

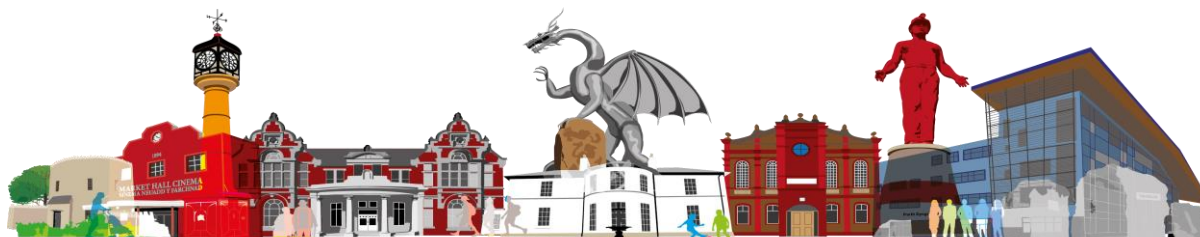
Self-Assessment – Progress Made Against 2022/23 Actions

Through our previous self-assessment process, undertaken for the year 2022/23, 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:

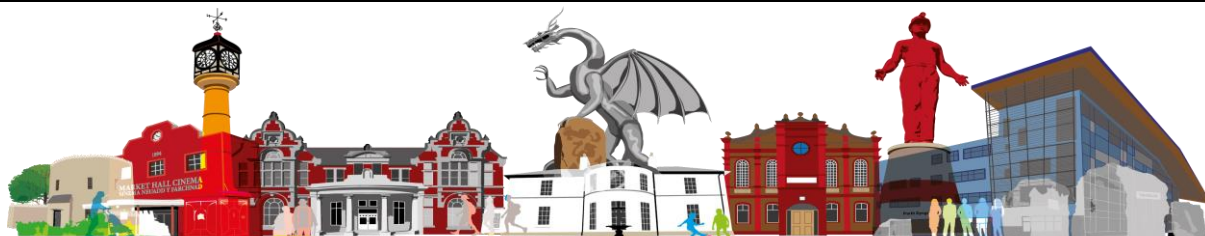
BLUE – Action has been completed
RED – Action is significantly behind target
AMBER – Action is behind target but is manageable
GREEN – Action is on target

39 actions were identified as part of the 2022/23 Self-Assessment. Of these: 7 are blue (completed); 26 are green; 5 are amber and 1 is red. Of the remaining 32 actions not completed, 29 will continue to be monitored into 2024/25 and 4 will move to business as usual.

Improvement Identified from 2022/23 Self-Assessment	Progress- What have we done?	Scoring	Status
Capacity concerns across service areas	The Councils Workforce strategy 2021 – 2026 continues to be implemented across the organisation. Several key actions have been delivered as part of the Councils Workforce delivery plan which underpins the strategy. Most recent progress of the implementation of the workforce strategy can be found here	Green	Continue to 2024/25
Uncertainty of the economic impact of: Covid-19; the exit from the European Union; and WG future financial settlements	The Council has embedded the changes to local government regulations and monitoring of resilience issues impacted by the European Union (Withdrawal) Act into business-as-usual activity when the exiting the EU transition period ended.	Blue	Move to business as usual
Achievement of the 70% recycling target by 2024/25	The Council continues to exceed the Welsh Government statutory recycling target of 64%, with a recycling rate of 66.18% for 2023/2024. A new recycling target has been set of 70% for 2024/ 2025, working is ongoing to help reach this target including a food waste campaign and data analysis to determine what improvements need to be made to reach the 70% target. Regular meetings are held with the waste team which are specifically focused on reaching the target. If the council does not maintain and improves its recycling targets the Council will be imposed a financial penalty. If the current recycling rate of 66.18% remains the same in 2024/25 there are potential fines of £243,712 to be incurred by Blaenau Gwent.	Amber	Continue to 2024/25



