



CABINET - 30TH NOVEMBER 2022

SUBJECT: ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT (INCLUDING WELL-BEING OBJECTIVES) 2021/22

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present Cabinet with the Annual Self-Assessment Report for 2021/22. The report also includes an update of the Well-being Objectives for 2021/22.
- 1.2 The Local Government and Election (Wales) Act 2021 requires a draft of the self-assessment to be reviewed by Governance and Audit Committee prior to coming to Cabinet. The draft attached (Part 1, Appendix 1) was approved by Governance and Audit Committee on 11 October 2022.
- 1.3 The report was also presented to Joint Scrutiny on 10 November 2022 for their scrutiny and challenge.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Self-Assessment Report is a statutory requirement under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. The Act replaces the improvement duty for principal councils set out in the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009. Self-assessment is an important part of the Council's performance framework. This is the first time the Council has been required to produce a Self-Assessment Report which replaces the former Annual Performance Report.
- 2.2 The Council is required to assess its own performance and provide the public with an accurate picture of that performance and identify areas for improvement.
- 2.3 The Council must also report progress against the six Well-being Objectives set out within the Corporate Plan 2018-2023. This report includes an update on the fourth year of the Corporate Plan.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Cabinet approve the Self-assessment Report (including Well-being Objectives) 2021/22 (Appendix 1) as a final position on organisational performance for the year 2021/2022, following the reports being scrutinised by Governance and Audit and Joint Scrutiny Committee. See section 10 for consultation responses.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Council has a statutory duty to publish a self-assessment report and make it available as soon as reasonably practicable after the financial year to which it relates.
- 4.2 Under the Act there is a duty to keep performance under review, the extent to which we are fulfilling the 'performance requirements' which is to:
- Exercise our functions effectively.
 - use our resources economically, efficiently and effectively.
 - Have effective governance in place for securing the above
- 4.3 Members engage in the 'self-assessment' process by scrutinising the information within the report. This supports the principles within Part 6, Chapter 1 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 statutory guidance.
- 4.4 The guidance says that "council executives should welcome and encourage scrutiny inquiries to make recommendations for system improvements. The aim is to support councils to build on existing strengths and to support them to achieve a more innovative, open, honest, transparent and ambitious sector, challenging itself and collectively driving up service delivery outcomes and standards."
- 4.5 "Member committees are a key part of offering constructive challenge to how a council is performing and how it organises itself in the delivery of sustainable services and are a key part of a council's self-assessment". The council is demonstrating this by the route the 'self-assessment' has taken through Governance and Audit and Joint Scrutiny Committee

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 This report introduces the Annual Self-assessment Report (including Well-being Objectives) 2021/22 (Appendix 1).
- 5.2 The intention of self-assessment is to show how a council acts on organisational learning and makes it part of an ongoing process of review. The key principle is to know how good organisational performance is and where it could improve. From this learning we have produced a Self-Assessment Report.
- 5.3 The new approach as set out in the Act is designed to be a more streamlined, flexible, sector-led approach to performance, good governance and improvement. The intention is for councils to be proactive in considering how internal processes and procedures change to enable more effective planning, delivery and decision-making to drive better outcomes
- 5.4 The statutory guidance says that self-assessment can be achieved by using intelligence already held corporately in an insightful way and reflecting at a strategic

level on how the council is operating, and to identify what action is needed to ensure it can continue to provide effective services now and for the long term.

