

**SUBJECT: Overview of Performance Management Arrangements**

**MEETING: Governance and Audit Committee**

**DATE: 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022**

**DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All**

**1 PURPOSE:**

- 1.1 To ensure that members understand the council's performance framework.
- 1.2 To present an update on the current effectiveness of the authority's performance management arrangements.
- 1.3 To provide the Committee with an overview of the Council's planned self-assessment process to meet the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

**2 RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That members use the update provided to inform their understanding of the effectiveness of the operation of the authority's performance management arrangements and identify any areas where they feel action needs to be taken or further information provided.

**3. KEY ISSUES:**

- 3.1 Performance management is about establishing a shared understanding of what needs to be achieved and making sure that it happens. The council currently has an established performance framework; this is the way in which we translate our purpose into action and ensure that everyone is pulling in the same direction to deliver real and tangible outcomes. This is shown in appendix 4.
- 3.2 Our performance framework:
  - Translates our purpose into the council's own well-being objectives and form the backbone of our five priority goals in the Corporate Plan.
  - Places an expectation on teams to translate these goals into specific, measurable actions in their service business plans
  - Contains a broad range of data to monitor impact and measure the performance of services
  - Provides employees with the opportunity to receive regular appraisals to demonstrate how they are contributing to the objectives

Other key processes that are part of and/or facilitate aspects of the framework include the Whole Authority Strategic Risk Assessment and self-evaluation arrangements.

- 3.3 There have been considerable adjustments to the Council's performance framework in the last two years due to the need to adapt arrangements to support the Council's response to the coronavirus pandemic and to meet requirement of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.
- 3.4 The pandemic caused unprecedented disruption to service delivery, and many planned activities and embedded processes were adjusted, reduced or stopped altogether to make capacity available to safeguard lives and livelihoods. To provide clarity and ensure accountability throughout the pandemic, Cabinet established a series (five in total) of revised purposes and strategic aims, known as the plan on a page, that reflected and adapted to the latest evidence and circumstances. The council's performance management arrangements were adjusted throughout to facilitate service planning, performance management and risk management that focused on what needed to happen and ensure progress could be monitored in a robust and transparent way.
- 3.5 The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 provides for a new and reformed legislative framework for local government elections, democracy, governance and performance. The Act replaces the previous improvement duty for councils set out in the Local Government (Wales)

Measure 2009. The Act requires each council in Wales to keep under review the extent to which it is meeting the 'performance requirements', that is the extent to which; it is exercising its functions effectively; it is using its resources economically, efficiently and effectively; its governance is effective for securing these.

- 3.6 Appendix 1 provides an appraisal of the arrangements that make up the current performance framework to ensure that Governance and Audit Committee are able to take an overview of their effectiveness. Each arrangement has been scored based on the council's self-evaluation framework: Level 6 Excellent; Level 5 Very Good; Level 4 Good; Level 3 Adequate, Level 2 Weak; and Level 1 Unsatisfactory. The committee last received an update providing an overview on performance management arrangements in November 2019.
- 3.7 Cabinet agreed, as part of the Corporate Plan commitment, an annual report to be received by Governance and Audit Committee, on the continued effectiveness of the council's strategic planning framework, ensuring the necessary checks and balances are in place around monitoring, evaluation, decision-making and policymaking. The report in appendix 1 forms the basis of this evaluation for performance monitoring and evaluation; further information assessing the effectiveness of decision-making is in appendix 2.
- 3.8 The council also places reliance on regulatory assessments as a vital part of our framework. These are Audit Wales, who examine the authority's corporate arrangements; Estyn, in relation to education provision; and the Care Inspectorate Wales, in relation to social services. Where applicable, the most recent findings of regulatory work have been factored into the appraisal of arrangements.
- 3.9 Governance and Audit Committee receive relevant Audit Wales performance audit reports throughout the year as they are published, which include any further areas of the council's arrangements where it is considered the authority needs to take action. The conclusion of these reports is consolidated within the regular Audit Wales Work Programme: Council Progress Update report provided to the committee. The latest update is on the Committee's agenda.
- 3.10 Under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, the mechanism for a council to keep its performance under review is self-assessment, with a duty to publish a report setting out the conclusions of the self-assessment once in respect of every financial year. Appendix 3 provides the Committee with an overview of the council's proposed process to undertake its first self-assessment under the Act, assessing performance in the 2021/22 financial year. Most of the evidence for the self-assessment can be informed by using intelligence already held corporately in an insightful way; this includes, for example, the Annual Governance Statement, audit and inspection reports, and service level business plans. Some of which already form part of the Performance Management framework, and some that will need to be further developed. Areas to be developed further in order to provide an additional evidence base includes directorate workshops.
- 3.11 Self-assessment is a way of evaluating, critically and honestly, the current position in order to make decisions on how to secure improvement for the future. It needs to be embedded across the organisation as effective self-assessment helps the council to continually learn and achieve sustainable improvement and better outcomes for citizens, service users and its own workforce. The Council needs to have an evaluative culture and mindset embedded in all it does, rather than see the self-assessment as standalone process to be completed once a year. Further developing this culture and embedding an evaluative mindset will be a key development point through the self-assessment process.
- 3.12 Governance and Audit Committee have an important role in contributing the report. A draft of the self-assessment report must be made available to the committee to review and make any recommendations for changes to the conclusions or action the council intends to take. The report is scheduled to be presented to the committee in June/July 2022 and this overview provides the committee with an update of how the process will be undertaken.

