

Flintshire County Council Corporate Self-assessment



Cymraeg

Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
Gweler y dudalen Gymraeg ar ein gwefan.

What is the Purpose of this Document?

This document details the Council's Corporate Self-assessment and identifies areas of best practise and areas for further improvement. The document explains:

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1. What is the Corporate Self-assessment?

The Local Government and Elections Act (Wales) 2021 sets out a duty to report on performance and states '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 year, and any actions it intends to take, or has already taken, to increase the extent to which it is meeting the performance requirements.' This document aims to achieve the duty set out above for the act and for the use by the Council.

The Corporate Self-assessment is a comprehensive assessment of the corporate organisation and not a detailed assessment of the performance of each service portfolio, the assessment themes are designed in this way.

The self-assessment is meant to provide a platform for assurance and self-improvement and would lead to an improvement plan for the organisation.

The Self-assessment Model focused on eight themes and considered a number of core questions within each of these themes, outlined further in this document. As with all models there will inevitably be overlaps across themes however, the themes are sufficiently defined and demarked to avoid too much overlapping or duplication.

The Self-assessment Model followed three stages:

- **Stage One** 'desk-based' analysis and evaluation of available documents and evidence, and some internal triangulation through review and moderation
- **Stage Two** opinion sourcing, consultation and engagement and 'triangulation'
- **Stage Three** production of a formal and final published assessment and improvement plan which will be led by the Cabinet and run through both the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Governance and Audit Committee for input and assurance.

The first stage was more evidential, this included the presence of strategies and evaluative reports e.g., regulatory reports, the Annual Governance Statement (AGS), the Annual Performance Report. The second stage, more qualitative through consultation with key stakeholders, whilst the third stage is the closing stage involving the production and publication of a formal and final assessment and action plan.

2. Process of Review and Timeframe

A timeframe to complete each of the three stages of the Corporate Self-assessment was identified as follows:

Stage	Content	Timeline
One	Desk-based' analysis and evaluation of available documents and evidence, and some internal triangulation through review and moderation	November 2022 - January 2023
Two	Opinion sourcing, consultation and engagement and 'triangulation'	February - June 2023
Three	Closing stage, production of a formal and final published assessment and action plan. Led by the Cabinet and run through both the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Governance and Audit Committee for input and assurance	July - October 2023

A Project Board was established in 2021, comprising of a Project Board Chair, a senior responsible officer, and officers from across portfolios that were either currently Performance Leads or officers who were previously part of the Governance Recovery Group during the Council's response phase to the pandemic. Each of the officers who sat on the Project Board were considered to have the ability to conceptualise new models and new ways of working, understand their portfolio services, whilst having sufficient seniority within the Council to take the Self-assessment forward.

We drew upon the Council's AGS model of evaluation, scoring and evidence capturing as this model was known to be effective. The model was a useful platform for challenging and moderating variations in opinion through facilitated review. A report was initially shared at Governance and Audit Committee in July 2021 on the development of the Self-assessment model, the proposed model for the first Corporate Self-assessment was endorsed.

This is the Council's second year completing the Corporate Self-assessment. For 2022/23, the model and approach was reviewed and adapted slightly to include an additional two questions within Theme A (Vision, Strategy and Performance Reports), to ensure that the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and Integrated Impact Assessments (IIA's) were incorporated.

The results of Stage One were shared at a Senior Leadership Academi where the results were considered, challenged, and evaluated. During Stage Two, consultation was undertaken with Members from both the Governance and Audit Committee and the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to further consider, challenge and evaluate the feedback and scores to ensure that we as a Council are continuously self-assessing our performance.

