

SUBJECT: Draft Self-Assessment 2025/26
MEETING: Governance and Audit Committee
DATE: 10 th September 2026
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1 PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To provide the committee with an opportunity to review the draft Monmouthshire County Council Self-Assessment Report, in line with the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the committee review the draft self-assessment report 2025/26 and make any recommendations for changes to the conclusions or actions prior to the report being considered by Council.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 For the council to be successful, it's important that we are clear about what we want to achieve, making sure that actions are delivered and measuring whether these are having the desired impact. We have clear and established performance management framework in place to achieve this.
- 3.2 The legislative basis for performance management in Welsh local authorities is set out in 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.
- 3.3 The mechanism for a council to keep its performance under review is self-assessment, with a duty to report 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 identify areas of development. At the heart of this, is the desire to secure better outcomes for citizens and service users. The self-assessment process has been embedded as part of the council's performance management framework (appendix 1). It is important that the assessment dovetails with, but does not duplicate, the Annual Governance Statement.
- 3.4 The self-assessment report evaluates the council's performance under each of the six Well-being Objectives in the Community and Corporate Plan, along with the programme of work that supports their delivery. The report focusses on the 'what we want to achieve' outcome statements that are each underpinned by specific actions for each objective. To support the delivery of the objectives, the council must make sure that all its areas are working efficiently and effectively. To that end, 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, asset management, digital and data. The report needs to tick a lot of boxes and as a result is a lengthy document. It is accompanied by a more accessible and concise summary version to increase public awareness of and engagement with the assessment.

- 3.5 Appendix 2 provides the committee with an overview of the process that was followed to complete the draft self-assessment report. This included desk-based evidence gathering to inform an initial evaluation, followed by workshops with each of the directorates and sessions with the Strategic Leadership Team and Cabinet. The assessment has focused on answering three key questions about the effectiveness of the council's arrangements: how well are we doing? how do we know? And, what and how can we do better? These informed the draft report, which is constructed around:
- How well do we understand our local context and place and has this informed our purpose and priorities? (Understanding well-being in the county)
 - How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes? (How well are we achieving the outcomes set in the Community and Corporate Plan)
 - How do we know? (Evidence)
 - How effectively are resources being used to deliver our priorities? (Enabling functions/services)
 - How effectively does the council work with stakeholders and partners on agreed outcomes? (Partnership and collaborative working)
 - What could we do better? (Actions)
- 3.6 The self-assessment is a continuously evolving process which we aim to develop and improve each year. Feedback from Governance and Audit Committee has played a key role in this ongoing development. Feedback from Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee as well as Cabinet has also informed changes and additions made. Changes include:
- Increased use of feedback from residents and services users including the resident survey, make your mark and service satisfaction surveys.
 - Sought views from residents through our *Let's Talk* forum on the accessibility of the report, providing them with the summary of the report as well as the assessment of the objectives.
 - Used independent evidence from Panel Performance Assessment, regulators and inspectors.
 - Developed the strategic assessment to provide an integrated overview of impact
 - Assessed progress and impact made over the four years of the plan.
 - Identified case studies for each objective and embed these in the full self-assessment.
 - Developed a designed summary of the report to increase accessibility of the document for residents.
- 3.7 The self-assessment report 2025/26 is complimented by a Panel Performance Assessment. The Commissioning an external Panel Performance Assessment is a requirement of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, which requires councils to make arrangements for an independent panel, appointed by the council, to assess the extent to which the council is meeting the performance requirements. The findings of the assessment, along with the council's response to the recommendations, was presented to the committee at their 4th June meeting. Progress in implementing the recommendations provided as part of this assessment will be monitored as part of the self-assessment report.
- 3.8 Governance and Audit Committee has an important role in contributing to the self-assessment report. 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 the assessment includes, but is not limited to, the Annual Governance Statement; the Strategic Risk Register; self-assessment of performance management arrangements; and financial reports. The self-assessment report should be used to inform the committee's role of seeking assurance of the effectiveness of the council's governance and performance management arrangements.
- 3.9 Scrutiny of the council's performance, which is contained in the report, is the remit of the Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee, who received the assessment of progress in

meeting the Council's objectives at their 30th June meeting. That committee accepted the assessed scores that were presented. The assessed scores for 'a connected place' and 'a learning place' have both been increased from 'level 4 – good' to 'level 5 – very good.'

- 3.10 Governance and Audit Committee are presented with a draft of this report, in accordance with the statutory guidance under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and can make any recommendations for changes to the conclusions or actions the council intends to take. If the council does not make a change recommended by Governance and Audit Committee, it must set out the recommendation and the reasons why in the final report. Further updates may be made to the report ahead of Council, where information becomes available or feedback received, ahead of the final assessment being presented to Council on the 24th September.

