

Meeting of:	GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	21 MAY 2026
Report Title:	SELF-ASSESSMENT APPROACH FOR 2025/26
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CORPORATE DIRECTOR – FINANCE AND TRANSFORMATION
Responsible Officer:	KATE PASK POLICY AND PERFORMANCE MANAGER
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	The Performance Framework (of which self-assessment is part) forms part of the Policy Framework.
Executive Summary:	This report outlines an approach to the development of the Council’s self-assessment 2025/26.

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to reflect on the self-assessment 2024/25 and present the Governance and Audit Committee (GAC) with an outline of the approach to the development of the self-assessment 2025/26.

2. Background

2.1 The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 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 meeting fora 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. Some members felt that annual performance data should have been published alongside the self-assessment.

- 2.3 The second self-assessment was published in December 2023 based on performance in 2022/23. Reflecting on the first self-assessment, some changes were made, including –
- Using information from the newly developed regulatory tracker
 - Publishing performance information alongside the self-assessment
 - Adding case studies to the document
- 2.4 The third self-assessment published in October 2024 was based on performance in 2023/24. This was the first time that the self-assessment reviewed performance against the Council's new Corporate Plan 2023-28. Reflecting on the second self-assessment, some changes were made, including –
- More comprehensive information on major consultation and engagement activity around the Council throughout the year
 - Scoring wellbeing objectives and aims using a more objective and agreed process
 - A section on how well we performed against improvement activities from the previous self-assessment
 - Embedding self-assessment in the quarterly performance process so that large parts of the report write themselves and are familiar to members.
- 2.5 Since 1 April 2024 the Council has been subject to the Social Partnership duty under the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023 (SPPP Act). As the information required for the Social Partnership Annual Report was so closely aligned with the existing self-assessment report format, the fourth self-assessment published in October 2025 based on 2024/25 was also the Council's first Social Partnership Annual Report. In order to cover the additional information required the consultation and engagement section was extended slightly to cover –
- Evidence of work with staff and Trade Unions on how the Council has achieved its wellbeing objectives in the year (particularly budget setting)
 - Evidence of how the council worked with staff and Trade Unions to agree last year's self-assessment
 - How frequently the Council met with Trade Unions as part of its Social Partnership duty
 - Any training provided to employees / trade union representatives on how the Social Partnership Duty was implemented; and
 - Any interesting case studies of work related to the Social Partnership Duty.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 It is proposed that the performance section of the self-assessment report for 2025/26 follows the same process as in 2024/25 but with the addition of more qualitative data in the form of case studies, regulator views and resident views where possible and pertinent to the wellbeing objective -

- A performance overview summarising performance against the whole corporate plan, using two graphs showing -
 - How are we doing on our commitments / projects?
 - How are we doing on our performance indicators?
- A performance section for each wellbeing objective to include -
 - A single graph that shows to illustrate how are we doing on our commitments / projects and our performance indicators (PIs) as set out in the Corporate Plan Delivery Plan for 2025/26
 - A summary of the aims with a Red Amber Yellow Green (RAYG) rating for each and a short narrative section
 - Case Studies and any other qualitative data linked directly to the wellbeing objective
 - Regulator assurances from inspections/audits conducted during 2025/26 including our first Panel Performance Assessment which took place in September 2025.
 - Consultation and Engagement Activities (to include a more in-depth consideration of work alongside staff and trade unions to fulfil the Council's social partnership duty reporting requirement)
 - What will we do to improve?

3.2 It is proposed that we use the same methodology as we have done for the previous two years to develop an initial quantitative RAYG rating for each of the wellbeing objectives and their aims. This means that the RAYG would be objective and based on performance on the commitments and PIs. This would provide useful information to the public about how we are doing at a strategic level (but beyond the Wellbeing Objective level).

3.3 The approach gives a score to each commitment and PI based on their RAYG rating. The individual scores are then combined to give an overall score for the aim (as a proportion of the maximum), using the approach provided in the performance framework. This methodology has worked well for the previous two years. After a score for each aim is developed, a narrative for each aim will be developed pulling information on commitments and PIs directly from the end of year performance dashboards.

3.4 Slightly different for this year we will present additional qualitative data where possible if it provides additional insight into how we are performing against the wellbeing objective, for example recent regulator views and any service user perspective data. This will be looked at in conjunction with the quantitative score to form a final more balanced score which will be tested with Heads of Service and Corporate Management Team (CMT).

3.5 It is proposed that our assessment of progress against the second performance requirement on use of resources follows the same process as last year. Firstly, it is proposed that the seven use of resources templates are reviewed and updated by the lead officers. All of the seven areas have been included in the work of Audit Wales in the past four years, and in many cases reviewed, discussed and followed up by the Governance and Audit Committee or Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, so there is significant additional evidence to draw on. These seven will then be collated by the performance team for scrutiny and challenge.

- 3.6 The third performance requirement, on governance, is largely covered by the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) which is scrutinised by the Governance and Audit Committee. We propose that this document will be summarised by the performance team as in previous years.
- 3.7 The draft findings from each of the three performance requirements will be brought together into a single presentation for officer scrutiny and challenge in the first instance. This will be discussed and moderated by Heads of Service at their meeting on 24 June 2026 and CMT on 1 July 2026.
- 3.8 The moderated findings will then be brought together into a single draft report for Cabinet/CMT (CCMT) on 14 July and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (COSC) on 27 July (provisional date) and considered alongside the detailed end of year performance dashboards and presentation, providing significant levels of challenge and scrutiny. Governance and Audit Committee members are able to observe this COSC meeting if they are keen to see how the detailed performance scrutiny role plays out in practice.
- 3.9 Comments and changes from CCMT will be used to inform the draft self-assessment report, which it is proposed will be presented to the Governance and Audit Committee on 16 July (provisional date) with the short performance summary report that will be published alongside the self-assessment. This will give GAC a better understanding of the Council's performance against each Wellbeing Objective, Aim, PI and Commitment that underpins the self-assessment judgements. This should give GAC additional reassurance about the fairness and accuracy of the process.

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. Wellbeing of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Wellbeing Objectives

- 5.1 This report proposes an approach to reviewing the following corporate well-being objectives under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 that form part of the Council's Corporate Plan 2023-28:-
1. A prosperous place with thriving communities
 2. Creating modern, seamless public services
 3. Enabling people to meet their potential
 4. Supporting our most vulnerable
- 5.2 The 5 ways of working set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 have also contributed to the Council developing its own five ways of working. The ways of driving and measuring those ways of working is also contained in the Corporate Plan Delivery Plan.

6. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 6.1 There are no specific implications of this report on climate change. However, the self-assessment will help us assess the Council's performance on areas including climate change.

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 help us assess the Council's performance on areas including safeguarding and corporate parenting.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Governance and Audit Committee: -
- Note the proposed approach to preparing the annual self-assessment for 2025-26.

Background documents

None