



CABINET – 30TH NOVEMBER 2022

SUBJECT: CORPORATE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT END OF YEAR REPORT 2021/22

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR - EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To present Cabinet with the Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) for the year ending 2021/22 a period impacted by both the pandemic response and the pandemic recovery. The progress reported needs to be considered against this context.

1.2 The CPA forms part of the overall Council 'self-assessment' activity and is submitted to Cabinet for endorsement.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 The Council's Performance Framework was endorsed by Cabinet in February 2020 and this report introduces one of the key components of the Framework, the Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA). The CPA is a 'self-assessment' of the Authority's progress across a wide range of information types.

2.2 As part of the Performance Framework, this report presents to Cabinet the CPA attached as Appendix 1.

2.3 Beneath the CPA are the Directorate Performance Assessments (DPA) which are detailed sources of information for each Directorate. Information from the DPA's is fed into the CPA. The CPA is an opportunity for members to ask, how well we are performing? and what evidence are we using to determine this.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 That Cabinet:

- 1) Note the comments and challenge of the Council's Corporate Performance for 2021/22 from Joint Scrutiny set out within section 10
- 2) Endorse the Corporate Performance Assessment for 2021/22 as set out in Appendix 1.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Members are involved in the 'self-assessment' process by scrutinising the information within the Corporate Performance Assessment. This also supports the principles within the new section (Part 6, Chapter 1) of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 which provides for a new performance and governance regime for principal councils
- 4.2 Statutory guidance for local authorities says that council executives should welcome and encourage scrutiny inquiries to make recommendations for system improvements.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 The Performance Framework has been developed to meet several strategic and operational needs as well as to meet the legislation and further the Council's desire to be a high performing learning organisation focused on meeting the needs of its residents. The framework was piloted in 2019 and endorsed by Cabinet February 2020. This report introduces and shares the CPA for year end 2021/22.
- 5.2 The spirit of the CPA (Appendix 1) is about providing learning from which improvements can be driven. The CPA is less about performance and targets (though they have their place) and is more so to provide a wider picture of performance that will support reflective and challenging conversations and scrutiny that will ultimately lead to learning and further improvement.

5.3 The Framework

The Council's Performance Framework has several component parts:

- **Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA)**
- Directorate Performance Assessment (DPA)
- Service Planning, identifying priorities resources and actions to improve.
- Risk Management – the barriers that may prevent improvement.
- My-Time Extra – personal learning and development, skills to deliver on objectives.

- 5.4 The Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) dashboard is used by the Corporate Management Team (CMT) and Cabinet to monitor the Council's progress in delivering its strategic priorities, identifying and challenging areas of underperformance and discussing and agreeing any remedial actions that may be required.
- 5.5 The dashboard is received by CMT and Cabinet on a twice-yearly basis. While the dashboard itself offers a rich insight, it is set at a high-level position and designed to be an 'at a glance' overall picture.
- 5.6 The detail that sits underneath it and creates the CPA from it is held within each individual DPA report, which are usually monitored at their individual scrutiny.
- 5.7 While the Appendix includes a range of insights into how the Council has performed, as this document is intended to provide learning and drive improvement, some of the headline areas raised within the Appendix have been set out in the table below:

| Corporate Challenges | Planned Interventions |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| In Year Underspends | A Review of the Councils Reserves Strategy will be undertaken |
| Sickness Absence Levels | Review of sickness absence policies underway External resource to be engaged to assist with understanding the issues and developing evidence based responses Implementation of Council's Employee Wellbeing Framework |
| Workforce Challenges | The implementation of the Council's Workforce Development Strategy and Employee Wellbeing Framework |
| Welsh Language Capability | Refinement of the Councils current approach to providing Welsh Language training to staff Inclusion of Welsh Language data in CPA |
| Freedom of Information Compliance | Additional resource has been added to the Information Governance Team Work underway to include FOI requests and responses on Council website |

