

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Acting Today for a Better Tomorrow

Corporate Well-being Plan

2023-2028



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL
MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council



Version 2: 2024-2025

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Foreword

Each year the Council reviews its Corporate Wellbeing Plan (CWP). This is the first review of our new CWP which was approved last year. The CWP is the most important document we produce and in it we set out our objectives and aspirations for a future Merthyr Tydfil. In doing this we look back at what we've achieved to date, what lessons we've learned and how we can make the most of opportunities that come our way.

As we have said in previous years, we have faced several challenges over the last few years, and we have had to adapt to meet these and ensure we provide positive responses. We have learned from these experiences and used them to inform this CWP. We have used feedback from our communities, including local residents, businesses, partners, staff, scrutiny (including youth voice) and trades unions. We'd like to thank you all for your views and comments, which we value highly.

It has been well publicised that Councils have needed to find considerable savings, we are no different. We have reflected our position in this plan and are comfortable that our objectives still meet the needs of our residents. The CWP continues to help us prioritise services and allocate resources effectively and efficiently over the coming years.

Our four corporate well-being objectives directly address the identified needs of our communities and contribute to the seven national goals set out in Welsh Government's Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The objectives we want to achieve are:

- An Aspirational Merthyr Tydfil, focused on learning
- A Healthier Merthyr Tydfil
- A Safe and Prosperous Merthyr Tydfil
- A Clean and Green Merthyr Tydfil

We value collaboration and our partnerships and will continue to work together to act today for a better tomorrow.



Councillor Geraint Thomas
Council Leader



Ellis Cooper
Chief Executive Officer

Introduction

This plan sets out our vision, values and priorities for 2023-2028. Developing this Plan has been a collaborative effort, involving Elected Members, Officers, and Partners together with feedback from public consultation. It is a testament to how we can work together to overcome challenges and deliver real outcomes for the residents of Merthyr Tydfil, along with those who work in and visit our town.

We value the impact of our regional working across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg area and aim to work better with a broad range of people and communities, offering opportunities for local people to become more involved.

Our Plan sets out ambitious goals that require us to work with communities and key partner organisations to do things differently. Through our programme of transformation, change, and innovation, we aim to secure the changes we need to positively impact the lives and well-being of both current and future generations. We recognise the significant financial pressures faced by Councils across Wales. This doesn't change our objectives, but we are unlikely to deliver everything at the same time, so we will need to prioritise.

In delivering our objectives we will remain focused on efficiency, effectiveness and economically prudent. We will also continue to apply the sustainability principle; five ways of working: Long-term; Collaboration; Integration; Involvement; Prevention.

We are excited about the opportunities this plan presents and are committed to working closely with our communities to achieve our goals.

Our Shared Vision
“Acting today for a Better Tomorrow”

The Wales we Want



A Prosperous Wales



A Resilient Wales



A Healthier Wales



A More Equal Wales



A Wales of Cohesive Communities



A Wales of Thriving Culture & Welsh Language



A Globally Responsible Wales

To strengthen Merthyr Tydfil’s position as the regional centre for the Heads of the Valleys; and be a place to be proud of where:

The Shared Vision for Merthyr Tydfil:

People learn and develop skills to fulfil their ambition;
 People live, work, and have healthy and fulfilled lives; and
 People visit, enjoy and return

How we will work together to deliver change and achieve our goals:

Merthyr Tydfil CBC well-being objectives	Cwm Taf Morgannwg PSB well-being objectives	Merthyr Tydfil CBC Lead Administration’s Vision
<p>An Aspirational Merthyr Tydfil focused on learning We will strengthen how we enable people to grow and reach their potential.</p>	<p>Healthy Local Communities A Cwm Taf Morgannwg where our communities are inclusive and feel cohesive and people feel safe, supported and valued.</p> <p>Sustainable and Resilient Local Neighbourhoods A Cwm Taf Morgannwg where we understand and respond to the risk of climate change to our communities. To do this we must value, manage and enjoy our green and blue spaces responsibly.</p>	<p>Our people make Merthyr Tydfil a place with a positive future filled with pride for our communities.</p> <p>Taken from <i>People, Place and Pride: Your Independent Vision for 21st Century Merthyr Tydfil</i></p>
<p>A Healthier Merthyr Tydfil We will empower people to live independent and dignified lives.</p>		
<p>A Safe & Prosperous Merthyr Tydfil We will support how our economy recovers and grows.</p>		
<p>A Clean & Green Merthyr Tydfil We will support the creation of a clean and green environment now and in the future.</p>		

