

Governance and Audit Committee

Date of Meeting	Wednesday, 27th September 2023
Report Subject	Corporate Self-Assessment 2022/23
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Governance and Corporate Services including Health and Safety and Human Resources
Report Author	Chief Executive
Type of Report	Assurance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Local Government and Elections Act (Wales) 2021 sets out a duty to report on performance and states 'A Council must produce a self-assessment report in respect of each financial year. The report must set out its conclusions on the extent to which it met the performance requirements during that year, and any actions it intends to take, or has already taken, to increase the extent to which it is meeting the performance requirements.'

This is the Council's second year completing the Corporate Self-assessment. For 2022/23, the model was reviewed and adapted slightly to include an additional two questions within Theme A (Vision, Strategy and Performance Reports), to ensure that the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and Integrated Impact Assessments (IIA's) were incorporated.

The Self-assessment Model follows a three-stage process:

Stage One - 'desk-based' analysis and evaluation.

Stage Two - opinion sourcing, consultation, and engagement.

Stage Three - final published assessment and improvement plan.

The results of the Corporate Self-assessment identified that overall, the Council is performing well against the assessment; **3%** Very Best Practice, **6%** Very Best Practice / Good Evidence and **74%** Good Evidence. The results of the Corporate Self-assessment also identified opportunities for improvement; **14%** Evidence but Further Action Required and **2%** Some Evidence but Lacking in Key Areas.

Very Best Practice

The Theme / Question scored as 'Very Best Practice' (Score 5) identified in the self-assessment relates to:

- **Theme F – Partnership Working**

Question: Does the Council engage in local, regional, and national partnerships and collaborations (F26).

Opportunities for Improvement 2022/23

Four Themes / five Questions scored as 'Evidence but Further Action Required' related to:

- **Theme B – Resource Planning and Management**

- Question: Are these strategies sustainable, and dynamic, in adapting to change and the future? (B13)

- **Theme C - Organisational Governance, Ethics and Values**

- Question: How well are these frameworks and codes applied and observed? (C15)

- **Theme D - Organisational Leadership and Structure**

- Question: Does the Council have an adopted organisational structure and a preferred working culture? (D20)
- Question: Is it evident that the preferred working culture is pre-dominant and effective? (D22)

- **Theme G – Customer and Community Engagement**

- Question: Does the Council have comprehensive and maintained plans and policies for customer and community engagement in place? (G31)

There was one Theme / Question that scored as 'Some Evidence but Lacking in Key Areas' and this relates to;

- **Theme G - Customer and Community Engagement**

- Does the Council have comprehensive and maintained plans and policies for customer and community engagement in place? (G29)

Appendix A, Section 10 provides the details to support these areas of improvement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To accept and approve the findings of the Corporate Self-Assessment 2022/23
2	To approve the opportunities for improvement identified in Corporate Self-Assessment 2022/23

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	Explaining the Corporate Self-Assessment 2022/23
1.01	<p>The Local Government and Elections Act (Wales) 2021 sets out a duty to report on performance and states ‘A council must produce a self-assessment report in respect of each financial year. The report must set out its conclusions on the extent to which it met the performance requirements during that year, and any actions it intends to take, or has already taken, to increase the extent to which it is meeting the performance requirements.’ This document aims to achieve the duty set out above for the Act and for the use by the Council.</p>
1.02	<p>Under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, the Council must put in place a system of Corporate Self-assessment to review the extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) it is exercising its functions effectively,b) it is using its resources economically, efficiently, and effectively, andc) its governance is effective for securing the matters set out in paragraphs (a) and (b).
1.03	<p>The Self-assessment model focuses on eight themes and considers a set of core questions within each of these themes outlined further in this document. As with all models there will inevitably be overlaps across themes, however, the themes are sufficiently defined and demarked to avoid too much overlapping or duplication.</p> <p>The Self-Assessment Model follows three stages:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Stage One - ‘desk-based’ analysis and evaluation Stage Two - opinion sourcing, consultation and Stage Three - final published assessment and improvement plan</p>
1.04	<p>A Project Board was established for the Corporate Self-assessment and comprised of a Project Board Chair, a senior responsible officer, and officers from across Portfolios. Each of the officers who sit on the Project Board are considered to have the ability to conceptualise new models and new ways of working, have an understanding of their service whilst having sufficient seniority within the Council to have taken the Self-assessment forward into its second year.</p>
1.05	<p>Stage One of the self-assessment was an analysis and evaluation against the Themes, listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A - Vision, Strategy and Performance• B - Resource Planning and Management• C - Organisational Governance, Ethics and Values• D - Organisational Leadership and Operating Models• E - Innovation and Change Management• F - Partnership Working• G - Customer and Community Engagement• H - Risk Management and Business Continuity

