

# Executive Summary: Performance Self-Assessment, April 2024 to March 2025

Together with our Performance Self-Assessment Reports covering April to September, and October to March, this document makes up our Self-Assessment under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. It is an accessible end-of-year summary of our performance against key functions, specifically our Well-Being Objectives (which are our Corporate Plan Priorities) and the seven governance areas. Evidence behind our conclusions in this document may be found in the accompanying performance reports.

**Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg. This document is available in Welsh. We are also happy to provide this document in large print, audio, and braille, please contact the Performance and Improvement Team (contact details are on the next page).**



**Conwy - Sir flaengar sy'n creu cyfleoedd**

**Conwy - a progressive County creating opportunity**

## **We want to hear your views!**

We value the rich diversity of Conwy and believe it's essential for all voices to be heard and acknowledged. We want to hear from you about the things that affect you. Are our long-term goals right for your community, and are we doing the right things? For more information or to share your thoughts on anything in our Corporate Plan, please contact us.

**By email:** [countyconversation@conwy.gov.uk](mailto:countyconversation@conwy.gov.uk)

**By telephone:** 01492 57 4000

Rydym yn croesawu galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. We welcome telephone calls in English and Welsh.

BT Relay Service Customers with hearing or speech impairments can contact any Council service by dialling **18001** before the number they require.

**By Sign:** British Sign Language users can contact us using a Sign Language interpreter through the InterpretersLive! service, provided by Sign Solutions – visit

[www.conwy.gov.uk/signing](http://www.conwy.gov.uk/signing)

**By post:** People and Performance Service

Performance and Improvement Team

Conwy County Borough Council

PO Box 1

Colwyn Bay

LL29 0GG

We welcome correspondence in both English and Welsh. There will be no delay in responding to correspondence received in either language.

## **Young People**

Young people are the future and we want to hear your views. Services working with young people want to listen and give you the chance to speak up. Conwy Youth Council is all about giving you a voice and a choice in decisions that affect you.

If you want to get involved, visit the [Youth Council Facebook page](#), or go to our [Youth Service website](#), or contact us:

**By email:** [youthservice@conwy.gov.uk](mailto:youthservice@conwy.gov.uk)

**By telephone:** 01492 575100

Rydym yn croesawu galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. We welcome telephone calls in English and Welsh. BT Relay Service Customers with hearing or speech impairments can contact any Council service by dialling **18001** before the number they require.

**Through Facebook and Instagram:** @GIconwyYS

### **To keep up-to-date:**

Like us on [Facebook](#)

Visit [our website](#) for information on the Corporate Plan

Visit our [‘Have your Say’](#) webpage

Set up an account on [My Conwy](#) to tailor updates from us, as well as make and manage your service requests online.

# Contents

Our Approach to Self-Assessment.....	5
Overall, How Well Are We Doing? .....	6
Performance Objectives: Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027 .....	8
1. Resilient council .....	8
2. Environment .....	8
3. Prosperity and Learning .....	9
4. Housing .....	9
5. Well-being .....	10
6. Governance Functions .....	10
6.1. Corporate Planning .....	10
6.2. Financial Planning .....	11
6.3. Performance Management .....	11
6.4. Risk Management .....	11
6.5. Workforce Planning .....	12
6.6. Assets .....	12
6.7. Procurement.....	13

## Our Approach to Self-Assessment

We hope that you find in this document and the accompanying performance reports to be a valuable collation and assessment of everything we have done during 2024 to 2025. We have tried to write these reports in an engaging and user-friendly way, whilst maintaining their integrity as performance reports. They continue to meet accessibility standards, and provide a narrative on our performance measures (including trend analysis) and key activities. They provide hopefully a digestible and balanced summary of key news stories, and activity undertaken by our principle committees (Council, Cabinet, Scrutiny, and Governance and Audit). We have also included reports undertaken by our regulators.

This Executive Summary provides a critical overview of the evidence amassed in our main performance reports (covering April 2024 to September 2024, and October 2024 to March 2025), and seeks to convey the extent to which our performance is driving positive outcomes and how well our governance is supporting continuous improvement. The summary also looks ahead to key opportunities and challenges. The three reports combined respond to the performance requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, and presents a clear picture of the overall 'corporate health' of the organisation.

The publication of this report marks a couple of key milestones for us, reporting not only on an updated Performance Management Framework in support of the revised Corporate Plan, approved in February; but also marking the completion of our efforts to bring forward the timing of our performance reports so that they are more useful. Going forward, these reports will continue to catalogue progress against not only our key Corporate Plan activity, but also any identified improvement activity arising from the reports (as required under the act), and any actions agreed in response to regulatory or peer challenge activity. The reports are also a vehicle for capturing improvement themes arising from our Service Performance Review process, which again is an important cog in our performance management framework that ensures that we are an organisation that self-assesses on an ongoing basis. We also hope to be able to introduce new service user data later in the year.