5.8 Conclusion

The Council's Performance Framework as set out will provide Cabinet, Joint Scrutiny, CMT and DMTs with a regular and embedded mechanism for monitoring progress, managing performance, and driving improvement. The dashboards, which provide 'a single source of the truth', enable key aspects of performance to be discussed, action to be agreed and learning to be generated. The ability to specifically link individual contributions to organisational goals provides a platform for every employee to understand how they fit and to be recognised for the part they play in delivering the Council's objectives.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 No assumptions were thought to be required in this report.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 This report is for information and has no decision-making requests, so the Council full Integrated Impact Assessment process does not need to be applied. Information on equalities and Welsh language will be included appropriately within the DPA and CPA as part of a picture of Directorate's self-assessments.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no financial implications within this report, however the CPA (Appendix 1) has a section on resources including relevant budget and out turns as part of the overall self-assessment of the directorate.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no personnel implications within this report, however the CPA (Appendix 1) has a section called 'resources' which provides data on a range of workforce aspects.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 The CPA was presented to Joint Scrutiny on 10 November and enjoyed constructive debate.
- 10.2 There were questions from Members on sickness absence, breaches of data requests and if there were sufficient resources in areas receiving the greatest number of complaints such as refuse collection, recycling and highway maintenance. Officers highlighted that the pandemic had an impact on staff absence due to sickness. The Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services also advised that a report had come before the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee outlining a series of measures designed to improve the situation regarding sickness rates. The Head of People Services outlined the national nature of increased sickness levels and provided assurances this is being reviewed alongside other Local Authorities and external partners
- 10.3 A Member requested figures based on gender for those appointed to high positions within the Council and asked for more information on whether vacancies were being filled by internal or external candidates. The Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services advised that putting all the information contained within Directorate Performance Assessments into one report would produce a document that would be too lengthy for one meeting.

The Director suggested that a Member Seminar be organised so that members can learn more about the information that forms the basis of the CPA. Members agreed and welcomed this idea.

- 10.4 One Member welcomed the report but questioned the objectivity as it was a self-assessment. The Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services reiterated that the report was a snapshot and that a future seminar would allow Members to drill down more deeply into the information. There was further explanation given on the future 'Panel Review' from external sources, which that would 'sense check our self-assessment arrangements.
- 10.5 A Member asked if there were any comparisons with other Local Authorities. The Business Improvement Manager said that making comparisons was challenging as the Welsh Government (WG) had suspended data reporting to maximise resources during the pandemic. In addition, WG are no longer collecting national Performance Indicators, though if a set became available locally through the Welsh Local Government Association it could be used to provide context.

- 10.6 There were questions around the underspend in the finance table. The Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer reminded Members that an outturn report outlining how the underspend was ring-fenced for a number of purposes and that this report had been agreed by Cabinet and Full Council.
- 10.7 The accuracy of the Welsh language statistics in the report and the percentage figures for Freedom of Information (FOI) compliance were questioned. Welsh language statistics have since been checked and confirmed as correct. An explanation has been added to explain why the figures for each Directorate cannot simply be added up. The FOI figures have been amended and are now correct. An explanation has also been added to the CPA to explain how the compliance rates are calculated.
- 10.8 A Member criticised the underspend of £37.8 M and suggested that virement of this money would allow resurfacing of poor roads for example. The Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer reminded Members that an outturn report outlining how the underspend was ring-fenced for a number of purposes and that this report had been agreed by Cabinet and Full Council. A Member queried why the sickness absence rates and the number of staff aged over 55 did not feature in the risk register. The Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services outlined how the sickness rates were for 2021/22 and the risk register relates to the previous financial year, and therefore they would be reviewed under a future risk register.
- 10.9 One Member praised the work carried out as part of the Sure Start programme. The Early Years Manager agreed that the work done was phenomenal and gave Members an update on the work undertaken.
- 10.10 The Chief Executive thanked Members for the challenging comments made this evening. The Chief Executive praised the work of Council staff during very challenging times during the pandemic. Members heard how certain areas such as complaints and FOI compliance may have been negatively impacted during this time, but it was because resources had been redirected to provide community support during the pandemic.
- 10.11 The Chair also praised the role of staff delivering free school meals during the pandemic and concluded that the report had been discussed, challenged and scrutinised as per the recommendation.
- 10.12 The summary CPA allowed for good debate, however some of the questions raised by Members could have been answered by having the full version of the document made available to them. We recommend that in future the full document is provided to Members.
- 10.13 Changes made to the CPA following committee, were to add commentary to explain the difference in Welsh language statistics, in that some staff have more than one role. An explanation was added to explain the difference in FOI figures, and any errors have been amended.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

Consultees: Christina Harray, Chief Executive
Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services
Dave Street, Corporate Director, Social Services and Housing
Mark S. Williams, Corporate Director Economy and Environment
Members of Joint Scrutiny
Sue Richards, Head of Education Planning and Strategy
Steve Harris, Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer
Kathryn Peters, Corporate Policy Manager
Cllr Eluned Stenner, Cabinet member Finance and Performance

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Corporate Performance Assessment Year End 2021-22