**4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no additional resource implications as a result of this report. However, there may be resource implications in undertaking further actions as directed by Strategic Leadership Team or as recommended by Governance and Audit Committee.

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## Appendix 1 - Appraisal of performance management arrangements

Well-being Objectives, Improvement Objectives & Strategic Aims 'Plan on a Page'	
<b>Purpose:</b>	<p>The Council has a responsibility under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to set well-being objectives. To achieve this, we must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set and publish well-being objectives</li> <li>• Take all reasonable steps to meet those objectives</li> <li>• Publish a statement about well-being objectives</li> <li>• Detail arrangements to publish an annual report of progress</li> </ul> <p>The requirement under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to set annual Improvement Objectives, produce an Improvement Plan and report annually on progress has been removed from April 2021, when the Local Government and Elections Act was introduced.</p> <p>When the Coronavirus pandemic began, swift action was needed to address the significant and unprecedented challenges being presented to our way of life and to the way we provided services. We have continued to rise to the challenge by establishing new ways of delivering services to support residents and businesses, assist community activity and maintain staff well-being. To provide clarity and ensure accountability throughout, a revised purpose and set of strategic aims have been established for the Council. To date, five iterations of the strategic aims have been developed in accordance with the changing situation, and emerging priorities.</p>
<b>Evaluation Score:</b>	Level 4 - Good
<b>Position February 2022</b>	<p>The council's Corporate Plan 2017-2022, approved in February 2018 and refreshed in March 2020, sets out five strategic goals, which also incorporate our well-being objectives. These are supported by 22 commitments to action we will take, and the ways in which they will be measured. The purpose and priorities set for Monmouthshire in the Corporate Plan also reflect our contribution to well-being objectives set for the county by the PSB well-being plan. The goals contained in the Corporate Plan 2017-22 were also adopted as the Council's Improvement Objectives in order to comply with the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009, which has been superseded this year by the Local Government and Elections Act.</p> <p>A mid-term review of the commitments in the Corporate Plan was undertaken and approved by Council in March 2020. This refresh ensured that the aspirations and activity in the plan remain relevant and reflect the latest thinking on issues of importance to our communities, such as the declaration of a climate emergency and improvements to transport links in the county. The Corporate Plan annual reports for 2019/20 and 2020/21 were presented to Council in October 2020 and September 2021 respectively, and outlined the progress made in achieving the strategic goals identified in the plan.</p> <p>As a result of the pandemic, some performance monitoring mechanisms were temporarily reduced and replaced with the ongoing monitoring provided by the strategic aims. Our usual practice of assessing progress against each goal in the Corporate Plan annual report on a scale of 1 to 6, unsatisfactory to excellent, and evaluating the progress of each of the 22 commitments to action, with a progress rating of either progressing well, taking steps, attention needed or no activity was suspended for the 2019/20 report due to the impact of the pandemic. This practice was reintroduced in the 2020/21 report, and all goals were assessed as 'adequate', although these ratings related to activity and progress against the commitments themselves and did not illustrate the significant activities undertaken during 2020/21 to support the pandemic response.</p> <p>Audit Wales issued a certificate of compliance for the audit of Monmouthshire County Council's assessment of both 2019/20 and 2020/21 performance, stating the council discharged its duties to prepare and publish an Improvement Plan in accordance with statutory requirements of the Local Government Measure 2009.</p>