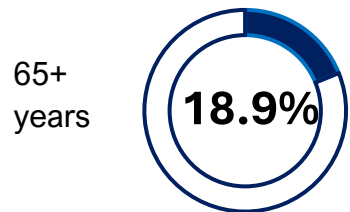
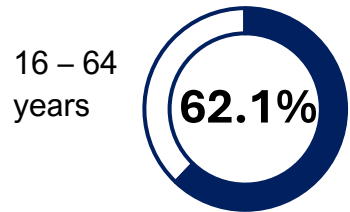
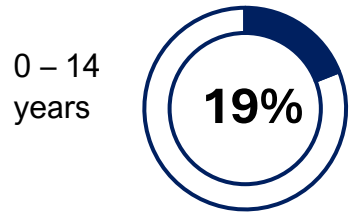
About Merthyr Tydfil

Located in the Heads of the Valleys area approximately 20 miles from the Welsh capital, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough is the smallest Welsh local authority and sits within the Cardiff Capital Region. The UK Census 2021 shows us the following facts and figures about Merthyr Tydfil:

Total Population

58,839

Population by Age Group:



Source: [Census 2021](#)

Health:



Very Good

45.4%

26,718 people



Good

30.2%

17,786 people



Fair

15%

8,837 people



Bad

7%

4,112 people



Very Bad

2.4%

1,386 people

Source: [Census 2021](#)

Ethnicity:

Source: [Census 2021](#)

91.7% 57,140 people	Identify as White
0.9% 510 people	Identify as mixed / multiple ethnic group
1.5% 871 people	Identify as Asian / Asian British
0.2% 91 people	Identify as Black African / Caribbean / British
0.4% 227 people	Identify as other ethnic groups

Merthyr Tydfil CBC's [Local Development Plan](#) (LDP) shows us that the main town of Merthyr Tydfil has a highest concentration of population (approximately 43,000). It is the main retail and service centre in the Heads of the Valleys; fulfilling a key strategic role in the region. Merthyr Tydfil has some of the most deprived areas in Wales.

The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation identified Merthyr Tydfil as having high levels of deprivation; with 28 of its 36 LSOAs recorded as being in the top 50% most deprived areas in Wales. To address this, the Council is developing a 'Tackling Poverty' strategy to enable and deliver targeted and co-ordinated actions in conjunction with our key partners.

Our Council

Number of Council staff:	2,922
Number of electoral wards	11
Number of local Councillors	30
Number of Households	25,800
Number of Primary Schools	19
Number of Secondary Schools	3
Number of 3-16 Schools	1
Number of Special Schools	1
Number of Pupil Referral Units	1

Core Values

The Council has **seven core values**. These were developed with our staff as part of a programme of staff involvement and engagement regarding how we want to work. These values are a link from personal objectives of staff members; to team/ service goals; to our well-being objectives and vision.

Core Values	Honesty and Openness
	Trust and Respect
	Accountability
	Learning
	Aspiration
	Team Working
	Communication

Operating Model

Our Operating Model Our Council approved operating model has been designed to set out how we will deliver our services. It supports us in transforming and improving how we work. Our operating model (built on the 5 ways of working) includes how we should work **economically, efficiently** and **effectively**.

We have set out the **8 operating principles** and expectations.

Listening and engaging with our stakeholders	Clear communication	Embracing digital technology
Focusing on key priorities and outcomes	Consistently and timely implementation of strategy	Aligning the budget to key priorities
Everyone is accountable	Promoting independence	

Financing the Plan

Local Government continues to face unprecedented financial challenges with inflation outstripping the levels of funding settlements provided. This has resulted in higher than anticipated borrowing costs, energy costs and cost of living pay awards for staff. With a revenue settlement of 3.9% for 2024/25, the Council had an initial funding gap of £12m.

To support the setting of a balanced budget for 2024/25, directorates were given budgetary targets to work to, based on a number of service prioritisation factors as set out below:

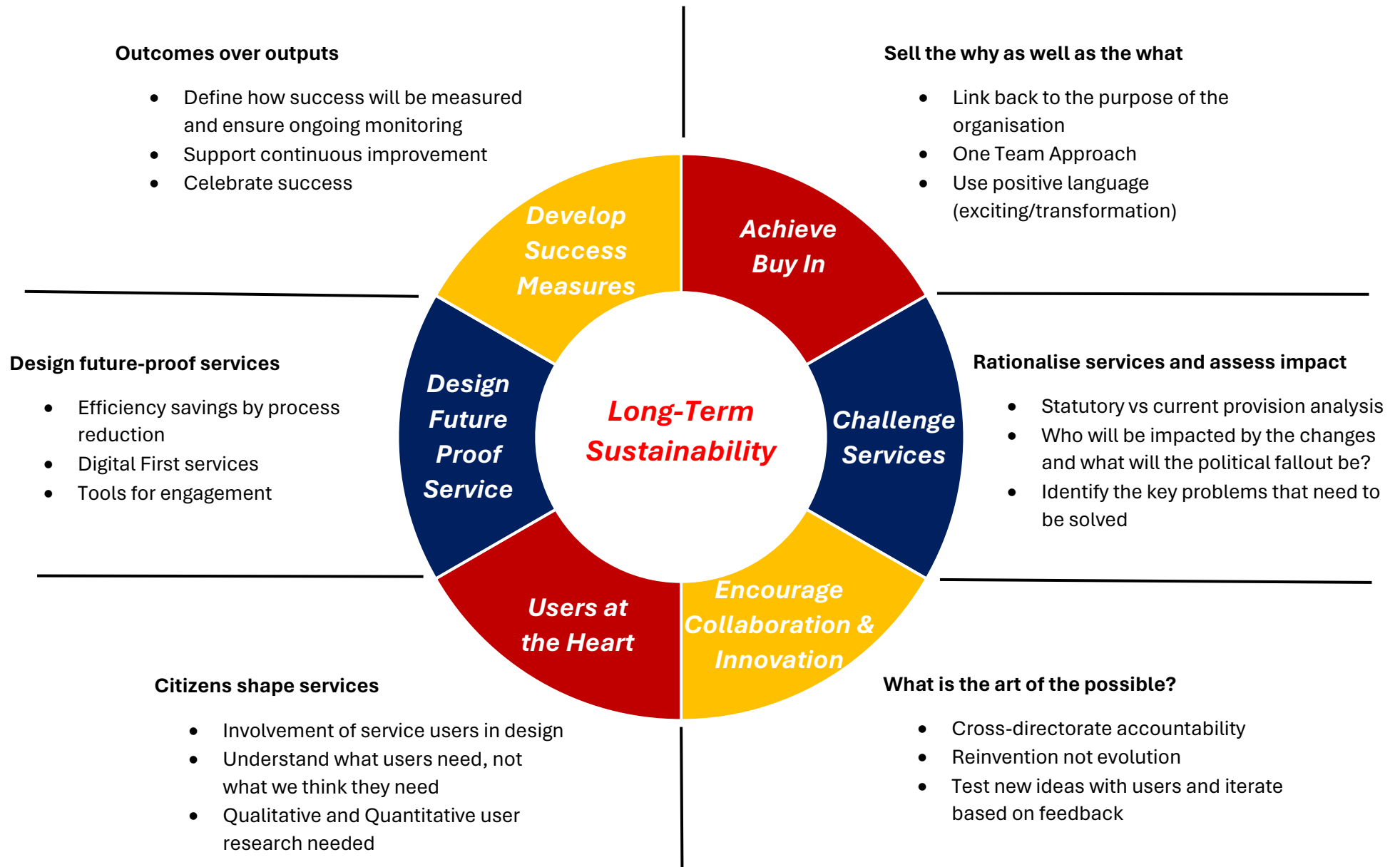
- The amount of statutory services in that directorate
- The amount of uncontrollable costs vs discretionary spend
- The demand levels within the directorate
- The priority of that directorate in achieving the Council's Vision

This process resulted in the setting of a balanced budget with a budget requirement of £160.8m, as outlined below.

Directorate	£m	%
Education	62.8	39.1
Social Services	48.2	30.0
Economy & Public Protection	9.6	6.0
Neighbourhood Services	12.1	7.5
Governance & Resources	8.7	5.4
Corporate Costs	19.4	12.0
Net Expenditure	160.8	100.0

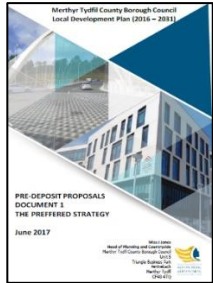
This longer-term, transformational approach is critical to the financial sustainability of the Council and will provide assurance to all stakeholders (including Welsh Government & Audit Wales) that the Council can respond to future challenges. To support this sustainability, the Council has maintained its General Reserves at an appropriate level of £5.7m, which is between 3.5% and 4% of the Council's net revenue budget, in line with our reserves policy.

Whilst this level of service prioritisation will continue over the course of the Corporate Plan, it is evident that deliver long-term financial sustainability, a transformational approach is required. Further work will be carried out throughout 2024/25 to develop a longer-term approach. Initial principles, that will guide that longer-term approach, are set out in the diagram below:

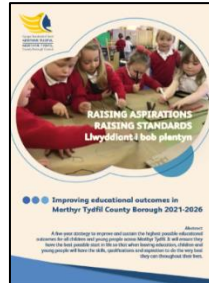


How does the Corporate Well-being Plan link to our other Key Corporate Strategies?