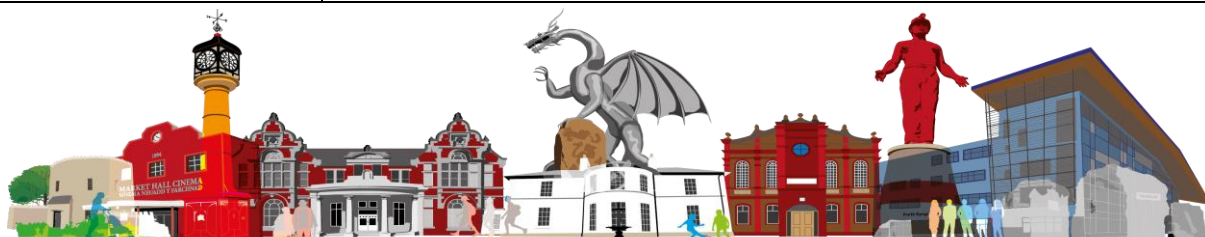
Improvement Identified from 2022/23 Self-Assessment	Progress- What have we done?	Scoring	Status
Higher levels of language acquisition and reading in our very young children in the early years is required	GL assessments will be conducted in various schools to gauge reading levels. The Council has arranged with schools to cover 50% of the cost of the assessment of the schools who participate and share their reading data with the Council. Data gathered will help to identify gaps and barriers to reading and learning. The EAS undertook a review of reading in summer 2023 but due to ASOS many schools did not submit information on reading. Therefore, more data needs to be gathered from schools and this will continue as a priority in 2024/25.	Amber	Continue to 2024/25
Improve school attendance in both primary and secondary sectors	Increase in both primary and secondary attendance. Attendance Pathway implemented in the Autumn term 2023. Increased support to schools via grant funded officers for family engagement. Primary and secondary attendance forums re-established. Targeted support meetings held with schools in Q3 and Q4 for attendance. Attendance blitzes in secondary schools.	Green	Continue to 2024/25
Improve progress between Key Stage 3 and 4, particularly in English, Maths and Science	Difficult to monitor progress due to changes in WG reporting – conversations ongoing with Team Leader Education Performance and schools. Also work with performance team to look at introducing Education Dashboard as a means of collecting and interrogating data.	Amber	Continue to 2024/25
Continue the work with Schools Causing Concern	Processes to hold the EAS to account in terms of the work of SIPs and pre-inspection reporting are in place and working well as evidenced by no new schools moving into a category in 23/24. TAS system to support schools causing concern embedded. Improved system for sharing information through Wider Group. Schools now reengaging with the LA through things like joint headteacher meetings which have excellent attendance across nearly all schools, and in working groups. Significant input from teams from across the Council including Education, finance and OD to support the River Centre which is the only school in BG in a category – however significant concerns remain. Significant improvement in quality of FADES from the Inclusion team have enabled more accurate evaluations of different service areas and planning for improvement.	Green	Continue to 2024/25
Welsh Government require for a revision to the Delivery Agreement to be undertaken and approved by them.	The Replacement LDP Delivery Agreement timetable was reported to Scrutiny Committee on 18 th June 2024 and was later approved by Council on 18 th July 2024. Welsh Government formally approved the revised timetable on 24 th July 2024.	Blue	Complete



Improvement Identified from 2022/23 Self-Assessment	Progress- What have we done?	Scoring	Status
Identifying capacity across the organisation to support the user design approach.	A session was undertaken by Service Works with CLT and training was then offered out further to digital champions and members of the Digital Board which looked at the end to end journey mapping. This capacity will now be led by Wider CLT.	Green	Continue to 2024/25
Embed agile working.	Our agile working and flexible working policy has been reviewed and have been amended to reflect the current position and future management. The reviewed agile working policy was agreed by Council in April 2024. The changes that have been made to the policy can be found here .	Blue	Complete
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	A data maturity assessment is to be undertaken in 2024 which will be used to inform the Council’s data vision and strategy.	Amber	Continue to 2024/25
Update and embed the Engagement Strategy.	<p>Amendments made following the draft Engagement & Participation Strategy and Action Plan, final version was presented and endorsed by Corporate Overview and Performance Scrutiny Committee in June and agreed at Council in July.</p> <p>Talk2gether has been designed following the guidance set in BGCBC’s Engagement and Participation Strategy for 2024-28. It’s an umbrella approach to all public engagement that shares the common goal of improving community well-being. Through a cohesive approach by all departments, it aims to ensure that all engagement carried out by the local authority is informed by best practice, whilst making public consultation straight-forward and ‘under one roof’ for the customer</p>	Green	Continue to 2024/25
Develop a vision and strategy for the future provision of ALN.	Our ALN strategies, policies and guidance have been reviewed in line with the ongoing ALN implementation of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (ALNET) legislation, new Welsh Government guidance for Elective Home Education (EHE), and to further support in areas of EOTAS/Exclusion and Attendance. The relevant documents were presented to Cabinet in October 23 and can be found here	Blue	Complete