To view previous Performance Self-Assessment Reports, please visit

[www.conwy.gov.uk/performance](http://www.conwy.gov.uk/performance).

## Overall, How Well Are We Doing?

This past year has continued to be financially challenging for us as a council, with members and officers having to make very difficult decisions to ensure that we managed our budget position for 2024 to 2025; and set a balanced budget for 2025 to 2026. In 2024 to 2025, we faced significant service demand pressures and spend exceeded the budget in several areas, particularly social care, education, environment, roads and facilities and housing. Welsh Government provided some additional one-off monies and along with reduced treasury management and other corporate costs, our total expenditure was contained within our income. However, we know that the present difficult financial climate is not going to go away any time soon, and we need to continue to brace ourselves as an authority to make difficult decisions. Our current medium-term forecasts are for a budget shortfall of £20.5m in 2026 to 2027, and £19m the following year.

Below summarises our performance and governance across the year into some general observations about our strengths and weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges.

1. Overall, we have done a great deal of good work in support of our corporate priorities. We have continued to respond responsibly to the financial pressures that all local authorities are facing, and have used our resources economically, efficiently, and effectively. Our governance processes are comprehensive; and changes introduced in recent years to the Senior Management Structure continue to work well.
2. We have revised our Corporate Plan for the authority, which seeks to address our financial resilience first and foremost. We have also realigned our goals to give a clearer steer as to our priorities, matched with the resource that we have available.
3. We maintain our commitment to the environment, working to tackle our carbon footprint and the nature emergency. We have taken forward a number of key initiatives during this period, again being recognised by the Green Dragon Environmental Standard; but we recognise, however, that there is still work to do to get to net zero by 2030 and that we are dependent on external funding to take projects forward.
4. We have attracted some £8.9 million in external funding to support regeneration, arts and heritage, businesses, and communities, delivering a number of important transformative projects in partnership with the Welsh and UK governments. We are particularly pleased to have secured additional funding to deliver improvements to Venue Cymru to deliver a Creative Hub and new facilities.

5. Our governance of housing is now stronger, and we continue to make good progress with the delivery of our Housing Strategy, doing good work to bring empty properties back into use, and to increase the supply of affordable housing. We have also made improvements in the prevention of homelessness, although recognise continuing pressures in this area.
6. Safeguarding remains a strong priority in our organisation. In particular we are delivering on exciting and really significant transformative work in the area of children's care. We still face significant challenges in the wake of the pandemic and cost of living crisis of course, particularly within Social Care and Education. We will continue with our transformation programme and explore collaborative opportunities where appropriate with our partners to maximise resources to address these issues.
7. During 2024 to 2025 we have continued to promote a strong culture and ethos within our organisation that supports the learning of Welsh, which includes the publication of our new [Ein Llais Conwy 2024 to 2029](#). We also have a clear plan to support Welsh in education settings and are seeing encouraging increases in the number of pupils accessing Welsh-medium education.
8. There are examples of good public engagement across the organisation, particularly around the budget, and we will continue to consider the way in which we consistently conduct effective and meaningful involvement exercises with stakeholders.
9. Our [Inclusive Conwy Plan](#) is an important step to achieving greater inclusion within our organisation and the county, but we recognise that there is a significant amount to do and some very real challenges in this area.
10. We do good work in support of staff development and well-being, but recognise that we have a high rate of sickness absence, particularly from stress and anxiety. We will continue to ensure that our staff are well-supported and listened to throughout the organisation.
11. We have demonstrated that we are proactive in our management of key assets, including through transfer or disposal. Financial constraints will likely have a negative impact on our ability to maintain our assets and invest in the future. Our work to implement a one office solution through Part II of the Office Accommodation Strategy is also to be commended – a significant piece of work with a great many administrative and logistical complexities.
12. We are reviewing whether existing systems and processes are appropriate and proportionate to the present needs of the organisation. Whilst capacity is a major issue, there are growing opportunities to consider new transformational ways of working, reducing bureaucracy, working in partnership, and harnessing emerging

technologies. We will continue to strive to be agile in recognising and resolving barriers to progress; and ensure we remain resilient.