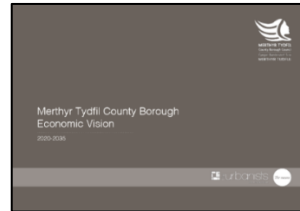
When developing the Corporate Well-being Plan, we ensured that the focus linked to the Council's other key strategies. To find out more about how, you can explore these strategies further by clicking on the image.



Replacement Local Development Plan



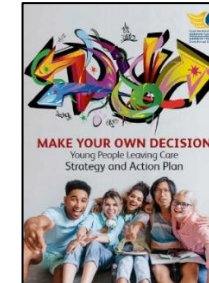
Raising Aspirations, Raising Standards



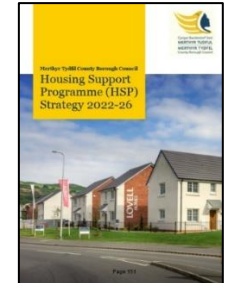
15-Year Economic Vision



Decarbonisation Plan



Young People Leaving Care Strategy



Housing Support Programme Strategy



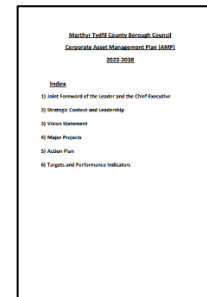
Merthyr Tydfil Nature Recovery Plan



Early Years Partnership Plan



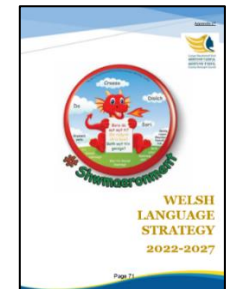
Communication & Engagement Strategy



Corporate Asset Management Plan



Healthy Organisation Strategy



Welsh Language Strategy



Key:



An Aspirational Merthyr Tydfil



A Healthier Merthyr Tydfil



A Safe & Prosperous Merthyr Tydfil



A Clean & Green Merthyr Tydfil

How have we used Stakeholder Feedback to Focus our Objectives?

When developing our well-being objectives, we undertook a broad [engagement exercise](#) to set out proposed objectives, going back out to stakeholders to consult with them on whether they felt these proposed objectives met their view of what the Council should be focusing on to improve the social; economic; environmental and cultural needs identified in Merthyr Tydfil. Over the past 12 months, the Council has engaged with stakeholders for a number of purposes, see examples below.



We have reviewed the feedback received from our stakeholders to help us as we test whether the focus of our well-being objectives remains relevant.

Our Well-being Objectives

As a Council, we continue to make progress in transforming how we work to ensure we are as efficient, effective and economical as possible with a view to maintaining a high standard of service delivery. Merthyr Tydfil CBC has seen significant changes in how it works; positively responding to legislative changes (such as the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act; and the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act). We also need to respond to things which are outside of the Council's direct control (e.g.) the impact of BREXIT; the ongoing cost-of-living crisis etc. We have also listened to our community feedback; our customers and partners; and have been grateful for the guidance, advice and toolkits offered by our regulatory partners.

Following this process; we have confirmed our four well-being objectives remain valid and continue to align with the facts and evidence that our data and information and feedback have provided. The Council's four well-being objectives will remain:

An Aspirational Merthyr Tydfil focused on learning	A Healthier Merthyr Tydfil	A Safe & Prosperous Merthyr Tydfil	A Clean and Green Merthyr Tydfil
We will strengthen how we enable people to grow and reach their potential	We will empower people to live independent and dignified lives	We will support how our economy recovers and grows	We will support the creation of a clean and green environment now and in the future

These four well-being objectives will together form a cohesive basis for activity to deliver not only our local well-being outcomes; but also, to maximise our contribution to delivering the seven national well-being goals in an increasingly integrated way.

Each well-being objective helps the Council to contribute to multiple goals. When we originally set our Corporate Plan, we identified a number of key focus areas which we, as a Council, would focus on to make continued, positive progress. Following 12 months of delivery, we can now outline the progress made on actions made to date, whilst also confirming the main focus of our activities during 2024/2025.

Let's look at each of these well-being objectives in more detail.

Objective 1 – An Aspirational Merthyr Tydfil, focused on learning

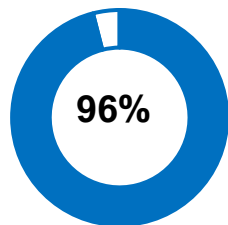
For the first year of delivery of this Plan, we identified five key actions which we would focus on to help us make positive progress against this well-being objective.