1.06	<p>We drew upon the Council’s Annual Governance Statement (AGS) model of evaluation and scoring, and evidence capturing, as this model is known to be effective. The model is a useful platform for challenging and moderating variations in opinion through facilitated review. The scoring criteria is listed below:</p> <p>Score 5 – Very best practice Score 4 – Good evidence Score 3 – Evidence but further action required Score 2 – Some evidence but lacking in key areas Score 1 – No evidence</p>																		
1.07	<p>Stage Two of the self-assessment sets out the conclusions from the analysis and evaluation of Stage One. This was carried out by the project board using peers from other portfolios to keep the assessment focused and to give consistency of check and challenge.</p> <p>The results of Stage One were shared at a Senior Leadership Academy where the results were considered, challenged, and evaluated. During Stage Two, consultation was undertaken with Members from both the Governance and Audit Committee and the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to further consider, challenge and evaluate the feedback and scores. The final results of the self-assessment are detailed in the graph below:</p> <div data-bbox="320 1039 1313 1700" data-label="Figure"> <p>The pie chart displays the following data:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Score</th> <th>Count</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Score 2</td> <td>2</td> <td>6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Score 3</td> <td>1</td> <td>3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Score 4</td> <td>26</td> <td>74%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Score 4/5</td> <td>5</td> <td>14%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Score 5</td> <td>1</td> <td>3%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </div>	Score	Count	Percentage	Score 2	2	6%	Score 3	1	3%	Score 4	26	74%	Score 4/5	5	14%	Score 5	1	3%
Score	Count	Percentage																	
Score 2	2	6%																	
Score 3	1	3%																	
Score 4	26	74%																	
Score 4/5	5	14%																	
Score 5	1	3%																	
1.08	<p>Following the pilot of the Corporate Self-assessment 2021/22, there has been improvements to the process for 2022/23. This included not only the Members Workshop but also consultations with the workforce and Trade Union representatives.</p>																		
1.09	<p>Stage Three is being presented here which includes published assessment and an improvement plan, which will be led by the Cabinet and run through the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny</p>																		

	Committee and Governance and Audit Committee for input and assurance in March 2024.
1.10	<p>Overall based on the range of questions asked against the eight Themes it is considered that the Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Does exercise its functions effectively. b) Uses its resources economically, efficiently, and effectively; and c) Has effective governance for securing the matters set out in paragraphs (a & b) <p>This is consistent with the findings and areas for improvements within the Council Annual Governance Statement and the Annual Performance Report for the year 2022/23.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	There are no specific resource implications for this report.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	<p>Chief Executive, Chief Officers, Senior Officers (Senior Leadership Academi), Trade Unions and the Workforce have all been consulted on the Corporate Self-Assessment along with Members from both the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Governance and Audit Committee.</p> <p>Cabinet will also have the opportunity to consider and review the content of the Corporate Self-assessment and the Opportunities for Improvement (detailed within the Corporate Self-assessment).</p> <p>The Corporate Self-assessment report was presented to Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny committee on 14th September 2023, where they raised the importance of addressing culture, values, ethics and resilience. This is covered within Appendix A, Section 10 (Opportunities for Improvement in 2022/23).</p>

4.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	Integrated Impact Assessments and Risk Management feed into the Corporate Self-Assessment and are assessed within the themes and questions.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix A: Corporate Self-Assessment 2022/23

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
-------------	--

6.01	Council Plan 2022/23 Council Plan Monitoring Reports 2022/23 Annual Governance Statement 2022/23
------	--

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
-------------	--------------------------------

7.01	Contact Officer: Emma Heath (Strategic Performance Advisor) Telephone: 01352 702 744 E-mail: emma.heath@flintshire.gov.uk
------	--

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
-------------	--------------------------

8.01	<p>Council Plan: the document which sets out the annual priorities of the Council. It is a requirement of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 for organisations to ‘set out any actions to increase the extent to which the council is meeting the performance requirements.’ Plans for organisations should be robust; be clear on where it wants to go; and how it will get there.</p> <p>Annual Governance Statement: is a public document that reports on the extent to which we as the Council comply with our own code of governance. This is a requirement by the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2018 to prepare a statement on internal control.</p>
------	--