



GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE – 8TH OCTOBER 2024

SUBJECT: DRAFT ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT (INCLUDING WELL-BEING OBJECTIVES) 2023/2024

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present Governance and Audit Committee with the Draft Annual Self-assessment Report for 2023/24 (Appendix 1) including the Well-being Objectives (Appendix 2) for their consideration and comment prior to its onward submission to Joint Scrutiny on 28 October 2024 and Cabinet 13 November 2024.
- 1.2 To provide Governance and Audit Committee with assurance that the Councils self-assessment process is robust and effective.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The self-assessment report is a statutory requirement under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. It is an important part of the Council's performance framework. This is the third time the Council has produced a self-assessment report which replaces the former Annual Performance Report.
- 2.2 The Council is required to assess its own performance and provide the public with a balanced picture of that performance.
- 2.3 The Self-Assessment report also includes a second part which is the progress update on the Council's five Well-being Objectives for the year 2023/2024 (Appendix 2). These objectives are contained within the Corporate Plan 2023-2028. Previously the Well-being Objectives were reported to Joint Scrutiny and Cabinet, after Governance and Audit, as they are not part of the requirement of

the Local Government and Elections (2021) duty but have now been included to provide a holistic set of performance reporting.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To review the Draft Self-assessment Report (Appendix 1) and if necessary, make recommendations for changes to the conclusions or action the council intends to take.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Council has a statutory duty to publish a self-assessment report which should be made available as soon as reasonably practicable after the financial year to which it relates.
- 4.2 The intention of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 is for councils to be proactive in keeping their performance under review and to consider whether organisational processes and procedures are as effective as they could be or improved to drive better outcomes.
- 4.3 Under the Act we have duty to keep performance under review and the extent to which we are fulfilling those 'performance requirements' which we are:
- exercising our functions effectively.
 - using our resources economically, efficiently and effectively.
 - has effective governance in place for securing the above
- 4.4 Part 6, Chapter 1, of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 statutory guidance says that councils are responsible for:
- Conducting robust self-assessments and reporting on the extent to which the council is meeting the performance requirements in order to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of its local communities.
 - Setting out any actions to increase the extent to which the council is meeting the performance requirements, including, for example, the role of scrutiny in challenging and driving the extent to which the performance requirements are being met.
- 4.5 The aim is to support councils to build on existing strengths and to support them to achieve a more innovative, open, honest, transparent and ambitious sector, challenging itself and collectively driving up service delivery outcomes and standards.
- 4.6 The guidance states that the Council must 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.

4.7 If the Council does not make a change recommended by the Governance and Audit Committee, it must set out in the final self-assessment report the recommendation and the reasons why the Council did not make the change.

5. THE REPORT

5.1 This report introduces the Draft Annual Self-assessment Report for 2023/24 (Appendix 1) which includes an update on the Well-being Objectives (Appendix 2). Appendix 1 is an assessment on the internal organisational effectiveness of the organisation and Appendix 2 as an external view on delivering on Council priorities.

5.2 The intention of self-assessment is to provide and act on organisational learning and provide an ongoing process of review about how good our performance is and where it could be better. From this learning we produce a self-assessment report.

5.3 The statutory guidance advises that self-assessment should be achieved by using intelligence already held corporately in an insightful way and reflecting at a strategic level on how the council is operating, and what action is needed to ensure it can continue to provide effective services now and for the long term.

5.4 The Council's Performance Framework has been developed to meet several strategic and operational needs as well as to meet the legislation and further the Council's desire to be a high performing learning organisation focused on meeting the needs of its residents.

5.5 Much of the information contained within the report is sourced from the Directorate and Corporate Performance Assessments, in addition to other council reports, including the Annual Governance Statement and Financial Reports.

5.6 The self-assessment process produces a summary of the learning which has emerged from the self-assessment process. We have chosen a range of information under the headings noted below within the guidance attached to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2014. We have reached our conclusions under the following headings:

- Corporate Planning
- Financial Planning
- Workforce Planning
- Procurement and Information Technology
- Assets
- Risk Management
- Performance Management
- Other Key Council Health Checks

5.7 Last year, Governance and Audit committee asked for a greater strategic overview statement, under the headings noted in paragraph 5.6. Therefore, we have introduced an overall ‘assessment score based on a definition to enable a ‘judgement’ of the success of the effectiveness.

5.8 The new rating is noted below:

Level	Rating	Description
1	Highly Effective	Major Strengths – All or significant majority of actions have been achieved or are on track. The weight of evidence shows that any identified areas for improvement are making the better best.
2	Effective	Important Strengths with a few areas for improvement – the weight of evidence shows successes are greater than areas that have not been achieved. Minor areas for improvement to make the good better.
3	Adequate	Strengths just outweigh weaknesses – the evidence of success marginally outweighs areas that are not on track. Some actions are behind schedule and data shows this is falling short of planned achievement. Areas for improvement identified
4	Less Effective	Weaknesses just outweigh strengths – The weight of evidence shows weaknesses marginally outweigh areas that are on track. Some actions are behind schedule and some measures are falling short of planned achievement. Several areas for improvement needed
5	Urgent Improvement Required	Important weaknesses – the weight of evidence and actions have not been achieved in most areas. Performance is assessed as moving in the wrong direction. Needs urgent improvement

5.9 The Self-Assessment overall, shows good progress with addressing last year’s action plan and is identifying areas for improvement as intended. The sections noted as adequate have actions to move them higher up the scale above. The self-assessment attached and the method for reviewing our

progress is part of a continuous improvement process so will continue to evolve.

- 5.10 The report includes, in order to provide a holistic view of performance and for the information of this committee, the first progress update of the 5 Well-being Objectives contained in the Council's Corporate Plan (2023-2028) with five new Well-being Objectives endorsed by Council 29 November 2023
- 5.11 Under the Act the Council has a duty to carry out a Panel Performance Assessment where an independent panel, appointed by the Council, will assess, the extent to which the Council is meeting the performance requirements. The panel are not responsible for holding the Council to account but will offer an external view of how the Council is meeting its performance requirements and there is an opportunity for the Council, in their scoping document, to ask the panel to review more specific areas that the Council would like to know more about. There must be at least one panel assessment during an electoral cycle, and it is for the Council to choose the time during the electoral cycle when panel performance assessment is likely to be of most value, though all must be completed and reported on by December 2026.
- 5.12. The report includes, in order to provide a holistic view of performance and for the information of this committee, the first progress update of the 5 Well-being Objectives contained in the Council's Corporate Plan (2023-2028) with five new Well-being Objectives endorsed by Council 29 November 2023

Conclusion

- 5.13 The self-assessment provides a platform to celebrate the activity that has gone well, to reflect on the areas that need to be improved, and to identify new approaches and interventions to support future progress.

The Council's Performance Management Framework has been developed to meet several strategic and operational needs, as well as to meet the legislation. It is an ongoing process that allows the Council to act on organisational learning, review its performance and recognise where it could improve.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 No assumptions have been made or were thought necessary, for this report that are not already contained within the report.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 No Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed for this report although individual assessments may have been made to support activity

within the Well-being Objectives. Page 44 of the Draft Self-assessment Report provides a brief update on our Welsh Language and equalities work. Delivery of the Well-being Objectives maximises our contribution to all the national well-being goals including 'A More Equal Wales'.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no financial implications within this report, however Page 13 in the draft Self-assessment Report provides information on Financial Planning 2023/24.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no personal implications arising from this report, though page 18 of the appendix has a section within Workforce Planning.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 All consultation responses have been incorporated within this report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021
Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 and associated statutory guidance

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Background Papers:

[Statutory guidance on Part 6, Chapter 1, of the Local Government and Elections \(Wales\) Act 2021](#)

[Caerphilly - Caerphilly County Borough Corporate Plan 2023-2028](#)

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Draft Annual Self-assessment Report 2023/24

Appendix 2 Well-being Objective Progress Update 2023/24