

Blaby District Council 'Best Value Duty' Voluntary Self-Assessment

1. Introduction & Background

1.1 In the spring of 2025, the Chief Executive of Blaby District Council (Julia Smith) requested that officers conduct an organisational self-assessment of our performance in meeting the statutory 'Best Value' duty.

1.2 The Best Value Duty is outlined in [Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1999](#). This requires Local Authorities to '*make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness*'.

1.3 The self-assessment was entirely voluntary and not instructed or motivated by any external organisations. It was intended to act as a broad 'barometer' of our organisational performance, to provide assurance of aspects that are delivered well and to provide an indication of where improvements could be made.

1.4 In May 2024, the government published a [Statutory Guide for Best Value Standards and Intervention](#) for local authorities which provided greater clarity to the local government sector on how to fulfil the Best Value Duty. It described what constitutes best value, the standards expected by the department, and the models of intervention at the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' disposal in the event of failure to uphold these standards.

1.5 In conducting our 'Best Value' self-assessment, Blaby District Council carefully followed the guidance outlined in this publication which sets out seven overlapping themes of good practice for running an authority that meets and delivers best value. These themes are illustrated below.

Diagram 1: Seven best value themes



- Continuous improvement
- Leadership
- Governance
- Culture
- Use of resources
- Service delivery
- Partnerships and community engagement

1.6 The guidance further defines best value themes by providing a description of the theme and what is expected, along with specific ‘characteristics of a well-functioning authority’. In total, there are 70 separate characteristics across the 7 themes described in the statutory guidance.

1.7 The designated group of officers responsible for carrying out the assessment then began to conduct this against all the ‘characteristics of a well-functioning authority’ contained within each of the seven Best Value themes. A robust systematic process was developed to assess and reflect on current position against the Best Value Duty.

2. Process

2.1 A group of Service and Senior Group Managers who lead the departments most closely related to each theme were assembled as a core project group.

The full group met at an initial 'kick off' meeting in May 2025, where the scope and methodology of the assessment was explained and discussed in full.

Managers with specific and specialist knowledge applicable to each theme were then designated to work on the assessment for those themes. To ensure consistency, the Council's Senior Manager for Corporate Services & Monitoring Officer attended all the themed sessions along with the Council's Performance & Information Manager.

2.2 To ensure suitable scrutiny and challenge as well as a variation of views and knowledge, the project co-ordinators (the Corporate Services & Monitoring Officer and Performance & Information Manager) maximised the number of managers attending each session. This is shown in the table below.

Theme	Number of Managers Involved in the Theme Assessment
Continuous Improvement	7
Leadership	11
Governance	6
Culture	8
Use of Resources	7
Service Delivery	7
Partnerships & Community Engagement	6

2.3 During the kick-off meeting, managers were introduced to the characteristics of a well-functioning authority. In advance of the themed sessions, they were invited to prepare and share evidence of how the Council currently delivers 'Best Value' against each of the characteristics. Conversely, if they were unable to provide evidence, they were encouraged to consider and share (in advance) ways in which the Council could improve itself against these particular characteristics.

2.4 At each themed assessment session, managers reviewed the evidence brought forward systematically for each characteristic. They then discussed an appropriate quantitative score to apply to that characteristic to demonstrate how well they agreed that the Council meets its Best Value duty for each of these.

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The scoring matrix is shown below.

Score Description	Score and Colour Code Applied
Fully delivering best value	5
Mostly delivering best value	4
Partly delivering best value	3
Mostly not delivering best value	2
No evidence of delivering best value	1

2.5 Applying a quantitative score to each characteristic also enabled the full theme to be scored, which in turn, enables a greater level of benchmarking to be applied to any future assessments designed to re-assess progress and ongoing Best Value delivery.

