

MEETING	Audit and Governance Committee
DATE	17 November 2022
TITLE	LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ELECTIONS WALES ACT 2021 – SELF-ASSESSMENTS
PURPOSE	Submit a draft of Gwynedd Council's Self-Assessment document for 2021/22 for committee consideration.
RECOMMENDATION	Members are asked to consider the contents of the draft document for 2021/22 and propose any comments and recommendations.
AUTHOR	Dewi W. Jones, Council Business Support Service Manager

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. This is a report presenting the council's first Performance Self-Assessment looking back at 2021/22. The report is identified as a new statutory request under the **Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021**.
- 1.2. The Act provides for a new and reformed legislative framework for local government elections, democracy, governance and performance. It replaces the duties of the Local Government Measure (Wales) 2009.
- 1.3. The Act requires that 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 financial 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 performance requirements are the extent to which:
 - it exercises its functions effectively;
 - it uses its resources economically, efficiently and effectively;
 - whose governance is effective to achieve the above.
- 1.4. At its simplest level, a self-assessment relates to how the council meets the performance requirements and responds to the following questions:
 - How well are we doing?
 - How do we know that?
 - What can we do better and how?
- 1.5. There is a duty to publish a report setting out the conclusions of the self-assessment once in relation to each financial year and to complete the work "as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of the financial year in which it relates."
- 1.6. A duty to consult at least once in a financial year with local people, local businesses, council staff and trade unions is also stated. These consultations should be used to

obtain feedback on the extent to which the authority is fulfilling the performance requirements.

2. SELF-ASSESSMENT OF THE COUNCIL'S PERFORMANCE

- 2.1. The council already collects much of the evidence and publishes documents containing the type of information that we're expected to include within the self-assessment. This includes documents such as (but not limited to) annual reports for Performance, Equality, Director of Social Services, Annual Statement of Accounts and Governance Statement. As a result, we have tried to keep the self-assessment document relatively concise with reference towards a number of the documents where further information can be obtained to try to avoid duplication.
- 2.2. Governance Group has led/taken an overview of the process within the council to ensure that the work is owned and led at a strategic level.
- 2.3. The guidance issued by the Government suggests that the seven corporate areas common to the corporate governance arrangements of public bodies (as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015) should be used as a framework for the self-assessment, namely:
- Corporate planning
 - Financial planning
 - Workforce planning (people)
 - Procurement
 - Assets
 - Risk management
 - Performance management
- 2.4. The Statutory Guidance sets out the need to involve the Governance and Audit Committee in the process to give them the opportunity to submit any comments and recommendations as outlined in the box below (which is extracted directly from the document).

<p><u>Involving the council's governance and audit committee</u></p> <p><i>Para 2.40 The council must make a draft of its self-assessment report available to its governance and audit committee. The committee must review the draft report and may make recommendations for changes to the conclusions or action the council intends to take.</i></p> <p><i>Para 2.41 If the council does not make a change recommended by the governance and audit committee, it must set out in the final self-assessment report the recommendation and the reasons why the council did not make the change.</i></p>	
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- 2.5. As we've already outlined this year is the first time we have conducted the self-assessment and this time it will be published as a stand-alone document. For the future

we intend to integrate the work with the Council's performance challenge arrangements and include the self-assessment within the **Annual Performance Report** so that all information is within the same document. This document is normally prepared during April/May for submission to a meeting of the Full Council for approval at the beginning of July.

- 2.6. Failure to publish a Self-Assessment would likely result in statutory recommendations from Audit Wales, which would have implications for the reputation of the Council.

3. NEXT STEPS

- 3.1. A draft of the Self-Assessment, together with any comments or recommendations from the Governance and Audit Committee will be submitted to Cabinet on the 25th of November and to the Full Council for approval on the 1st of December.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1. The Governance and Audit Committee is requested to consider the Draft Self-Assessment for 2021/22 which appears in the appendix and provide any recommendations for changes if there are any.

Appendix 1 – Gwynedd Council Self-Assessment (Draft) 2021/22