Improvement Identified from 2022/23 Self-Assessment	Progress- What have we done?	Scoring	Status
Respond to the recommendations from the recent Estyn Inspection.	Work has been undertaken to address the three recommendations from Estyn. This has included revising business plans to incorporate the recommendations at both a strategic and an operational level. In response to the recommendations the self-evaluation cycle has been revised and a review of performance management process has taken place. An update on the progress made against these recommendations were presented to People Scrutiny Committee and can be found here	Green	Continue to 2024/25
Continue to monitor and improve on attainment levels.	Summer 2023 Key Stage 4 (KS4) results were positive and in line with the School Development Plan targets set by the 4 secondary settings. There were improvements in 23 out of 24 key measures across the 4 secondary settings	Green	Continue to 2024/25
Increase capacity at Pen-Y-Cwm and River Centre and reduce out of county placements, in turn reducing annual financial loss	A demand analysis and option appraisal for Pen y Cwm has been completed which will help to inform a business case to Welsh Government. Regional discussions are currently taking place to further inform the process	Green	Continue to 2024/25
Monitor Home to school transport funding issues	Consultation has started with Regeneration Directorate to look at working more closely on home to school transport across the two directorates. Monthly meetings continue with the Transport team to discuss any issues The Home to School Transport budget reported slightly favourable variance at the financial year end. The change of the Learner Travel measure has been put forward as a suggestion in the budget a savings process however this wasn't accepted, the LA to look at an alternative service delivery. Currently undertaking an options appraisal process	Amber	Continue to 2024/25
Secure external funding for European Social Fund (ESF) programmes e.g. Inspire;	European Social Fund programmes have now closed and transitioned into Shared Prosperity Fund youth programmes from April 23. SPF has been used to fund an 11-16 youth work team based in or aligned to schools, an alternative curriculum provision and a 16-25 youth work NEET team. This provision ensures the Youth Service is meeting the identified needs of young people 11-25 and underpins the local approach to the WG's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YP NEET strategy). SPF is due to end in March 2025. Discussions are ongoing at both local, regional and national level to influence future UK Government funding options and to align with both WG and UK Government in readiness for any future rounds of funding. The Young People and Partnership Division works closely with the Regeneration Directorate in this area of work.	Green	Continue to 2024/25



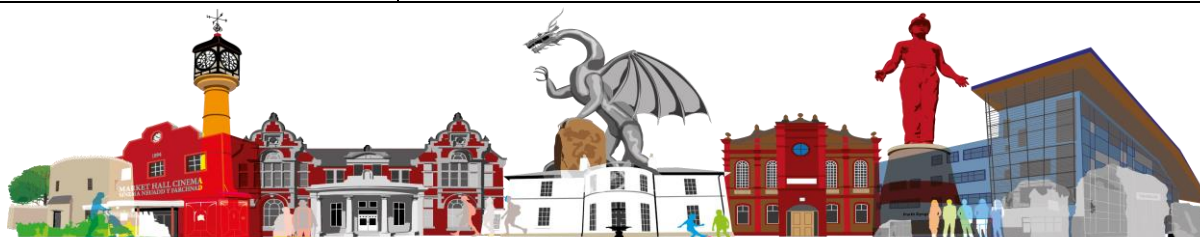
Improvement Identified from 2022/23 Self-Assessment	Progress- What have we done?	Scoring	Status
Monitor closely school place and sufficiency of all schools, use data more effectively to inform long term planning.	A number of our Secondary schools are experiencing sufficiency issues, for the September 2024 academic session, a catchment area review has been undertaken and a consultation is taking place during the autumn term to gain more understanding and to help alleviate some of these issues	Green	Continue to 2024/25
Supporting the community to gain the right skills for a changing world and build capacity for lifelong learning.	Utilised SPF funding to have a coordinated approach of delivery across the LA, upskilling and offering work placement opportunities to improves skills across a range of occupational sectors. Engaged with several partners to facilitate these opportunities, community and voluntary sector partners, education and BGCBC teams Engaged with business to determine future skill needs and adapted courses and training to upskill employed as well as economically inactive individuals within our community.	Green	Move to business as usual
Progress with the development of CiNER	Planning issues largely complete save for compliance with conditions/s106. Awaiting conclusion of negotiations between Ciner and WG over land deal and UK Govt for assistance for project to proceed.	Green	Continue to 2024/25
Progress with the development of Regain 2 to support growth and investment into the area	Regain 2 (now Goldworks) building completed and operational from November 2024.	Blue	Complete
Work to further improve our competitiveness across the UK.	Targeted the UKCI outputs and moved off the bottom of the UKCI for the first time since its inception, this performance measure is now business as usual.	Green	Move to business as usual
Our Climate group will work to prioritise key actions from the Decarbonisation plan in order to work towards achieving the Welsh Government Net Zero Targets of reaching a 63% reduction by 2030, an 89% reduction by 2050 and a 100% reduction by 2050.	The organisational Climate Group continues to meet on a six-week rotation to consider and action appropriate actions associated to the Council's existing Decarbonisation Plan for 2030, considering key issues such as accommodation and assets, fleet and transport, and ULEV infrastructure. The group has been actively involved in the work required for 2050, endorsing an area-based Net Zero 2050 Framework, and fundamentally shaping the preparation of the first Blaenau Gwent Local Area Energy Plan for 2024 to 2029, which sets out an initial pathway to help move forward on the challenging agenda for the local area.	Green	Continue to 2024/25