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
Community and Corporate Plan 2022-28
Self-assessment Report 2024/25

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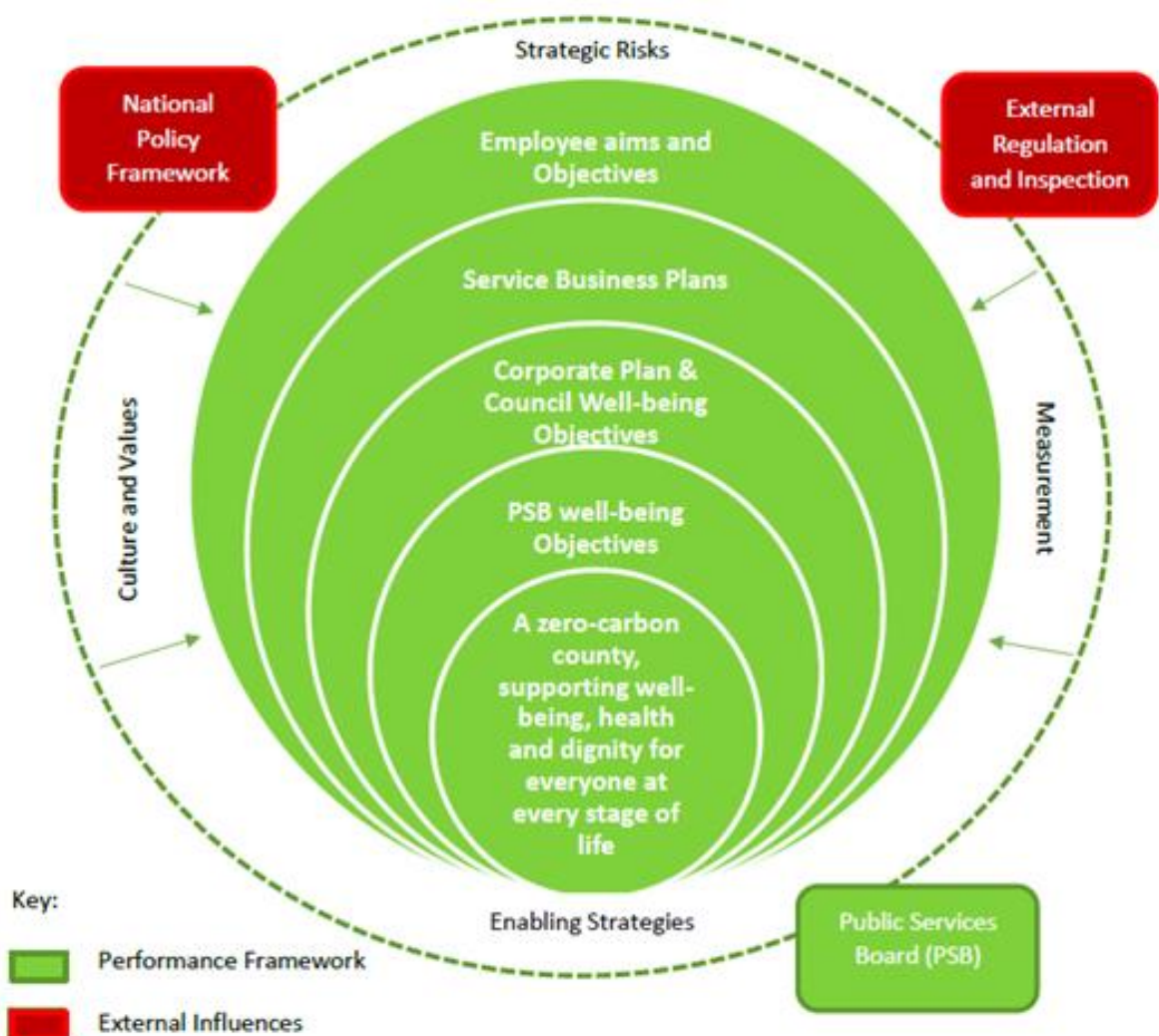
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Appendix 1

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.



Appendix 2 – 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 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 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 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 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 continued production of the self- assessment report.

Process

The council has developed a process to undertake self-assessment under the Act, assessing performance in the 2024/54 financial year. The main component parts of the process and timeline are:

April – May	May – June	June	July - August	September
Desk-based evidence gathering	Directorate self-assessment Workshops	Council self-assessment report drafted and draft assessment of objectives	Refinement of report and consultation with stakeholders through the Let’s Talk Forum	Draft report to Governance and Audit Committee and Self-assessment

		presented to Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee		agreed in line with council process
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This timeline ensures that the self-assessment can 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.

Evaluative evidence to inform the assessment has been compiled at a directorate level. Most of the evidence has been collated 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.



The evidence gathered has been explored further, and challenged where necessary, at directorate and enabling function based self-assessment workshops, to determine if the objectives (outcomes) of the council are being achieved.

Self-assessment workshops

Directorate workshops	Enabling functions workshops
Learning, Skills & Economy	People
Social Care & Health	Asset Management
Place	Finance
Infrastructure	Procurement
Customer, Culture & Well-being	Digital & Data

The workshops were facilitated through the following questions:

- How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes? (Community & Corporate Plan objectives)
- 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 - including a review of actions from the previous report)

The full evidence and conclusions from workshops have been collated and will be used by directorates and enabling functions to inform their services business plans.

Following the workshops, the evidence has been reviewed, further challenged, and collated into a corporate level evaluative self-assessment. This has been integrated with the council's requirement to report on the progress it has made in meeting its well-being objectives for the preceding financial year (2024/25) under the Well-being of Future Generations Act. The report is structured under these headings:

- Understanding our local place
- Outcomes (progress against our objectives in the Community and Corporate Plan):
 - How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?
 - How do we know?
 - Areas for development
- Enabling functions
 - Corporate planning, performance and risk management
 - Financial planning
 - Workforce planning
 - Procurement
 - Assets
 - Digital & Data
 - Democracy & Scrutiny
- Our work with partners
- Our Actions (including progress against previous actions)

The self-assessment report will be scrutinised by the council's Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee. A draft of the self-assessment report will 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. The self-assessment will be approved in accordance with the council's agreed processes at a meeting of full Council.