Key Action	What we've done to date
<p>Developing ambitious pathways which will support the development of high levels of literacy, numeracy and digital skills from early years through to post-16</p>	<p>In partnership with the National Literacy Trust nearly all primary schools are engaged in a developing Literacy project & have all involved have received money towards books and equipment for school libraries with one school having a bespoke library funded. All secondary school are involved in an oracy project again with National Literacy Trust and Birmingham University. A project involving primary schools in partnership with Value Added Education is working on a Welsh Language App – Caru Cymru with several other schools also involved with the same provider developing their own apps.</p>
<p>Continuing to explore and expand our 'Pathways to Employment' scheme to provide specific training and employment support to children looked after and other vulnerable learners</p>	<p>The Local Authority, in 2021 committed a proportion of Core finance for the Pathway to Work; then in 2023 we were successful in gaining SPF funding. This funding was used to recruit a new mentor in addition to the core funded mentor, an admin role, and finances to run the ILM alongside the Core funded element of the ILM.</p> <p>Since the start of the Pathway to Work programme, the team have supported over 30 CLA individuals into Employment.</p> <p>In 2021-2022, the project supported 63 young people, 16 of whom secured employment, 12 of whom went on to higher or further education and two who gained apprenticeships.</p> <p>Current delivery 2022-2024 is the continued support for 54 CLA individuals. 11 into ILM (Intermediate Labour Market Model) supported employment, 4 into Volunteering, 8 into higher or further education, 10 partaking in Internal training with host employer and/or Local Authority and 4 individuals taken part and completing training with external provider.</p> <p>We have a partnership joint project between Merthyr Tydfil CBC and EE mobile network called 'Seren Dyfodol' across schools in the County Borough. This scheme, targeting 14–16-year-old CLA pupils, aims to support and mentor young people with homework, work experience and sports activities of their choice across a two-year period. The project aims to target young people who may be struggling currently within their school environment and offers them a guaranteed place on an EE apprenticeship post 16 if this is their desired route. As a result of this highly successful and innovative project we have been able to work with the Learning Department to support roll out to all Merthyr Tydfil CBC schools.</p>

	<p>Recently 3 CLA participants who were engaged on the Seren Dyfodol project gained apprenticeships at EE.</p> <p>We have recently developed a new project called 'Ewch Amdani' (Go for it) - The project supports school age children ages 11- 16/18 with their future goals and dreams. The project will allow the children to have a better understanding about different career paths and how to achieve these goals. The programme will give the children a taste of real-life skills, and it will introduce them to a variety of opportunities and how they themselves can achieve anything they want to. The project will open their eyes to what's on their own doorsteps in relation to further education, training, apprenticeships, college, universities, and employment.</p> <p>We have been successful in securing additional further funding to expand the Pathway to Work project via SPF for 2024/25. This will allow us to further develop, paid work placement opportunities.</p>
<p>Connecting with education providers and businesses to better align courses / modules with high level vocational experience and learning</p>	<p>The work of the Business Education Together Partnership was formally launched in The College Merthyr Tydfil in January – this work shows how schools and businesses from across the County Borough and wider are working together to meet the needs of the not only the Curriculum but also providing opportunities for children and young people to understand different work environments. This has been further developed to link Welsh speaking businesses in particular with schools.</p>
<p>Developing a system where communities and schools work together to provide exciting opportunities and innovative experiences for all learners</p>	<p>The Community Focused Schools agenda is working across the County Borough. This work is starting to link community groups more closely with schools to support and develop high quality learning opportunities for all. This work is also seeking to engage parents more actively with the work in schools aiming to increase attendance levels of all learners.</p>
<p>Working with all stakeholders, we will develop aspirational pathways for learning for all</p>	<p>Working with The College Merthyr Tydfil we are developing a series of options for learners who require an alternative curriculum and those who are academically more able. This work also includes partnerships with businesses and the work done with Economic Regeneration.</p>

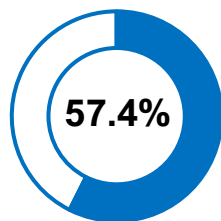
To understand how this is making a difference, you can read some **case studies**.

Responses to our Budget Consultation and Residents Survey told us that people felt the following services were really important for the Council to focus on:



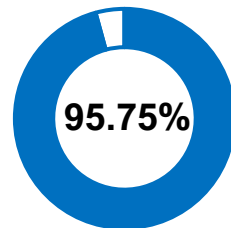
Education

Up from 85%

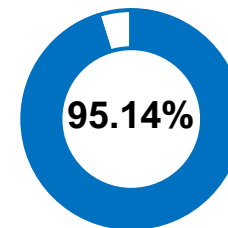


Community Regeneration
including Adult Education

Down from 60.8%



improving education
was very or fairly important



supporting people
into work was important

What we will focus on in 2024/2025

1. Continuing to improve the attendance in all schools
2. Develop a mechanism for sharing good practice across all schools
3. Further develop the partnership work for those learners in need of an alternative curriculum
4. Develop opportunities for learners more able and talented (academically and otherwise)
5. Continue to development of the Literacy Strategy and Digital Strategy Groups but ensure a focus on numeracy skills through partnerships.