## **Performance Objectives: Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027**

### **1. Resilient council**

The narrative throughout this summary and accompanying Self-Assessment reports is very clear with regards to the financial challenges that we are facing. The situation is very serious, and we are working hard to ensure the ongoing sustainability of the council as an organisation. During 2024 to 2025 we have undertaken considerable work in this regard, which includes refocussing our Corporate Plan to concentrate on financial resilience. We have also approved our supporting Resilience Plan following work with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) to rigorously review areas of key spend, including looking at business processes and digital solutions to reduce spend. We have also put important spending and vacancy control processes in place. The financial challenge is not going to go away any time soon, as we are forecasting pressures of around £20m for 2026 to 2027, and again for 2027 to 2028. Our future resilience will depend entirely on the level of government funding and our ability to make difficult decisions over the coming months and years to guarantee our ongoing sustainability. The continuing involvement of, and clear messaging to the public and staff throughout this will be vital, being particularly mindful of well-being.

### **2. Environment**

We continue to deliver great work in support of the Environment, and particularly through the delivery of our flood alleviation work; supporting biodiversity; improving water quality; and recycling initiatives, including influencing positive recycling behaviours. Audit Wales have praised us for having an effective and efficient waste service. We remain committed to tackling the Climate and Nature Emergency and have in this last period approved our Electric Vehicle Charge Point Strategy. Decarbonisation work has also been delivered at several schools. Corporate Plan activity is currently progressing with no concerns, and key measures provide a positive picture. We were proud to announce in April 2024 that we had retained the Level 5 Green Dragon Environmental Standard certification for the tenth consecutive year. We will also continue to champion the Well-being benefits that come with access to a clean, attractive environment, continuing our good work to further active

travel, for example. There remains a challenge in terms of achieving net carbon zero, which is dependent on available funding to support projects.

### **3. Prosperity and Learning**

We do a great deal in support of local businesses and the economy, providing not only business advice and support, but also help through various grant schemes. We have attracted some £8.9 million in external funding to support regeneration, arts and heritage, businesses, and communities. Utilising UK Government funding, we have taken forward some key projects in support of regeneration and tourism, and supported communities and businesses in all parts of the county. We also continue to support local events that benefit communities and the economy, though our greatest challenge remains – finding adequate funding to support our aspirations. We provide vital employment support and youth engagement work, such as through our career events, and the work of the Employment Service and Youth Services. We continue to make excellent progress with our provision and activity in support of education and skills, but there remains significant challenges that are impacting on young people, particularly with attendance and behaviour. The percentage of school leavers known not to be in education, employment or training also remains an important area of focus for us. Considerable work has been undertaken to ensure the continued sustainability of education provision, schools, and our school building portfolio. We have progressed with school mergers, agreed a new cooperative music service model, and delivered on facility improvements. However, our ability to deliver on new facilities is dependent on external funding. We are also working to bring school improvement functions back within the council, which is a significant piece of work.

### **4. Housing**

We have continued with our good work to progress our Housing Strategy, with a clear focus on reviewing the number of applicants on the housing register, and bringing more empty properties back in to use. We have also done good work to support the delivery of affordable housing in the county, and anticipate a significant increase in their number over the next few years. We continue to make clear improvements in the prevention of homelessness; however, there of course remains a considerable challenge in this area with persistent high demand. Reducing reliance on bed and breakfast accommodation is a priority for us as we increase the number and quality of our temporary accommodation leased portfolio. A new Commissioning Plan will look to shift greater investment to early intervention and prevention to reduce pressure on social care and housing services. We're

looking ahead in 2026 to the revision of our Housing Strategy, which will include a number of currently separate strategic plans within it, providing a more holistic approach to housing and homelessness in the county.

## **5. Well-being**

The council does a great deal of work to support the well-being, health, and safety of people in Conwy. Libraries, theatres, and leisure venues provide crucial preventative services, while our social care provision support those most in need. We have progressed a number of key projects to improve the quality of care provision for both children and adults during the year, with more to come in 2025 to 2026. Increasing care needs and the cost of care are of course the biggest challenges facing us as a council. Neither has the impact of the cost-of-living crisis gone away. We continue to do good work to foster community cohesion and ensure our communities are safe, and we will ensure this work continues amongst ongoing crime and anti-social behavioural pressures. We will continue to work closely with our partners to help address all our challenges where we can, particularly in the context of increasing demand, significant financial pressures, and ongoing capacity issues affecting all services.