Improvement Identified from 2022/23 Self-Assessment	Progress- What have we done?	Scoring	Status
Continue to work towards the recommendations made by our climate assembly.	The organisation, with its partners, continues to put the voice of our citizens at the heart of policy making and implementation. The new Net Zero 2050 Framework is based around the 4 key areas identified by the climate assembly for Blaenau Gwent, and several projects, programmes and initiatives are being introduced by the Council to support the recommendations set by the assembly including ELEV support infrastructure, active travel initiatives, and energy policies and projects. Furthermore, the organisation is leading the local partnership Climate Mitigation Group, and actively participating in regional and national partnerships on key issues associated to the assembly's recommendations.	Green	Continue to 2024/25
Continue to support the national campaign to tackle Fly- Tipping (not up my street);	There has been an increased use of CCTV surveillance across the County Borough at prolific fly tipping locations resulting in 112 incidents of fly tipping being captured during 2023/24 Blaenau Gwent issued the third highest numbers of fly tipping fixed penalty notices in Wales during 2022/23 with 79 FPN's issued and have exceeded this number this year, with 110 fly tipping fixed penalty notices issued between April 2023 and March 2024.	Green	Continue to 2024/25
Continue with the delivery of the Energy Prospectus to interest in energy development across the borough to facilitate a supply of renewable energy to meet the future energy needs of the area including consideration of wind and hydro generation projects;	<p>The Council continues with the delivery of the Energy Prospectus including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refit Project – energy conservation measures to 23 buildings across the corporate portfolio, Aneurin Leisure Trust and schools plus a street lighting upgrade. Measures included solar PV. Wind generation – progress has been made with one site to reach full business case development stage. • Solar generation – Welsh Government Energy Service has undertaken initial feasibility for solar farm potential. • Hydro generation – feasibility study completed and planning application drafted. • Expansion of the Works District Heating Network • Additional EV charge points have also been installed at the Council Depot as well as a rapid charge point installed at Community Meals base to allow for charging for new Community Meals ULEV fleet. Although the delivery of the Energy is progressing well, there are a number of projects still be worked through. Work is ongoing to understand residents transport use, behaviour, challenges and issues. Next steps will be to explore the challenge of behaviour change and what a net zero transition means for people in Blaenau Gwent. 	Green	Continue to 2024/25



Improvement Identified from 2022/23 Self-Assessment	Progress- What have we done?	Scoring	Status
Re-establish and strengthen existing engagement networks as well as establish new opportunities for people to get involved.	The Engagement and Participation Strategy is to be approved in Mid 2024 and will incorporate a number of ways for people to get involved.	Green	Continue to 2024/25
Ensure the Safe Reduction of Children Looked After Strategy 2020 – 2025 actions are regularly monitored, implemented and reviewed.	The safe reduction of children looked after continues to be a priority for the Council, despite a consistent increase in the referrals, which is reflected in our Care and Support statutory intervention and child protection registration numbers, the number of children looked after has remained relatively constant. The Council will continue to ensure the actions within the Safe Reduction of Children Looked After Strategy continues to be regularly monitored, implemented and reviewed.	Green	Continue to 2024/25
Continue to implement the regional action plan to meet the needs identified within the population needs assessment.	The Regional Partnership Board aims to deliver integrated care in Blaenau Gwent and the region, but more efforts are needed to ensure the population needs analysis and Area Action Plan truly benefit local citizens. To achieve this, the Integrated Services Partnership Board has prioritised tasks from the Area Plan, forming task groups to advance these goals.	Green	Continue to 2024/25
Take forward any learning from the outcome report requested by Care Inspectorate Wales on Public Law process.	Following the self-evaluation exercise requested by CIW on the Public Law Outline process, a Task and Finish Group has been developed and meets regularly to address the actions identified on short and medium term. Most actions have been completed now, with the plan due to be finalised during 2024/2025 with no issues or delays being identified.	Green	Continue to 2024/25
Ensure that preventative support is available for adults and their unpaid carers, that promote and maintain personal independence;	During 23/ 24 the Council has provided a range of support for unpaid carers this has included carers support sessions, carers wellbeing groups additional carers short breaks/ respite opportunities. Additional support has been provided regionally for carers in relation to specific carers hospital discharge services, carers café and joint working with third sector partners. Over the year there has been a significant amount of investment to ensure new contacts made to adult services are responded to timely and consistently using a strength based approach, there have also been robust learning and development opportunities for all our teams to provide our staff with the skills to focus on the strengths and resilience of our citizens and their carers and develop care and support plans, where appropriate that balance appropriate rights and responsibilities alongside exploring appropriate preventative solutions. We will continue to focus on this area of work within Adult services.	Green	Continue to 2024/25