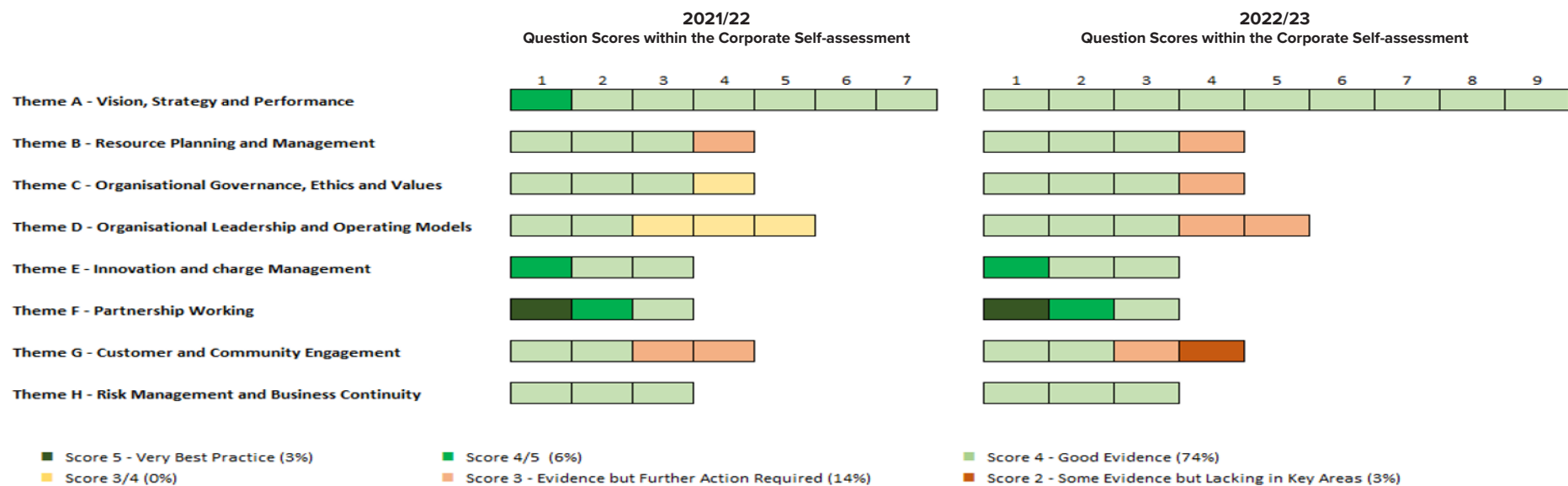
3. Scoring Criteria:

The scoring criteria for the Corporate Self-assessment is detailed below:

- Score 5** Very best practice
- Score 4** Good evidence
- Score 3** Evidence but further action required
- Score 1** No evidence
- Score 4/5** Very best practice / Good evidence
- Score 3/4** Good evidence / Action may be required
- Score 2** Some evidence but lacking in key areas

4. Comparison between 2021/22 and 2022/23 (Summary of the Effectiveness of the Council’s Corporate Self-assessments)

Comparison between 2021/22 and 2022/23 Corporate Self-assessments



Note: Two additional questions were added to the 22/23 Corporate Self Assessment within Theme A

An overall comparison of the scores between 2021/22 and 2022/23 for the 35 questions within Themes A-H (excluding the two new questions in Theme A) between the financial years of 2021-22 and 2022-23, shows that 26 scores have remained the same, 6 have decreased and 1 has increased.

A further breakdown of the scoring within each of the Themes is outlined below:

- **Theme A** six questions remained with a score of 4 and one question reduced from a score of 4/5 to a 4. The two new questions for 2022-23 scored 4
- **Theme B** scoring for the four questions remained the same; One question scored 3 and three questions scored 4
- **Theme C** three of the questions remained at a 4 and one question reduced from a score of 3/4 to 3
- **Theme D** two questions remained the same with a score of 4, two questions reduced from 3/4 to a 3 and one question increased from a score of 3/4 to a 4
- **Theme E** scoring for all three questions remained the same, one scoring 4/5 and two scoring a 4
- **Theme F** scoring for all three questions scoring remained the same, one score of 5, one a 4/5 and one question scoring a 4
- **Theme G** scores for two questions scoring remained at a 4, one question reduced from a 3 to a 2, and one question reduced from a 3/4 to a 3
- **Theme H** scoring for all three questions remained a 4

5. External Assurance

A high-level focus of governance, risk, and control arrangements are in place for setting and monitoring actions in response to reports received from external regulators, including Estyn, Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) and Audit Wales. The Annual Audit Summary sets out the audit and regulatory work completed by Audit Wales of Flintshire County Council since the last annual report which was published in January 2022. Overall, the Auditor General for Wales has reached a positive conclusion. “The Auditor General certified that the Council had met its remaining Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 duties for the financial year 2021-22, as saved by an order made under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.” No formal recommendations have been made during the year.

6. Council Performance

The Council Plan is a detailed document which sets out the annual priorities of the Council. It is a requirement of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 for organisations to ‘set out any actions to increase the extent to which the council is meeting the performance requirements.’ The Council Plan 2022/23 was adopted by the Council in July 2022, and the end of year performance monitoring report highlighted that 77% of activities were making good progress and 62% of the performance indicators had met or exceeded their targets for the year.