<b>Key future actions</b>	<p>Since March 2020, we have had to establish new ways of delivering services to support residents and businesses, assist community activity and maintain staff well-being through the pandemic. To provide clarity and ensure accountability, a revised purpose and set of strategic aims were approved by Cabinet in May 2020, and these have been periodically updated in accordance with the changing pandemic situation, and emerging priorities. To date, five iterations have been developed, the most recent designed to take the council through to the summer of 2022.</p> <p>At the start of the pandemic, the pace of change was unrelenting, with hundreds of staff re-deployed, new services created almost overnight, and tens of millions of pounds re-directed to support those who needed help and to ensure local businesses remained viable. The impact this had on the workings of the council was considerable, and we had to reconsider our entire approach to service delivery. As such, the initial plan on a page focused on protecting life and supporting communities to be sustainable and resilient. As the circumstances of the pandemic have changed, the plans have altered in focus. The final iteration aligns more closely with the Corporate Plan, with wider considerations such as our environmental priorities, and sets a direction up to the local election in summer 2022. It also has a broader view, setting the focus and identifying longer term priorities and challenges.</p> <p>To support the implementation of the strategic aims, structures and mechanisms were put in place to track and evaluate progress. A business plan was established to monitor activity, and Cabinet received reports to provide updates on council activity on each iteration of the plan on a page. In September 2021, Strong Communities select committee received a summary report encompassing activity undertaken in the preceding 18 months to allow scrutiny of the progress of the strategic aims. The aims were also summarised in the Corporate Plan Annual Report, which was presented to Council in September 2021. In a letter provided to the council in December 2020, Audit Wales specifically identified the development and implementation of the various iterations of the strategic aims as a key strength in creating our response and recovery structures.</p>
<b>Key future actions</b>	Complete an assessment of 2021/22 performance against the Corporate Plan goals and the strategic aims.

<b>Service Business Plans</b>	
<b>Purpose:</b>	Each service sets a Service Business Plan for a three-year period. Service business planning and regular evaluation of our performance is fundamental to how we operate. It allows services to plan for the future, assess what went well, learn from what didn't and measure the impact the service has made on people and places of Monmouthshire. Service Plans ensure clear alignment between the council's priorities and objectives, and detail the actions the service will be undertaking, performance measures to assess progress and risks facing the service and mitigating actions.
<b>Evaluation Score:</b>	Level 3 - Adequate
<b>Position February 2022</b>	<p>A thorough appraisal of business plans was undertaken by the Performance Team during 2019/20 and feedback provided to business plan holders. The start of the pandemic in early 2020 meant many processes were adjusted, reduced or suspended entirely as resources were redirected to the pandemic response. This impacted in the completion of quarter 4 business planning updates, which were due in April 2020 and on the preparation of updated plans for the new planning year. For those service areas who were able to continue with the preparation and updates to their plans, support was available from the Performance Team, although the appraisal process was not completed as resources were focused on performance arrangements related to the pandemic response</p> <p>To ensure accountability during this time, the strategic aims 'plan on a page' were published and a framework to monitor progress was established. A Strategic Aims business plan was created to specifically identify actions to address the strategic aims, and this was maintained throughout 2020/21. It was stored on the council's intranet site, 'the Hub', which made it available to all officers and members to provide clarity and direction, and to act as a mechanism for performance monitoring.</p>

In April 2021, a new business planning process was developed, based on the new 'Plan on a Page' approach that was adopted at the start of the pandemic. This concise, easily accessible Plan on a Page model proved effective with staff, based on feedback provided, so presented a clear opportunity to reintroduce the business planning process at the start of the new planning year 2021/22. The new process focuses on providing clarity, via a streamlined approach to planning that is easy to update and follow, in order to provide accountability and identify areas requiring further consideration. This aligns with the new Local Government and Elections Act, which requires councils to produce a self-assessment, which highlights the positive outcomes for service users, and identifies areas that need to be improved.

The new process provides a three-year 'plan on a page', which sets the direction for the service area and covers all aspects of service delivery from customer satisfaction to workforce planning and financial management. This is supported by a quarterly performance monitoring tool, an annual self-assessment of progress, performance measures and a risk assessment. It also guides business plan holders to reflect on the Well-being of Future Generations Act, and how their plan adopts the sustainable development principles and the five ways of working. A user guide has been provided, alongside a simple 'How To' document, to assist plan holders with the transition to the new format, and the Performance team attended DMTs and corresponded with business plan holders to offer further advice and guidance.

