SUBJECT:	**Self-assessment of Performance Management Arrangements**
MEETING:	**Governance and Audit Committee**
DATE:	**1st May 2025**
DIVISIONS/WARDS AFFECTED: All	

1. PURPOSE:

1.1 To ensure that members of the committee have an understanding of the council's performance framework.

1.2 To present an update on the current effectiveness of the authority's performance management arrangements.

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. The components of the framework are shown visually in appendix 2.

3.2 Our performance framework: Translates our purpose into the council's own well-being objectives; Places an expectation on teams to align to deliver these objectives through setting specific, measurable actions in their service business plans; Contains a broad range of data to monitor impact and measure the performance of services. 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 few years due to the need to meet requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. 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.

3.4 Appendix 1 provides an assessment 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. This includes an assessment of how well we are doing, how we know this and planned actions for the future along with timescales.

3.5 A summary of the conclusion of the assessment for each arrangement is provided below:

- Well-being Objectives - The council has set six well-being objectives in the Community and Corporate Plan. This has ensured that there is a clear direction for the council, that is fed through the performance management framework. Enabling strategies aligned to deliver the well-being objectives have been developed. There is a need to ensure arrangements are in place to evaluate performance of these strategies.

- Service Business Plans - The Service Business Plan process has principles, supporting templates and guidance in place that are regularly reviewed. A quality assurance process continues to be undertaken and has supported the improvement in quality of plans and will aim to further improve consistency of plans. There is a need to provide further training and support on the planning process.

- Self-evaluation - The self-assessment process informed the completion of a self-assessment report of the Council's performance in 2023/24. The reported facilitated scrutiny of the Council's performance. There remains a need to strengthen self-evaluation through the council's performance management framework, particularly in services business plans, and providing more detailed explanations of underperformance.

- Performance Data and Information – The use of performance data in the Council's performance management framework is being strengthened. The measurement framework of the Community and Corporate Plan has been reviewed to increase the focus on outcomes, where possible, and dashboards haven been developed to present performance information. There is a need to improve the council's data maturity, with data accuracy being an important part.

- Strategic Risk Management – The council's strategic risk management policy and guidance has been updated, agreed and is being implemented through the performance management framework. The council has also defined its risk appetite. The strategic risk register is regularly updated and reported.

3.6 This report on the continued effectiveness of the council's strategic planning framework is presented annually to Governance and Audit Committee and is important in ensuring the necessary checks and balances are in place around the arrangements for performance planning, monitoring and evaluation. It will also inform the Council's annual self-assessment process and report, part of which includes an assessment of Corporate Planning, Performance and Risk Management arrangements.

3.7 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.

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: Self-Assessment of Performance Management Arrangements

<table>
<tr><th colspan="4">Well-being Objectives</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">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:
Set and publish well-being objectives
Take all reasonable steps to meet those objectives
Publish a statement about the well-being objectives
Detail arrangements to publish an annual report of progress
The Council publishes a Corporate Plan every five years. This plan contains the wellbeing objectives of the Council and sets out the actions it will take to achieve them over the time of the plan. Alongside these actions, measures and targets are set that the Council will use to track progress. An evaluation of the Council's performance and progress in meeting these targets is published in our annual Self-Assessment Report.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>How well are we doing?</td><td>How do we know?</td><td>Action & timescale</td></tr>
<tr><td>Are there defined council well-being objectives that are communicated and understood?</td><td>The Community and Corporate Plan was approved in April 2023. This plan sets out the council's six well-being objectives which include the aims we want to achieve, the actions we will take and how performance will be measured. The Community and Corporate Plan has been promoted and published on the website for residents and internally for staff.

The approval of the plan has ensured that there is a clear direction for the council, which has fed through our performance management framework. A suite of enabling strategies have been developed and aligned to deliver the objectives in the plan.

