

SUBJECT: Draft Self-Assessment 2022/23
MEETING: Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee
DATE: 20th September 2023
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1 PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To provide the committee with an assessment of the council's performance during 2022/23. The committee is asked to consider how well we have addressed the areas for development identified in the previous self-assessment report, and to what extent the council has met the performance requirement outlined in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the committee uses the draft self-assessment report to scrutinise the council's performance during 2022/23 and agrees any areas they would like to examine in greater depth as part of their forward work programme.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 The Self-Assessment Report is a requirement under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. The Act requires each local authority 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 and its governance is effective for securing these.
- 3.2 Under the Act, 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 is a way of evaluating, critically and honestly, the current position and to inform decisions on how to secure improvement for the future. It needs to be embedded across the organisation to help the council continually learn and achieve sustainable improvement and better outcomes for citizens, service users and its own workforce. The self-assessment process has been embedded as part of the council's performance management framework (appendix 1).
- 3.3 The financial year 2022-23 saw a time of transition for the Council and the organisation. Following the appointment of a new administration, a new Community and Corporate Plan was developed, having been informed by a wide range of evidence with a focus on improving the economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being of Monmouthshire in line with the Well-being of Future Generations Act. This plan was produced against a backdrop of economic uncertainty, with increasing financial pressures making it difficult to meet increasingly complex demand in many service areas.
- 3.4 Given the circumstances of the transitional period of 2022/23, the assessment focuses on how well the Council has met the areas for development identified in the 2021/22 self-assessment report rather than the explicit actions in the Community and Corporate plan as these were not approved until the end of the year. While the report shows targets against key measures in the performance framework, it is important to be aware these are for the year 2026-27 which is the final year of the plan. Work to develop targets profiled targets for the intervening years is currently underway.

- 3.5 The areas for development are set out under each of the six Well-being Objectives identified in the Community and Corporate Plan. To support the delivery of the objectives, the council has to make sure that all of its areas are working efficiently and effectively. The report also assesses the effectiveness of the 'enabling functions' that support council services to meet changing demands and ensure their sustainability. These include corporate planning, performance and risk management; financial planning; workforce planning; procurement; assets; digital; data; and democracy and scrutiny. These enablers are also assessed against the areas for development identified in last year's assessment.
- 3.6 The self-assessment report demonstrated the progress the council has made in addressing its areas for development and identifies any further areas for development to be addressed in 2023/24. These include:
- We have continued to expand our education offer with the development of the new 3-19 all-through school in Abergavenny and the implementation of our 10-year Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, which aims to promote and expand Welsh medium-education provision in the county.
 - We have shown our commitment to reducing our impact on the planet exceeding recycling targets, and the production of our socially responsible procurement strategy. However, we will struggle to achieve our goal of net-zero by 2030 if work in this space continues at its current pace.
 - We have faced increased and more complex demand for homeless accommodation, with a heavier reliance on temporary accommodation. Finding suitable housing provision is likely to continue to be challenging as phosphates continue to restrict new developments in the county, including the development of affordable housing.
 - We have continued to support our communities and residents through investing in volunteering opportunities, increasing our sports development offer and involving residents in longer-term planning. We have provided both financial support and advice to residents on the cost-of-living crisis and can demonstrate an understating of where poverty interventions are needed, however we do not always have the resources to act upon this information.
 - Work is needed to ensure the financial viability of the council's services and to prevent further overspend in service areas such as social care and homelessness.
- 3.7 Committee findings have been used to inform our assessment of performance and formed a key part of our evidence base. Evidence presented to, and scrutinised by, the committee which informed our assessment includes, but is not limited to, the 22/23 outturn report; the Strategic Risk Register; Welsh Education Strategic Plan; and the Local Development Plan Annual Monitoring Report.
- 3.8 Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee has an important role in scrutinising the council's performance. This report provides the committee with an assessment of performance during 2022/23 which the committee can use to inform this role. The committee may also wish to use this report to identify any further areas it may wish to scrutinise the performance of in more detail as part of its forward work plan.
- 3.9 Following scrutiny, the self-assessment report will be presented to Governance and Audit Committee which has a statutory role in scrutinising the self-assessment report to seek assurance on the effectiveness of the council's governance and performance management arrangements. The assessment will be taken to Governance and Audit Committee on the afternoon of the 20th September before being presented to Council on the 26th October.
- 3.10 The annual self-assessment report 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.

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 identified in the self-assessment report. These would be subject to the usual council decision-making processes.

5. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

Performance and governance of local authorities: statutory guidance

Corporate Plan 2017-22

Community and Corporate Plan 2022-28

Self-assessment Report 2021/22

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Appendix 1

Performance Management Framework

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

Building a zero-carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life 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 Council and form the backbone of our Community and Corporate Plan. Each of our teams has a service 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.

