

NAME OF COMMITTEE	Governance and Audit Committee
DATE OF MEETING	22 May 2025
TITLE OF ITEM	CYNGOR GWYNEDD SELF-ASSESSMENT 2024/25
OBJECTIVE	To submit a draft of the main issues to be addressed within the Cyngor Gwynedd Self-assessment 2024/25 document for the committee's consideration.
RECOMMENDATION	Members are asked to consider the issues presented for 2024/25 and offer any comments and recommendations along with any additional matters that should be included.
CABINET MEMBER	Councillor Nia Jeffreys, Leader of the Council
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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This is a report which presents a draft of the main issues to be included in the Council's Self-assessment for 2024/25. It is noted that the self-assessment is a statutory requirement under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.
- 1.2 As in previous years, the Council's Self-assessment will be incorporated into the Annual Performance Report. The Performance and Self-assessment Report for 2024/25 will be structured to reflect the format of the 2023-28 Cyngor Gwynedd Plan.
- 1.3 Statutory guidance states that the Governance and Audit Committee needs to be included in the self-assessment process, providing them with an opportunity to make any observations and recommendations.
- 1.4 In the past, the Committee has indicated a desire to provide input earlier in the process rather than providing observations/recommendations at the end of a final draft copy of the document before it is submitted to Cabinet. In an attempt to respond, the main issues that are intended to be included within the self-assessment for 2024/25 (Appendix 1) are presented here so that the Committee has an opportunity to make observations and recommendations and also to identify if there are any other issues that should be included within the self-assessment much earlier than usual.
- 1.5 These observations/recommendations will then need to be taken into account when drafting the document for formal submission to this Committee, Cabinet and Full Council as usual in early autumn. The process of drafting the Annual Report will follow the same timeline.

2. SELF-ASSESSMENT OF THE COUNCIL'S PERFORMANCE

- 2.1. The Local Government and Elections (Wales) 2021 Act 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. This means that a Council must produce a self-assessment report in relation to each financial year. The report must set out its conclusions as to the extent to which it met the performance requirements during that financial year, and any steps it intends to take, or has already taken, to increase the extent to which it meets the performance requirements. The performance requirements are to what extent:
 - i. it is exercising its functions effectively;
 - ii. it is using its resources economically, efficiently and effectively;
 - iii. the Council has robust governance arrangements in place to ensure the requirements of i. and ii.
- 2.3. At its simplest level, the self-assessment is concerned with the way 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. As already stated, there is a duty to publish a report noting 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 it relates to."
- 2.5. It also notes the duty to consult with local people, local businesses, the Council's staff and trade unions at least once in a financial year. These consultations should be used to get feedback on the extent to which the authority delivers the performance requirements.
- 2.6. The Council is already gathering much of the evidence and publishing documents that contain the type of information we are expected to include within the self-assessment. This includes documents such as (but not limited to) Performance, Equality, Director of Social Services' annual reports and the Annual Statement of Accounts. It is also noted that there is a close link between this document and the Annual Governance Statement which is being submitted to the same meeting. As a result, we have attempted to keep the self-assessment document relatively concise with reference to a number of the documents where further information is available in order to try to avoid duplication.
- 2.7. It is the Governance Group that has led/taken an overview of this 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 Audit Committee have had the opportunity to provide comments on a draft version over the past few weeks.

- 2.8. As noted above, the Governance and Audit Committee needs to be involved in the process to give them the opportunity to make any observations and recommendations as outlined in the box below (which is taken directly from the document).

Include the council's governance and audit committee

Para 2.40 The Council must arrange for a draft of its self-assessment report to be made available to its governance and audit committee. The committee must review the draft report and can make recommendations for changes to the conclusions or actions the council intends to take.

Para 2.41 If the Council does not make a change recommended by the governance and audit committee, it must note the recommendation and the reasons why the council did not make the change in the final self-assessment report.

- 2.9. Failure to publish a Self-assessment would likely result in statutory recommendations from Audit Wales, which would have implications for the Council's reputation.
- 2.10. As reported to this Committee in September 2024, it is the Council's intention to undertake a Panel Performance Assessment, which will consist of independent members. This was originally planned to be done in November last year, but due to the political changes in the Council this was changed to March 2026. A Panel Assessment needs to be undertaken at least **once** within an electoral cycle and is associated with the duty to be undertaking annual self-assessments on performance with these documents forming part of the evidence base.

3. NEXT STEPS

- 3.1. Following receipt of observations/recommendations from the Governance and Audit Committee the preparation of the self-assessment will continue and Cabinet will consider its content.
- 3.2. A draft of the Annual Performance Report and Self-assessment will be submitted to this Committee in September at which time there will be an opportunity to provide observations/recommendations on the final draft in accordance with past procedure. Following this, the document, together with any observations or recommendations from the Governance and Audit Committee on the self-assessment will be submitted to Cabinet in September and to the Full Council for approval on 3 October 2024.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1. The Governance and Audit Committee is asked to consider the issues outlined for the 2024/25 Self-assessment which appears in Appendix 1 and to make observations/recommendations for changes, if any, along with any additions.

Appendix 1 – Main issues for Cyngor Gwynedd's 2024/25 Self-assessment

