

CYNGOR SIR CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

<u>Report to:</u>	Council
<u>Date of meeting:</u>	14 December 2023
<u>Title:</u>	Ceredigion County Council Self-Assessment Report 2022/23
<u>Purpose of the report:</u>	To present the Council’s Self-Assessment Report 2022-23 as required by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021
<u>For:</u>	Decision

Cabinet Portfolio and Cabinet Member:
Councillor Bryan Davies - Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Policy and Performance

Introduction

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.

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

Under its duty to report on performance, the Council is required to publish a Self-Assessment Report once in respect of every financial year setting out the conclusions as to the extent to which the Council met the performance requirements during that financial year, and any actions it will take, or has already taken, to increase the extent to which it will meet the performance requirements. The emphasis of the Report is on understanding how the Council is operating now, the likely demands it will face in the future, and how it can build sustainability.

Current Position

Since April 2023, Ceredigion County Council has been undertaking its latest round of Self-Assessment and a timetable of the activities is attached at Appendix 1 for reference.

The evidence collected has been used to produce the 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 Report has been developed by assessing a wide variety of evidence including internal reports and reviews, external regulatory and inspection reports and crucially engagement and consultation activities.

It is important to note that 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.

Although the Self-Assessment Report is the key output from the process the work on improving outcomes is an ongoing year-round activity. Throughout the year we conduct consultation in support of self-assessment, we collate evidence to inform the workshops, we deliver the actions in our Self-Assessment action plan and we monitor their progress towards completion.

Following positive feedback from Welsh Government and our peers on last year's report, we have retained a similar format for this year to help in disseminating key messages and keeping it succinct, as requested by Welsh Government. A number of improvements have been made 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 Council's Corporate Strategy 2022-27 sets out its Corporate Well-being Objectives, which were developed to promote sustainability and improve the well-being of the citizens of Ceredigion. They were identified through extensive analysis of evidence and engagement with residents, including the ambitions of the new political administration, the Ceredigion Assessment of Local Well-being and public consultation. Pages 33-48 of the Self-Assessment Report reviews the Council's progress in delivering the Objectives. Following this year's review of the Objectives it is proposed that they remain unchanged for the next year:

- Boosting the economy, supporting businesses and enabling employment
- Creating caring and healthy communities
- Providing the best start in life and enabling learning at all ages
- Creating sustainable, green and well-connected communities

The Governance and Audit Committee has a statutory responsibility to consider the Self-Assessment Report and make recommendations on the conclusions and the actions that the Council proposes to take. The Report was considered at its meeting on 27 September 2023 and approved to proceed for approval at 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 Council.

Next Steps

The final Self-Assessment Report will be submitted to Ministers, Estyn, the Auditor General for Wales and the Council's Governance and Audit Committee, 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. Work is continuing to organise the Council's first Panel Performance Assessment due to take place during 2024/25 and supported by the Welsh Local Government Association.

Well-being of Future Generations:

No, an Integrated Impact Assessment has not been completed as the Self-Assessment Report does not introduce any new policies or strategies.

Summary of the Integrated Impact Assessment:

Long term:
Collaboration:
Involvement:
Prevention:
Integration:

Recommendations(s):

- 1. That Council approves the Self-Assessment Report 2022/23 including the Annual Review of Performance and Well-being Objectives**
- 2. That Council approves the Corporate Well-being Objectives to remain unchanged for the next year**

Reasons for decision:

To ensure compliance with Part 6 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 / Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Overview and Scrutiny:

Governance and Audit Committee 27/09/2023
Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Committee 6/11/2023

Policy Framework:

Part 6 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021
Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Corporate Well-being Objectives:

All, the Self-Assessment Report assesses the Council's overall performance

Finance and Procurement Implications:

None, all actions contained in the Self-Assessment Action Plan will be delivered within existing structures and budgets

Legal Implications:

The Council has a duty under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to set Well-being Objectives and Steps to deliver those Objectives.

Staffing Implications:

None, all actions contained in the Self-Assessment Action Plan will be delivered within existing structures and budgets.

Property / asset implications:

None, all actions contained in the Self-Assessment Action Plan will be delivered within existing structures and budgets.

Risk(s):

The Self-Assessment Report 2022-23 and review of Well-being Objectives is not published leading to failure to comply with legislation.

Statutory Powers:

N/A

Background Papers:

Performance and governance of principal councils: Statutory guidance on Part 6, Chapter 1, of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

<https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-03/performance-governance-of-principal-councils.pdf>

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Timetable of activities undertaken in Support of Self-Assessment in 2022-23

Appendix 2 - Self-Assessment Report 2022/23

Corporate Lead Officer:

Alun Williams (Corporate Lead Officer Policy, Performance and Public Protection)

Reporting Officer:

Rob Starr (Performance and Research Team)

Date:

9 November 2023