

Meeting of:	GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	18 APRIL 2024
Report Title:	SELF-ASSESSMENT APPROACH FOR 2023/24
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CHIEF OFFICER – LEGAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES, HR AND CORPORATE POLICY
Responsible Officer:	ALEX RAWLIN POLICY AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS MANAGER
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	The Performance Framework (of which self-assessment is part) forms part of the Policy Framework.
Executive Summary:	This report outlines an approach to the development of the Council’s self-assessment 2023/24.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to reflect on self-assessment 2022/23 and present Governance and Audit Committee (GAC) with the proposed approach to the development of the self-assessment for 2023/24.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 which received royal assent in January 2021 set out a new local government improvement regime. One of the requirements of the Act is for the council to make and publish a self-assessment report once each financial year. The self-assessment report has to set out conclusions on whether the council met the ‘performance requirements’ during that financial year, and actions needed to improve. The ‘performance requirements’, focus on -

- Is the council exercising its functions effectively;
- Is the council using resources economically, efficiently and effectively;
- Is the council’s governance strong.

- 2.2 The Council published its first self-assessment in October 2022 based on performance in 2021/22. The process was new, but the self-assessment was based on existing data, reports and meeting fora where possible. Feedback on the report was generally positive in terms of the honesty and transparency of ratings, length of the report and simplicity of the language. Some members felt that annual performance data should have been published alongside the self-assessment.

- 2.3 The Council published its second self-assessment in December 2023 based on performance in 2022/23. Reflecting on the first self-assessment, some changes were made, including –
- Using information from the newly developed regulatory tracker,
 - Publishing performance information alongside the self-assessment,
 - Adding case studies to the document,
 - Completing a formal consultation.
- 2.4 Many parts of the self-assessment process have been embedded into the council's regular performance management process, for example the regulatory tracker, inclusion of consultation, engagement and involvement exercises in the quarterly dashboard, and reporting performance against wellbeing objectives rather than directorates.
- 2.5 This is the first-time the self-assessment will review performance against the Council's new Corporate Plan 2023-28 and, as such, a new process for the performance element of self-assessment will be required.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 It is proposed that the performance section of the self-assessment report is updated to reflect the new Corporate Plan 2023-28. A draft outline is included at **Appendix 1** to demonstrate the proposed look and feel of this updated section of the report which would include –
- A performance overview summarising performance against the whole corporate plan, using two graphs showing -
 - How are we doing on our commitments / projects?
 - How are we doing on our performance indicators (PIs)?
 - A performance section for each wellbeing objective (WBO) to include -
 - A single graph that shows - How are we doing on our commitments / projects and our performance indicators?
 - A summary of the aims with a Red, Amber, Yellow, Green (RAYG) rating for each and a short narrative section
 - Regulators Assurances
 - Consultation and Engagement Activities
 - What will we do to improve?
 - Case Studies
- 3.2 The performance team has developed a methodology for developing a RAYG rating for each of the 44 aims in the Corporate Plan. This approach would result in a more objective RAYG rating, based on performance on the commitments and PIs. This would provide useful information to the public about how we are doing at a strategic level (but beyond the Wellbeing Objective level). The proposed methodology is included at **Appendix 2**.
- 3.3 The proposed approach gives a score to each commitment and performance indicator based on their RAYG rating. The individual scores are then combined to give an overall score for the aim (as a proportion of the maximum), using the approach provided in the performance framework. The

performance team has tested this approach based on quarter 3 data, and the findings are also attached in Appendix 2 and summarised (for WBO1 as an example), below -

1.1	Providing high-quality children's and adults social services and early help services to people who need them	Yellow
1.2	Supporting people in poverty to get the support they need / help they are entitled to	Green
1.3	Supporting people facing homelessness to find a place to live	Red
1.4	Supporting children with additional learning needs to get the best from their education	Green
1.5	Safeguarding and protecting people who are at risk of harm	Amber
1.6	Help people to live safely at home through changes to their homes	Red
1.7	Support partners to keep communities safe	Yellow