How can residents help us:

- Encourage your child to attend school regularly.
- Support your child to get the best out of their education.
- Take part in local events in schools, community centres and hubs.
- Take part in lifelong learning courses and events and tell your friends and family about them.
- Let us know what adult learning courses you are interested in and take part in our adult learning courses.
- Share your views on the things that matter to you by taking part in Council surveys or consultations.

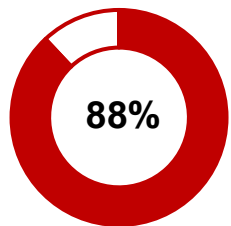
Objective 2 – A Healthier Merthyr Tydfil

For the first year of delivery of this Plan, we identified five key actions which we would focus on to help us make positive progress against this well-being objective.

Key Action	What we've done to date
Providing support services to enable people to remain living in their own homes	Delivered at 3000-3500 hours of domiciliary care per week to support people to remain at home. Supported at 160 people through the provision of direct payments in order for them to purchase the care to meet their assessed needs.
Developing integrated service responses with health to achieve better well-being outcomes for children and adults	Developed Camau Babi service for Merthyr Tydfil as a part of the regional workstream and pathway to services. Attendance at Parent Infant Relationship regional groups – recruitment of a Parent Infant Relationship strategic psychological lead for the region. Commissioned emotional wellbeing preventative therapeutic support. Developed a new joint regional community model for adults based on urgent care and the health needs of the population.
Provide additional supported accommodation to reduce homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation	Developed supported accommodation for young people 16+. Increased the Supported accommodation for 18+. Increased the temporary accommodation utilising HMOs to meet our statutory duties. Continued to work with housing and partners to develop an extra care facility in the coming years. Increased the development of general needs affordable housing through WG Grant Funding to increase 1 bed properties and other homes in line with local need to reduce overreliance on B&B and work towards a rapid rehousing model.
Provide safeguarding advice and support to all vulnerable groups: children looked after; child protection; adults at risk (including domestic abuse) whilst ensuring cross-cutting Council multi-agency approaches to safeguarding and working with the Regional Safeguarding Board are sustained and developed	Development of new regional child sexual and criminal exploitation pathways. Review of MASH- to divert work to the correct teams and reduce delay. This will increase IAA support able to be provided. Reviewed the provision of adult safeguarding and revised the structure to improve outcomes for vulnerable adults. The governance around the Corporate Safeguarding Reference Group has been strengthened. The Safeguarding Policy and the Whistleblowing Policy have both been updated. We continue to adhere to the work of the CTM safeguarding Board. The Director of Social Services is the Chair. We sit on various subgroups and are part of the pilot of Single Unified Safeguarding Review.

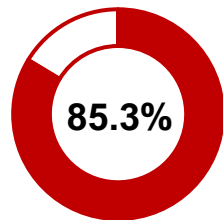
To understand how this is making a difference, you can read some **case studies**.

Responses to our Budget consultation and Residents Survey told us that people felt the following services were really important for the Council to focus on:



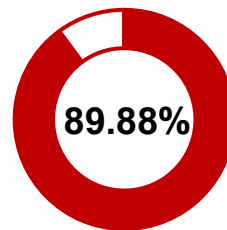
Social Services

Up from 79.3%

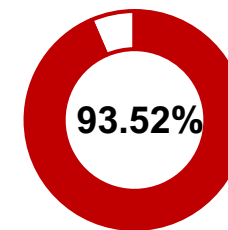


Care for the Elderly

Up from 79.2%



housing for local people
was very or fairly important



maintaining our parks
and green, open spaces was

What we will focus on in **2024/2025**

1. **Adults Services**

Move to the implementation stage of the new regional adult community model.

Review all high-cost placements to ensure that people are receiving the care they need.

2. **Children's Services**

Finalise the Corporate Parenting Strategy and work to the corporate parenting charter.

Provide safe and stable accommodation within Merthyr Tydfil for children looked after.

Increase the support provided to Special Guardians within Merthyr Tydfil.

3. **Safeguarding**

Implement the revised arrangements for adult safeguarding.

Continue to work with partners in the Cwm Taf Morgannwg safeguarding board arena.

Review the impact of the implementation of the Right Care Right Person.

4. **Housing and Homelessness**

We want to continue to use grants to develop affordable housing to move people from B&Bs.

We will turn our data into intelligence to better support in meeting need.

We will stop using out of county B&Bs and purchase additional properties within the County Borough to help meet the needs of our clients.

