

SUBJECT:	PANEL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT
MEETING:	Council
DATE:	25 June 2026
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	All

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To provide Council with the Panel Performance Assessment report and the authority's response to the recommendations.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Council notes and accepts the findings of the Panel Performance Assessment report attached at appendix 1.
- 2.2 That Council approves the draft response to the recommendations attached as appendix 2.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 The council's unifying purpose is for Monmouthshire to be a zero-carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life. This is set in the Community and Corporate Plan.
- 3.2 We have clear and established performance management framework in place to ensure we can deliver our agreed purpose and be held to account. These arrangements are overseen by the independently chaired Governance and Audit Committee with oversight from regulators including Audit Wales. The legislative basis for performance management in Welsh local authorities is set out in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. This establishes specific performance requirements. These include a duty to produce an annual self-assessment report and the requirement to commission an independent panel to conduct a statutory evaluation at least once per electoral cycle to examine how the council is meeting its performance requirements. This is known as Panel Performance Assessment or PPA.
- 3.3 In February 2026 the Council underwent its first panel performance assessment. The independent group of experts concluded that:

"Monmouthshire is an ambitious, well-run Council with communities at its heart and a reach that transcends boundaries."

They also wrote that the council demonstrates strong ambition with the capability to become great. A copy of the full report is attached as appendix 1.

- 3.4 The panel was chaired by Bev Smith, a former local authority chief executive who has subsequently held several non-executive roles. The panel met with more than 120 people over the course of the week including: a politically balanced focus group of backbench councillors nominated by group leaders; focus groups of officers at all tiers of the organisation; volunteers; business leaders; town and community councillors; trade unions; leaders of other public sector organisations and most importantly focus groups of local people. They also considered the results of the 2025-26 residents' and staff surveys and digested a wide range of documents. [OBJ]
- 3.5 The panel worked to a scope developed by Cabinet and approved at its meeting on 27th November 2025. The scope was:
- how well does the council align across directorates to optimise delivery of the priorities set out in the Community and Corporate Plan?
 - what opportunities are there to further develop the council's emerging person centred and preventative approaches to working with its communities, local businesses and other stakeholders, (including town and community councils)?
 - how well are we able to demonstrate the intended outcomes and emerging impacts of our Community and Corporate Plan and, how well do we communicate them to councillors, residents and other stakeholders, including town and community councils and local businesses?
- 3.6 The legislation that guides the assessment also requires the panel to assess the extent to which the council is meeting the performance requirements specified in the Act. Namely:
- exercising its functions effectively;
 - using its resources economically, efficiently and effectively; and
 - having effective governance in place for securing the above.
- 3.7 The panel highlighted a number of strengths including good governance, effective resource management and a culture of collaboration. Staff were seen as loyal, committed, and integral to the council's culture and delivery model. In addition, they identified areas for development including the need to improve the measurement of impact and outcomes. These will be taken forward as part of the council's performance management arrangements.
- 3.8 The panel made the following recommendations:
- Prioritise major opportunities to deliver better outcomes for residents at lower costs.
 - Strengthen community resilience and shared understanding.
 - Complete the development of workforce and succession planning.
- 3.9 The authority cannot amend the panel's report but does get the opportunity, and is required to, produce a response to it. This must include:
- The extent to which it accepts the conclusions in the report;
 - The extent to which the council intends to follow any recommendations contained in the report; and

- Any actions it proposes to take to increase the extent to which it meets the performance requirements.

- 3.10 The draft response and actions are attached as appendix 2 to this report. They were presented to Governance and Audit Committee on 4th June to enable that committee to review the draft response and may make recommendations for changes. This is a statutory requirement placed on the committee. They were joined by members of the Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee. Following extensive exploration of the report's findings, the committee did not make request any changes to the authority's response ahead of it being presented to Council.
- 3.11 The Panel Performance Assessment findings will inform the annual self-assessment process. These two processes enable councillors, residents, regulators to form a clear view of how the organisation is seeking to continuously improve and deliver the best possible outcomes for the residents and businesses of Monmouthshire.

4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

- 4.1 A full impact assessment is not required for this decision. The Panel Performance Assessment is expected to have a positive impact by strengthening accountability and supporting better outcomes for all residents, including future generations.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 5.1 Not conducting a Panel Performance Assessment was not an option as it is a statutory requirement. The process has identified recommendations which are shown above and led to a series of proposed actions, attached as an appendix to this report.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

- 6.1 The effectiveness of For Purpose, On Purpose will be overseen by the Project Assurance Board Chaired by the Chief Executive. The board will oversee the development of a benefits realisation framework. This will include:
- Financial: Operational cost savings: Cost avoidance / liability reduction; Income generation / improved recovery
 - Service & Customer Experience: Service performance; Accessibility & inclusion; Customer satisfaction & trust
 - Environmental & Social Value: Environmental impact; Social/community impact
- Strategic: Regulatory and policy compliance; Operational and organisational resilience; Sustainable organisational capability; Positive effects on staff capacity and moral.

This will be considered by Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee in September 2026.

- 6.2 The evaluation of the community resilience actions will initially form part of the measurement framework for F-POP. The evaluation of workforce and succession planning will form part of the evaluation of the People Strategy which is embedded in the whole authority self-assessment. This includes key metrics from the staff survey.

7. REASONS:

- 7.1 To provide independent assurance on the council's delivery, support continuous improvement, and meet the statutory requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 The costs associated with the panel were be met by The Welsh Local Government Association. There are no direct costs associated with the assessment

9. CONSULTEES:

Cabinet
Strategic Leadership Team
Governance and Audit Committee
Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee

Following a wide-ranging debate at Governance and Audit Committee, with members of Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee in attendance, the response to the draft response to the recommendations was considered appropriate and no changes were requested ahead of Council. The committee requested more explicit referencing of the recommendations within the cover report to Council and this reflected in the key issues section of the report.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Statutory Guidance - <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-03/performance-governance-of-principal-councils.pdf>

11. AUTHOR:

Matthew Gatehouse, Chief Officer – People, Performance and Partnerships

12. CONTACT DETAILS:

Tel: 0778 555 6727

E-mail: matthewgatehouse@monmouthshire.gov.uk