An Audit Wales review of our performance management arrangements found 'The Council has a maturing performance management system that supports delivery of its corporate objectives'.</td><td>Community and Corporate Plan 2022-28

Audit Wales review of performance management arrangements (December 2024)</td><td>No further action identified.</td></tr>
</table>

Are the well-being objectives embedded in the performance management framework?	An Audit Wales review of our performance management arrangements found 'The Council has clearly defined its intended outcomes in its Community and Corporate Plan 2022-28 and details how it will measure progress against them. Measures include a mix of inputs, outputs and outcomes, and the supporting Performance Management Framework enables the cascade of activity to the relevant service plans.' Supporting and Enabling strategies aligned to deliver the objectives in the Community and Corporate Plan have been developed. These are important to enable the delivery of the ambitions of the plan. We need to ensure there are clear mechanism and arrangements to monitor the impact of these strategies and regularly evaluate performance against their outcomes. Quality assurance of service business plans undertaken in Q2 of 2024/25 shows the actions to deliver the community and corporate plan objectives are mostly embedded, and progress updated, within service business plans. Feedback and support has been provided to managers on the importance of aligning their plans with the Community and Corporate Plan and this will be regularly monitored.	Audit Wales review of performance management arrangements (December 2024) Enabling Strategies Service business plans quality assurance	Complete an annual evaluation of performance of the enabling strategies – July 2025
Is progress and performance in delivering the well-being objectives monitored and held to account?	The actions to deliver the Community and Corporate Plan objectives are updated quarterly within service business plans. A six-month Community and Corporate Plan progress update is produced and scrutinised. This was presented to Cabinet in December as part of their continuous monitoring of how effectively the council is delivering its objectives and to Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee who scrutinised	Community and corporate plan 2024/25 six-month progress update	Produce a self-assessment report for 2024/25 – September 2025

	the council's performance and used the report to inform their work plan. Assessing progress within the year has allowed officers and members to identify where services are not on track to meet the targets and identify any remedial actions that may be required. A further annual self-assessment of our progress in meeting our well-being objectives will be undertaken at the end of the financial year in the form of a self-assessment report. A process has been developed and agreed, based on previous assessments and experience. This will clearly identify how well are we doing, how do we know (the evidence we have used) and what and how can we do better.		

Service Business Plans			
A Service Business Plan is a planning tool which all service areas are required to complete. It allows services to set a plan for the next three years, assess what went well, learn from what didn't and measure the impact the service has made on people and places of Monmouthshire. Service business 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. Service business planning and regular evaluation of our performance is fundamental to how we operate.			
	How well are we doing?	**How do we know?**	**Action & timescale**
Is the service business plan process robust, communicated and understood?	Service Business plan principles, supporting templates and guidance are in place and regularly reviewed. The documents are available on the intranet, the Hub. An Audit Wales review of our performance management arrangements found 'The Council has a service plan template that is applied consistently across most services. There are plans to continue to improve consistency through the existing	Service business plan principles, supporting information and guides. Services Business plan Quality Assurance. Feedback from service managers.	Make mandatory performance management training available via the Council's online Learning Management System (Thinqi) – June 2025

	quality assurance process.' An Internal Audit Review of Service Business Plans has also been completed in the last year and was given a reasonable assurance rating. Feedback from Service managers has shown there is a need to provide further training and support on the process. The Audit Wales review of our performance management arrangements recommended to promote the training resources and support available to continue to strengthen performance management arrangements. The service business plan principles and guidance have been updated, where necessary, using feedback gathered. The use of training videos for managers to aid the completion of service business plans has not yet been completed as initially planned. The potential for making performance management training available via the Council's online Learning Management System is being explored to facilitate this training. Once complete, this training will be mandatory for those officers with a responsibility for completing service business plans.	Audit Wales review of performance management arrangements (December 2024) Internal Audit Service Business Plan Review (August 2024)	
Are service business plans complete, up to date and of good quality?	Service business plans completion rates within timescales remains varied, which was identified within the Internal Audit review, however there has continued to be improvement. For recent quarters, approximately sixty percent of the plans were updated in the timescale. Consistent reminders to update plans are needed to continue the increasing trend of timely updates. A quality assurance process has been developed to assess whether plans are meeting the planning principles, the quality of updates and whether they are aligned with wider council commitments. This facilitates officers to easily identify which	Service business plans completion rates. Services Business plan Quality Assurance. Feedback from service managers. Audit Wales review of performance	Make mandatory performance management training available via the Council's online Learning Management System (Thinqi) – June 2025 Complete annual quality assurance of Service

	areas of their plan need improvement, helping them to focus on key aspects. The most recent quality assurance was completed during Q2 of 2024/25. This has found that there has continued to be improvement in the quality of plans, though many plans still require improvement in parts of their completion. Some common areas for development remain the completion of risk registers, use of performance indicators and robust assessment of progress and impact. This is consistent with the findings of the internal audit review. The Audit Wales review of our performance management arrangements recommended the need to increase the consistency of service planning to strengthen performance management arrangements. The quality assurance reports have been shared with all chief officers, managers and officers completing service plans in November 2024 and further support made available to support improvements identified.	management arrangements (December 2024) Internal Audit Service Business Plan Review (August 2024)	Business Plans and support managers to implement the findings – October 2025

Self-evaluation
Self-evaluation is a way of evaluating, critically and honestly, the current position to make 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. Self-evaluation allows us to assess our actions openly and honestly, and to consider whether the actions taken helped to reach our desired goals and objectives. This process helps us to learn what went well and what didn't, informing our future actions.