7. Consultation and Engagement

7a. Engagement with Stakeholders

It was identified within the Council's Corporate Self-assessment 2021/22 that consultation with key stakeholders was an area that could be improved upon. In March 2023, a questionnaire was compiled and shared with Trade Union representatives to respond to and provide feedback: with them being a key internal stakeholder. Unison, GMB Union and Unite the Union were all consulted with, and Flintshire County Council received responses from Unison and Unite the Union. GMB did not provide a response.

Overall, feedback received was very positive with Trade Unions advising that they have a good industrial relationship with the Council. The opportunities to be involved in discussions at an earlier stage, when problems/issues are first identified rather than commencing once decisions have been made would be preferred, but the Trade Unions do believe that the Council does listen, and regular meetings are undertaken.

7b. Consultation with Employees

A consultation was undertaken with employees of Flintshire County Council during the summer months of 2023. A survey was open to all employees (with the exception of employees based in schools) and the purpose of the consultation was to gain feedback on six key topic areas: Engagement, Performance, Mental Health and Well-being, Communication, Hybrid Working and, Visions and Values. The feedback was positive and will be used to identify what is working well, identify the areas for ongoing improvement and also contribute to the shaping and development of the Council's corporate strategies and frameworks.

As part of the consultation employees were asked for their views and opinions on a new set of proposed core values, to sit at the heart of everything we as the Council do and will define the relationship between the Council and our citizens of Flintshire.

8. Key Themes of the Corporate Self-assessment

The eight key themes of the Corporate Self-assessment are listed below:

- Theme A** Vision, Strategy and Performance
- Theme B** Resource Planning and Management
- Theme C** Organisational Governance, Ethics and Values
- Theme D** Organisational Leadership and Operating Models
- Theme E** Innovation and Change Management
- Theme F** Partnership Working
- Theme G** Customer and Community Engagement
- Theme H** Risk Management and Business Continuity

Against these themes, the Council reviewed whether:

- It was exercising its functions effectively
- It was using its resources economically, efficiently, and effectively
- Governance was effective for securing the above

Theme A - Vision, Strategy and Performance

Questions		How we do this / How we achieve this?
A1	Does the Council have a set of corporate and service strategies in place which set out vision and ambition?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Plan 2022-23 which sets out the Council's vision and ambition for the year. • A set of corporate and service strategies were in place which set out the Council's vision and ambition e.g., the Digital Strategy, Mid-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the Learning and Development Strategy etc.
A2	Are these strategies locked-in to national and regional Government strategy, and collaborative planning with key partners?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council Plan priorities were clearly defined and locked into national and regional priorities and strategies. • The Council Plan 2022-23 identified clear linkages to national and regional policies/strategies which were captured in the document. • School Modernisation Strategy and Strategic outline Programme for 21st Century school investment, North Wales Construction Partnership; Welsh Government, Sustainable Learning Communities.
A3	Are these strategies being followed and are they achieving their aims and objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council Plan 2022-23 progress and performance is monitored through the new Business Planning, Performance and Risk Management System. • The MTFS was updated annually alongside the Council's budget process. • Service Strategies were reviewed within their set timeframes (set timeframes varied between each of the strategies and the services). • Annual reporting on relevant strategies and plans ensures reviews of aims and objectives are being achieved.
A4	Are these strategies sustainable, and dynamic, in adapting to change and the future?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council Plan had an annual refresh in 2022/23 to ensure appropriateness. Engagement was conducted with stakeholders including Chief Officer Team, senior officers, employees, members of the Council and key partners in various ways which included committee meetings and management meetings to support the development of the plan.
A5	Are these strategies supported by portfolio service business plans which are consistent with the overall aims and objectives of the Council?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the year each Portfolio had a business plan in place which supported the Council Priorities that align with the Council Plan 2022-23, including Capital Programme and Assets plans are aligned with the aims and objectives of the Council and some priorities are reflected in the Council Plan, where appropriate. • Portfolio Business Plans are in development to become standardised and monitored through the new Business Planning, Performance and Risk Management System.

