

Committee: **Governance and Audit Committee**  
Date of meeting: **18<sup>th</sup> October 2023**  
Report Subject: **Blaenau Gwent Council Self-Assessment 2022/23**  
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr Steve Thomas, Leader / Cabinet Member  
Corporate Services and Performance**  
Report Submitted by: **Damien McCann, Interim Chief Executive**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder	Governance and Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	28/09/23	08.10.23	18/10/23		12/10/23		24/10/23	Cabinet CLT 18/09/23

1. **Purpose of the Report**
  - 1.1 For the Governance and Audit Committee to be provided with the Council's Self-Assessment report 2022/23, found at appendix 1.
  - 1.2 The Self-Assessment provides a retrospective and factual account of the activity undertaken by the Council during the previous financial year 2022/23. It has been developed in line with the requirements as outlined in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.
2. **Scope and Background**
  - 2.1 The Self-Assessment is a new requirement for all local authorities across Wales as outlined within the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. The Act requires each council in Wales to keep under review, through self-assessment, the extent to which it is meeting the 'performance requirements', that is the extent to which:
    - It is exercising its functions effectively;
    - It is using its resources economically, efficiently, and effectively;
    - and
    - Its governance is effective for securing the above.
  - 2.2 Local authorities are required to produce a self-assessment once every financial year in order to assess activity over the past year and to consider the required activity for the coming year.
  - 2.3 Self-assessment is a way of critically, and honestly, reviewing the current position in order to make decisions on how to secure improvement for the future.
  - 2.4 Self-assessment of how the council is meeting the performance requirements places ownership of performance and improvement firmly with local government. Considering the extent to which the council is meeting the performance requirements is a corporate, organisational assessment, rather than an assessment of individual services, aimed at

ensuring the council's ability to respond to the changing environment in which it operates.

- 2.5 The council needs to have an evaluative culture and mindset embedded in all it does, rather than see self-assessment as a standalone process to be completed once a year. The self-assessment process has been embedded as part of the council's performance management framework and is aligned to the Council's Corporate Plan and Business Planning process.
- 2.6 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is also a key piece of legislation when undertaking self-assessment. The Council is required to meet the duties under this Act in accordance with the sustainable development principle, the Well-being Goals, the core set of corporate governance activities and the five ways of working.
- 2.7 The Self-Assessment will be provided in a number of ways:
- Full assessment detailing all statutory requirements for reporting;
  - An easy read summary of the full assessment;
  - A visual, engaging and user friendly infographic; and
  - Each chapter to be made available separately for easy access to certain information.
- 2.8 A further requirement of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 is for each local authority to hold a panel performance assessment once in an electoral cycle, providing an opportunity to seek external insights (other than from auditors, regulators or inspectors) on how the council is meeting the performance requirements. This will be progressed in years 3 to 4 of the political cycle.

### 3. **Options for Recommendation**

#### 3.1 **Option 1**

The Committee is assured that the Council's Self-Assessment 2022/23 is an accurate account of the effectiveness and performance management arrangements of the Council.

#### **Option 2**

For the Governance and Audit Committee to make any recommendations for changes to the conclusions or actions the council intends to take.

### 4. **Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

- 4.1 The Self-Assessment is a requirement as part of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.
- 4.2 The Self-Assessment must follow the requirements as outlined as part of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

- 4.3 The Self-Assessment is aligned to the Council's Corporate Plan and performance management framework.
5. **Implications Against Each Option**
- 5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***  
There are no direct impacts on the budget for the production of the Self-Assessment, but budget information has been provided at the relevant sections within the document.
- 5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***
- 5.2.1 There is a risk to the Council if they do not abide with the legislative requirements to produce a self-assessment report on an annual basis.
- 5.2.2 Risk considerations have been provided at the relevant sections within the document.
- 5.3 ***Legal***  
There is a legislative requirement for the Council to produce a self-assessment report on an annual basis.
- 5.4 ***Human Resources***  
There are no direct impacts on the workforce for the production of the Self-Assessment, but workforce information has been provided at the relevant sections within the document.
- 5.5 ***Health and Safety***  
There are no direct impacts on Health and Safety for the production of the Self-Assessment, but information has been provided at the relevant sections within the document.
6. **Supporting Evidence**
- 6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***
- 6.1.1 Performance information has been provided at the relevant sections within the document.
- 6.1.2 The learning and evaluations from the self-assessment will be used to inform future planning activity as identified within the Council's Corporate Plan and business planning process.
- 6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***  
Providing a transparent assessment of performance during 2022/23 in order to inform future planning.
- 6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***
- 6.3.1 Involvement is a key area within the Self-Assessment and information has been provided at the relevant sections within the document.
- 6.3.2 There are legislative requirements for engagement as part of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. Information on this has been

included in the self-assessment and will be aligned in future to the agreed engagement and participatory priorities of the Council.

6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

Long term is a key area within the Self-Assessment and information has been provided at the relevant sections within the document.

Learning from the self-assessment is used to inform future planning, including the 5 year Corporate Plan.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

6.5.1 Prevention is a key area within the Self-Assessment and information has been provided at the relevant sections within the document.

6.5.2 Learning from the self-assessment is used to inform future planning and to prevent problems for becoming greater in the future.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

Collaboration is a key area within the Self-Assessment and information has been provided at the relevant sections within the document.

6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

Integration is a key area within the Self-Assessment and information has been provided at the relevant sections within the document.

6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***

Decarbonisation is a key area within the Self-Assessment and information has been provided at the relevant sections within the document.

6.9a ***Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment***

This report is an evaluation of previous performance and activity throughout 2022/23 and is not seeking a decision that would have an impact on this area.

6.9b. ***Equality Impact Assessment***

6.9.1b This report is an evaluation of previous performance and activity throughout 2022/23 and is not seeking a decision that would have an impact on this area.

Equalities is a key area within the Self-Assessment and information has been provided at the relevant sections within the document.

7. ***Monitoring Arrangements***

7.1 Self-assessment is part of the Council's performance management framework of ongoing assessment and review and is aligned to the Corporate Plan and Business Planning process.

**Background Documents /Electronic Links**

- *Blaenau Gwent Council Self-Assessment 2022/23*