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires each local authority in Wales to keep under review the extent to which it is meeting the 'performance requirements'. 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.			
	How well are we doing?	**How do we know?**	**Action & timescale**
Is the self-assessment process robust, communicated and understood?	A process for completing self-assessment was developed and adhered to. The self-assessment process for 2023/24 was informed by a review of the previous year's self-assessment process. This included directorate workshops, which provided the opportunity for heads of service to reflect on their service area and assess activity against the Community and Corporate Plan objectives. The 2023/24 self-assessment report evaluates the council's performance under each of the six Well-being Objectives set out in the Community and Corporate Plan, and the programme of work that supports their delivery. The self-assessment report demonstrates the progress the council has made in achieving its intended outcomes and identifies any further areas for development. The self-assessment report was informed by a range of evidence including the output from the workshops along with other elements of the performance framework, such as Chief Officer reports, scrutiny, external regulation and the Annual Governance Statement. An Audit Wales review of our performance management arrangements found 'The Council's arrangements enable it to recognise good performance and identify what it needs to improve. The comprehensive six-monthly reports and quarterly updates of performance dashboards and service plans enable	Self-assessment report 2023/24 Audit Wales review of performance management arrangements (December 2024)	Produce a self-assessment report for 2024/25 – September 2025

	members and officers to have sight of in-year pressures and issues that may require remedial decisions. However, whilst performance reporting is moving towards being more balanced, there are examples where underperformance is not presented in as much detail as positive performance. This makes scrutiny of performance more challenging as it is not always clear what the reasons for underperformance are and how these are being addressed.' A self-assessment process and template for 2024/25 has been developed and agreed, based on feedback on the previous year's report, including importantly strengthening the application of a self-evaluative mindset when assessing performance.		
Is self-assessment embedded through the performance framework?	The Self-Assessment process has been embedded in the council's performance management framework. The self-assessment process has facilitated the completion of the self-assessment report. Quality assurance on service business plans has shown that self-evaluation continues to not be completed consistently when updating service business plans. The Internal Audit review of service business plans has also identified the need to improve the completion of self-assessments within plans. Strengthening self-evaluation within plans is a continuing action, this will inform evidence in the self-assessment report.	Service business plans Service business plans quality assurance Internal Audit Service Business Plan Review (August 2024)	Ensure that managers apply a self-evaluative mindset when updating and completing service business plans – October 2025
Is the outcome of self-assessment monitored and performance held to account?	The self-assessment evidence has been reviewed, further challenged, and collated into a corporate level evaluative self-assessment.	Self-assessment report 2023/24 Audit Wales review of performance	Self-Assessment report for 2024/25 produced – September 2025

	The draft self-assessment report is presented to Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee, with Governance and Audit Committee having approval of the final draft, as per legislation. Both committees scrutinised the 2023/24 report and found that overall, it was a fair and balanced assessment of performance during the year. The report was subsequently approved by Council. The Audit Wales review of our performance management arrangements recommended the need to ensure that areas of underperformance are consistently and adequately mitigated with robust explanation. In developing the 2024/25 report, there is a need to ensure areas of underperformance or areas for improvement are fairly identified or explained. The self-assessment report includes an action plan that focuses specifically on what and how the council can do better for the significant conclusions of the assessment. The actions are monitored through the year in service business plans and the next self-assessment report will include an assessment of the progress made on these actions.	management arrangements (December 2024)	

Performance Data and Information			
Data and information are essential to our performance framework. This comprises of nationally 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. All staff and members need to regularly access and use performance data and analysis of performance to evaluate the progress and impact of services.			
	How well are we doing?	**How do we know?**	**Action & timescale**

