

<b>MEETING</b>	Audit and Governance Committee
<b>DATE</b>	7 September 2023
<b>TITLE</b>	LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ELECTIONS WALES ACT 2021 – SELF-ASSESSMENTS
<b>PURPOSE</b>	Submit a draft of Gwynedd Council's Annual Performance Report and Self-Assessment document for 2022/23 for committee consideration.
<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	Members are asked to consider the contents of the draft document for 2022/23 and propose any comments and recommendations.
<b>CABINET MEMBER</b>	Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn, Council Leader
<b>AUTHOR</b>	Dewi W. Jones, Council Business Support Service Manager

## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. This is a report to present the Council's Annual Performance Report and Self-Assessment looking back at 2022/23. Note that the Self-Assessment is as a new statutory request under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.
- 1.2. This year, for the first time, the Council's self-assessment has been incorporated within the Annual Performance Report. Gwynedd Council's Performance and Self-Assessment Report 2022/23 (Appendix 1) has been structured to reflect the format of Gwynedd Council's Plan 2018-23. In the first part the focus is on the performance of the priority projects while the second part looks at each department's day to day work. The third part includes the self-assessment.
- 1.3. There is some further work to be done to complete the content of parts 1 and 2 of the report and to the format, this work will be completed in time to present at to the Cabinet and to the Full Council during the month of September.
- 1.4. The Statutory Guidance sets out the need to involve the Governance and Audit Committee in the self assessment process to give them the opportunity to submit any comments and recommendations. With this in mind, Committee members are asked to focus on Part 3 of the report, (which is the Self-Assessment) and offer any comments or recommendations.

## 2. SELF-ASSESSMENT OF THE COUNCIL'S PERFORMANCE

- 2.1. The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 provides for a new and revised legislative framework for local government elections, democracy, governance and

performance. It replaces the duty set out in the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

- 2.2. 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:
  - i. it exercises its functions effectively;
  - ii. it uses its resources economically, efficiently and effectively;
  - iii. whose governance is effective to achieve the above.
- 2.3. 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?
- 2.4. 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."
- 2.5. 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.
- 2.6. 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.
- 2.7. The 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. It is also noted that the Chair and Vice-chair of the Governance and Scrutiny Committee had the opportunity to feed into the process of drawing up the report and also had the opportunity to provide comments on a draft version over the past few weeks.
- 2.8. As stated above it is necessary to include the Governance and Scrutiny Committee in the process in order to give them the opportunity to submit any comments and

recommendations as outlined in the box below (which has been taken directly from the document).

<p><b><u>Involving the council's governance and audit committee</u></b></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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- 2.9. 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 Annual Performance Report and Self-Assessment, together with any comments or recommendations from the Governance and Audit Committee on the self-assessment will be submitted to Cabinet on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September and to the Full Council for approval on the 28<sup>th</sup> of September, 2023.

### **4. RECOMMENDATION**

- 4.1. The Governance and Audit Committee is requested to consider the Draft Self-Assessment for 2022/23 which appears in Appendix 1 (page 147 onwards) and provide any recommendations for changes if there are any.

### **Appendix 1 – Gwynedd Council Annual Performance Report and Self-Assessment (Draft) 2022/23**