audit Committee, on 26 July 2023, the Council will commence formal consultation on the draft document with the public as well as -

- discussion with Trade Unions
- discussion with Town and Community Councils at the Town and Community Council Forum
- discussion with Partners and neighbouring local authorities at the Public Services Board

3.6 Following engagement and consultation over the summer, it is proposed that the final self-assessment be presented to Cabinet and Council in September 2023.

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 review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this information report.

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

5.1 This report measures 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 Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to: -

- Review and provide any recommendations for change to the corporate self-assessment report 2021/22 at **Appendix 1**.
- Consider whether the additions to the report since 2021/22 add value to the document.

Background documents

None.