As part of the new Act, and the need for greater emphasis on self-assessment and identifying areas for improvement, the new template requires service areas to consider what they want to achieve over a three-year period, and to reflect on the impact their actions are having on service users, how this can be evidenced, and what comes next to improve the impact of the service. The new plans are in their infancy, so a period of transition is to be expected, however completion has been varied. Most service areas have developed a plan on a page for the forthcoming three years with some consideration of service impact and medium-term direction-setting, however the quality of plans does need to be developed. Transitioning from more process-based planning to outcome-focused planning needs to be further evolved. The Performance Team are attending DMTs to provide further guidance on both the planning process and the self-assessment report due later this year.

The plans are available on the council's intranet, The Hub, and are accessible to officers and members to provide increased transparency and to facilitate challenge. Quarterly updates are not always completed within the set timescales, which lessens their ability to be utilised in a timely manner for accountability.

There has been reduced capacity within the Policy and Performance Team and the normal quality assurance process has been limited during 2021/22. The team's focus has adjusted to ensure the strategic aims, their associated business plan and effective performance reporting, have been maintained to provide clarity and accountability during the pandemic. In addition to this, reviews of the strategic risk assessment have increased due to the rapidly changing nature of the pandemic response, and associated reporting requirements. Despite this, business plans have been monitored throughout the year and assistance has been offered where particular issues have arisen, or where plan holders have requested additional support.

**Key future actions**

Support services to develop their approach to service business planning to fully embrace the self-assessment approach introduced in 2021/22

Improve capacity within the Performance Team to ensure a full appraisal of service business plans is carried out

## Performance Data and Information

<b>Purpose:</b>	<p>Data and information are essential to our performance framework. This comprises of nationally set performance indicators and locally set indicators that services have developed to measure the impact of their service. As well as maximising the use of data we hold to inform how we plan, manage, and deliver services.</p> <p>All staff and members need to regularly access and use performance data and analysis of performance to evaluate the progress and impact of services.</p>
<b>Evaluation Score:</b>	Level 4 – Good
<b>Position February 2022</b>	<p>The pandemic has caused some disruption to the collation of performance indicators due to changes in frameworks, disruption to services and capacity to facilitate collation. Although, performance indicators and metrics have continued to be used to inform how performance has been assessed in the Corporate plan annual report, Coronavirus strategic aims and plans on a page.</p> <p>The Council’s Corporate Plan goals set out a range of measures that are used to evaluate progress and these have been used to evaluate performance in the 2020/21 Corporate Plan. Performance metrics have also been developed and used to evaluate progress against the Council’s coronavirus strategic aims. This has ensured evaluations of progress have been informed by a range of evidence for accountability. Summaries and infographics have also been developed to help communicate performance data and information to residents.</p> <p>Service business plans show there remains is variability in the use, overall quality and completeness of performance indicators within services to assess performance. This can limit the ability of services to robustly assess their performance. Feedback and assistance is being provided to services, where required, to strengthen their planning.</p> <p>The internal audit of data quality of performance indicators has not been completed due to the impact of the pandemic. Ensuring data quality remains essential. This will be a continued focus as part of developing the Council’s data maturity.</p> <p>The “data hub”, the council’s performance measurement area hosted on the Council’s intranet site continues to be updated. This has been streamlined to ensure the information is up to date and focussed on the most pertinent performance data, tracking progress on measures set in the Corporate Plan. Further development of the data hub is planned. The technology is also being piloted to enable the creation of data dashboards, which will make use of feeds from internal and external data sources. The development of pilot dashboards has begun and the learning from these pilots will be used to inform the future direction.</p> <p>There here has been an increased focus on the council’s use of data in its response to the Coronavirus pandemic, which has included the production of Monmouthshire-specific COVID-19 case maps, and regular Coronavirus data analysis using a range of data sources relevant to Monmouthshire.</p> <p>Cabinet have agreed investment into a new data capacity and capability roadmap to strengthen how the council uses data to guide its activity. This is being utilised in two main parts, Firstly, growing our data capability across the organisation through training and development opportunities for existing staff in all teams. Developing the Council’s data maturity is a critical element of this. Secondly a focus on generating better insight from existing datasets. This includes combining data sets for a deeper understanding of our population and using data analytics to target preventative services.</p>
<b>Key future actions</b>	<p>Continue to strengthen the Council’s data quality</p> <p>Support services to make better use of data to inform service planning and transformation including: data visualisation, data analysis and data insights.</p>



