

GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Date of Meeting | Wednesday 28 th July 2021 |
| Report Subject | Development of a Corporate Self-Assessment Model |
| Report Author | Chief Executive, Chief Officer Governance and Internal Audit Manager |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill, the Council must put in place a system of corporate self-assessment to review the extent to which:

- 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).

The duty comes fully into effect in April 2022, but preparations are underway to prepare in this financial year for a 'trial' run. There is no prescribed model for how to undertake such an assessment. We are suggesting a three-stage process having drawn on our experience and in consultation with national advisors:

- 1) draw together evidence from existing sources and identify whether further targeted evidence needs to be gathered;
- 2) formulate and test conclusions
- 3) review of the findings by this Committee and agreement of an action plan by Cabinet prior to publication

RECOMMENDATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | That the Committee endorses the proposed model for the first and trial corporate self-assessment. |
|---|---|

REPORT DETAILS

| | |
|-------------|--|
| 1.00 | EXPLAINING THE RECRUITMENT OF A LAY MEMBER |
| 1.01 | <p>The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires the Council to establish a process 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). <p>These are the so called “performance functions”.</p> <p>The Council must also consult the following groups at least once per financial year on how well it carries out those performance functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local people, • other persons carrying on a business in the Council's area, • the staff of the council, and • recognised trade unions. |
| 1.02 | <p>The duty comes fully into effect in April 2022, but preparations are underway to develop the process in this financial year, so that the Council can</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • help to shape how such reviews should be carried out; and • test out how the process could and should work so that it adds value to our existing performance and governance regime |
| 1.03 | <p>We are developing a three stage model as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Evidence gathering – the Council gathers existing evidence such as the Annual Governance Statement (AGS), existing self-assessments, reports by external regulators etc. and identifies any gaps where further work is needed 2) Conclusions and testing – the Council draws conclusions about its discharge of the performance functions and considers whether to test those conclusions using targeted consultation 3) Approval and publication – this Committee must review and comment on the self-assessment before it is considered by Cabinet, which will then publish an action plan to address any areas that need to be bolstered |
| 1.04 | <p>At Stage One evidence will be gathered against the themes below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision, Strategy and Performance • Resource planning and management • Partnership working • Innovation and change management |

| | |
|------|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational governance, ethics and values • Organisational leadership and operating models • Customer and community engagement • Risk management and business continuity |
| 1.05 | The assessment process needs to balance depth and thoroughness with proportionality. We need to avoid becoming lost in detail. Areas of inconclusive analysis and areas of concern with scope for improvement can be followed through at the close of the self-assessment process. Stage one is due to be completed by the end of October 2021. |
| 1.06 | A project board has been formed to oversee the process. The board will ensure that we maintain a fast paced, creative approach whilst having an understanding of their portfolio or due to their position within the Council. |
| 1.07 | The second stage will test out 'the proposition' of initial conclusions from the analysis and evaluation stage one. We will test the initial conclusions from stage one against the views and opinions of those to be surveyed and interviewed in order to keep the assessment focused. |
| 1.08 | The third and closing stage will involve the production of a formal and final published assessment and action plan which will be led by the Cabinet and run through both the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Governance and Audit Committee for input and assurance. |

| | |
|-------------|---|
| 2.00 | RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS |
| 2.01 | The potential resource in officer for such a process could be excessive. The process therefore needs to be carefully designed and controlled. Using evidence at Stage One will help to limit the resource implications. |

| | |
|-------------|---|
| 3.00 | CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT |
| 3.01 | None. |

| | |
|-------------|---|
| 4.00 | RISK MANAGEMENT |
| 4.01 | The Council's risk management framework will feed into the Corporate self-assessment. |

| | |
|-------------|-------------------|
| 5.00 | APPENDICES |
| 5.01 | None |

| | |
|-------------|---|
| 6.00 | LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS |
| 6.01 | Contact Officer: Gareth Owens, Chief Officer Governance Telephone: 01352 702344 E-mail: gareth.legal@flintshire.gov.uk |

| | |
|-------------|--------------------------|
| 7.00 | GLOSSARY OF TERMS |
| 7.01 | None. |