Questions	How we do this / How we achieve this?
<p>A6 Are these strategies compliant with the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory guidance for Public Service Boards (PSBs) adhered to, for Well-being Assessment and Well-being Plan production. This includes demonstrable alignment to the well-being goals for Wales and five ways of working. • A requirement of Committee reports is to demonstrate how strategies are compliant with the Act. • Statutory guidance for Public Service Boards (PSBs) adhered to, for Well-being Assessment and Well-being Plan production. This includes demonstrable alignment to the well-being goals for Wales and five ways of working.
<p>A7 Are strategies and decisions made following the undertaking of Integrated Impact Assessments (where applicable)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs) are carried out on all new strategies that assess against the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, including summary IIAs for Committee reporting on strategic reports.
<p>A8 Are these portfolio service plans being followed and are they achieving their aims, objectives, and performance targets? (new to 22/23)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular reviewing of Portfolio service plans, including monitoring and an escalation process in place. • Annual Performance Report 2022/23. • End of year reporting against the priorities and measures within the Council Plan 2022/23. • Risks are monitored and updated, and Risk Registers are being developed within the new Business Planning, Performance and Risk Management System.
<p>A9 Is there effective democratic oversight of portfolio service direction and performance? (new to 22/23)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance reporting cycles that we had in place ensured that we had robust assurance and scrutiny in place. • Performance reporting cycles have a thorough process for executive responsibility, scrutiny, and assurance. • Portfolio performance has been reported through relevant Programme Boards.

Score 4 - Good Evidence

- Each Portfolio ensures that their business plans align closely with the Council Plan 2022-23.
- Digital Strategy aims and objectives are well mandated under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the five ways of working.

Theme B - Resource Planning and Management

Questions		How we do this / How we achieve this?
B10	Does the Council have comprehensive and maintained strategies for workforce, finance, procurement, and assets in place?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council had a number of comprehensive and maintained strategies in place which included; the Medium Term Financial Strategy, Market Stability Report, Dementia Strategy, Code of Corporate Governance, Procurement Strategy, a Capital Asset Strategy, Workforce Strategy and Digital Strategy.
B11	Are these strategies achieving their aims and objectives at a corporate level?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These strategies act as a framework within the Council and underpin all activities operated. Updates were provided to Cabinet and/or Overview and Scrutiny Committees on the progress of the strategies.
B12	Are these strategies achieving their aims and objectives at a portfolio level?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These strategies act as a framework within the Council and underpin all activities operated. Updates were provided to Cabinet and/or Overview and Scrutiny Committees on the progress of the strategies.
B13	Are these strategies sustainable, and dynamic, in adapting to change and the future?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These strategies act as a framework within the Council and underpin all activities operated. The Council's strategies were reviewed and updated annually. Reports were provided to the relevant Committees on the progress of these strategies. However, there were some areas between Portfolios and Corporate that could be improved. This included the timeliness of reviewing and monitoring key strategies and plans which sit below the Council Plan.

Score 4 - Good Evidence

- The Market Stability Report produced in June 2022 is informed by the Population Needs Assessment and will guide commissioning of regulated services for the next 5 years.

Score 3 - Evidence but Further Action Required

- B13 - There were some areas between Portfolios and Corporate that could be improved upon. This included the timeliness of reviewing and monitoring key strategies and plans which sit below the Council Plan, ensuring corporate oversight of all policies and strategies and determining the effectiveness of such policies and strategies.

Theme C - Organisational Governance, Ethics and Values

Questions		How we do this / How we achieve this?
C14	Does the Council have comprehensive and maintained frameworks and codes in place for governance, ethics and values?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council's Code of Corporate Governance was reviewed and updated by the Corporate Governance Working Group which comprised of senior officers from the relevant portfolios. Their assessments were subject to challenge by statutory officers. IA Report (ethics) - We ensured that the seven principles of public life were central to decision making. Code of Conduct - Good conduct was of paramount importance and adherence to the code was ensured by the Council having a robust Standards Committee, the membership of which was refreshed through stringent recruitment of new lay members. Suite of Policies and Procedures – The Council's policies and procedures must be kept relevant and focused, and they were updated as required. We upheld Principle A of our Corporate Governance Framework, which requires us to behave with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law. Our Annual Governance Statement (AGS) was subject to Member challenge.
C15	How well are these frameworks and codes applied and observed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The AGS is a self-assessment of our Code of Corporate Governance based on the evidence and knowledge we have within the organisation and was reviewed by Audit Wales.
C16	Is the application of ethics and values evident in the way the Council appraises options and makes decisions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong corporate values are evidenced in the continued delivery of discretionary services/decisions made for the benefit of our residents despite financial pressures to cut such services.
C17	Does the Council work productively with its external regulators and demonstrate sound compliance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A robust ethical framework was in place - mapped through to monitoring and reporting structures. The ethical framework was visible in the Constitution and supporting policies and protocols. The Council had all policies and protocols expected of a forward-thinking council.