- 5.5 The Council's Performance Framework has been developed to meet several strategic and operational needs as well as meeting the legislation, and further the Council's desire to be a high performing learning organisation focused on meeting the needs of its residents.
- 5.6 Much of the information contained within the report is sourced from the Directorate Performance Assessments, the Corporate Performance Assessment in addition to other council sources of information such as the Annual Governance Statement, Financial Reports and Equalities Reports.
- 5.7 The self-assessment process will produce a summary of the learning which has emerged from the self-assessment process. We have chosen a range of information to use that will be reviewed to reach our conclusions under the following headings:
- Corporate Planning
 - Financial Planning
 - Workforce Planning
 - Procurement
 - Assets
 - Risk Management
 - Performance Management
 - Other Key Council Health Checks
- 5.8 These headings are from the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) guidance as a way to frame the organisational learning. The report also includes a progress update of the six Well-being Objectives contained within the Council's Corporate Plan (2018-2023), which was endorsed by Cabinet in April 2018. The Objectives will remain in place until 2023.
- 5.9 Each of the six Well-being Objectives has a series of outcomes which sets out what the Council hopes to achieve on behalf of citizens. This report sets out the progress made against those six objectives during 2021/22.
- 5.10 As the first year of 'self-assessment' within the context of the new legislation, we have reviewed the process and listened to the feedback from our committees to help inform areas for development for the next 'self-assessment'. They are,
- Provide more 'evaluative statements' in the final document, by showing a greater connection to the source information, which informed the summary 'judgements'. This may require additional hyperlinks to the source documents, so the reader has greater understanding of why judgements were made and greater publication of data showing connections to learning.
 - To allow greater consultative time with Governance and Audit committee prior to a formal committee
 - To run workshops with committee to provide greater awareness of the legislation and the council process to meet the legislation.
 - To strengthen the 'involvement' process with the statutory list in the guidance which are, local people; other persons carrying on a business in the council's area; the staff of the council; and every trade union which is recognised (within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (c.52)) by the council. This is not about consulting on the final document but

using an evidence-based approach by involving the above groups in ongoing self-assessment judgements.

5.11 Conclusion

The Council's Performance Framework has been developed to meet several strategic and operational needs, as well as to meet the legislation. It is an ongoing process that allows the Council to act on organisational learning, review its performance and recognise where it could improve.

The self-assessment provides a platform to celebrate the activity that has gone well, reflect on the areas that need to be improved and to identify new approaches and interventions to support future progress.

The Self-Assessment Report 21/22 summarises learning on the Council's organisational effectiveness, using the Well-being of Future Generations framework. The Self-Assessment also identifies actions to improve our organisational effectiveness, and this will be monitored throughout the year.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 No assumptions have been made or were thought necessary, for this report that are not already contained within the report.

6.2 Unless a specific Well-being Objective is judged as delivered in its entirety, or assessment of data and public consultation responses change direction significantly, it is assumed the Well-being Objectives will continue throughout the course of the remaining year of the Corporate Plan.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 No Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed for this report although individual assessments may have been made to support activity within the Well-being Objectives. Page 14 of the Self-assessment Report provides a brief update on our Welsh Language and equalities work. Delivery of the Well-being Objectives maximises our contribution to all the national well-being goals including 'A More Equal Wales'

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Page 7 in the Self-assessment Report provides information on Financial Planning.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no personal implications arising from this Report.

10. CONSULTATIONS

The "Annual Self-Assessment Report (Including Well-Being Objectives) 2021/22" came to the Joint Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 10th November 2022.

Following an introduction from the Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance, Committee Members received a presentation from the Corporate Policy Manager. Members were given an overview of the statutory requirements and key points from the Self-Assessment Report were also highlighted.

