

Vale of Glamorgan Council Annual Self Assessment 2023/24

Scrutiny Committees September 2024



Annual Self-Assessment Purpose

‘Embedding a culture of evidence based and outcome focused performance, self-reflection and challenge to secure continuous improvement’

- ▶ To meet our performance requirements, annually we will come to a judgement and report on how well the Council is:
 - exercising its functions effectively (*How well are we doing things?*)
 - using its resources economically, efficiently and effectively (*Are we providing value for money?*)
 - governing itself (*How well are we run?*) and
 - we will identify *what and how we can do better?*

Vale of Glamorgan Annual Self-Assessment Report 2023/24

- ▶ **Purpose:** The Draft Annual Self-Assessment report evaluates the Council's progress in meeting its 2023/24 Annual Delivery Plan commitments and Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives. It aims to identify areas for improving internal processes and resource use.
- ▶ **Requirement:** Under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, Welsh Local Authorities must review performance annually and publish a self-assessment report.
- ▶ **Assessment Method:** The report draws on performance and other data, including Directorate Self-Assessments, Peer Challenge, and the Annual Governance Statement. It assesses resource use, achievement of Corporate Plan Well-being Objectives and our governance arrangements.

2023/24 Annual Self Assessment Judgements: Pre-Challenge

ADP Performance Assessment

Our overall judgement is 'Good' against the Annual Delivery Plan 2023/24.

- ▶ We have achieved 85% of 591 planned activities and associated targets set in what was an ambitious Annual Delivery Plan given the context of ongoing significant service demand pressures and a difficult financial and economic climate. The areas of underperformance identified from performance monitoring remain areas of focus in 2024/25 and are reflected in the Council's Annual Delivery Plan and service level delivery plans for the period.

Use of Resources

Our overall judgement is 'Good' for how we are using our resources (people, assets, finance (including procurement and commissioning), engagement insight, performance and risk management, informed by the 2023/24 Directorate Self-Assessments.

- ▶ Across our services we have good evidence of how we have used our resources economically, efficiently, effectively and equitably to enhance performance, achieve outcomes and meet need and are in a strong position to secure future service improvements.
- ▶ A judgement of Fair was attributed to the Council's finance, commissioning and procurement to reflect ongoing demand pressures in service areas and subsequent impact on budget. Whilst returning a breakeven position on the 2023/24 budget, this was achieved after a drawdown on reserves to meet significant demand pressures in a number of service areas which is not a sustainable option for the long term.
- ▶ A judgement of 'Fair' was attributed to our use of engagement insights reflecting the need to embed existing pockets of good practice across all Council services and the Council's commitment to take forward the learning from the findings of the Life in the Vale Survey 2023.

Governance, Risk management and Internal Control Effectiveness

The Draft Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 provides a judgement of 'reasonable assurance' from the Head of Internal Audit:

- ▶ There is reasonable assurance that there are no major weaknesses in our risk management, governance and control processes, based on review, assessment and ongoing monitoring. An Internal Audit Opinion of either 'substantial or reasonable assurance' has been given to 82% of risk-based reviews undertaken in-year testing the effectiveness of the internal control environment with 92% of all recommendations issued being in the low to medium priority categories.

