

# Best Value Assessment - Opportunities for Improvement

Prepared for: Senior Leadership Team / Audit & Governance Committee

## Executive Summary

### 1 Introduction

1.1 This document is an appendix to the primary Best Value report.

1.2 It lists the opportunities for improvement that have arisen from the assessment of Blaby’s delivery of the Best Value duty against 66 characteristics of a well-functioning authority outlined in the [Statutory Guide for Best Value Standards and Intervention](#) published by the government in May 2024.

1.3 Within the government guidance, the 66 characteristics are divided into 7 best value themes. The table below categorises the characteristics into those 7 themes and includes the opportunities for improvement identified for each characteristic.

1.4 Implementation of these opportunities would increase the likelihood of an improved score during any future repeated assessments, thereby increasing our delivery of the Best Value duty.

1.5 Due to capacity constraints, it may not be feasible for Blaby District Council to implement all the opportunities for improvement. An objective prioritisation exercise will be undertaken to select the opportunities that carry the greatest value and impact.

1.6 The scoring matrix used to assess each characteristic is shown below. **Please note that** this report focused on the characteristics with a score of either 2 or 3, excluding characteristics that were found to be already ‘Fully Delivering Best Value’ (scoring 5) or ‘Mostly Delivering Best Value’ (which scored 4).

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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

Across themes, common areas for improvement relate to

- the consistent use of performance data to evidence delivery.
- clearer articulation of the ‘golden thread’ between corporate priorities, service plans and individual objectives
- stronger and more systematic approaches to risk and learning from complaints
- Improved consistency in how improvement activity is initiated, governed and reviewed.

The detailed tables that follow are intended to inform prioritisation and selection of assurance activity and ongoing improvement planning rather than to represent areas of failure.

### Continuous Improvement

Summary: There were 2 characteristics with an assessment score of under 4 for this theme

Theme / Code	Characteristic of a Well-Functioning Authority	Score	Suggested Areas for Improvement if we want to increase our score
Continuous improvement - CI001 (a)	There is an organisational-wide approach to continuous improvement, with frequent monitoring, performance reporting and updating of the corporate and improvement plans.	3	We will ensure that Data / Performance Measures captured at service level are integral to the service planning process.
Continuous improvement - CI001 (b)	There is some form of established transformation function or programme	3	The development of more specific and defined corporate transformational targets will enable us to demonstrate the impact of our approach to transformation and make it central to our continuous improvement ambitions.

### Culture

Summary: There was only 1 characteristic with an assessment score under 4 identified for this theme.

Theme / Code	Characteristic of a Well-Functioning Authority	Score	Suggested Areas for Improvement if we want to increase our score
Culture - C001	Members and officers promote and demonstrate the highest ethical standards and appropriate working behaviours through established shared values and ways of working	3	Implement a training programme on the constitution and support officers to locate, interpret and utilise relevant protocols. Training to be appropriate dependent upon role.  Incorporate Councillor complaints onto our formal complaints database so that the data can be scrutinised using Power BI.

## Governance

Summary: There were 2 characteristics with an assessment score of under 4 for this theme

Theme / Code	Characteristic of a Well-Functioning Authority	Score	Suggested Areas for Improvement if we want to increase our score
Governance - G009	Performance management and quality assurance information effectively measures outcomes and is frequently interrogated.	3	We will undertake a review to align higher priority measures with projects, the Corporate Action Plan and key objectives. Further we will align the Outcomes Framework to our corporate performance framework.
Governance - G010	Lessons are learned from complaints	3	We will introduce a measure and process to ensure that lessons learned are consistently recorded and reflected up for complaints where we have accepted some or all responsibility.

## Leadership

Summary: There were 2 characteristics with an assessment score of under 4 for this theme

Theme / Code	Characteristic of a Well-Functioning Authority	Score	Suggested Areas for Improvement if we want to increase our score
Leadership - L006	Robust systems are in place and “owned” by members for identifying, reporting, mitigating and regularly reviewing risk	3	We will regularly review the corporate risk register with The Leader and Deputy Leader and ensure that Service Risks are regularly reviewed and updated by meeting as a Corporate Risk Board on a quarterly basis.
Leadership - L007	Effective succession planning, with the recruitment and nurturing of officers with the necessary skills, ensures organisational resilience	3	We will look to formalise our informal approach to mentoring, building on the buddy programme for new service managers and external mentoring for new Group Managers and Directors through Solace, DCN and within Leicestershire Authorities.  We will as part of our transition through LGR, nurture and provide a package of support to our staff to upskill and provide resilience to change.

