

<b>Report to</b>	County Council
<b>Date of meeting</b>	July 9, 2024
<b>Lead Member / Officer</b>	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis, Lead Member for Finance, Performance and Strategic Assets
<b>Head of Service</b>	Helen Vaughan-Evans, Head of Corporate Support Service: Performance, Digital and Assets
<b>Report author</b>	Emma Horan, Strategic Planning and Performance Officer
<b>Title</b>	Council Performance Self-Assessment 2023 to 2024

## 1. What is the report about?

1.1. This report accompanies the council's Performance Self-Assessment for 2023 to 2024, providing our end of year analysis of progress and challenges with our key performance objectives (i.e. our Corporate Plan themes).

## 2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1 Regular reporting is part of our [values and principles](#) around being clear and transparent about our performance and being accountable. It is an essential monitoring requirement of the council's performance management methodology and our statutory duties in relation to the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, the Equality Act 2010 and Wales Measure 2011, and our contributions to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

2.2 We monitor our performance regularly, taking six monthly reports to Scrutiny and Cabinet meetings. Our Executive Summary, presented alongside this report, provides an evaluative statement of our progress. This report also presents the draft Scope for the Panel Performance Assessment for further input.

### **3. What are the Recommendations?**

- 3.1. It is recommended that, subject to any agreed changes, County Council approve the Performance Self-Assessment 2023 to 2024.
- 3.2. County Council provide feedback on the draft scope for the Panel Performance Assessment (appendix IV).

### **4. Report details**

- 4.1 Appendix I presents our Executive Summary, which seeks to draw out the highlights of our performance against our objectives (i.e. our Corporate Plan themes that are also our Well-being and Equality Objectives) and the seven governance areas prescribed in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. The short paragraphs within this document are effectively our statement of performance against our functions, also looking ahead to the challenges that we face and areas for improvement.
- 4.2 Appendix II is our familiar quarterly Performance Update Report, which is our process for ongoing self-assessment and embodies all the evidence (internal and external) and analysis that seeks to answer the questions of 'How well are we doing', 'How do we know', and 'What and how can we do better'? This Performance Update Report presents the latest picture covering October 2023 to March 2024, and is the first performance report for our revised Corporate Plan. This Performance Update Report for October to March, when combined with the Executive Summary and the two preceding Update Reports, makes up our Self-Assessment for 2023 to 2024. Reviewing all Performance Update Reports together will allow the reader to see improvement activity that we have identified throughout the year in support of performance. Appendix III summarises the actions arising from all the Service Performance Challenges that took place during the year.
- 4.3 These reports reflect the turbulence of recent months (during 2023 to March 2024) as the council has worked to ensure it achieves a balanced budget. These reports demonstrate that our governance is working effectively and that our culture, our values and principles, are standing us in good stead. There are some good achievements to be proud of including: homelessness prevention (although some measures remain a 'Priority for Improvement'); local economy and community benefits delivered through procurement; the growth in micro providers, allowing

greater access to services for residents; early years support; investment in electric vehicle charging, coastal defence schemes and energy efficiency schemes in our buildings; strong governance and a growing understanding of what it means to be a part of the “Denbighshire family” and our “one council” approach, and a growing confidence in using Welsh. And areas where progress needs to improve, including: stakeholder feedback has deteriorated this year (for reasons we understand); high number of people on the housing waiting list; damaged roads and pavements made safe in the target time; poverty and the vitality of our local economy remains a concern (including Year 11 Leavers from schools know Not to be in Education, Employment or Training).

#### 4.4 Six improvement activities have been identified this period:

- Provide an update on the reasons for poor performance relating to the percentage of damaged roads and pavements made safe within target time (CAT1 - Category 1 defects dealt within timescale) (this is a continuing action).
- The new Economic Strategy should take into account the county's cultural offer and how it contributes to wider economic and well-being outcomes.
- Following agreement and to allow the council to focus on the development of the Regional Transport Plan, close the Sustainable Transport Plan project and amend the commitment within our Corporate Plan.
- Consider the Stakeholder Survey 2023 to 2024 responses.
- Consider the findings and recommendations of the Well-being of Future Generations Commissioner’s New Ways of Working Journey Checker.
- Keep Corporate Plan commitments and performance expectations under continual review in the context of the present difficult financial environment.

#### 4.5 Included in appendix IV is the proposed scope for the upcoming Panel Performance Assessment (PPA), which the council is required to host once within an ordinary term under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. The document explains the background and purpose of the assessment and outlines the recommendations of the PPA Working Group for the focus of the assessment.

- 4.6 The Working Group comprised of the Corporate Director for Governance and Business; the Head of Corporate Support Services – People; the Head of Corporate Support Services – Performance, Digital and Assets; the Head of Finance (S151); the Chief Internal Auditor; the Leader; Lead Member for Finance, Performance and Strategic Assets; Lead Member for Corporate Strategy, Policy and Equalities; and key performance officers from the Strategic Planning and Performance Team. The group was also supported by the WLGA.
- 4.7 Three areas of focus were decided on, covering: **1. Leadership, 2. Budget Proposals / Transformation, and 3. Partnership Working.** Suggestions for key questions relevant to these areas have been picked out from the WLGA’s suggested line of questioning, taken from their [methodology](#), giving consideration of, and avoiding duplication with other recent audits or ongoing areas of work.
- 4.8 The scope is being shared alongside the council’s Self-Assessment of Performance to obtain further input from senior leaders and elected members. It is anticipated the Cabinet will appoint panellists in July, with fieldwork taking place in September.

## **5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: The Denbighshire We Want?**

- 5.1 The Performance Self-Assessment includes an evaluation of the council’s success in delivering against its Corporate Plan themes. The Panel Performance Assessment will also consider how well the council is able to deliver against its priorities.

## **6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

- 6.1 There is no additional cost associated with this report.

## **7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?**

- 7.1. A Well-being Impact Assessment (WIA) is not required for this report. A WIA was undertaken on the Corporate Plan itself, which has been updated as part of the revision of the Corporate Plan, approved by [County Council](#) in February.

## **8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?**

- 8.1. The reports have been developed by the Strategic Planning Team, in consultation with other council services. Feedback has already been sought from the Senior Leadership Team, [Performance Scrutiny Committee](#), [Governance and Audit Committee](#) and [Cabinet](#).
- 8.2. Throughout, Members have been encouraged to discuss aspects of the reports they might wish to scrutinise further.
- 8.3. Once approved, our self-assessment will be shared with the Auditor General, Welsh Ministers etc. as specified in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

## **9. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

- 9.1. No statement is required with this report.

## **10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

- 10.1 Failure to publish our Self-Assessment would likely result in statutory recommendations from Audit Wales, with significant implications for the reputation of the council. There is also a risk of poor performance being reported out of context, impacting on our reputation. On this basis, we have already shared the draft report with the Communications Team. There is a risk that the output of the Panel Performance Assessment brings no value to the council. It is therefore important that County Council engages with the scoping exercise to give clear direction to the panel.

## **11. Power to make the decision**

- 11.1. Part 6, Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (chapter 1, section 89).
- 11.2. Part 2, Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 (section 13).
- 11.3. The Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 (section 16); and The Equality Act (Authorities subject to the Socio-economic Inequality Duty) (Wales) Regulations 2021.