Is performance data used to monitor and evaluate the council's performance?	Performance data is embedded in the Council's performance management framework. The Community and Corporate Plan has an agreed measurement framework. This is allowing us to measure our performance on areas that can be directly affected by the council and the progress of wider outcomes that are not directly in the council's control. This facilitates performance to be held to account and identifies where services are not performing as planned. We have reviewed the measurement framework to increase the focus on outcomes, where possible. This was agreed by cabinet in September 2024 along with targets against these measures that demonstrate the ambition of the council to residents. This also responds to the Audit Wales review on the council's use of performance information which found 'The council provides some performance information to enable senior leaders to understand the perspective of service users, but information on outcomes is limited restricting their ability to manage performance effectively.' The Audit Wales review of our performance management arrangements found the 'Council has a maturing performance management culture and is responding to recommendations made in Audit Wales's review of performance information.' The performance measures are updated quarterly in the community and corporate plan dashboard and form part of the six-monthly progress report and annual self-assessment report. This allows officers and members to regularly assess performance and take action accordingly.	Community and corporate plan measurement framework & dashboard Directorate performance dashboards Service Business Plans Audit Wales review of performance information (March 2024) Audit Wales review of performance management arrangements (December 2024)	Embed the revised measurement framework for the community and corporate plan in the self-assessment report– September 2025

	Performance dashboards are also in place for each directorate, displaying their key performance indicators. These dashboards are supporting performance data to be further embedded in the decision-making process. Service business plan principles require services to use appropriate performance data and measures to monitor and evaluate performance. Quality assurance of service business plans shows there remains variability in the use of performance indicators within services to assess performance. This can limit the ability of services to robustly assess their performance. Feedback and assistance are being provided to services, where required, to strengthen their planning.		
Is the council's performance data on its services/ processes/outcomes relevant, accurate and up to date?	The community and corporate plan 'measurement framework' identifies measure we can have a direct and measurable effect on and measures we will track for longer term changes that our contribution is only one part of. This allows us to track service, process and outcome level progress and performance. Our self-assessment concludes there remains a need to further develop self-assessment arrangements to focus on outcomes and embed an evaluative mindset. This includes the use of outcome measures identified in the revised community and corporate plan measurement framework. Quality assurance of service business plans shows there remains variability in the overall quality and timeliness of completion of performance indicators within services to assess performance. This was also identified in the Internal Audit of service business plans. Feedback and assistance are being provided to services, where required, to strengthen their planning.	Community and corporate plan measurement framework. Self-Assessment report 2023/24. Service business plans quality assurance. Audit Wales review of performance information (March 2024) Internal Audit Service Business Plan Review (August 2024)	Embed the revised measurement framework for the community and corporate plan in the self-assessment report– September 2025 Undertake targeted action to improve the council's data maturity – December 2025 and ongoing

	Performance measures and target setting guidance is in place and embedded in service business plan principles. Performance measure definitions and proformas are used for collating performance measures in the community and corporate plan. Also, Internal audit reviews will look to ensure that performance information is reviewed when it is appropriate to do so. While arrangements are in place to support the production of accurate performance data, our assessments show we need to continue to focus on improving our data maturity, with data accuracy being an important part. This forms an integral part of the Council's Digital and Data Strategy. Data quality was also identified as an area for improvement through the Audit Wales use of performance information review. We will focus on improving our data accuracy as part of our wider work on developing the council's data maturity.		

Strategic Risk Management			
The strategic risk register captures the high and medium level strategic risks that face the council in line with the council's risk management policy. This ensures that: • Strategic risks are identified and monitored by the authority • Risk controls are appropriate and proportionate • Senior managers and elected members systematically review the strategic risks facing the authority			
	How well are we doing?	**How do we know?**	**Action & timescale**
Is there a collective view of the council's strategic risk management arrangements and risk appetite that is	The council's strategic risk management policy and guidance has been updated and agreed. The council has also defined its risk appetite and agreed a risk appetite statement. These documents are available on the council's intranet.	Strategic risk management policy and guidance Risk appetite statement	Embed the updated strategic risk management policy within risk reporting arrangements – June 2025

