

GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday, 26 th September 2024
Report Subject	Corporate Self-assessment 2023/24
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 Corporate Self-assessment 2023/24 aims to achieve the duty set out above for the act and for the use by the Council.

This is the Council's third year completing the Corporate Self-assessment. For 2022/23, the model and approach were 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. For 2023/24, the model and approach were reviewed again and adapted to align with the WLGA's Panel Performance Assessment Methodology, with existing questions amended slightly, a number of new questions and a new Theme (Theme I: Climate Change) added to the Corporate Self-assessment.

The Corporate Self-assessment is a comprehensive assessment of the corporate organisation and not a detailed assessment of the performance of each service portfolio, therefore, the assessment themes have been designed in this way.

RECOMMENDATIONS

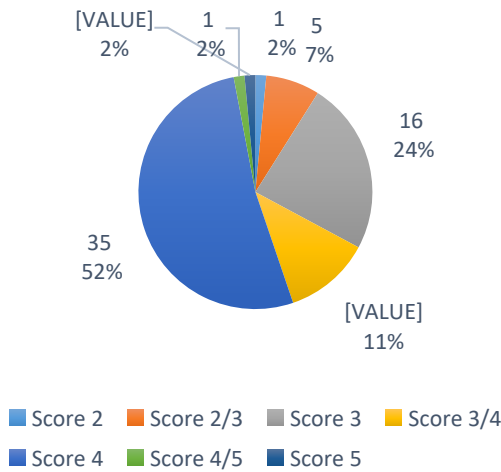
1	To be assured of the findings of the Corporate Self-assessment 2023/24.
2	To be assured of the opportunities for improvement identified in the Corporate Self-assessment 2023/24.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE CORPORATE SELF-ASSESSMENT 2023/24
1.01	<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, and c) its governance is effective for securing the matters set out in paragraphs (a) and (b).
1.02	<p>The Corporate Self-assessment Model focused on nine themes and considered a number of core questions within each of these themes. As with all models there inevitably is some overlaps across themes however, the themes are sufficiently defined and demarked to avoid too much overlapping or duplication.</p> <p>The Self-assessment Model followed three stages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage One - ‘desk-based’ analysis and evaluation of available documents and evidence, and some internal triangulation through review and moderation • Stage Two - opinion sourcing, consultation and engagement and ‘triangulation’ • Stage Three - production of a formal and final published assessment and improvement plan which will be led by the Cabinet and run through both the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Governance and Audit Committee for input and assurance
1.03	<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 • I – Climate Change
1.04	<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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Score 5 – Very best practice (no action required) • Score 4/5 – Very best practice / Good evidence (no action required)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Score 4 – Good evidence (no action required) • Score 3/4 – Good evidence / further action may be required • Score 3 – Evidence but further action may be required • Score 2/3 – Some evidence but lacking in key areas / further action may be required • Score 2 – Some evidence but lacking in key areas and action required • Score 1 – No evidence and action required
1.05	<p>Stage Two of the Corporate Self-assessment is undertaken in two parts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part 1 - a review of 2022/23 Opportunities for Improvement with relevant Officers • Part 2 - sets out the conclusions from the analysis and evaluation of Stage One <p>The results of Stage One were shared with Senior Managers at Senior Leadership Academi where some of the results were considered, challenged, and evaluated.</p> <p>During Stage Two, consultation was undertaken with Chief Officer - Governance, Officers, and a number of Members from Cabinet, Governance and Audit Committee and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to further consider, challenge and evaluate the feedback and scores to ensure that as a Council, we are continuously self-assessing our performance.</p>
1.06	<p>The final results of the Corporate Self-assessment 2023/24, identified that overall, the Council is performing well against the assessment questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Score 5 - very best practice for and no further action required 2% • Score 4/5 - good evidence/very best practice and no further action required for 2%, • Score 4 - good evidence and no further action required for 52%, • Score 3/4 - good evidence / action may be required for 11% , • Score 3 - evidence but further action required for 24% , • Score 2/3 - some evidence but lacking in key areas / further action required for 7%, • Score 2 - some evidence but lacking in key areas and further actions required for 2%.
1.07	<p>The final results of the Corporate Self-assessment 2023/24 are detailed in the graph below:</p>

Corporate Self-Assessment Scores 2023/24



1.08

Where outcome of performance has been identified as scoring 3/4 (having good evidence / action may be required) or scoring less than this, an improvement plan has been devised:

Opportunities for Improvement 2023/24

Eleven Opportunities for Improvement have been identified for improvement in this year's Corporate Self-assessment and although this is an increase from last year, consideration must be given to a new theme and addition of 37 questions.

- **Opportunity 1** – Improve and further embed a performance management and data culture
- **Opportunity 2** – Undertaking of Integrated Impact Assessments (IIA's) (where applicable)?
- **Opportunity 3** – Corporate oversight of policies and strategies with alignment to the Council's ethics and values
- **Opportunity 4** – Consideration of staff retention, current and future skills needs and gaps
- **Opportunity 5** – Communication and engagement with citizens of Flintshire
- **Opportunity 6** – Under-represented groups are communicated and engaged with effectively
- **Opportunity 7** – Further embed risk appetite
- **Opportunity 8** – Reduce the impact of climate change
- **Opportunity 9** – 2030 net zero commitments as part of 'Net Zero Wales'
- **Opportunity 10** – Reductions in carbon emissions in the wider community
- **Opportunity 11** – Integration of climate change into the medium and longer term planning

Section 10 of Appendix A provides further details to support the Opportunities of Improvement.

1.09

Stage Three is being presented here which includes published assessment and an improvement plan, which will be led by the Cabinet and presented to Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee

	and Governance and Audit Committee for input and assurance in September 2024.
1.10	<p>Overall based on the range of questions asked against the nine 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 Annual Governance Statement 2023/24.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	A risk in delivering some of the Opportunities for Improvement identified in the Corporate Self-assessment 2023/24 are in relation to available resources.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	<p>The results of Stage One were shared with Senior Managers at Senior Leadership Academi where some of the results were considered, challenged, and evaluated.</p> <p>During Stage Two, consultation was undertaken with Chief Officer - Governance, Officers, and a number of Members from Cabinet, the Governance and Audit Committee and the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to further consider, challenge and evaluate the feedback and scores to ensure that we as a Council are continuously self-assessing our performance.</p> <p>Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee had the opportunity to consider and review the content of the Corporate Self-assessment 2023/24 and the Opportunities for Improvement (detailed within the Corporate Self-assessment) on 12th September 2024. Recommendation at this meeting was to reintroduce the section specific to consultation. The Corporate Self-assessment has been amended and Section 7 details what consultation had been undertaken during 2023/24 and information regarding future development of a Consultation and Engagement Hub.</p> <p>Governance and Audit Committee to have an opportunity to consider and review the content of the Corporate Self-assessment 2023/24 and the Opportunities for Improvement (detailed within the Corporate Self-assessment) at Governance and Audit Committee meeting.</p>

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	Risk Management feeds into the Corporate Self-assessment and is assessed within the themes and questions. A key risk in delivering some of the Opportunities for Improvement identified in the Corporate Self-assessment 2023/24, are in relation to available resources.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix A: Corporate Self-assessment 2023/24

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Council Plan (2023-28) Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 Panel Performance Assessment Methodology

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>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> <p>Panel Performance Assessment: The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 places a duty on councils to arrange for a panel to undertake and respond to a corporate, organisational level assessment, of the extent to which the council is meeting its performance requirements.</p>