<b>Staff Appraisal (Check-In, Check-Out)</b>	
<b>Purpose:</b>	Appraisals help staff to understand what is expected of them, to agree how values and behaviours are linked to how we perform at work and to ensure that all of our work links to the wider purpose of the organisation. Managers at every level are expected to set the right standards, coach, motivate, feedback on poor performance and recognise those people who deliver good performance.
<b>Evaluation Score:</b>	Level 3 – Adequate
<b>Position February 2022</b>	<p>The employee performance framework, 'Check-In, Check-Out' (CICO) has been in place for a number of years and was designed to provide a values-based performance assessment between staff and line managers. Based on feedback, the CICO process was reviewed and rolled out with more robust guidance and supportive training, and a more effective recording module that allowed managers to record the completed CICO directly into the HR system.</p> <p>Despite the adjustments to the process, it is clear that it does not lend itself to all teams and workforce structures. The focus has therefore moved away from ensuring all staff adhere to one single process, to supporting professional discussions between managers and their staff in a range of formats. The focus is on adopting an approach that ensures professional development, wellbeing and information flow for those that want or need it. Following the Culture and Ethics audit report, Strategic Leadership Team, SLT, have decided to move beyond the quantitative approach to tracking this and into a more qualitative approach, with the introduction of various platforms for staff to express their views and identify problems, if necessary. The Peoples Q&amp;A has been being rolled out across the organisation to allow staff to engage directly with leadership, without the intervention of management, and provides a key 'listen' function, and check and balance to a more qualitative approach, to ensure that issues and blockers are raised and identified directly to SLT and DMTs.</p> <p>The staff 'Digital Cwtch' was introduced at the start of lockdown and has proven successful so continues on a two-weekly basis. This is a livestreamed session, attended by the Chief Executive or a representative of SLT, and takes place without an agenda to allow staff to raise issues, anonymously if required, directly with a senior leader. A Leaders Q&amp;A is also held on a weekly basis with a member of HR, to allow managers to discuss any topic they wish with HR and with their peers.</p> <p>The aim is to establish a process whereby an appraisal is the right of any employee who wants one, with a framework in place to allow them to raise an issue if they are unable to have one. Managers will have the ability to record any completed appraisals in their Service Business Plan, and this information can be cross referenced with the outcomes of the various discussion forums open to staff to ensure correlation. Work is also underway to establish a new training management system to record the developmental pathways of staff, and an e-recruitment system to improve the way in which we recruit staff.</p> <p>Following the production of the new Corporate Plan later this year, all associated strategies will be updated, including the People strategy. This will provide a clear framework for staff appraisal, incorporating the various strands identified above.</p>
<b>Key future actions</b>	Develop an approach to staff appraisals to ensure anyone who wants or needs a professional discussion with their manager, is able to have one.



<b>Strategic Risk Assessment</b>	
<b>Purpose:</b>	<p>The strategic risk assessment captures the high and medium level risks that face the council in line with the council's risk management policy. This ensures that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic risks are identified and monitored by the authority</li> <li>• Risk controls are appropriate and proportionate</li> <li>• Senior managers and elected members systematically review the strategic risks facing the authority</li> </ul>
<b>Evaluation Score:</b>	Level 4 – Good
<b>Position February 2022</b>	<p>The strategic risk assessment is a live document, available to all and designed for ongoing update whenever necessary. It is located on the council's Hub, which ensures select committees are able to view the information at any point in the year to prioritise their work plan, as appropriate. The assessment is prepared and updated, in line with the council's strategic risk management policy, by drawing on a wide range of evidence including service plans, performance measures, regulatory reports and progress on the previous risk assessment.</p> <p>The risk assessment undergoes a formal review six monthly, which is scrutinised by Governance and Audit Committee and signed off by Cabinet annually. At the start of the pandemic, due to the rapidly changing nature of our response according to infection rates and legislation, the strategic risk assessment was reviewed frequently. This was to ensure existing strategic risks were monitored and their mitigations assessed for effectiveness, and to ensure any new emerging risks were identified and included, along with mitigating actions and responsible officers. An Emergency Response Team, ERT, was stood up at the start of the pandemic and established an independent risk register to monitor specific COVID-19 related risks. When the ERT was stood down, any relevant ongoing medium or high-level risks were incorporated into the strategic risk assessment for continued monitoring, whilst lower-level risks were transferred to service business plans for localised monitoring. A letter issued by Audit Wales in December 2020 recognised the robust arrangements implemented during the early period of the pandemic to mitigate risks, and the process for integrating the COVID-specific risk register with the strategic assessment, and the associated reporting mechanisms introduced.</p> <p>The latest version of the strategic risk assessment was reviewed by Governance and Audit Committee in November 2021. The current register identifies 16 risks.</p> <p>Risk assessment is a key principle of service business planning as this allows services areas to identify operational risks pertinent to their specific area, and also provides a platform to identify potentially higher-level strategic risks for inclusion on the strategic register, as per the risk management policy and guidance document. Monitoring of service business plans shows that risk assessments in plans remains an area for improvement to strengthen the capture and management of risks facing services.</p> <p>In line with the Well-being of Future Generations Act, identification and mitigation of longer-term risks that will impact on future generations at a community level but will have a lesser impact on the medium-term delivery of council services, is an area for continued development. Through working with the Public Service Board, we are developing our understanding of future risks and opportunities and how we respond to them in Monmouthshire.</p>
<b>Key Future Actions:</b>	<p>Support services to strengthen the quality of their business planning approach, in particular, monitoring risks.</p> <p>Develop risk management arrangements to identify and mitigate longer-term risks that will impact on future generations at a community level, in line with the Well-being of Future Generations Act.</p>