- 10.1 One Member asked why grant funding was underspent and also enquired if grant money received is now being spent on the intended uses or had it been returned. The Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer outlined that the underspend related to money received specifically during the pandemic such as the Covid-19 hardship fund which had now ceased. So, it was money which had been directed at addressing Covid-19 challenges rather than funding which had not been spent. Members heard how no grant money had been returned. The Member also sought clarification on a sentence under Equalities and Welsh Language and suggested the report is properly proof-read before publication. A further question on the low level of Welsh learners was also put to officers. The Head of Transformation outlined how the paragraph in question would be checked for clarity and the whole document would be proofed again. On the issue of Welsh learners, the officer advised that the training programme was relaunched following the pandemic and would offer courses ranging from beginner to advanced learner. The Corporate Policy Manager added that the Council also offered confidence building classes to encourage staff to use existing Welsh skills.
- 10.2 A Member highlighted the projected occupancy rate of less than 40% at Ty Penallta over the coming years and asked about future usage. He believed that some of the space could be used to help the homeless. The Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services highlighted a section of the report that referred to the opportunity to rationalise the Council's estate and therefore reduce associated expenditure such as rent, heating and lighting. Members heard how due to the Agile Working Policy it would be possible to increase occupancy at Ty Penallta above 45% as part of a review of what happens to outlying buildings.
- 10.3 One Member observed that the Voluntary Sector should be included as part of partnership working towards a single public estate. On the issue of equality, the Member highlighted that many elderly residents did not access online services, and this should be factored into future planning. The Member also queried the running of food cooperatives as depicted in the report as she felt the role of voluntary organisations had been overlooked. On the issue of working with the Voluntary Sector the Corporate Policy Manager advised that the current policy on the development of Community Hubs involved partnership working with this sector. The officer also stressed that the Council acknowledged that not everyone was digitally enabled and therefore face-to-face services would also be available in the Hubs. The Corporate Policy Manager also observed that she would check the wording of the food cooperatives section of the self-assessment. The Member also raised hospital discharge challenges due to a lack of adequate social care and suggested that this should be a priority for the Council. The Corporate Director for Social Services and Housing assured Members that this was a key priority for the Authority and outlined some of the achievements and challenges within domiciliary care for communities. Members heard how it was a challenging balancing act between prioritising people in the community and those ready to be discharged from hospital.
- 10.4 A Member questioned the principle of self-assessment and suggested that in terms of general well-being a freeze on Council Tax and rents would be welcome during a cost-of-living crisis. It was also suggested that national charities should be allowed to use surplus capacity in Council buildings. The Chief Executive suggested that a lot of what had been outlined was not relevant to the report being discussed. Members

were advised that there would be opportunity to discuss issues around the Council Tax when the budget was discussed at Full Council. In terms of the principle of self-assessment the Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services reiterated a point made earlier in the meeting that the Council was subject to an independent review at least once a term and that this process checked for accuracy on performance data.

- 10.5 One Member suggested that surplus capacity in Council buildings should be addressed as a priority. The Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services reiterated points around the Agile Review that would consider opportunities to cut costs by rationalising the estate and maximising the workspace at Ty Penallta
- 10.6 A Member raised the issue of the Street Lighting policy as decarbonisation was highlighted in the report. He suggested an adult conversation was needed for safety reasons over the issue of switching off 87% of lighting at midnight. The Member also suggested that the Reserve Strategy scheduled for March should be brought forward so that Members were better informed when discussing the budget. The Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer advised that work was already taking place on the approach to addressing the financial challenges and that robust scrutiny of the reserves held is part of this process. He advised Members that the Reserves Strategy would come before the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee in January. The Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Regeneration and Climate Change advised that the street lighting policy had recently been considered by the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee and that leaving lights on after midnight would increase carbon emissions.
- 10.7 One Member questioned why the views of residents were not included in the assessment. He suggested that a panel review every 5 years was not good enough in terms of monitoring the assessment process. The Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services advised that the What Matters survey for all residents was imminent and that the findings would feed into future self-assessments.
- 10.8 In response to 10.1 the Report has been checked. In response to 10.3, officers reviewed the voluntary sector involvement in the narrative for Well-being Objective 5, and felt it should remain unchanged, as it is factually correct, but added a few more words to reflect appreciation for voluntary sector contribution.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021
Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 and associated statutory guidance

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Tina McMahon, Community Regeneration Manager
Jeff Reynolds, Sports and Leisure Facilities Manager
Clive Campbell, Transportation Engineering Manager
Paul Cooke, Senior Policy Officer
Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer Equalities, Welsh Language and Consultation

Background Papers:

[Corporate Plan 2018-2023](#)

[Statutory guidance on Part 6, Chapter 1, of the Local Government and Elections \(Wales\) Act 2021](#)

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Annual Self-assessment Report (including Well-being Objectives) 2021/22