



## **JOINT SCRUTINY – 26<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2024**

**SUBJECT: ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT (INCLUDING WELL-BEING OBJECTIVES) 2022/23**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES**

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To present Scrutiny with the Annual Self-assessment Report for 2022/23. The report also includes an update of the Well-being Objectives for 2022/23.
- 1.2 The Local Government and Election (Wales) Act 2021 requires a draft of the self-assessment to be approved by Governance and Audit Committee prior to coming to Joint Scrutiny. The draft attached (Part 1, Appendix 1) was approved by Governance and Audit Committee on 15 Feb 2024.
- 1.3 Following Scrutiny, the report will go on to be presented to Cabinet on 6 March 2024.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The self-assessment report is a statutory requirement under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. It is an important part of the Council's performance framework. This is the second 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 a balanced picture of that performance.
- 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 fifth and final year of the old Corporate Plan.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 Members review the Self-assessment Report (including Well-being Objectives) 2022/23 (Appendix 1) and discuss, challenge, and scrutinise the information contained within.

## **4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 The Council has a statutory duty to publish a self-assessment report and it should be made available as soon as reasonably practicable after the financial year to which it relates.
- 4.2 The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 replaces the improvement duty for principal councils set out in the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009. The 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 that councils be proactive and use learning to identify where to improve particularly with internal processes to enable more effective planning, delivery, and decision-making to drive better outcomes.

Under the Act we have duty to keep performance under review the extent to which we are fulfilling the 'performance requirements' that is, the extent to which we are:

- exercising our functions effectively.
  - using our resources economically, efficiently, and effectively.
  - has effective governance in place for securing the above
- 4.3 Scrutiny Members are involved 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 The guidance also states that principal councils are responsible for:
- Conducting robust self-assessments and reporting on the extent to which the council is meeting the performance requirements to improve the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of its local communities.
  - Setting out any actions to increase the extent to which the council is meeting the performance requirements, including, for example, the role of scrutiny in challenging and driving the extent to which the performance requirements are being met.
  - Scrutiny 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. Scrutiny committees, as well as internal audit, will be a key part of a council's self-assessment.

## **5. THE REPORT**

- 5.1 This report introduces the Annual Self-assessment Report (including Well-being Objectives) 2022/23 (Appendix 1).
- 5.2 The intention of self-assessment is to provide and act on organisational learning and provide an ongoing process of review about how good our performance is and where

it could be better. From this learning we produce a self-assessment report.

- 5.3 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 what action is needed to ensure it can continue to provide effective services now and for the long term.
- 5.4 The Council's 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.
- 5.5 The Directorate Performance Assessments (DPA) and the Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA), are key documents in our Performance Framework, and were designed with this in mind. Much of the information contained within the report is sourced from the DPA's and CPA, in addition to other council reports, including the Annual Governance Statement and Financial Reports.
- 5.6 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
- 5.7 The report includes the last progress update of the six Well-being Objectives contained within the Council's Corporate Plan (2018-2023). The new Corporate Plan 2023-2028 was approved by Council 29 November 2023.
- 5.8 Each of the six Well-being Objectives had 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 2022/23.
- 5.9 As part of the self-evaluation process that underpins the report the Council has set out in each section of the Well-being Objective:
- What went well this year
  - What did not go well and what have we learned
  - What difference have we made
  - What did we learn for future objectives
- 5.10 **Conclusion**

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 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.

## **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 36 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 14 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**

- 10.1 Governance and Audit Committee received the draft Self-Assessment on the 15<sup>th</sup> of February 2024 and voted to approve the Report. Paragraph 10.2 reflects the feedback from the Governance and Audit Committee.
- 10.2 One member queried the use of the word citizens as opposed to the use of the word resident and would prefer the usage 'resident' – this will be looked at for future reporting.

Workforce Planning, the action was for an annual recruitment cycle, but the intake has moved to 2 yearly cycles. An explanation has been added to show that the annual recruitment cycle is in relation to the budget and the recruitment campaigns is moving to 2 yearly cycles. It was explained that this will give apprentices better opportunities, by expanding the training, learning and to give the skills, knowledge, and experience to help gain employment with the Council at the end of this time and a 2-year period was better to do this. The 'frequency' of the action will be amended for the next Self-Assessment

A member asked about the inclusion of the vacancy rate or numbers to provide the wider context to the risk that we are trying to manage. It was explained that we don't currently have the vacancy rates as our HR payroll system doesn't have the capability to hold it, but we have just upgraded our system so it will be available and included for the next Self-Assessment.

A query was raised on the evaluation costs of properties and assets and whether the data includes an uprating. It was noted that as the data table contains actual costs that are taken from the condition survey, no uplift has been added. The next round of building surveys will pick up on current costs when the next surveys take place. This started January 2024 and is on a 3-year rolling programme.

There was a query on the 104 properties brought back into use and what this meant. It was confirmed that it meant the houses were now being rented out and we will clarify that on the next publication.

Members asked for the number of invoice payments that we make within 30 days to include percentages as well as numbers to add context. This will be updated for the 23/24 report.

Members asked about homeworking and in particular how homeworking was affecting the well-being of employees. It was explained that the results of a staff survey were positive. It is supported by the Well-being Strategy and another survey is due to take place soon.

It was requested in future that we could include hyperlinks that explains the role of Governance and Audit, and this will be added.

A progress update was asked for on the actions marked as having slippage in relation to strengthening the links between the emerging Corporate Plan, the Council's Medium-Term Financial Plan, and the TeamCaerphilly Transformation Programme. The MTFP has been refreshed, and we are now facing a potential savings requirement of £46/£47 million. In the coming months, we are aligning the MTFP with the projects coming out of the Mobilising Team Caerphilly Transformation programme to ensure that they are joined up. A report on the updating the Council Reserves Strategy has been to Joint Scrutiny and we are undertaking a review of the Financial Regulations that will be linked in with the Review of the Reserves Strategy. Once this is completed, we will refresh the Reserves Strategy to reflect what is in the revised Financial Regulations. This will be completed by the next self-assessment.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

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

Author: Ros Roberts, Business Improvement Manager [roberr@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:roberr@caerphilly.gov.uk)

Consultees: Dave Street, Deputy Chief Executive  
Cllr Eluned Stenner, Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance

Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director, Education and Corporate Services  
Mark S Williams, Corporate Director for Economy, and Environment  
Steve Harris, Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer  
Sue Richards, Head of Education Planning and Strategy  
Liz Lucas, Head of Customer and Digital Services  
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services  
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer  
Kathryn Peters, Corporate Policy Manager  
Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer  
Rhian Kyte, Head of Regeneration and Planning  
Nick Taylor-Williams, Housing Services Manager  
Rob Hartshorn, Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services  
Marcus Lloyd, Head of Infrastructure  
Paul Warren, Strategic Lead for School Improvement  
Gareth Jenkins, Interim Director of Social Services  
Tina McMahon, Caerphilly Cares 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) 2022/23