

The Council will continue to work with the community to make the environment an enjoyable and clean space by encouraging people to dispose and recycle correctly.

An ambitious and innovative council delivering the quality services at the right time and in the right place

This Well-being Objective provides a focus for the Council to work in partnership to provide high quality services to meet local need, and improve the quality of life and well-being within the community.

Throughout 2023/24 adequate progress has been made against this Well-being Objective with the achievements outweighing the challenges but noting that some of the actions are behind schedule or falling short.

Finance is a key and ongoing challenge for the Council. Over the years Blaenau Gwent has seen its budget reduce by around £40million, with a further £8.5m million required for 2024/25 and £6m for 2025/26, with potentially an additional £25m savings required to be found over the next 4 years. To meet these challenges, we must think about the way we provide services to reduce costs, and how we can generate income. This may mean us having to reduce, change or stop some services or look at alternative delivery models.

Alongside this there is a risk that school balances will be depleted by March 2025, and that many of our schools will be in a deficit. The Local Authority will work closely with schools to support them to produce deficit reduction plans and to identify financial efficiencies.

The Council will need to work more in partnership with more stakeholders (including our communities) moving forward as it is likely that we will be unable to deliver the amount and scale of current services, and we will need to work with partners for delivery to be undertaken outside of the Council.

As with all organisations, governance is key and ensures that the Council is working within legal requirements and in compliance with its own policies. We have a number of policies, strategies and arrangements in place that ensure we know what we are doing and why, conducting business in an open, transparent, and accountable manner, and upholding the principles of good governance and public service. The external audit reports we have received over the year have included some service based recommendations, but overall, most have recognised that we have made improvements, and we are aware of where changes need to be made.