Score 4 - Good Evidence

- Strong corporate values which are evidence in the continued delivery of services, especially those that are discretionary.

Score 3 - Evidence but Further Action Required

- C15 - Develop a clear set of values which are clearly defined and to ensure consistency across the Council, engaging with the workforce and to ensure all policies, strategies, and process to align with the Council's ethics and values (this is also related to Theme B, question B13).

Theme D - Organisational Leadership and Operating Models

Questions		How we do this / How we achieve this?
D18	Is there strong and effective political leadership?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The AGS, Principle A evidence identified a number of documents which set out Codes of Conduct along with the Code of Corporate Governance and also set out a standard to achieve. Regular Group leaders' meetings were held between the leaders of each of the Council's political groups and attended by the statutory officers (Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service, Chief Officer (Governance)/ Monitoring Officer, Corporate Finance Manager/Section 151 Officer and Head of Democratic Services).
D19	Is there strong and effective professional leadership?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The AGS Principle A evidence identified a number of documents which set out Codes of Conduct along with the Code of Corporate Governance which also sets out a standard to achieve. Strong and professional leadership was provided through the Chief Officer Team (COT) and the portfolio Department Management Teams, supported by the senior Leadership Academy, comprising of Chief Officers and their portfolio Service Managers.
D20	Does the Council have an adopted organisational operating model and a preferred working culture?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council's 'flat structure' operating model was adapted in 2014, following an extensive review. The original structure of Chief Executive and nine Chief Officers moved to one of a Chief Executive and six Chief Officers as a result of adapting to change within the Council.
D21	How effective is the operating model?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The structure was effective, and this was demonstrated by the performance of the organisation at corporate performance level and the performance across a number of various projects in which the different areas worked in a collaborative way.
D22	Is it evident that the preferred working culture is pre-dominant and effective?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The working culture was collegiate with officers from different portfolios working together on projects.

Score 4 - Good Evidence

- Strong collaborative working across portfolios and continuously looking at ways to improve delivery.

Score 3 - Evidence but Further Action Required

- D20 and D22 Resilience amongst the workforce is an emerging issue and therefore, to address this work underway on a compliant and sustainable pay model and the completion of the Workforce Planning Framework (this is also related to Theme B, question B13). Preferred working culture needs to be defined through consultation and review of policy.

Theme E - Innovation and Change Management

Questions		How we do this / How we achieve this?
E23	Does the Council have a proven appetite for innovation and change management?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council Plan 2022-23 was an ambitious document and has been for a number of years. Target dates, measures and actions were stretched/ambitious but realistic in nature. Within the Council Plan 2022-23 there were a number of examples that demonstrated innovation and change management with a number of additional actions and measures than previous years. Given a one-year Council Plan has been in place, more often milestones that were due at the year-end were rolled over into the new Council Plan. To address this a 5 year Council Plan will be used from 2023 until 2028.
E24	How well has the Council implemented its chosen innovation and change programmes and projects against time, budget, transition and performance objectives and targets?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance of the Joint Social Value Procurement Strategy demonstrated progress made against the strategy. 21st Century Schools Modernisation Strategy identifies changes needed to modernise school provision.
E25	How well does the Council compare to its peers in being an innovator?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead authority on Wales Government Mutual Investment Model (MIM) on school capital projects Engage with a number of networks to share ideas and identify best and work practice.

Score 4 / 5 – Very Best Practice / Good Evidence

- Digital Strategy 2021-26 sets a clear vision demonstrating the Council’s appetite for innovation and change in a modern digital world.

Score 4 - Good Evidence

- Social Services Annual Report 2022-23 provides evidence of innovation in service delivery, including Micro Care, Progress for Providers
- Recent Estyn report on Adult Community Living demonstrated and praised for the positive work taking place with the community.

