

NAME OF COMMITTEE	Governance and Audit Committee
DATE OF MEETING	22 October 2026
TITLE OF ITEM	CYNGOR GWYNEDD SELF-ASSESSMENT 2025/26
OBJECTIVE	Submission of the draft Cyngor Gwynedd Self-assessment 2025/26 for the committee's consideration.
RECOMMENDATION	Members are requested to consider the content of the draft document for 2025/26 and offer any comments and recommendations.
CABINET MEMBER	Councillor Nia Jeffreys, Leader of the Council
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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. This is a report that presents the Council's Self-assessment, which looks back at 2025/26. **(Appendix 1)**. It is noted that the self-assessment is a statutory requirement under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.
- 1.2. As per usual, the Self-assessment will be submitted for adoption with the Council's Annual Performance Report for 2025/26 (and the Social Partnership Annual Report for 2025/26). These 2 documents are included for your information as appendices 2 and 3, **but there is no expectation for you to offer comments/recommendations on these.**
- 1.3. The document reflects the priority areas within the Council Plan and outlines the strengths and risks under each area, as well as the matters that we will address.
- 1.4. 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. Following observations received in the past on being included earlier in the process, committee members were given an opportunity to make observations and recommendations on the draft matters that were to be included within the self-assessment at their meeting on 9 July 2026.

2. SELF-ASSESSMENT OF THE COUNCIL'S PERFORMANCE

- 2.1. The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 provides for a new and amended 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?
- What and how can we do better?

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 to which it relates."

2.5. It also notes a 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. Over the past year, the Council conducted surveys with the staff and residents of the County and consulted with trade unions on their performance. It is a statutory requirement that attention is given to the outcomes of consultations when preparing the self-assessment and it is confirmed that this has been undertaken and highlighted in the document.

2.6. In 2024/25, Gwynedd took part in the National Residents Survey, and several other surveys were also carried out with our residents over the past year. A Staff Voice Survey was held once again, and the recognised trade unions were asked for their feedback and comments on the authority's performance and possible areas for improvement as part of the preparation of the Self-Assessment. Surveys were also conducted with businesses in the county, including the annual Business Survey. The results of all these consultations will help to improve Council services and set strategic direction, as well as meeting legislative expectations.

2.7. 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 was submitted to the Committee back in September. 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.

- 2.8. 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.
- 2.9. 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 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.

- 2.10. Following past requests from members of the Governance and Audit Committee to be included earlier in the process, the main matters intended to be included within the self-assessment for 2025/26 were submitted at a meeting of the Committee on the 9th of July. In response, it was suggested that the following matters required attention:
- Need to highlight more clearly the main legal challenges and risks it faces, and whether there are lessons to be learned from cases such as Article 4.
 - There is concern regarding the delay in developing the Education Transport Policy and the potential impact on pupil attendance and the operation of school bus routes.
 - Attention should be drawn to the challenges associated with funding and service delivery, including Pupil Immersion Units and the future of rural infrastructure in Dwyfor and Meirionnydd.
 - The operational challenges associated with implementing and collecting the Council Tax premium need to be acknowledged, together with the need to improve Council Tax collection performance.
 - The challenges and expectations underpinning educational achievements in literacy and numeracy should be explained.
 - It is necessary to ensure that the Apprenticeship Scheme contributes effectively to the Council's future workforce planning.

A number of these points have been addressed in the attached draft self-assessment, where there is evidence to support the comments.

- 2.11. Failure to publish a Self-assessment would likely result in statutory recommendations from Audit Wales, which would have implications for the Council's reputation.
- 2.12. A Panel assessment was carried out in March 2026 as a part of the arrangements to review the Council's performance and governance. It is noted that the findings of the self-assessment for 2025/26 correspond with the findings and recommendations of

the Panel report, providing further assurances that the key matters have been consistently identified and are considered as a part of the next steps.

- 2.13. A report on the recommendations arising from the Panel Performance Assessment, together with the Council's draft response, will be presented for consideration by the Governance and Audit Committee at its meeting on 22 October 2026.

3. NEXT STEPS

- 3.1. A draft of the Annual Performance Report and Self-assessment, along with any observations or recommendations from the Governance and Audit Committee on the self-assessment will be submitted to the Cabinet on 10 November and to the Full Council for approval on 3 December 2026.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1. The Governance and Audit Committee is asked to consider the draft Self-assessment Report for 2025/26, which appears in Appendix 1 and offer any recommendations for changes, if any.

Appendix 1 – Cyngor Gwynedd Self-assessment Report 2025/26 (Draft)

Appendix 2 - Cyngor Gwynedd Annual Performance Report 2025/26 (Draft)

Appendix 3 - Annual Report on the Social Partnership Duty 2025-26 (Draft)