How can residents help us:

- Consider becoming a foster parent.
- Encourage young people to take part in local events and make their views known.
- Use our parks and open, green spaces to maintain or improve your physical and mental health.
- Share your views on the things that matter to you by taking part in Council surveys or consultations.
- Link in with your local Councillor if you need more information on anything.

Objective 3 – A Safe & Prosperous Merthyr Tydfil

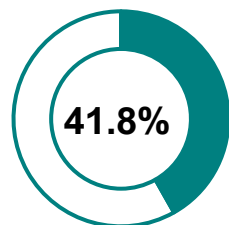
For the first year of delivery of this Plan, we identified five key actions which we would focus on to help us make positive progress against this well-being objective.

Key Action	What we've done to date
Developing and rolling-out an aspirational Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Placemaking Plan;	<p>Since its adoption by Full Council in November 2020, the Council has continued to implement the Placemaking Plan through the development and delivery of a number of projects including Howfields, Marsh House, Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Centre and the Former Synagogue. The projects have had a positive impact on the Town Centre creating new facilities, employment opportunities and will contribute to improving the experience for local people and visitors to the Town Centre. The Council has also continued to develop plans for the key strategic sites namely Glebeland, Lower High Street and St. Tydfil Shopping Centre. The development and delivery of projects has enabled the Council to successfully secure significant levels of funding from the WG Transforming Towns Programme and significant levels of match funding from the private / public sector.</p>
Increasing economic activity rates through partnership activities; leading to lower levels of worklessness across the County Borough	<p>Town Centre Hub development is operational. 4th December 2023 saw the opening of the new facility funded by UK Gov Shared Prosperity Fund. The town centre hub will act as a central town centre drop in facility to support people with complex barriers that they face with Housing, Employment, Skills and matters linked to Social Services.</p> <p>A partnership corner is a design feature of the Town Centre Hub and host various partners throughout each working week at the hub. Partners offer advice and guidance on various subject matters.</p> <p>Communities for Work Plus programme has a daily presence in the Town Centre Hub. This service offers an opportunity to engage with the programme and explore alternative options on upskilling and employment.</p> <p>Working in partnership with Job Centre Plus, a youth hub has been established to link in with young people who access the services of Work Coaches at Job Centre Plus. This is a recent development and to date is going well.</p> <p>Various events have been planned with partners. Cost of Living Event which was held on the 13th February 2023. A spring recruitment fair is being held on the 21st March 2024. This will allow businesses locally and regionally to offer live vacancies to those who are attending. It is expected that over 18 employers will be at the event.</p>
Tackling anti-social behaviour in conjunction with relevant partners, using effective enforcement techniques	<p>CCTV – The use of CCTV to proactively detect ASB and community safety issues at the earliest possible opportunity. Over 75% of everything recorded is typically proactively detected or witnessed by CCTV staff.</p>

	<p>CCTV – Retrospectively viewing and supplying evidence for ASB & Crime that is key in many successful cases.</p> <p>ASB – Utilising the ASB staged approach as part of the ASB, police and crime act 2015.</p> <p>WARDENS – Referring ASB cases into the ASB team.</p> <p>WARDENS - Submitting intelligence so community safety partners can take an evidence lead approach at the earliest point.</p> <p>YOUTH JUSTICE TEAM – We work closely with the youth justice team.</p>
<p>Improving business support opportunities throughout Merthyr Tydfil County Borough; promoting business ownership and preparing an engagement/pathway programme to access start-up opportunities;</p>	<p>Employability offers recruitment solutions to all employers that are identified by the business support team and physical regeneration within Community Regeneration. All support is bespoke and would be developed in line with recruitment and support needs of the employer.</p> <p>The Encouraging Enterprise programme, centred around the MTEC facility has provided a highly visual enterprise resource in the heart of the town. The MTEC centre has established a proven methodology, focused on effective partnership working to ensure that participants receive the right level of support, at the right time from the right agencies. These agencies include; Business Wales, Development Bank of Wales, Princes Trust, Purple Shoots to name but a few. Rather than act as solely a sign posting service, MTEC supports pre and post start businesses through the maze of delivery available and where no delivery exists, will endeavour to source it. This has significantly increased access to resources and currently have more than 380 businesses registered against an initial target of 120.</p> <p>MTEC has developed referral links across the Borough and liaises with partners that can direct individuals to our service, whilst providing them with resources and case studies promoting enterprise as a routeway. For example, we have maintained excellent links with Jobcentre Plus, who utilise MTEC for those claimants who are either Unemployed, Economically Inactive or, as we see more prevalently, underemployed. We have a “Three Way Assessment” for new referrals that explores their Enterprise skills and experience, Generia skills, such as literacy, numeracy and digital and other factors, such as personal circumstances, etc. This forms the basis for their development plan, which will incorporate input from a wide range of partners. Additionally, we hold a joint Governance / Case Management meeting fortnightly to discuss how we can overcome barriers for businesses and provide the most seamless service.</p>
<p>Continue to develop an aspirational Merthyr Tydfil to attract investment</p>	<p>Using our plans and strategies, work collaboratively to attract investment. This builds on the work already done and set out above in this section.</p>

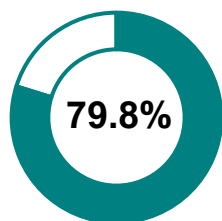
To understand how this is making a difference, you can read some **case studies**.