Improvement Identified from 2022/23 Self-Assessment	Progress- What have we done?	Scoring	Status
Gain a greater understanding of the barriers to access digital solutions within our communities and develop support for those who wish to improve their digital skills.	Customer Services Strategy 2023-27 and Digital Transformation Strategy 2023-27 were reviewed to consider service delivery, including understanding access points across the Council and establishing what barriers people face. Our aim is to develop a culture that supports digital improvement, innovation and uses new technology. The Council is also responding to the Older People's Commissioner for Wales's 'Access Denied' report. A Digital Inclusion Officer is now in place who attends all our community hubs on a weekly basis to help residents get online.	Green	Continue to 2024/25
Provide support to those impacted by the cost-of-living crisis via actions identified by the Cost-of-Living Member and Officer Groups.	The cost of living group has continued to meet throughout 2023/24 and has implemented a number of actions to support those most in need. Moving forward, a review of this group is to be undertaken to consider merging it with the current Local Well-being Partnership.	Green	Continue to 2024/25
Engage effectively across the organisation, with partners and key groups to develop the new Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028.	The new Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28 was presented alongside the final Annual Report for the existing SEP. The plan was in April 2024. The annual reports progress was acknowledged and provides a good basis of the ongoing commitments in relation to Equality. The new SEP Delivery and Oversight Group was set up and has agreed Terms of Reference moving forward to monitor the progress of delivering the plan over the next four years. An internal and external Lived Experience Network has been established to reflect and capture people with protected characteristics experiences in working for and/or living in BGCBC.	Blue	Complete
Respond to the recommendations from the Welsh Language Commissioner.	The Welsh Language Investigation action plan completed, and Welsh Language Commissioners Office (WLCO) correspondence received to agree conclusion of the investigation. CLT agreed proposal to re-brand the Core Group of Officers to ensure continuation of best practice in line with the Welsh Language Standards. Continuation of delivering Welsh Language forward work programme including a programme of Welsh Cultural celebrations. The Welsh Language Annual Report presented to CLT and Corporate Overview and Performance Scrutiny, detailing the progress in meeting the standards. Positive comments were received by members acknowledging the progress and developments in relation to Welsh Language over the last year.	Blue	Move to Business as usual



Improvement Identified from 2022/23 Self-Assessment	Progress- What have we done?	Scoring	Status
Further embed safeguarding arrangements across the whole Council.	Work has been undertaken to implement safeguarding arrangements across the Council. As part of this, a review has been undertaken to consider how best to take this forward corporately, this approach is to be considered by CLT for implementation in 2024. Audit Wales intend to re assess safeguarding arrangements in Blaenau Gwent in late 2024.	Amber	Continue to 2024/25
Progress the Workforce Strategy including consideration of recruitment and retention across the Directorates	The Councils Workforce strategy continues to be implemented across the organisation with several key actions delivered through the year. This includes a review of our Agile Working and Flexible Working policies, development and implementation of Employer Supported Volunteering Policy and the continuation of our annual workforce profiles across all directorates & Schools to inform workforce planning. During the year the Council reviewed its recruitment and selection policy which works to ensure recruitment and selection is fair, objective and transparent as well as to recruit and retain individuals with the right experience, knowledge and competencies in a timely manner. The Council will continue to implement our workforce strategy through annual implementation plans which support workforce strategy objectives which includes considering recruitment and retention of staff across all Directorates	Green	Continue to 2024/25
Work to reduce the sickness levels across the Council.	During 2022/23 there was an improving picture with sickness levels reducing by 1.29 days per full time equivalent (FTE) employee when compared to the previous year, however sickness remains high at 15.45 days per FTE employee (13.71 days excluding COVID-19). Based on the comparative data available the Council had the highest level of sickness across Welsh Local Government. The Council has in place a range of support for staff and strategies to manage well-being, Sickness across the workforce continues to be monitored closely with quarterly review of sickness absence continuing as part of Corporate Leadership Team meetings and the Council continues to research any areas of good practice .	Green	Continue to 2024/25