<b>Self-Evaluation</b>	
<b>Purpose:</b>	Self-evaluation allows us to appraise what we have done, assess what went well, learn from what didn't and plan future activity informed by what we did and the impact made.
<b>Evaluation Score:</b>	Level 3 – Adequate
<b>Position February 2022</b>	<p>Over the last few years there has been a focus on improving self-evaluation arrangements by continuing to embed this within the council's existing arrangements and implementing specific programmes of work and aligning these more closely with the budget setting process.</p> <p>The last annual report on progress and performance in 2020/21 on the Corporate Plan was presented to Council in September 2021 and outlined the progress made to achieve the goals identified in the plan. This report meets the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure to publish an assessment of performance by 31 October each year, whilst also meeting the Well-being of Future Generations Act requirement of reporting performance before 31 March. The requirements of the Measure were superseded in 2021 by the introduction of the Local Government and Elections Act and self-evaluation arrangements are being developed in line with these new requirements, as set out in Appendix 3. Audit Wales have issued a certificate of compliance for the audit of Monmouthshire County Council's assessment of 2020/21 performance.</p> <p>The annual report published in October 2021 also provides a summary of activity and an assessment of progress against the strategic aims in the 'Plan on a Page', which were introduced at the start of the pandemic to provide direction and assure accountability through the rapidly changing environment of the pandemic response. Progress against the strategic aims was continuously monitored during 2020/21 via the strategic aims business plan, whereby actions were identified to contribute to the achievement of the aims and allocated to specific service areas. A report was provided to Cabinet on progress of each iteration of the plan on a page to ensure performance was being assessed and monitored, and to provide opportunity for feedback.</p> <p>The introduction of the Local Government and Elections Act prompted a review of the Service Business Plans to provide a better platform for self-assessment of performance, quarterly and on an annual basis. The revised plans include a covering 'Plan on a Page', which provides opportunity for service areas to identify their medium-term aspirations for their service users and for themselves, as a team. It includes measures to monitor the quantitative aspect of their performance, and a risk register to identify and allow them to put actions in place to mitigate risks.</p> <p>The new planning process requires plan holders to continue to update on progress quarterly and has introduced a new 'self-assessment' element, which is required annually. This allows plan holders to review the aspirations from their 'plan on a page' and identify how well they have achieved them, where there are areas of slippage or where more development is required, and what their plan is going forward to meet the aspirations the following year.</p> <p>Work is also underway to develop an organisational self-assessment, as required by the new legislation, which is due to be published later this year and reflects on activity during 2021/22. The proposed process includes new directorate workshops, which will provide the opportunity for heads of service to reflect on their service area and assess activity against the Corporate Plan priority goals. The output from the workshops will form the basis of the self-assessment, along with other elements of the performance framework, such as Chief Officer reports, scrutiny, external regulation and the Annual Governance Statement. As this is the first year, the process will be reviewed throughout and amended where necessary.</p>
<b>Key Future Actions</b>	<p>Continue to produce an annual report on the continued effectiveness of the council's strategic planning framework</p> <p>Support services to implement the new service business plans to strengthen the quality of planning.</p> <p>Undertake the first self-assessment and develop the process as it progresses</p>