Theme F - Partnership Working

Questions	How we do this / How we achieve this?
<p>F26 Does the council engage well in local, regional, and national partnerships and collaborations?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a wide amount of evidence throughout a number of documents which demonstrated engagement locally, regionally, and nationally. Examples of these documents included the Public Services Board - Well-being Plan, Joint Public Service Board Plan, Council Plan 2022/23, AGS - Principle B, Code of Corporate Governance and Regional Emergency Planning.
<p>F27 Do the partnerships and collaborations for which the council is (co) responsible/relies upon have sound and effective governance arrangements in place?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear terms of reference were agreed where necessary to ensure clarity of the governance arrangements. For example, the Public Service Board Terms of Reference set out the Governance arrangements for the Board.
<p>F28 How well do the key partnerships and collaborations for which the council is responsible/relies upon perform against their aims and objectives?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance of key partnerships and collaboration was strong, an example of this was the performance of Aura Leisure and Libraries against the business plan it set. • Establishments of new groups to manage emerging issues. • Success in achieving a number of grant funding.

Score 5 - Very Best Practice

- Engagement in local, regional, and national partnerships and collaborations.

Score 4 / 5 - Very Best Practice / Good Evidence

- Portfolios representing the Council on a number of boards, locally, regionally and nationally including Youth Justice Service Executive Management Board.

Score 4 - Good Evidence

- Regional Integration Funding clearly identifies the success achieved against its aims and objectives.

Theme G - Customer and Community Engagement

Questions	How we do this / How we achieve this?
<p>G29 Does the Council have comprehensive and maintained plans and policies for customer and community engagement in place?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council had a corporate strategy for delivery of Customer Services for, Face to Face, Telephone and Online. Core principles for public engagement and consultation were adopted in 2012 to underpin the Welsh National Principles for Public Engagement.
<p>G30 Does the Council use customer and community feedback effectively in reviewing performance and shaping services?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services engaged with customers and communities to gain feedback on performance and drive improvements to help shape services.
<p>G31 How well does the Council perform in meeting its customer services standards and targets?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance against Corporate Complaints was monitored and reported to Cabinet, Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Governance and Audit Committee as well as annually to the PSOW annual letter and half yearly update. The Chief Officers Team received monthly performance reports.
<p>G32 How well does the Council engage with stakeholders in framing policy and in the making of key service policy decisions?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement with key stakeholders such as partners had been identified in the AGS as working well. There was strong evidence of partnership working, relationship management and formal and informal partnerships.

Score 4 - Good Evidence

- 21st Century Schools Consultation Strategy and how the Council engages with Young People.
- Engagement with key stakeholders (Trade Unions).

Score 3 - Evidence but Further Action Required

- G31 - Customers engagement and involvement as part of the reviewing process; Develop a single system for oversight of customer engagement which will allow the enhancement of service delivery through data collection, feedback and benchmarking.

Score 2 - Some Evidence but Lacking in Key Areas

- G29 -To develop a corporate Consultation and Engagement Strategy and review the Customer Service Strategy, including the establishment and increased use of social media, managing customer expectations and a review of customer standards.

Theme H - Risk Management and Business Continuity

Questions		How we do this / How we achieve this?
H31	Does the Council have comprehensive and maintained strategies for risk management and business continuity in place?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Management Framework is reviewed annually, updated accordingly, and was last reviewed in September 2022. • Risk Registers for each portfolio were produced and reviewed on a monthly basis.
H32	Have these strategies proved effective in real-time and/or test scenario settings?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recovery risk registers are no longer a requirement since coming out of the pandemic, but portfolio risk registers continued to be managed and maintained throughout 2022/23.
H33	Are these strategies dynamic in adapting to change and ensuring resilience for the future?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Risk Management User Guide was reviewed and shared with Governance and Audit Committee for review and agreement of the framework. Development takes place yearly to ensure the latest trends and best practice is being upheld. • An E-learning Risk Management module is in development.

Score 4 - Good Evidence

- All portfolio risk registers have undergone a rigorous audit.
- Risk Management Framework was approved by Governance and Audit Committee.
- Risk Management module is being developed within the Performance Internal System.

9. Progress on Opportunities for Improvement from 2021/22

Opportunity for Improvement 2021/22	Target Completion Date	Theme it Contributes to	Owner	Progress RAG	Review of Progress 2022/23
<p>1) Look at workforce strategies to allow for more flexibility in resource planning and responding to recruitment challenges (B13)</p>	<p>January - October 2023</p>	<p>B - Resource Planning and Management</p>	<p>Chief Officer Team</p>	<p>Amber</p>	<p>The vacancy management approval process continues to be in place to ensure that critical posts are prioritised for recruitment.</p> <p>Within the Council Plan 2023-28, recruitment and retention is a key area of focus as part of the priority 'People'. The Workforce Planning Framework is in progress and due to be finalised in December 2023.</p> <p>The implementation of a compliant and sustainable new pay model is due to commence October 2023 and will continue into 2024. It will form part of the Opportunities for Improvement 2022/23 also (see below Section 8 for further information).</p>

