

CYNGOR SIR CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to: Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Committee

Date of meeting: 6th November 2023

Title: Self-Assessment Report 2022/23

Purpose of the report: For information to ensure the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Committee are updated on the progress of preparing the Self-Assessment Report 2022/23 including Annual Review of Performance and Well-being Objectives

Reason Scrutiny have requested the information:
To keep up to date on the progress of preparing the Self-Assessment Report

Background

Part 6 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 introduced a new Self-Assessment based performance regime for Principal Councils.

The new performance regime is intended to build and support a culture in which councils continuously seek to improve and do better in everything they do, regardless of how well they are performing already. It is the expectation of the Act that councils will always be striving to achieve more and seek to ensure best outcomes for local people and communities. One way of doing this is to continuously challenge the status quo and ask questions about how they are operating.

There are 5 specific duties for Councils introduced by the Act:

- Duty to keep performance under review
- Duty to consult on performance
- Duty to report on performance
- Duty to arrange a Panel Performance Assessment
- Duty to respond to a Panel Performance Assessment

The focus of self-assessment is on outcomes rather than process, and requires local authorities to take a different approach to assessing their performance than previously. This will require greater self-reflection.

Since April 2023, Ceredigion County Council has been undertaking the second round of Self-Assessment, in which the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Committee has played an integral part. A workshop was held with the Committee on 24 April to record Member's perspectives on Council performance and opportunities for improvement. A

full timetable of the activities undertaken in support of Self-Assessment in 2022/23 is attached at Appendix 1 for reference.

Current Position

Since then, the evidence collected has been used to produce the Draft Self-Assessment Report which is attached at Appendix 2. This is the main output from the Self-Assessment process and sets out how the Council is currently performing and the actions it intends to take going forward.

The Self-Assessment Report for 2022/23 discharges the requirements of both:

- The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 – to set and review progress against our Corporate Well-being Objectives
- The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 – the duty to keep performance under review, consult on performance, report on performance, arrange a Panel Performance Assessment and respond to a Panel Performance Assessment.

Following positive feedback from Welsh Government and our peers, we have retained a similar format for this year to help in disseminating key messages and keeping it succinct, as requested by Welsh Government. We have made several improvements this year to strengthen the report:

- Providing further detail on the consultation and engagement undertaken during the year and how it is used.
- Providing details of the stakeholder consultation to support self-assessment.
- Providing further detail in the evaluation commentary of the Council's overall performance.
- Updating the Self-Assessment Action Plan, adding the new actions identified along with a progress update.
- Expanding the benchmarking section (further work is ongoing to develop this in conjunction with Data Cymru).
- Added "Council Structure" section to provide details of how the Council is structured.
- Included links to other related reports and strategies, which is seen as best practice.

The Governance and Audit Committee has a statutory responsibility to consider the Self-Assessment Report and make recommendations on the findings and the actions that the Council proposes to take. The Report was considered at its meeting on 27 September 2023 and approved the report to proceed for approval at Cabinet and Council. No formal recommendations were made to the conclusions or the actions, although minor formatting amendments have been made to improve the quality of the report prior to Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Following approval by Governance and Audit Committee the process of producing the 2022/23 Self-Assessment Report is now complete and cannot be amended further.

Next Steps

The Self-Assessment Report is scheduled to proceed to Cabinet on 7 November and Council on 30 November, before being submitted to Ministers, Estyn and the Auditor General for Wales, as well as being published on the website.

Panel Performance Assessment Update

Part of the new Self-Assessment Performance Regime is the duty to undertake a Panel Performance Assessment once in every election cycle.

Panel Assessments are intended to provide an independent and external perspective of the extent to which the Council is meeting the performance requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. The aim is to support Councils to achieve their aspirations through developing and understanding how they are operating and how they can ensure they are able to deliver effective services long-term.

The Council’s first Panel Performance Assessment is being organised for the first quarter of 2024/25 and supported by the Welsh Local Government Association. Preparatory work, such as appointing the Panel and scoping the Assessment will be conducted over the next several months.

Wellbeing of Future Generations:

No, an Integrated Impact Assessment has not been completed. The Self-Assessment Report does not introduce any new policies for the Council, instead its role is to review and report back on progress during 2022/23 and publish the actions we intend to deliver arising from the Self-Assessment process. The actions contained in the action plan are resourced and funded through existing structures and budgets.

Summary of Integrated Impact Assessment:

- Long term:** N/A
- Collaboration:** N/A
- Involvement:** N/A
- Prevention:** N/A
- Integration:** N/A

Recommendations(s):

To receive the Self-Assessment Report 2022/23 including the Annual Review of Performance and Well-being Objectives

Reason for decision:

To ensure the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Committee are updated on the progress of preparing the Self-Assessment Report 2022/23 including Annual Review of Performance and Well-being Objectives

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Date of Report: 28/9/2023

Acronyms: