**Self-Assess****ment – Progress Made Against 2021/22 Actions**

Through our previous self-assessment process, we identified how well we were performing and what we could do better. In order to achieve this, we developed an action plan which highlights the areas where improvement was needed. The below table has been updated to show the progress made to achieve these actions throughout the year, with a summary of the work undertaken, any challenges that have arisen and our focus for the future. From evaluating our progress, we have set ourselves against Red, Amber, Green, Blue status which is aimed to give a clear snapshot of the progress we have made:

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| **BLUE – Action has been completed** |
| **RED – Action is significantly behind target** |
| **AMBER – Action is behind target but is manageable** |
| **GREEN – Action is on target** |

**31 Actions were identified as part of the 2021/22 Self-Assessment. Of these for 2022/23: 8 are blue (completed) ; 21 are green; 2 are amber 12 will continue to be monitored into 2022/23 and 21 will move to business as usual.**

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| **Improvement Identified from 2021/22 Self-Assessment** | **Action** | **Progress- What have we done?** | **Scoring** | **Status** |
| Implement the Audit Wales recommendation with regards to Silent Valley Waste Services Ltd. | Develop a business case for the future of Silent Valley to be brought back under the remit of the Local Authority.  Undertake a review of the governance and oversight arrangements of companies in which the Council has an interest. | In March 2023, Silent Valley limited company was brought back under the remit of Blaenau Gwent Council. | **Blue** | **Complete** |
| Capacity concerns across service areas | Address the staffing needs including recruitment and retention in services across the Council and implement the strategy devised to consider short, medium and longer-term solutions to the workforce including the consideration to collaborate on a regional basis | The Workforce strategy and action plan continues to be implemented to help address staffing needs across the authority. The Council has undertaken a review of recruitment and retention data to understand the challenges faced which has helped to inform and develop workforce plans which have been developed by directorates and reported to senior officers. | **Green** | **Continue 2022/23** |

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| **Improvement Identified from 2021/22 Self-Assessment** | **Action** | **Progress- What have we done?** | **Scoring** | **Status** |
| Uncertainty of the economic impact of: Covid-19; the exit from the European Union; and WG future financial settlements | Continued financial monitoring and reporting through the Council’s democratic process.  Identify strategic business reviews to mitigate the possible residual funding gaps in future years. | The Council’s budget and financial position continues to be closely monitored and regularly reported through the democratic process, this includes updates through Mid-term financial strategy, 6 monthly reports through performance and finance report and member briefings.  Service areas monitor their individual budgets, any progress, change or impact on budgets are reported through directorate business plans. Any risk or impact on budgets are reported through the Corporate Risk register.  Our engagement programme in 2023 gave people in Blaenau Gwent the opportunity to share their views to help us plan our budget and services from April 2023 onwards. This year we had the highest level of response witnessed for a budget engagement survey carried out by the council with 3,376 valid questionnaires being completed.  We have been working with Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council to access the Shared Prosperity Fund. This fund is the UK Government replacement to the European Structural Investment Fund following the withdrawal of the UK from the European Union. | **Green** | **Continue 2022/23** |
| The results of the 2021 Census may impact Local Government Settlements moving forward. | Consider the Census results when planning future budget settlements and service provision | The results of the census were challenged by the Council. The ONS have confirmed that they feel the information is correct. Further analysis of localised data is to take place to assess the impact that this may have on future service delivery and budgets. | **Green** | **Move to business as usual** |

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| **Improvement Identified from 2021/22 Self-Assessment** | **Action** | **Progress- What have we done?** | **Scoring** | **Status** |
| Implementation of Strategies and Plans | Continue to monitor and implement Strategies and Plans identified throughout the self-assessment via the business planning process | The Council published the first self-assessment report in October 2022 which set out how strategic plans have been implemented throughout the year.  Our new Corporate Plan has been developed which sets out our vision, values and priorities for 2022- 2027. | **Green** | **Move to business as usual** |
| Audit Wales have identified that the most significant risk facing councils during 2021-22 continues to be the COVID-19 pandemic and its recovery | Continue to monitor and implement the COVID 19 Recovery and Renewal Plans via the business planning process | As part of the Springing Forward Audit completed by Audit Wales – several recommendations were identified- these recommendations have been included in business plans and progress of these are reported quarterly. Any risks identified have been recorded on our Corporate Risk register and updates to manage these risks are reported regularly.  Following the COVID 19 pandemic the authority moved from the emergency response to a recovery phase in March 2022. Recovery plans were established and have now been embedded within the business plans. | **Blue** | **Complete** |
| The budget monitoring in Community Services is robust but needs to reflect longer term planning. | Community Services to work closely with Resources to consider how medium term financial resilience can be strengthened | Regular meetings between finance and Regeneration and Community Services continue to take place to ensure that income generation and spending targets are monitored. | **Green** | **Move to business as usual** |
| Achievement of the 70% recycling target by 2024/25 | Actions within Business Plan | The service continues to monitor residual side waste as well as promoting the ‘keeping up with the Jones’s’ campaign which is now fully rolled out across the borough. Monitoring is currently in place to identify the streets with low performance regarding food waste recycling. To support this, a food waste campaign has been rolled out across the borough. An education centre, currently in the build phase, is to be situated at Roseheyworth HWRC. This action will remain until the recycling figures for 2024/25 are known. | **Green** | **Continue for 2022/23** |

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| **Improvement Identified from 2021/22 Self-Assessment** | **Action** | **Progress- What have we done?** | **Scoring** | **Status** |
| Community Services to share good practice throughout the directorate and across the Council. | Technical Services Income Generation Model to be presented to Wider CLT Reinstate Community Services Performance Reports | Community Services Performance Reports have been reinstated and presented through the democratic process. | **Blue** | **Complete** |
| Higher levels of language acquisition and reading in our very young children in the early years is required | This will feature in the recovery programme from COVID as we ‘build back better’ in line with Curriculum for Wales Reform | The focus on Higher levels of language acquisition and reading continues to be a priority and area of focus for our Education department. | **Amber** | **Continue for 2022/23** |
| Improve attainment of eFSM pupils and particularly our more-able pupils in the early years and throughout education | Identified within the business plan | Learner outcomes for those eligible for free school meals (eFSM) has improved and the achievement gap has been reduced, despite the number of eFSM levels increasing. | **Green** | **Move to business as usual** |
| Improve school attendance in both primary and secondary sectors | Identified within the business plan | 2021/22  Attendance Secondary School - 84.8%  Attendance Primary School 89.5%.  2022/23  Attendance Secondary School - 85.8%  Attendance Primary School 90.4%.  Joint meetings have been held across educational departments to support with secondary schools to improve attendance and reducing exclusions. Further analysis will take place in order to identify the reason for decline and put mitigating actions in place.  Targeted work has taken place to help reduce exclusions. | **Green** | **Continue for 2022/23** |

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| **Improvement Identified from 2021/22 Self-Assessment** | **Action** | **Progress- What have we done?** | **Scoring** | **Status** |
| Improve progress between Key Stage 3 and 4, particularly in English, Maths and Science | Identified within the business plan | Key Stage 4 results for 2022 demonstrated progress and were in line with the school development plan targets set by the four secondary settings. There were improvements in 29 out of 32 key measures. GCSE A\*/A and A\*-C grades improved in  English, Science and Maths.  A-level A\*-C and A\*-E grades continue to be strong and were in line with the all-Wales mean at 98.4% for BG learners at Coleg Gwent settings. | **Green** | **Continue for 2022/23** |
| Continue the work with Schools Causing Concern | Identified within the business plan | There has been an incremental reduction in Schools Causing Concern from 6 schools in 2019 to 2 schools in 2022. We continue to work with schools causing concern. | **Green** | **Continue for 2022/23** |
| Welsh Government require for a revision to the Delivery Agreement to be undertaken and approved by them. | Undertake a revision of the Delivery Agreement | Since approval of the revised Delivery Agreement there have been a number of unforeseen delays meaning an updated Delivery Agreement timetable was required. The [Welsh Government Agreed](https://blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/media/ce4byecz/blaenau-gwent-delivery-agreement-2nd-revision-welsh-government-agreement-letter-02-02-23.pdf) a [revised Delivery Agreement](https://blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/media/zk2p5c4x/revised-da-feb2023.pdf) in February 2023. Submission of the plan is now due to Welsh Government May/ June 2024 | **Green** | **Continue for 2022/23** |
| Address the workforce pressures being seen locally and nationally, particularly in provider services and domiciliary care | Work with the GSCG and TCG to alleviate pressures in both the short and long term.  Work to establish the development of a Strategic Workforce Plan to support capacity issues across the Council | Pressures on workforce in Social Services continues to be a national issue. The recruitment and retention strategy has been reviewed with the introduction of a new Workforce Recruitment lead who is focussing on supporting Managers on recruiting to vacant Provider and Social Work posts.  Social Services are working closely with Organisational Development to establish a Strategic Workforce Plan to support capacity concerns in the short, medium and longer-term as well as considering the opportunity to collaborate on a regional basis. The workforce in Social Services has been identified as a critical risk and has therefore been included on the Council’s Corporate Risk Register. | **Green** | **Move to business as usual** |
| **Improvement Identified from 2021/22 Self-Assessment** | **Action** | **Progress- What have we done?** | **Scoring** | **Status** |
| Implement the findings of the Council’s Communication function | Embed the recommendations | We have developed a campaign based approach to our corporate communication function to increase focus and impact. One of our main communication campaigns for the year was the cost of living support work. | **Green** | **Move to business as usual** |
| Identifying capacity across the organisation to support the user design approach | The Council to consider where the user design approach is required and ensure staff support the process | We recognise that digital progression is the future and, as a council, we aim to develop effective digital infrastructure and improve connectivity within the borough by promoting digital participation. We are leading on a project that looks at how our communities are accessing our services and how we can make improvements. We are working to understand the barriers to our communities using digital services and developing support for those who wish to develop their digital skills. | **Green** | **Continue for 2022/23** |
| Gender Pay Gap – a review of the current data is to be undertaken in conjunction with the Workforce Strategy | Identify actions/measures to further address the gender pays differences as part of existing Equality plans. | Our assessment, published as part of our Pay Policy Statement for 2022/23, shows women and men are paid equally for doing equivalent jobs across the Council. | **Blue** | **complete** |
| Undertake data analysis identify key health inequalities across Gwent, including the impacts of COVID 19. | The Gwent Well-being Plan to be informed by the data and develop appropriate actions for implementation to tackle health inequalities. | The Gwent PSB have agreed to become a Marmot Region and to adopt the eight Marmot principles to reduce health inequalities across Gwent and to work in partnership with the Institute of Health Equity (IHE). | **Blue** | **Complete`** |
| Maintain accurate records of all assets. | Identify the cause of the incorrect values in the fixed asset register and correct any values affected by the issue | Council approved its revised commissioning and procurement strategy in March 2023 – ‘Maximising the Socially Responsible Blaenau Gwent Pound £’ The strategy sets out how our commissioning and procurement activities will support the Council’s corporate priorities | **Green** | **Move to business as usual** |

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| **Improvement Identified from 2021/22 Self-Assessment** | **Action** | **Progress- What have we done?** | **Scoring** | **Status** |
| Embed agile working | Development of a Council Policy to support an aging workforce. Undertake a review of the agile working policy and council property, including the establishment of a staff survey | We have reviewed our Agile working arrangements through engagement with our staff and trade unions. Workforce plans are in place for each directorate. | **Green** | **Continue for 2022/23** |
| Supporting the Council with its commercial developments | The Council needs to undertake a review of its Commercial function and what it feels needs to be prioritised in this area moving forward.  Develop an Investment Framework, in partnership with CIPFA, for approval at Council. | We have made good progress to be more commercially minded as an organisation, and have reviewed our commercial strategy to further embed the Council's commercial and business ambitions. We have worked with our partners in SOLACE & CIPFA to develop a commercial framework to develop project specific business cases, which will support a consistent one council approach to future commercial and business opportunities. | **Green** | **Move to business as usual** |
| Develop a data delivery plan to help implement the Council’s vision for using data effectively and address inconsistencies across areas with regards to performance and reporting | Consider the development of a delivery plan for using data effectively and improve the consistency of performance reporting across the Council. | The development of a data strategy will be a key development in 2023/24. The strategy is to be aligned to a number of other council strategies to avoid duplication. | **Amber** | **Continue for 2022/23** |
| Further strengthen the Community Hub model. | Monitor the impact of Universal Credit on residents and identify what other support is available.  Develop a Customer Services Strategy to continue the support provided to the customer and doing this in the right way. | The customer services strategy, informed by the recent external review on customer experience is being progressed which will set out our vision for customer support for the future. | **Green** | **Move to business as usual** |
| The Energy Prospectus will contribute towards the target of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2030. | Implementation of the Energy Prospectus | The work and projects carried out as part of the Energy Prospectus support the implementation of the Council’s Decarbonisation Plan and to contribute to becoming net zero by 2030 alongside the declaration of a climate emergency. | **Green** | **Move to business as usual** |

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| **Improvement Identified from 2021/22 Self-Assessment** | **Action** | **Progress- What have we done?** | **Scoring** | **Status** |
| The activity of the Community Hubs to date | Continue to review and further develop the Community Hub | Community Hub figures are monitored and reported on. | **Blue** | **Complete** |
| Establish Town Centre Advisory Boards | Establish Town Centre advisory Boards across all towns. | Advisory Boards are in place across the  Town Centres of Abertillery, Brynmawr and Ebbw Vale to support a partnership delivery approach for future project delivery. | **Blue** | **Complete** |
| Examples of integrated working provided as part of narrative. | The Council will continue to work with partners across the Council | The Sustainable Development principles are included within the standard report template presented to our Committees. These are to be completed for every report for the members to consider as part of their decision making.  In our Corporate Performance reports we continue to evidence how the work we have undertaken as an authority contributes to the 5 ways of working under the Well-being of Future Generations Act. | **Blue** | **Complete** |
| Examples of collaborative working provided as part of narrative | Continue to work collaboratively with partners and identify further partnership opportunities | We work in collaboration with a range of local partners which includes working with other public sector organisations, the third sector, businesses and members of the public to develop and deliver our services.  Recently a Gwent Public Services Board has been established to bring together other Gwent local authorities and partners to work in collaboration to implement a well-being plan. This plan brings partners together to work towards creating a climate ready Gwent that is fairer more equitable inclusive for all. | **Green** | **Move to business as usual** |
| Update and embed the Engagement Strategy. | Continued engagement with various groups including the community, businesses, staff and Trade Unions.  Update the Engagement Strategy to reflect areas of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 | A refreshed Engagement and Participation Strategy is being developed which will strengthen our approach to engage local communities, businesses, staff and trade unions. | **Green** | **Continue for 2022/23** |