communicated and understood?	The policy is being embedded in the council, the requirements have been integrated as part of the Council's performance management framework, including in the service business planning process. The awareness of the policy, and the importance of adhering to it, needs to be further embed through the organisation. There is a need to develop a risk management training offer to support the effective discharge of risk management responsibilities.		Develop strategic risk management training and guidance – July 2025
Is strategic risk management embedded in the council?	The strategic risk register is updated regularly and available to all members and officers to view at any time. There are arrangements to formally review and report the whole strategic risk register six monthly. Directorate risk registers are being developed to strengthen the management of risks at a directorate level and facilitate risk identification and mitigation between a service (service business plan) and strategic (risk register) level. These haven't all been completed by April as initially planned. Further support is being provided to directorates to establish and develop directorate risk registers in line with the strategic risk management policy. The starting point for identifying risks are often service business plans, where heads of service and service managers identify risk to their service. Quality assurance of these plans has continued to show service-based risk registers are often not robust enough or fully completed. This shows strategic risk management remains not consistently embedded at a service level. Further strategic risk management training, as part of implementing the updated risk management policy will be undertaken.	Strategic risk management policy and guidance Strategic risk register Service business plans risk registers	Work with directorates to establish and develop all six directorate risk registers – September 2025 Develop strategic risk management training and guidance – July 2025
Is there a shared understanding of the	The strategic risk register identifies high and medium level strategic risks and ensures risk levels are assessed, and mitigating actions are	Strategic risk register	Embed the updated strategic risk

most significant corporate risks?	identified. The register is updated regularly, which ensures it remains focussed on the most significant strategic risks facing the council. It is available to all members and officers to view at any time and has regular reporting arrangements in place. This ensures there is a shared understanding of strategic risks facing the council. The latest update of the strategic risk register has embedded some of the requirements of the new policy, including risk category, appetite level and treat/tolerate categories. Further work is needed to embed the remaining requirements of the policy in the register, including target risk scores. This will be completed as part of the continued planned implementation of the policy. Service business plans not being robust enough or fully complete impacts on the effectiveness of service risk identification and management. This may subsequently be having an impact on the effective identification and management of strategic risks, although other arrangements in place, including the development of directorate risk registers, will limit this, strengthening service risk registers remains important. A Risk Radar is being developed to identify any emerging risks and opportunities that are relevant to the council. This report will be used to inform risk identification at all levels and will be regularly presented to the Strategic Leadership Team alongside reviews and updates to the Strategic Risk Register to ensure awareness of possible emerging risks.	Service business plans risk register	management policy within risk reporting arrangements – June 2025 Develop strategic risk management training and guidance – July 2025 Develop a Risk Radar to inform risk identification – June 2025
Is there integration with other risk control arrangements that facilitate the management of risk?	Strategic risk management is an integral part of the Council's activities to support decision-making in achieving its objectives. The updated strategic risk management policy identifies other corporate risk control arrangements that the council has in place through which risks are identified and managed and need to integrate with strategic risk	Strategic risk management policy	Assess progress in implementing the actions to develop or strengthen risk control

