

GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Wednesday 22 nd March 2023
Report Subject	Corporate Self-Assessment 2021/22
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.'

The duty came fully into effect in April 2022 and work has taken place to carry out the organisations first Corporate Self-Assessment. There is no prescribed model for how to undertake a self-assessment. We developed a three-stage process having drawn on our experience and in consultation with national advisors:

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

Stage two - opinion sourcing, consultation and engagement.

Stage three - final published assessment and improvement plan.

As an organisation, the results of the Corporate Self-Assessment has identified that there is good evidence of performance against the assessment, scored between good and best practice in 79% of the questions asked. In 15% of the questions it was identified that there was good / more evidence required and in 6% there was a need for further action.

The theme / question scored as 'very best practice' identified in the self-assessment relates to:

- **Theme F – Partnership Working**

Question: Does the Council engagement in local, regional, and national partnerships and collaborations (F24).

Two Themes / Three questions scored as 'having evidence but further action needed' related to:

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

Question: Are these strategies sustainable, and dynamic, in adapting to change and the future? (B11)

- **Theme G – Customer and Community Engagement**
 Question: Does the Council have comprehensive and maintained plans and policies for customer and community engagement in place ? (G27)
 Question: Does the Council use Customer Service feedback effectively in reviewing performance and shaping services? (G28)

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To consider findings of the Corporate Self-Assessment 21/22.
2	To note the opportunities for improvement identified in Corporate Self-Assessment 21/22.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	Explaining the Corporate Self-Assessment 2021/22
1.01	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.
1.02	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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) it is exercising its functions effectively, b) it is using its resources economically, efficiently, and effectively, and c) its governance is effective for securing the matters set out in paragraphs (a) and (b).
1.03	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. The Self-Assessment Model follows three stages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stage One - ‘desk-based’ analysis and evaluation Stage Two - opinion sourcing, consultation and Stage Three - final published assessment and improvement plan
1.04	A Project Board was established comprising of a Project Board Chair, a senior responsible officer and officers from across portfolios that are either currently Performance Leads or officers who were part of the Governance Recovery Group during the Council’s response phase to the pandemic.

	<p>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 take the Self-Assessment forward.</p>										
1.05	<p>Stage one of the self-assessment was against the themes 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>During Stage Two the results of the assessment were considered, challenged and evaluated at a specially convened Senior Leadership Academi. A separate consultation process was not undertaken for this year. The final results of the self-assessment are detailed in the graph below:</p> <div data-bbox="400 1541 1302 2007" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px auto; width: fit-content;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Corporate Self-Assessment Results 2021/22</p> <table border="0" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: blue; border: 1px solid black;"></td> <td>Score 5 - Very best practice</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: orange; border: 1px solid black;"></td> <td>Score 4/5 Good evidence, almost best practice</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: grey; border: 1px solid black;"></td> <td>Score 4 - Good evidence</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: yellow; border: 1px solid black;"></td> <td>Score 3/4 Good evidence, could enhance further</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: blue; border: 1px solid black;"></td> <td>Score 3 - Evidence but further action required</td> </tr> </table> </div>		Score 5 - Very best practice		Score 4/5 Good evidence, almost best practice		Score 4 - Good evidence		Score 3/4 Good evidence, could enhance further		Score 3 - Evidence but further action required
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1.08	Stage three is being presented here which includes published assessment and improvement plan which will be led by the Cabinet and run through the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee (CROSC) and Governance and Audit Committee for input and assurance in March 2023.
1.09	During consultation with Cabinet and CROSC, feedback and suggestions were made by CROSC. Appendix A has been updated to reflect the suggestions made at CROSC.
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 Council Annual Governance Statement and the Annual Performance Report for the year 2021/22.</p> <p>The Self-Assessment has identified two themes / three questions which scored a 3 as 'having evidence but further action needed'. There are always areas where we strive for improvement and the following list of opportunities have been identified following engagement which it is felt can be achieved in the short term and have some real benefits in doing so. This relates to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme B – Resource Planning and Management. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question: Are these strategies sustainable, and dynamic, in adapting to change and the future? (B11) • Theme G – Customer and Community Engagement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question: Does the Council have comprehensive and maintained plans and policies for customer and community engagement in place? (G27) • Question: Does the Council use Customer Service feedback effectively in reviewing performance and shaping services? (G28) <p>The improvement plan can be found in Appendix A.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	Resource implications were felt as this was the first time of carrying out the Corporate Self-Assessment. However now the work has been completed the implications in the future will be less.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Chief Executive, Chief Officers, and Senior Officers (Senior Leadership Academi) have all been consulted on the Corporate Self-Assessment. Cabinet now has the opportunity to consider and review the content of the Corporate Self-Assessment and Improvement Plan. The report and improvement plan was also reported to Corporate Resource Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 8 th March 2023.

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

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix A: Corporate Self-Assessment 2021/22

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Council Plan 2021/22 Council Plan Monitoring Reports 2021/22 Annual Governance Statement 2021/22

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	Contact Officer: Lisa Brownbill, Internal Audit, Performance and Risk Manager Telephone: 01352 702231 E-mail: lisa.brownbill@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	Council Plan: the document which sets out the annual priorities of the Council.
8.02	Medium Term Financial Strategy: a written strategy which gives a forecast of the financial resources which will be available to a Council for a given period and sets out plans for how best to deploy those resources to meet its priorities, duties and obligations.