- 3.4 As in previous years, the Wellbeing Objectives will also each be given a RAYG judgement. This year however, the judgement will be more objective, using the same process as for aims.
- 3.5 It is proposed that the assessment of progress against the second performance requirement (use of resources) follows the same process as last year. Firstly, it is proposed that the 7 use of resources templates are reviewed and updated by the lead officers. All of the 7 areas have been included in the work of Audit Wales in the past two years, and in many cases reviewed, discussed and followed-up by the Governance and Audit Committee or Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, so there is significant additional evidence to draw on. These 7 will then be collated by the performance team for scrutiny and challenge.
- 3.6 The third performance requirement, on governance, is largely covered by the annual governance statement (AGS) which is scrutinised by the Governance and Audit Committee. We propose that this document will be summarised by the performance team as in previous years.
- 3.7 The draft findings from each of the three performance requirements will be brought together into a single presentation for officer scrutiny and challenge in the first instance, at a Heads of Service meeting, and then at a Corporate Management Board (CMB) meeting in mid-June. This will then be tested more formally at a full-day Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) meeting on 3 July and considered alongside end of year performance.
- 3.8 Comments and changes from CPA will be used to inform the draft self-assessment report, which it is proposed will be presented to the Governance and Audit Committee on 19 July as required by the Act. It is also proposed to present the report to Cabinet/CMB before the summer break.
- 3.9 Consultation on self-assessment in 2023 did not provide the constructive feedback anticipated. Discussion with other authorities shows that most are not undertaking direct consultation on their draft self-assessment reports. The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) tell us that the approach other authorities have taken to the consultation duty is not to ask residents for their views on the draft Self-Assessment, but instead to use existing consultation

and engagement feedback as part of the evidence base to inform self-assessment.

- 3.10 In discussions with the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and Data Cymru, it has been established that a national residents survey is being established for 2024. This national resident survey will be a modular, consistent survey to be offered to all local councils free of charge. This centralised approach will enhance comparability through standardisation and contribute to meeting the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. Data will be collected at a postcode level, allowing councils to understand trends at various geographies. In addition, this is an ongoing offer, meaning that trend data will be collected and analysed. The views of the Governance and Audit Committee on this survey would be welcome.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Wellbeing of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Wellbeing Objectives

- 5.1 This report proposes an approach to reviewing the following corporate well-being objectives under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 that form part of the Council's Corporate Plan 2023-28:-

1. A county borough where we protect our most vulnerable
2. A County Borough with fair work, skilled, high-quality jobs and thriving towns
3. A County Borough with thriving valleys communities
4. A County Borough where we help people meet their potential
5. A County Borough that is responding to the climate and nature emergency
6. A County Borough where people feel valued, heard, part of their community
7. A County Borough where we support people to live healthy and happy lives

- 5.2 The 5 ways of working set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act have also contributed to the Council developing its own five ways of working. The ways of driving and measuring those ways of working is also contained in the Corporate Plan Delivery Plan.

6. Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 There are no specific implications of this report on climate change. However,

the self-assessment will help us assess the Council's performance on areas including climate change.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 There are no specific implications of this report on safeguarding or corporate parenting. However, the self-assessment will help us assess the Council's performance on areas including safeguarding and corporate parenting.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Governance and Audit Committee: -
- Considers the proposed way forward for the self-assessment for 2023/24
 - Considers the self-assessment structure set out in **Appendix 1**
 - Considers the proposed methodology for scoring aims set out in **Appendix 2**
 - Considers the options for ongoing public consultation and engagement outlined in paragraphs 3.9 and 3.10.

Background documents

None

Appendix 1 – Draft structure for the performance section of the self-assessment report 2023/24