2.6 The seven themed assessment sessions took place during August and September 2025.

3. Summary of Outcomes

3.1 The final scoring 'heat map' output is shown below:

Theme	Assessment Results against all Characteristics of a Well-Functioning Authority'											
Continuous Improvement	CI001 3	CI002 Exc*	CI003 Exc*	CI004 4	CI005 5	CI006 5	CI007 4	CI008 5	CI009 4	CI010 4	CI011 5	
Leadership	L001 4	L002 4	L003 5	L004 5	L005 5	L006 3	L007 3	L008 4	L009 4	L010 5		
Governance	G001 4	G002 3	G003 4	G004 3	G005 5	G006 5	G007 5	G008 Exc*	G009 3	G010 3		
Culture	C001 3	C002 4	C003 4	C004 5	C005 5	C006 4	C007 4	C008 5	C009 5	C010 5	C011 5	
Use of Resources	R001 4	R002 4	R003 5	R004 5	R005 5	R006 3	R007 5	R008 5	R009 3	R010 5	R011 Exc*	R012 3
Service Delivery	SD001 3	SD002 3	SD003 3	SD004 4	SD005 5	SD006 3	SD007 3	SD008 3	SD009 4	SD010 3		
Partnerships & Community Engagement	PC001 4	PC002 4	PC003 3	PC004 4	PC005 2	PC006 3						

* Exc = Excluded as the characteristic is not relevant to Blaby District Council

3.2 In summary, across the seven Best Value themes and 66* 'characteristics of a well-functioning authority' that are described in the statutory Best Value guidance, the following scores have been assigned for Blaby District Council.

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24 characteristics received a score of 5 (dark green) - **Fully delivering best value**

21 characteristics received a score of 4 (light green) - **Mostly delivering best value**

20 characteristics received a score of 3 (yellow) - **Partly delivering best value**

1 characteristics received a score of 2 (orange) - **Mostly not delivering best value**

0 characteristics received a score of 1 (red) - **No evidence of delivering best value**

3.3 *There is a total of 70 characteristics in the [Statutory Guide for Best Value Standards and Intervention](#). Blaby opted to assess themselves against 66 of these, excluding 4 from the process after they were agreed as 'not relevant' for Blaby District Council.

The excluded characteristics are outlined below.

- In the 'Continuous Improvement' theme, characteristics 2 and 3 related to Oflog. This is a government office that no longer exists.
- In the 'Governance' theme, characteristic number 8 refers to wholly or partly owned council commercial entities. Blaby District Council does not currently have any ownership of commercial entities.
- Characteristic 11 in the 'Use of Resources' theme also relates to wholly or partly owned council commercial entities.

3.4 45 of the 66 characteristics (68%) were deemed to be either fully or mostly delivering best value (scoring either 4 or 5), with the gathered evidence demonstrating that the Council can be confident in the validity of these scores and assured that it is delivering against the duty in relation to these characteristics.

However, particularly for those characteristics found to be 'mostly delivering best value', there were several suggested improvements identified that are included in the appended 'Opportunities for Improvement' document.

3.5 The 20 characteristics that were found to be 'partly delivering best value' gave some assurance that the duty was being met, but also that there was clear scope for development and improvement. These again are included in the appended 'Opportunities for Improvement' document.

3.6 1 of the 66 characteristics assessed was found to be mostly not delivering best value. Although this was a concern to the project team and to the Councils Senior

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Leadership, it was felt that this demonstrated that an honest and objective exercise had been completed.

There was significant scope for improvement identified by the project team, with the detail for this included in the appended 'Opportunities for Improvement' document.

4. Conclusion & Next Steps

4.1 The resulting 'Opportunities for Improvement' document, which is appended to this report, will now be assessed by our Senior Leadership team to determine which of the opportunities carry the most value and which are viable to implement in terms of capacity and cost. Those opportunities identified as a priority will then be added to our corporate action plan and service planning processes.

4.2 The project team have also recommended that the assessment process is repeated on a bi-annual basis with the intention of demonstrating quantifiable progress towards maximising the delivery of the Best Value duty for the Council and Blaby District. It is acknowledged that the current uncertainty surrounding Local Government Reorganisation may hinder the opportunity for future repeated assessments, but whilst that uncertainty remains, we should continue with the intention to do this.