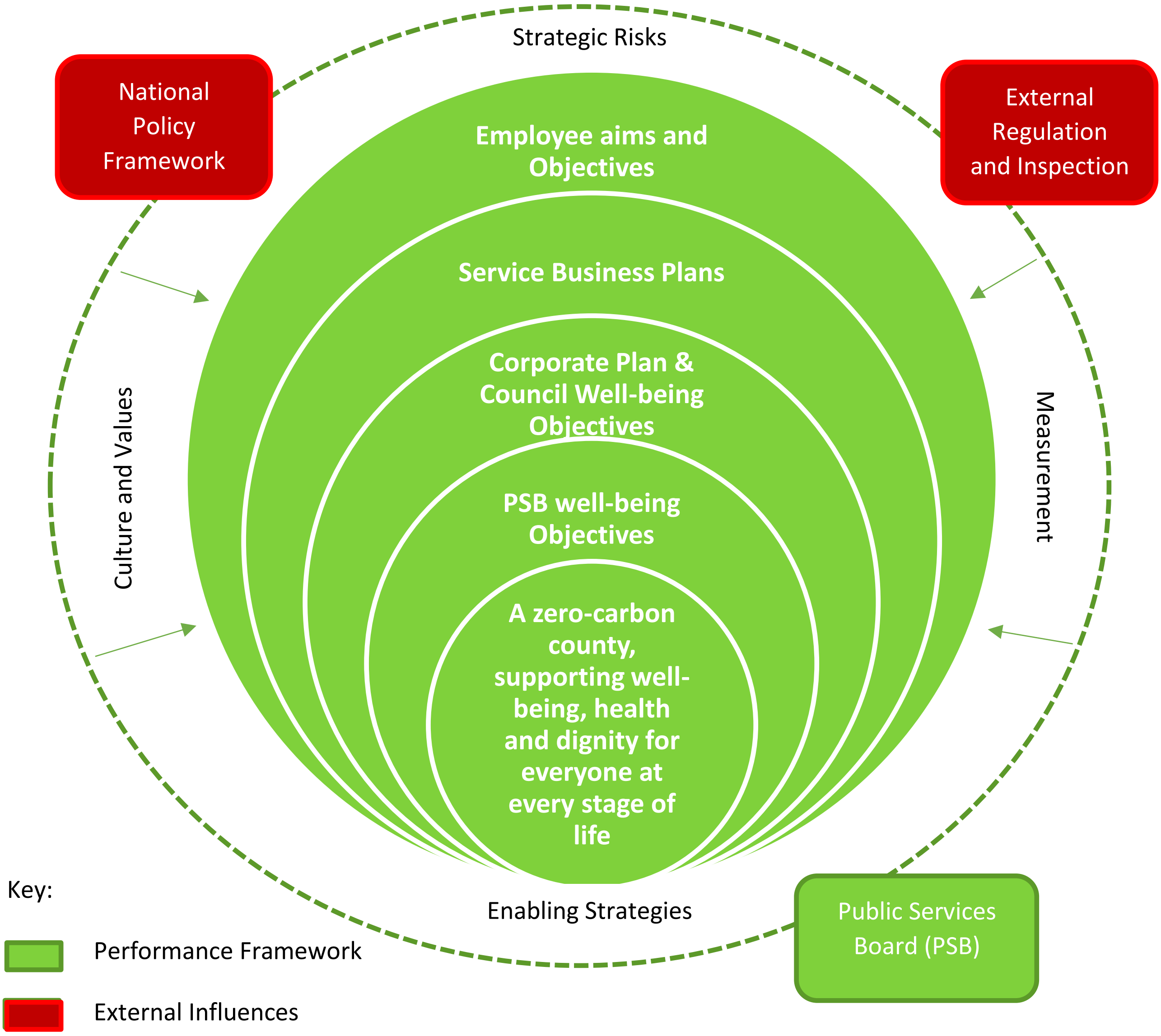
	management policy. These are Health and Safety, Emergency Planning, Insurance, Finance, Internal Audit, Information Governance & Cyber Security. An assessment of the effectiveness of each of these risk control arrangements, following the same process that is used to evaluate the strategic risk management arrangements, was completed in August 2024 and reported to the committee in September 2024. The assessment demonstrates the arrangements in place to identify, respond, monitor and report risk. The assessment identifies actions that need to be completed to develop or strengthen the arrangements. An update on the progress with implementing these actions will form part of the next assessment of the effectiveness of risk control arrangements reported to Governance & Audit Committee.	Overview of the effectiveness of risk control policies	arrangements – June 2025
Is there a robust risk management assurance framework in place?	There are arrangements to formally review the whole strategic risk register six monthly. These are facilitated by the performance and data insight team in liaison with risk owners and include review reports to Strategic Leadership Team and cabinet. The strategic risk register is formally reported to Governance & Audit Committee, Performance & Overview scrutiny committee and Cabinet. This provides assurance on the robustness of risk management framework in place. Directorate risk registers are being developed to strengthen the management of risks at a directorate level. These are being facilitated by the performance and data insight team in coordination with Directorate Management Teams. An internal audit review of risk management has been completed and was given a reasonable assurance rating. This identified strengths and some weaknesses. Actions to respond to the recommendations have been agreed and are being implemented. The findings from the review	Strategic risk register Strategic risk management reports Internal Audit review of risk management (March 2024)	Embed the updated strategic risk management policy within risk reporting arrangements – June 2025 Complete actions in response to the internal audit review recommendations – June 2025

	have informed the development of the updated strategic risk management policy. A review of strategic risk management arrangements is reported to Governance and Audit Committee six monthly. Risk management arrangements also form part of the Council's annual self-assessment report. These arrangements are providing assurance of the framework in place and inform the identification of areas for development.		

Appendix 2

Our Performance Framework

Our performance management framework illustrates the interdependencies and how the policies, plans and programmes it contains, should be mutually reinforcing. In simple terms, our performance management makes sure that everyone is pulling in the same direction to deliver real and tangible outcomes, to improve the quality of life of people and communities.



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 through the Community and Corporate Plan, based on the same well-being assessment as the PSB objectives. 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 strategic risk management policy enables us to manage strategic risks to our delivery. Our employee aims and objectives show how the contributions that individual colleagues make to these objectives and delivering our vision in accordance with our values. Our 'enabling strategies' support the delivery of our objectives. Our work is informed and guided by national policy and external regulation and inspection.