## **6. Governance Functions**

### **6.1. Corporate Planning**

We have robust officer and member structures in place to support strategic planning within the organisation, and we are assured that we meet key legislative requirements under the Well-being of Future Generations Act, the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, and the Equality Act 2010 and subsequent 2011 (Wales) Regulations. Our Annual Governance Statement concurred that there were no significant governance issues, but does highlight concerns about wider resource difficulties, staff capacity and well-being. These issues are well understood, and there is considerable work taking place around these matters, and particularly to make sure that staff are well supported. Responding to the financial challenges facing the authority, we have developed a plan for resilience, utilising technology and transforming delivery where possible. Crucially, we have revised our Corporate Plan to have a clearer focus on financial resilience, rationalising our objectives within available resource.

## **6.2. Financial Planning**

We have strong financial processes in place as a council with clear political oversight. These have been strengthened during 2024 to 2025 by the roll-out of further financial modules within our financial management system to increase oversight of contracts and procurement, budget and forecasting, and card purchasing. We will continue to apply the utmost rigour in the scrutiny of service budgets during 2025 to 2026 and beyond, and do all that we can to maximise income and external funding streams; explore opportunities for alternative models of service delivery; embrace new technologies and initiatives; and collaborate with partners and community groups (within the county and the region) to both deliver and influence demand on services wherever possible.

## **6.3. Performance Management**

We have strong performance management arrangements in place covering an array of activity from our Corporate Plan, to programme and project management, the Director's annual social services report, complains and compliments, regulatory work, and the activity of key committees. Following the rationalisation of the Corporate Plan during 2024 to 2025, we have revised and strengthened the plan's performance framework to improve benchmarking and, eventually, user perspective information. Together with improvements to our Self-Assessment reporting and our review of the Service Performance Review process, we will be in a position to make substantive updates to our performance management framework this summer and bring those to democracy, ensuring our arrangements are fit for the needs of the organisation. The final component of this work will be the introduction of a new stakeholder engagement survey, which will provide annual data for our Performance Self-Assessment Reports. Our review of business processes and democratic arrangements will also improve our oversight of performance matters, the effectiveness of scrutiny, for example, being one such area where members will be making recommendations for improvement.

## **6.4. Risk Management**

We have a mature risk and issues management processes in place with good engagement by officers and members. We have done considerable work during 2024 to 2025 to review the corporate risk and issues registers, rationalising their content whilst hopefully making it more useful to support strategic discussions. We have placed strategic ownership of the revised register with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Cabinet, and have introduced

a process of 'deep dives' with SLT to more closely scrutinise risks and the controls in place. Following the review's output being approved by democracy, our Risk Management Framework will be updated and cascaded to services, with fresh training rolled out to officers and members.

## **6.5. Workforce Planning**

The financial challenges that we continue to face (and will do for the foreseeable future) are putting considerable pressure on our workforce. Staff absence has increased, with stress and anxiety being a major cause for concern. We have identified this as an improvement area. We take our duty of care over staff very seriously and have a number of measures in place to support staff health and well-being. In this year we have published our pay statement, reviewed our anti-harassment policy, implemented a revised approach to one-to-one meetings (Conwy Conversations), developed a progression pathway for children's residential workers, launched a graduate trainee programme for social work, issued new workforce planning guidance, revised the Corporate Grievance Policy, and implemented new requirements arising from social partnership legislation. This is not an exhaustive list. We are planning further work to help strengthen our culture and support an environment where employees feel valued and are listened to. We will also continue with the delivery of our Learning and Development Plan, which seeks to not only support personal and professional development, but also support health and well-being. We also have a great deal to do in promoting an Inclusive Conwy culture that promotes individual awareness and responsibility for inclusion.

## **6.6. Assets**

During 2024 to 2025 we have continued to demonstrate that we are proactive in our management of key assets and are not afraid of making difficult decisions. The progress we have made this year in moving our office accommodation strategy forward in particular shows this, but also through decisions made to dispose, lease, or change the use of property within our portfolio. We are assured that robust arrangements continue to be in place around our ICT assets and infrastructure, with a proactive approach to risk management in particular. There will doubtless be harder decisions to make around our assets in the future as we respond to financial challenges. Every effort will be taken to ensure that the impact of those decisions are assessed and thoroughly understood, and that the principles of involvement are applied throughout.

## **6.7. Procurement**

We have effective procurement support and processes in place, and are making good progress with our Procurement Strategy 2023 to 2028, ensuring that we continue to manage our spend responsibly and secure value for money. We have undertaken some key procurement decisions during the year around the award of contracts, supporting a mix of social care, education, environment, and regeneration projects. We have also done considerable work in this last period to prepare for the implementation of new procurement legislation. This is a significant change in which public sector procurement is undertaken and there are likely to be some challenges as things embed. Considerably more time and planning will be required to meet notification requirements, for example, before we can procure any works, goods, or services, which will necessitate a cultural shift in how procurement is approached by services.