## Partnerships & Community Engagement

Summary: There were 3 characteristics with an assessment score of under 4 for this theme.

Theme / Code	Characteristic of a Well-Functioning Authority	Score	Suggested Areas for Improvement if we want to increase our score
Partnerships & Community Engagement - PC003	There is early and meaningful engagement and effective collaboration with communities to identify and understand local needs, and in decisions that affect the planning and delivery of services. In some cases, this involves co-design of services.	3	<p>More consideration around co-designing with communities required.</p> <p>We will look at tools that are available, “the voice toolkit” and focus our efforts to match government initiatives such as the Youth Strategy to support co design of services.</p>
Partnerships & Community Engagement PC005	Partners and residents are involved in developing indicators and targets, and monitoring and managing lack of performance. The authority may be beginning to experiment with more participative forms of decision making.	2	Review partners and residents’ engagement in development of performance measures and where opportunities present themselves, we will take up those opportunities.
Partnerships & Community Engagement PC006	The authority drives social and environmental value in their place through mechanisms like procurement and employment.	3	We will embed “Social Value” across all service areas, utilising the best practice we have developed in our procurement. activates. We will continue to monitor, measure and report.

## Service Delivery

Summary: There were 6 characteristics with an assessment score of under 4 for this theme.

Theme / Code	Characteristic of a Well-Functioning Authority	Score	Suggested Areas for Improvement if we want to increase our score
Service Delivery - SD001	Service plans are clearly linked to the local authority’s priorities, strategic plans and longer-term planning – a golden thread that runs through to individual objectives and accountability.	3	We will highlight in the annual review template which prompts individuals to consider how their objectives have contributed towards delivering on our corporate values.
Service Delivery - SD002	Service delivery is evidence based; customer and citizen focused and meets the needs of different groups within the community.	3	Ensure that the corporate plan is evidence based by being measurable in the form of data or key indicators.
Service Delivery - SD003	Users are satisfied with the level and quality of services provided.	3	We will review our approach to measuring customer satisfaction.
Service Delivery - SD006	The authority has complete, timely and accurate data, and the skills to interpret it, to inform decisions.	3	We will improve Data Quality and utilisation of data to inform decision making, particularly widening the use of Power BI as a data analysis and presentation tool.
Service Delivery - SD007	There are clear and effective mechanisms for scrutinising performance across all service areas. Performance is regularly reported to the public to ensure that citizens are informed of the quality of services being delivered	3	Define corporately what we mean by performance and consequently define what 'good' looks like for Blaby, and how we report to the public. We will benchmark using the Outcomes Framework in key areas.

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Theme / Code	Characteristic of a Well-Functioning Authority	Score	Suggested Areas for Improvement if we want to increase our score
Service Delivery - SD008	Procurement processes are economic, efficient and ensure the outcomes of efficient contract procurement and management.	3	<p>We will highlight the requirement to engage with legal services before conducting procurement, entering a contract or placing an order. This is to ensure compliance with Procurement legislation, BDC's own Contract Procurement Rules and ensure we can demonstrate best value</p> <p>The Contract register is under review to improve process, accessibility and visibility.</p>

### Use of Resources

Summary: There were 2 characteristics with an assessment score of under 4 for this theme.

Theme / Code	Characteristic of a Well-Functioning Authority	Score	Suggested Areas for Improvement if we want to increase our score
Use of Resources - R009	Sustainable, competitive corporate functions including procurement and IT which deliver value for money	3	Introduce a formalised process for determining how services are provided, internally, externally or in partnership and triggering a review to determine Best Value.
Use of Resources - R012	Effective project management of projects to enhance governance and effective use of resources	3	We will continue to implement the improvement plan to embed our Project Management processes.