2023/24 Annual Self Assessment future steps

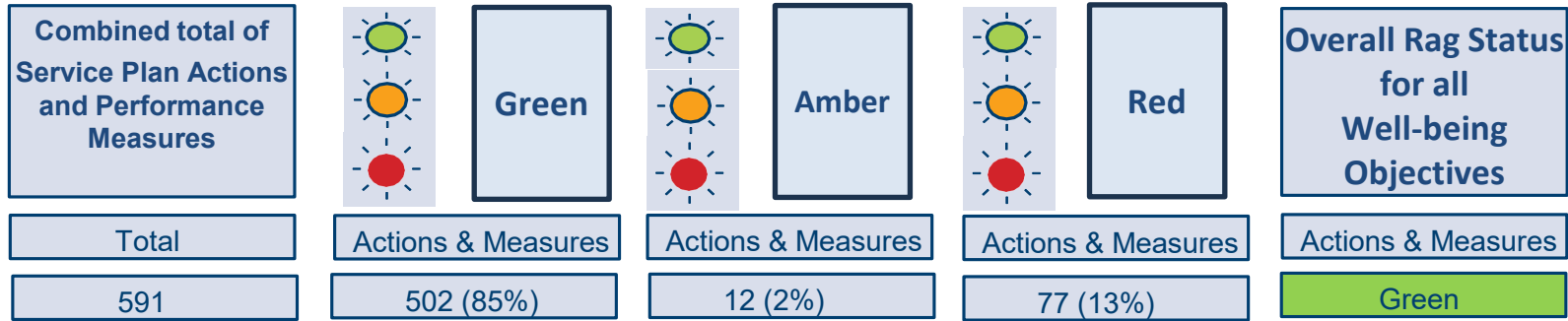
Task/Audience	Meeting Date
Draft Annual Self-Assessment Report considered by Cabinet with referral to all Scrutiny Committees and Governance & Audit Committee. (Pre-consultation draft)	5 th September 2024
Draft Annual Self-Assessment Report considered by all Scrutiny Committees (consultation draft)	9 th September - 18 th September 2024
Draft Annual Self-Assessment Report considered by Governance & Audit Committee (consultation draft)	23 rd September 2024
Final Draft Self-Assessment Report (post consultation) presented to Cabinet for approval with reference to Governance & Audit Committee for consideration and approval.	10 th October 2024
Final Draft Self-Assessment Report considered by Governance & Audit Committee for approval.	21 st October 2024 (If no further comments from G&AC then reference to Full Council for approval (2 nd December)
Final Draft Self-Assessment Report presented to Cabinet for approval with reference to Full Council for approval. (Ref from GAC)	7 th November 2024
Annual Self-Assessment Report considered by Full Council - to include agreement of any recommendations made by the Governance & Audit Committee and proposed actions to be taken in response.	2 nd December 2024
Annual Self-Assessment findings inform the development of the new Corporate Plan 2025-30 and Annual Plans for 2025/26.	October - December March 2024

Future Steps: The findings will contribute to the Council's first Panel Performance Assessment (PPA) in late 2024 and guide the development of the Corporate Plan 2025-30.

Cabinet Actions: The Cabinet is asked to review and endorse the draft report, refer it to the Governance & Audit Committee and Scrutiny Committees for feedback, and consider recommendations before final approval by the Full Council.

ADP Performance Assessment Snapshot

Overall performance against the Annual Delivery Plan 2023/24 is **'GOOD'**



ADP (Actions)	RAG	Direction of Travel	ADP (Performance Measures)	RAG	Direction of Travel	ADP (Actions + Measures combined)	RAG	Direction of Travel
Objective 1			Objective 1			Objective 1		
Objective 2			Objective 2			Objective 2		
Objective 3			Objective 3			Objective 3		
Objective 4			Objective 4			Objective 4		
All ADP Actions			All ADP PIs			Overall ADP		

Directorate Self-Assessment Summary

Overall judgment for how well we have used our resources to deliver our Annual Delivery Plan commitments is ***‘GOOD’**

Pre- Moderation Judgements					
Corporate enablers: Overall Council Summary	Corporate Resources	Environment & Housing	Learning & Skills	Place	Social Services
People	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Finance, Commissioning & Procurement	Good	Fair	Good	Good	Fair
Assets	Good	Fair	Good	Good	Good
Performance	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Risk	Good	Good	Good	Good	Fair
Engagement and Insight	Fair	Fair	Good	Good	Good
Overall rating for ‘how we are using our resources’	Good	Fair	Good	Good	Good

Post- Moderation Judgements					
Corporate enablers: Overall Council Summary	Corporate Resources	Environment & Housing	Learning & Skills	Place	Social Services
People	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Finance, Commissioning & Procurement	Fair	Fair	Fair	Good	Fair
Assets	Good	Fair	Good	Good	Good
Performance	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Risk	Good	Good	Good	Good	Fair
Engagement and Insight	Fair	Fair	Good	Fair	Good
Overall rating for ‘how we are using our resources’	Good	Fair	Good	Good	Good