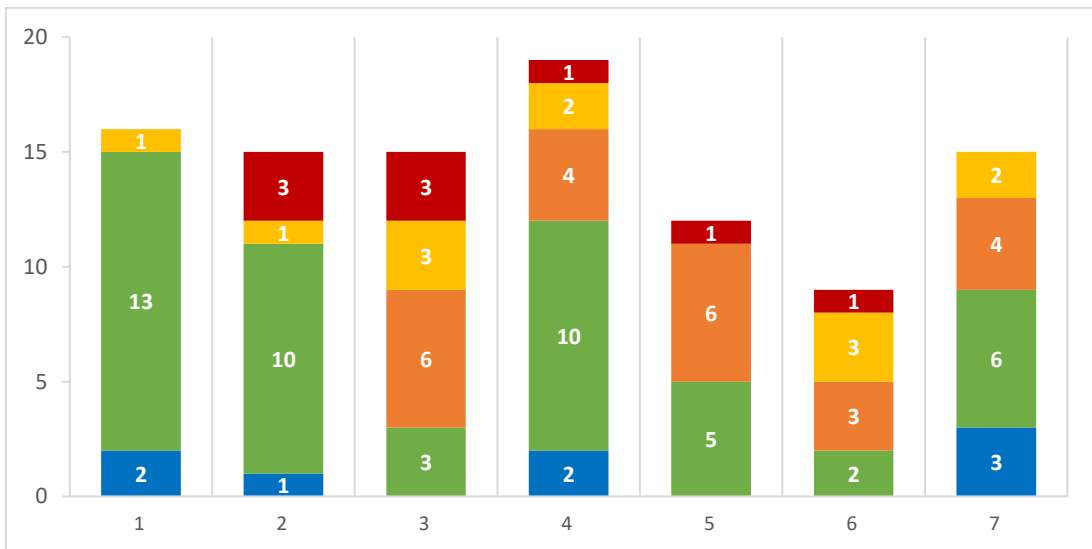
Performance Overview

To support the new, 5-year Corporate Plan, we developed a 1-year delivery plan for 2023/24. The plan includes –

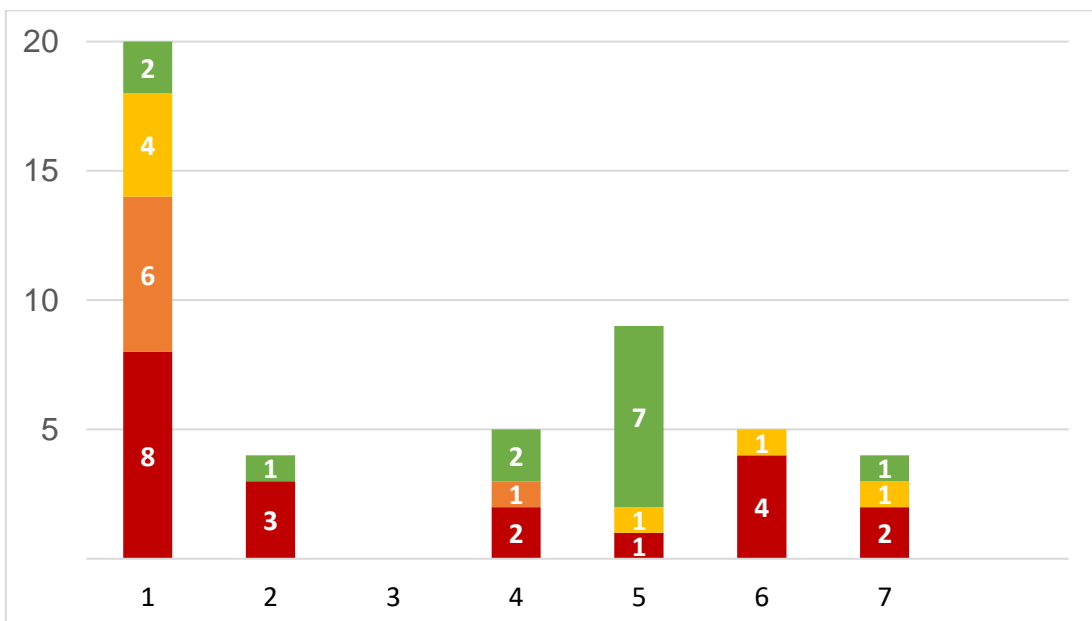
- 101 commitments (projects) the council will do to help us achieve our aims, for example, opening a new recycling centre at Pyle.
- a list of 99 performance indicators to measure our day to day activities, for example, collecting a recycling your household waste.

Each one of these has been given a blue, red, amber or green rating to show you whether they are completed, on target or if we are struggling to achieve them.

Graph 1 – How we are doing on our commitments / projects



Graph 2 – How we are doing on our performance indicators.

