

SUBJECT: Self-Assessment Report 2024/25

MEETING: County Council

DATE: 18th September 2025

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1 PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To seek Council approval of the self-assessment report 2024/25 to ensure that members have a clear and transparent assessment of the authority's performance during the year ending 31 March 2025 in line with requirements outlined in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the self-assessment for 2024/25 be approved.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 Monmouthshire's Community and Corporate Plan established a clear purpose for Monmouthshire to be a zero carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life. Self-assessment is a way of evaluating, critically and honestly how well the authority is progressing with the delivery of the objectives set in the plan and the effectiveness of our supporting arrangement such as finance, workforce and asset management. It is a vital part of the authority's performance management arrangements. The full self-assessment report has been examined by the Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee and the Governance and Audit Committee which have provided feedback and assurance on the assessment scores and the effectiveness of the arrangements. The full self-assessment report is included as appendix 3 with a summary at appendix 2
- 3.2 The initial years of activity set out in the Community and Corporate Plan included work to develop new strategies, including enabling strategies. The focus is now on delivering the actions outlined in the strategies throughout the period of the plan. An evaluation score of between 1 (unsatisfactory) and 6 (excellent) has been applied to each of the council's six objectives for the year ending March 2025. Five of these have been assessed as level 4 (good) and one as level 3 (adequate) showing a positive trajectory of improvement since 2022. The report also describes the progress that has been made following the recommendations made in last years' evaluation as well as highlighting future areas of development.
- 3.3 The financial year 2024/25 saw a continuation of numerous pressures in the local government sector. Council's are facing rising costs, alongside increasingly complex demand pressures. The objectives set out in the Community and Corporate Plan strive to address complex issues within an increasingly uncertain environment. The ambition outlined in the document looks to the long-term and is focused on the well-being of current and future generations.
- 3.4 The 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 report focusses on the 'what we want to achieve' outcome statements. These are each underpinned by specific actions for each objective.

3.5 The report demonstrates the progress the council has made in achieving its intended outcomes and identifies any further areas for development to be addressed in 2025/26. These include:

- Focussing on improving life chances for people irrespective of their income or background. We have provided targeted support to those experience disadvantage including increasing the number of flying start places and running the food and fun programme which provides free or subsidised meals and activities during school holidays.
- Taking local action to reduce our carbon emissions. Scorecards published by Climate Emergency UK show that Monmouthshire County Council has improved its work towards net zero over the past two years and are performing better than most councils in England and Wales.
- Alongside this, residents have made a significant contribution to the green agenda by recycling 72.18% of household waste - one of the highest rates in the UK.
- Delivering a range of projects to develop a diverse local economy in which businesses and working people can thrive. In April 2024 the council secured up to £8.4m to implement transport projects across the county to enhance access, safety and infrastructure. Changes have been made to local bus services, with a new operator taking over some routes and several services being adjusted to improve connections and efficiency.
- Like all parts of the UK Monmouthshire has a highways maintenance backlog that exceeds the available funding. We have allocated an additional £2M in our 2025-26 budget for infrastructure with the majority being spent on road improvements.
- Taking action to reduce homelessness. Last year, 71% of households, who were at risk of homelessness, were prevented from becoming homeless.
- Changing the way social care is provided by taking a more preventative approach, intervening earlier and bringing some provision back into the county. In adult social care there has been an increase in the past three years in the availability of care at home. In children's social care there has been a gradual reduction in the number of children looked after from 209 to 190 over the past three years.
- In 2024 our secondary schools achieved higher results than elsewhere in Wales. 27.5% of pupils across Monmouthshire achieved 5 or more GCSE at levels A*-A, compared with 18.1% for Wales. Pupils eligible for free school meals don't do as well however, they have higher attainment than their peers in Wales at Key stage 4.

3.6 To support the delivery of the objectives, it's important that all teams are working efficiently and effectively. The report assesses the effectiveness of the enabling functions that support front line delivery to meet changing demands and ensure their sustainability. These include corporate planning, performance and risk management, financial planning, workforce planning, procurement, assets, digital and data.

3.7 Alongside the assessment of the delivery of our objectives, the report assesses how well we have achieved the areas for development identified in the 2023/24 self-assessment report. This can be found in the 'our actions' section. This section also sets out additional areas for development that have been identified as part of the 2024/25 assessment.

3.8 This report is primarily an evaluation of what did in 2024/25. It informs our future work but it does not purport to set out detailed action or delivery plans. That work sits elsewhere, including in the service business plans that are produced annually by teams across the

authority. Nor does not cover the authority's budget position which is considered in more detail in financial monitoring reports.