Opportunity for Improvement 2021/22	Target Completion Date	Theme it Contributes to	Owner	Progress RAG	Review of Progress 2022/23
<p>1) The creation of a consultation and engagement database to be used by all services to register their consultation and engagement activity (G29)</p> <p>2) The development of a consultation and engagement portal on Flintshire's website to provide a central resource for closed, current and future consultations/engagements undertaken by the Council (G29)</p> <p>3) The creation of a consultation and engagement stakeholder database to hold the details of a wide range of network information to ensure that when engaging we are reaching as far and as wide as possible including with the protected characteristic groups (G29) (G30)</p>	March 2025	G - Customer and Community Engagement	Customer Contact Service Manager / Communications Officer (Internal)	Amber	The Digital Strategy Board rejected a business case to develop a local solution owing to competing priorities and capacity within IT. A third-party solution was due to be procured but a shift in budget priorities resulted in a pressure bid being withdrawn as non-essential spend. The opportunities are long term ambitions subject to funding and/or capacity to develop our own solution.
<p>1) Forward work programme of consultation/engagement activity across all portfolios to be generated and shared on the web (G27)</p>	March 2024	G - Customer and Community Engagement	Customer Contact Service Manager / Communications Officer (Internal)	Amber	A programme of consultation and engagement activity across the Council is to be developed based on the input from all portfolios. This will continue until March 2024 and the outcome of this will be published on our website.

Opportunity for Improvement 2021/22	Target Completion Date	Theme it Contributes to	Owner	Progress RAG	Review of Progress 2022/23
1) Review the national position in relation to the National Principles and their standing across Wales – review and reaffirm our commitment depending on outcome of research (G29)	COMPLETED	G - Customer and Community Engagement	Customer Contact Service Manager	Green	This opportunity for improvement has been completed and the refreshed National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales was launched. https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/PDFFiles/Your-Council/National-Principles-for-Public-Engagement-in-Wales.pdf

10. Opportunities for Improvement in 2022/23

The Project Board engaged with all who took part in the Self-assessment. Based on the range of questions asked against the eight Themes it is considered that the Council:

- a) Does exercise its functions effectively,
- b) Uses its resources economically, efficiently, and effectively, and
- c) Governance is effective for securing the matters set out in points (a) and (b).

This is consistent with the Council’s Annual Governance Statement and the Annual Performance Report for the year 2022/23. There are always areas where we strive for improvement and the following list of opportunities were identified for improvement in 2022/23.

During 2022/23, consultation was undertaken with the Senior Management Team and members of both the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Governance and Audit Committee. This enabled each of the Themes to be critically reviewed and as a result the Council have identified six areas for improvement. Some of these areas were also Opportunities for Improvement 2021/22 with them being more medium and/or longer-term goals.

Opportunity for Improvement 2022/23	Target Completion Date	Theme it Contributes to	Owner	Progress RAG	Review of Progress 2022/23
1) Look at workforce strategies to allow for more flexibility in resource planning and responding to recruitment challenges	March 2024	B) Planning and Resource Management - <i>Are these strategies and supporting action plans sustainable, and dynamic, in adapting to change and the future? (B13)</i>	Corporate Manager, People and Organisational Development	Amber	1) As advised in Section 7, within the Council Plan 2023-28, recruitment and retention is a key area of focus as part of the priority ‘People’. The Workforce Planning Framework is in progress and due to be finalised in December 2023. The implementation of a compliant and sustainable new pay model is due to commence October 2023 and will continue into 2024.
2) Corporate oversight of all policies and strategies for each Portfolio, creating a structured work programme that details the reviewing period of the policies and strategies.	September 2024		Internal Audit, Performance and Risk Manager / Strategic Performance Advisor		