## Appendix 2 - Assessing the effectiveness of decision-making

	<b>Decision Making</b>
<b>Purpose:</b>	Decision making and policy making is an important part of our governance arrangements and is about how we ensure we are doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner. Good governance is essential for the effective use of public money and the continued delivery of efficient and effective public services. The scrutiny process is an integral part of this and ensures openness, transparency and accountability in the council's decision-making.
<b>Evaluation Score:</b>	Level 4 - Good
<b>Position February 2022</b>	<p>The council's 2020/21 Annual Governance Statement (AGS), which was presented to Governance and Audit Committee in July 2021, demonstrates that Monmouthshire has appropriate governance arrangements in place. The AGS is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government. In the majority of areas, we have effective governance arrangements in place, which are continually improving.</p> <p>The Coronavirus pandemic initially caused significant organisational disruption as the law did not permit fully remote decision-making, In April 2020, the Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) regulations 2020 came into force enabling virtual meetings. Monmouthshire was the first in Wales to hold key meetings remotely, which were available to the public through live streaming. This allowed the continuation of democratic decision-making, and remote meetings are still being held today. The process has developed to accommodate hybrid meetings, allowing some attendees to meet in person, where restrictions allow, and technology has been updated to improve this functionality at County Hall. In their letter of December 2020, Audit Wales identified the council's transition to virtual decision-making and committee meetings as a strength and stated that it was "fast and well-managed, allowing it (the council) to return to the full democratic decision-making process earlier than many other councils in Wales."</p> <p>Initially, a very limited number of urgent decisions were made in accordance with the officer and Members' schemes of delegation as detailed in the Council's Constitution and urgent decision-making procedures. The Chief Officer People and Governance (Monitoring Officer) subsequently presented a report to Cabinet in May 2020 on the impact on decision making that COVID-19 has had within the Council and to identify next steps. As the use of technology came into operation, minimal Council meetings were cancelled and, as much as possible, the systems of internal control have continued to operate during the pandemic. In the Chief Internal Auditor's opinion, as stated in the Annual Governance Statement 2020, adequate assurance was obtained over the course of 2020/21 to result in an overall 'Reasonable' audit opinion to be issued for the Council's activities, although this was based on the limited work undertaken by the team. In conclusion, during 2020/21 the Coronavirus pandemic did not lead to significant internal control or governance issues which impacted on the overall review of effectiveness.</p> <p>The Councils Integrated Impact Assessment process ensures the decisions the Council makes are carefully considered to take equality and sustainable development into account, this includes legislation that Monmouthshire County Council is subject to: the Equality Act 2010, socio-economic duty, Well-being of Future Generations Act and Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. As well as key responsibilities such as safeguarding and corporate parenting and policy considerations including social justice and the climate emergency. A range of these have been undertaken during 2020/21 and 2021/22 and have been published on the website accompanying decision making reports.</p>
<b>Key Future Actions</b>	<p>The Council will continue to monitor &amp; review its governance arrangements and identify any gaps.</p> <p>Implement the process for the evaluation of decisions made by Council and Cabinet</p> <p>Continue to produce an annual report on the continued effectiveness of the council's strategic planning framework</p> <p>Adopt all of the applicable changes introduced by the local Government and elections Act 2021</p>

## **Appendix 3 – Self-assessment process**

### **Legislation**

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (“the Act”) provides for a new and reformed legislative framework for local government elections, democracy, governance and performance. The Act replaces the previous improvement duty for councils set out in the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009. The Act requires each council in Wales to keep under review the extent to which it is meeting the ‘performance requirements’, that is the extent to which; it is exercising its functions effectively; it is using its resources economically, efficiently and effectively; its governance is effective for securing these.

The mechanism for a council to keep its performance under review is self-assessment, with a duty to publish a report setting out the conclusions of the self-assessment once in respect of every financial year. Self-assessment will be complemented by a panel performance assessment once in an electoral cycle, providing an opportunity to seek external insights (other than from auditors, regulators or inspectors) on how the council is meeting the performance requirements.

### **Why**

Self-assessment is a way of evaluating, critically and honestly, the current position in order to make decisions on how to secure improvement for the future. It is about the council being self-aware, understanding whether it is delivering the right outcomes, and challenging itself to continuously improve. It needs to be embedded as effective self-assessment helps the council to continually learn and achieve sustainable improvement and better outcomes for citizens, service users and its own workforce.