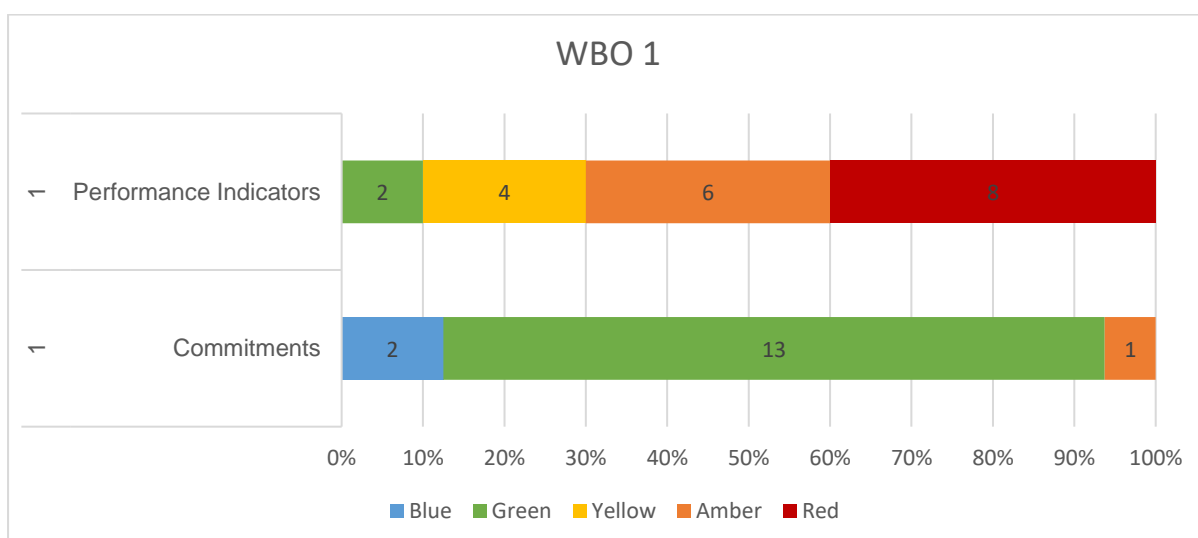


Wellbeing Objective	Score
1 - A County Borough where we protect our most vulnerable	Green

The main ways we will achieve this objective are:

1. Provide high-quality children's and adult social services and early help services to people who need them.
2. Support people in poverty to get the support they need / help they are entitled to.
3. Support people facing homelessness to find a place to live.
4. Support children with additional learning needs to get the best from their education.
5. Safeguard and protect people who are at risk of harm

Graph 3 – How we are doing on our commitments / projects and our performance indicators



The information below gives you more detail on how we are doing on each aim under this wellbeing objective

Aim	RAYG	Performance this year
Helping our residents get the skills they need for work	Green	Employability Bridgend provides support to residents and council employees, including unemployed people, and those in work but struggling with low skills or in-work poverty. By quarter 3 2023-24, 288 people from the Employability Bridgend programme went into employment and 72 people left Employability Bridgend with an improved Labour market position. A number of grant schemes have been launched successfully, and we continue to work in partnership with public and third sector groups to deliver the employability programme, including Careers Wales, BAVO, DWP and Bridgend Employability Network. XX people have been referred to the employment service in Assisting Recovery in the Community (ARC) for support with mental health issues.
Making sure our young	Yellow	73 young people on the Employability Bridgend programme have been supported into education or training. A marketing campaign has

people find jobs, or are in education or training		been developed, targeting young people, to raise awareness of employment and training opportunities. BCBC vacancy issues have been addressed through grow your own schemes, flexible working, and management and leadership development. There has been good progress with the international recruitment of social work staff with eight appointees in post.
Improving town centres, making them safer and more attractive	Red	Engagement has taken place in Maesteg to help influence the town centre strategy which is now being developed. The availability of grant funds for commercial properties in town centres are being advertised and council officers are engaging with interested businesses. Existing schemes that have previously benefited from the funding are nearing completion. We are continuing to investigate further funding options for our town centres by working with both the UK and Welsh Government and Transport for Wales.
Attracting investment and supporting new and existing local businesses	Amber	13 businesses have received support through the shared prosperity fund. There are bi-monthly grant panel meetings as part of the Shared Prosperity Fund business support programme. Work continues on the Supplier Relation Management [SRM] project to help local businesses tender for public sector work. Despite this, the webpage has not been promoted due to staffing and capacity issues. There has been regional engagement with Cardiff Capital Region [CCR] to monitor developments and disseminate information.
Making the council an attractive place to work	Green	A new Employee Assistance Programme was launched in December 2023. Work continues on the menopause and carers protocol. Further positive progress continues with the "Grow your Own" programme. We are developing a staff extranet so that non-desktop users can access the staff intranet. The corporate investment in apprenticeships continues to make a positive impact and a further 3 new apprentices were appointed in Q3. We continue to promote all the savings and benefits that come from Brivilege rewards to assist with the Cost of Living crisis. <i>5 of the 6 PI's are reported on annually so are not included in Q3 data.</i>
Ensuring employment is fair, equitable and pays the real living wage	Green	We continue to work with our supply chain, encouraging employers to offer training and working with our suppliers to become accredited and find out if they are RLW employers. This position has remained the same since Q2. <i>The only PI for this aim is reported annually so is not included in Q3 data.</i>

Regulators Assurances

- To be added

Consultation and Engagement Activities

- To be added

What will we do to improve?

- To be added

Case Studies

- To be added