- 3.9 As well as being an incredibly useful tool for councillors and officers, the production of a self-assessment report is a legal 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' defined in the Act. This means the extent to which: it is exercising its functions effectively; is using its resources economically, efficiently and effectively and its governance is effective for securing these.
- 3.10 The Act creates a duty to publish a report setting out the conclusions of the self-assessment once in respect of every financial year. This informs decisions on how to secure improvement for the future. The self-assessment process has been embedded as part of the council's performance management framework (appendix 1 of the assessment). This ensures it can help the council continually learn and achieve sustainable improvement and better outcomes for citizens, service users and its own workforce. Our self-assessment began with a desk-based evaluation of available evidence. The initial findings were tested refined through a series of workshops with Directorate Management Teams before being subject to challenge by Strategic Leadership Team and then presented to Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee and Governance and Audit Committee.
- 3.11 A draft of the self-assessment report was provided to Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee, who used the report to scrutinise the council's performance during 2024/25. The committee provided helpful feedback, emphasising the importance of ensuring external and independent assurance of the adequacy of the self-assessment process. Further external assurance will be provided during 2025/26 as part of the completion of a panel Performance Assessment of the Council to gain additional independent assurance of the council's performance.
- 3.12 The draft self-assessment report was also presented to Governance and Audit Committee, which has a statutory role to review the draft assessment. The report was used by the committee to seek assurance on the effectiveness of the council's governance and assurance arrangements. Governance and Audit Committee are also able to make recommendations for changes to the conclusions or actions the council intends to take as set out in paragraph 2.40 of the statutory guidance. The committee reviewed the report and were satisfied with the assurance provided on the process followed for the self-assessment exercise and the structure and content of the report completed. The committee noted how these arrangements had evolved to strengthen the process. The committee did not make any specific recommendations for change ahead of its consideration by Council.
- 3.13 The self-assessment is a public document and should be accessible to a wide audience. Once approved the assessment and summary will be published on the council's website and shared with key partners in accordance with paragraph 2.42 of the statutory guidance.
- 3.14 The annual self-assessment report is, by its very nature, carried out by local authority officers drawing on a range of evidence including reports produced by external organisations like regulators. Once every five years, the Local Government and Elections Act requires us to conduct a panel performance assessment which will be chaired and conducted by external peers including an independently appointed chair. The Council is planning to complete the panel performance assessment in the current, 2025/26, financial year. Our Improvement work is also examined by Audit Wales who undertake audits of our performance management work. The findings of these are reported to the Governance and

Audit Committee who use them to seek assurance about the effectiveness of our arrangements.

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

- 4.1 This report is an evaluation of previous commitments and is not seeking a decision that would have an impact on these areas. The progress the council has made on the Well-being of Future Generations Act, equalities and safeguarding is set out in the report. Any action the Council takes that requires further decision will be evaluated in line with the decision-making process.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 5.1 The self-assessment report is an evaluation of previous commitments and is not seeking a decision on a future policy direction. The report provides an analysis, using a range of information, on the council's performance in 2024/25. The structure of the report has been informed by the legislation it is required to meet.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

- 6.1 The report provides a comprehensive evaluation of the performance of the council in 2024/25 using a range of performance information and evidence.

7. REASONS:

- 7.1 To ensure that the council can be held to account for performance and can demonstrate progress towards delivering better outcomes for citizens.
- 7.2 To comply with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act and the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 This report is a review of performance in 2024/25. This report does not commit the council to any explicit actions which result in additional resource commitments. Any resource implications of action the Council takes in future in response to the assessment will be dealt with in accordance with the usual decision-making rules.

9. CONSULTEES:

Directorate Management Teams
Strategic Leadership Team
Cabinet

The draft self-assessment report has been scrutinised by Performance & Overview Scrutiny Committee and reviewed by Governance & Audit Committee. The feedback from the committees is set out in this report.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

6. AUTHORS:

Matthew Gatehouse, Chief Officer People, Performance and Partnerships
Richard Jones, Performance and Data Insight Manager
Robert McGowan, Policy and Scrutiny Officer
Hannah Carter, Performance Analyst

7. CONTACT DETAILS:

E-mail: matthewgatehouse@monmouthshire.gov.uk
E-mail: richardjones@monmouthshire.gov.uk
E-mail: robertmcgowan@monmouthshire.gov.uk
E-mail: hannahcarter@monmouthshire.gov.uk

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.