The performance and governance provisions in the Act are framed within the context of the well-being duty in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, which sets out a legally binding common purpose for public bodies to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Well-being of Future Generations Act provides the context within which a council should be exercising its functions, using its resources and ensuring its governance is effective, with the aim of maximising its contribution to the well-being goals. It sets the framework within which a council must consider its performance, in terms of service delivery, corporate capability and capacity to meet the needs of current users, without compromising the needs of future generations.

The statutory guidance on the Well-being of Future Generations Act contains a core set of activities common to the corporate governance of public bodies. These are corporate planning, financial planning, workforce planning, procurement, asset, risk management and performance management. Considering the seven corporate areas as a framework for the self-assessment and applying the five ways of working to those areas, will support the council to ensure it is governing itself to maximise its contribution to the well-being goals and meet its well-being objectives.

The WLGA have identified draft principles for self-assessment for councils to ensure that they have arrangements in place that:

- demonstrate self-awareness derived from evidence-based analysis that focuses on outcomes;
- are owned and led at a strategic level and are not an exercise in compliance;
- further develop a culture of challenge to facilitate improvement as part of an ongoing process;
- are integrated as part of the council’s corporate planning, performance and governance processes; and
- enable an organisation-wide assessment rather than an assessment of individual services.

Further developing this culture and embedding an evaluative mindset will be a key development point through the first few iterations of the self- assessment report.

### **Process**

The Council has developed a proposed process to undertake its first self-assessment under the Act, assessing performance in the 2021/22 financial year. The process has been designed to maintain a focus on the purpose of the self-assessment.

The main component parts of the process and timeline are:

<b>Feb – April</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>May – June</b>	<b>June - July</b>	<b>By end July</b>
Desk-based evidence gathering	Directorate self-assessment Workshops	Council self-assessment report drafted	Draft of self-assessment to Scrutiny and Governance & Audit Committee	Self-assessment agreed in line with Council process.

The timeline proposed tries to balance the ability of self-assessment to inform and be informed by the policy direction of the council and how it uses its resources efficiently and effectively, particularly the budget setting process. The process and timescales will be reviewed throughout and amended, where necessary, based on learning.

An evaluative evidence base will be developed at a directorate level. The statutory guidance prescribes some evidence the council must consider, some of which will need to be further developed. Most of the evidence for the self-assessment can be informed by using intelligence already held corporately in an insightful way; this includes, for example, the Annual Governance Statement, audit and inspection reports, and service level business plans.

This evidence will be explored further, and challenged where necessary, at directorate-based self-assessment workshops to determine if the objectives (outcomes) of the council are being achieved. It is proposed the workshops will be facilitated through the following questions:

- How well do we understand our local context and place and has this informed our purpose and priorities? (Need)
- How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes? (From Corporate Plan)
- How do we know? (Evidence)
- How effectively are resources being used to deliver our priorities? (Enablers)
- How effectively does the council work with stakeholders and partners on agreed outcomes? (Partnership working)
- What could we do better? (Actions)

These will be kept under review and adjusted if required based on learning during the process.

Following the workshops, the evidence will be reviewed and aggregated into a corporate level evaluative self-assessment. This will be integrated with the existing Corporate Plan annual report, which meets the council's requirement to report on the progress it has made in meeting its well-being objectives for the preceding financial year under the Well-being of Future Generations Act. The proposed structure of the self-assessment report is detailed below:

- Outcomes (progress against corporate plan goals):
  - How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?
  - How do we know?
- Corporate planning
- Financial Planning
- Workforce Planning
- Procurement
- Assets
- Performance and Risk Management
- Digital & Data
- What and how can we do better? (Actions)

The final structure of the self-assessment report will be concluded as the report is developed. The self-assessment report will be taken through scrutiny and approved in accordance with the council's agreed processes. A draft of the self-assessment report must be made available to Governance and Audit committee, who must review the draft report and make recommendations for changes to the conclusions or action the council intends to take.

## Appendix 4

### Performance Management Framework

Our performance management framework makes sure that everyone is pulling in the same direction to deliver real and tangible outcomes.

Building sustainable and resilient communities is the unifying purpose of the diverse range of services for which we are responsible. We are a partner in the Public Service Board, which is responsible for setting well-being objectives for the county. The council's own well-being objectives are set by the Council based on the same well-being assessment as the PSB objectives and, form the backbone of our Five Organisational Goals in the corporate plan. Each of our teams has a business plan that aligns to these objectives. We have a range of performance measures that we use to keep track of our progress. Our risk management policy enables us to manage strategic risks to our delivery. Our employee aims and objectives show the contributions that individual colleagues make to these objectives and delivering our vision in accordance with our values.