Final Judgements 2023/24 & Direction of Travel				
Corporate enablers: Overall Council Summary	2021/22 Rating	2022/23 Rating	2023/24 Rating	Direction of Travel (DoT)
People	Good	Good	Good	↔
Finance, Commissioning & Procurement	Good	Good	Fair	↓
Assets	Good	Good	Good	↔
Performance	Good	Good	Good	↔
Risk	Good	Good	Good	↔
Engagement and Insight	Good	Good	Fair	↓
Overall rating for ‘how we are using our resources’	Good	Good	Good	↔

Overall rating for Engagement and Insight revised from ‘Good’ to ‘Fair’ - Acknowledges the existence of good foundations with pockets of good practice and the need to build on those to ensure consistency across the Council both in how we engage and in the use of that insight.

Overall rating for Finance, Commissioning & Procurement revised from ‘Good’ to ‘Fair’ – Recognition of the significant and ongoing financial pressures facing all council services, exacerbated by increased demand for services and other external factors beyond the Council’s control.

Governance, Risk Management and Internal Control Effectiveness

Internal Audit opinion gives reasonable assurance to the Council's governance, risk management and internal control arrangements for the period 2023/24, indicating that from a governance perspective the Council's systems and processes are generally sound.

Annual Governance Statement

- ▶ An opinion of **reasonable assurance** can be given to the Council's governance arrangements based on Internal Audit assessment in accordance with the CIPFA/SOLACE governance framework.

Internal Audit Opinion

- ▶ An opinion of **reasonable assurance** can be given to the Council's framework of governance, risk management and internal control based on Internal Audit opinion.

Emerging Areas for Focus - Council Wide

- Address ongoing workforce recruitment and retention challenges
- Development and retention of key skillsets required to deliver the Reshaping Programme and major Council projects
- Increase workforce diversity and promote a culture of inclusivity
- Strengthen workforce planning within the context of ongoing budgetary pressures
- Work collaboratively to identify assets across the Council which can be put to better use
- Work collaboratively to identify capital improvement and development projects for social care to grow services in line with the market stability report
- Further develop digital services and the rigour around digital progress to maximise new ways of working and ensure responsive services
- Apply new planning policy to reduce carbon output as aligned to our climate change priorities
- Support the development of a whole-authority transformation strategy that supports the longer term financial sustainability of education provision and our schools
- Maximise opportunities to access and use grant funding across Council services and with partners to address local issues and deliver sustainable and impactful services
- Work collaboratively to seek extension of the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) programme to ensure continued support for major regeneration projects
- Implement Audit Wales' recommendations associated with local reviews
- Streamline and reinvigorate the performance and democratic/scrutiny process following the development of a new Corporate Plan
- Embed a placemaking approach in planning, designing and maintaining our community spaces supporting integrated and sustainable communities for the future
- Support and challenge schools to raise levels of attendance with an emphasis on the secondary sector and specialist provision, whilst tackling persistent absence and addressing emotionally based school avoidance and needs of vulnerable learners
- Reduce the overall rate of young people not in employment, education, or training (NEETs)
- Work in collaboration to refine target groups to support employability and seek alternative mechanisms to address need
- Widen access to public arts on a cost neutral basis
- Lead and support the delivery of new homes across the Vale of Glamorgan to respond to growing housing and homelessness pressures
- Support the delivery of net-zero ambitions through recycling services and the management of our fleet and vehicles
- Work with partners to promote community models of care, and to minimise any unnecessary time spent in hospital in line with the Welsh Government Frailty Standard.
- Develop our oversight of engagement activities across the Council to strengthen insight and promote its use to inform decision making and communicate what has changed and/or improved as a result.
- Improve our response and learning from complaints.

Above emerging areas for continued focus are reflected in our Directorate Self-Assessments, the Annual Delivery Plan End of Year Performance Assessment and also identified as significant challenges in the Draft Annual Governance Statement 2023/24.