Opportunity for Improvement 2022/23	Target Completion Date	Theme it Contributes to	Owner	Progress RAG	Review of Progress 2022/23
3) Determining the effectiveness of policies and strategies by aligning them with the 'Theme' question (B13)	September 2024		Internal Audit, Performance and Risk Manager / Strategic Performance Advisor		2) A forward work programme is to be developed to ensure input from all Portfolios. 3) Within the development stages a key aspect will be aligning any tasks / actions with the Themes question
1) Establish clear ethics and values for the organisation 2) Engage with the workforce to determine the Council's ethics and values 3) All policies, strategies, and process to align with the Council's ethics and values (this is also related to Theme B, question B13)	December 2023 December 2023 September 2024	C) Organisational Governance, Ethics and Values - <i>How well are these frameworks and codes applied and observed? (C15)</i>	Corporate Manager, People and Organisational Development Corporate Manager, People and Organisational Development Internal Audit, Performance and Risk Manager / Strategic Performance Advisor	Amber	1) The Council's ethics and values have been developed and now require final approval and adoption 2) Engagement with the workforce commenced during the summer months of 2023 3) A forward work programme is to be developed to ensure input from all Portfolios.

Opportunity for Improvement 2022/23	Target Completion Date	Theme it Contributes to	Owner	Progress RAG	Review of Progress 2022/23
1) Embedding the ethics and values within the organisational and working structure 2) The implementation of a compliant and sustainable new pay model (this is also related to Theme B, question B13) 3) Finalisation of the Workforce Planning Framework (this is also related to Theme B, question B13) 4) Preferred working culture needs to be defined through consultation and review of policy	September 2024 March 2024 December 2023 December 2024	D) Organisational Leadership and Structure - <i>Does the Council have an adopted organisational structure and a preferred working culture? (D20)</i>	Corporate Manager, People and Organisational Development Corporate Manager, People and Organisational Development Corporate Manager, People and Organisational Development	Amber	1) Review of relevant policies including Hybrid Working policy. 2) Work is due to commence October 2023 and will continue into 2024. 3) The Workforce Planning Framework is due to be finalised in December 2023. 4) Engagement with the workforce commenced during the summer months of 2023 and feedback will support in the reviewing of relevant policies, including the Hybrid Working Policy.
1) Improve and embed a performance culture through the development of a Performance Management Framework	March 2024	D) Organisational Leadership and Structure - <i>Is it evident that the preferred working culture is pre-dominant and effective? (D22)</i>	Internal Audit, Performance and Risk Manager / Strategic Performance Advisor	Red	1) A Performance Management Framework to be drafted and gain approval and adoption.

Opportunity for Improvement 2022/23	Target Completion Date	Theme it Contributes to	Owner	Progress RAG	Review of Progress 2022/23
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Establish a corporate Facebook page and develop use of social media as a means of communication 2) A Charter for communication detailing customer expectations of the Council and vice versa. Establish realistic and manageable response times as well as standard of civility. 3) Create corporate policy on consultation and engagement with annual plans of intended consultations 4) Review of customer standards guidelines corporately 	<p>March 2024</p>	<p>G) Customer and Community Engagement <i>- Does the Council have comprehensive and maintained plans and policies for customer and community engagement in place? (G29)</i></p>	<p>Customer Contact Service Manager / Customer Service and Communications Manager</p>	<p style="text-align: center; color: white; background-color: red;">Red</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Background work has commenced on creating a corporate Facebook account and developing the use of social media. This work is in progress. 2) A Charter for communication to be drafted and approved for adoption. 3) A corporate policy on consultation and engagement to be drafted and approved for adoption following the appointment of a new Customer Service and Communications Manager. 4) A review of corporate customer standards links to point 4 and is to be drafted and approved for adoption.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Customers engagement and involvement as part of the reviewing process 2) Develop a single system for oversight of customer engagement. 3) Enhance service delivery through data collection, feedback and benchmarking 	<p>March 2024</p>	<p>G) Customer and Community Engagement - <i>How well does the Council perform in meeting its customer services standards and targets? (G31)</i></p>	<p>Customer Contact Service Manager / Customer Service and Communications Manager</p>	<p style="text-align: center; color: white; background-color: red;">Red</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Customers to be consulted as part of the process of drafting a corporate consultation and engagement policy. 2) Capital secured in 2023/24 to procure a third-party solution to host the Council's consultation and engagement. Procurement to be taken forward. 3) Improved complaint performance data shared with portfolios to review trends and learn from complaints.

11. Certification

The Corporate Self-assessment undertaken provides a comprehensive assessment of the organisation and provides a platform of assurance.

Opportunities to improve have been identified through this review. We pledge our commitment to addressing these issues over the coming year and we will monitor their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review.

Signed on behalf of Flintshire County Council



Neal Cockerton
Chief Executive



Cllr. Ian B Roberts
Leader of the Council