

MEETING	Governance and Audit Committee
DATE	5 September 2024
TITLE	Gwynedd Council's Annual Performance Report and Self-Assessment
PURPOSE	Submit a draft of Gwynedd Council's Annual Performance Report and Self-Assessment document for 2023/24 for committee consideration.
RECOMMENDATION	Members are asked to consider the contents of the draft document for 2023/24 and propose any comments and recommendations.
CABINET MEMBER	Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn, Council Leader
AUTHOR	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 statutory request under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.
- 1.2. Like last year, the Council's self-assessment has been incorporated within the Annual Performance Report. Gwynedd Council's Performance and Self-Assessment Report 2023/24 (Appendix 1) has been structured to reflect the format of Gwynedd Council's Plan 2023-28.
- 1.3. The document has been presented as text only as there is further work to be done to complete the format and design. This work will be completed in time to present 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 2** 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. As already mentioned 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 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).

Involving the council's governance and audit committee

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.

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.

- 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.
- 2.10. As reported to this Committee at its meeting on 23rd May 2024 a Panel Performance Assessment (consisting of independent members) will take place within the Council in the Autumn. A Panel Assessment needs to be carried out at least **once** within an election cycle and is linked to the duty to carry out annual self-assessments on performance with these documents forming part of the evidence base.

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 17th of September and to the Full Council for approval on the 3rd of October, 2024.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1. The Governance and Audit Committee is requested to consider the Annual Performance Report and Self-Assessment draft for 2023/24 which appears in Appendix 1 and provide any recommendations for changes if there are any.

Appendix 1 – Gwynedd Council Annual Performance Report and Self-Assessment (Draft) 2023/24