Responses to our Budget Consultation and Residents Survey told us that people felt the following services were really important for the Council to focus on:



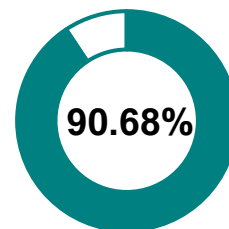
Physical Regeneration

Down from 47%

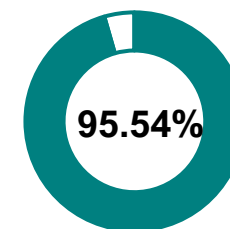


**Public Protection
& Crime & Disorder**

Down from 80.2%



developing and supporting
improved public health



providing support to local
businesses/high streets

What we will focus on in 2024/2025

1. Work with the new Town Centre Board to support actions arising from the UK Government Long Term Plan for Towns programme.
2. Implement and continuously review the Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Placemaking Plan by Summer 2024.
3. Develop a pathway for College Merthyr Tydfil Students to progress to Enterprise Opportunities within the County Borough.
4. Support businesses to effectively engage with Decarbonisation initiatives.
5. Initiate new programmes for those individuals classed as “Under-employed”.

How can residents help us:

- Buying local from local business, supporting local businesses to trade and keeping money in our local area.
- If you run a local business, think about hosting an apprentice to help build skills for the future.
- Access the Council’s free Employability projects to gain the skills and experience employers are looking for.
- Take responsibility for your local area by reporting issues to help us better understand how we can help resolve these.
- Share your views on the things that matter to you by taking part in Council surveys or consultations.
- Link in with your local Councillor if you need more information on anything.

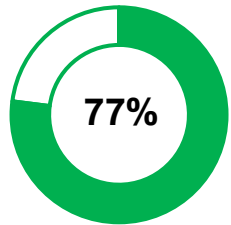
Objective 4 – A Clean & Green Merthyr Tydfil

For the first year of delivery of this Plan, we identified four key actions which we would focus on to help us make positive progress against this well-being objective.

Key Action	What we've done to date
Delivering the Merthyr Tydfil Nature Recovery Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We were awarded the prestigious Pro Landscaper project award for Community Green Space under £50,000, Natures Gift Garden in Troedyrhiw in November 2023. Dowlais High Street greening corridor Redefining the Landscape at The Incline, Twynyrodyn Penywern ponds – new hedge, tree lined avenue, seating, change of grassland management, woodland thinning, removal of fences, pond restoration.
Delivering a Council approved Net Zero Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan adopted by Council June 2023, setting out 6 key themes: Building & Estates management, Mobility & Transport, Procurement, Outsourced services, Land management, Governance Implemented a governance structure where each theme lead presents progress to CMT every 6 months.
Ensuring green spaces are accessible to our residents to support their health and well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.25ha of open space was secured as part of a planning application for an allocated housing site at Twynyrodyn, which included access improvements. 10 playgrounds have been refurbished across the County Borough, increasing opportunities for residents to access the outdoor environments to improve their health and wellbeing. Effective implementation of LDP policies ensured that no priority open spaces were lost to development. Green flag status of our parks was maintained, ensuring residents have access to good quality outdoor recreation.
Meet the Welsh Government waste Recovery target of 70%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retrieval of additional capacity bins deemed no longer required following a monitoring campaign. Appointment of an externally funded temporary Warden focusing on recycling waste electrical products. Monitoring food waste participation and engagement with residents who do not recycle. Introduced a free bulky metals and large domestic appliance collection service. Introduced a household bulky rubble collection service.

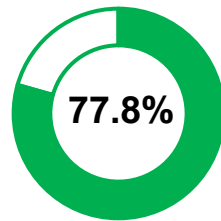
To understand how this is making a difference, you can read some **case studies**.

Responses to our Budget Consultation and Residents Survey told us that people felt the following services were really important for the Council to focus on:



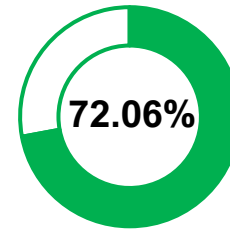
Refuse & Waste

Down from 82%

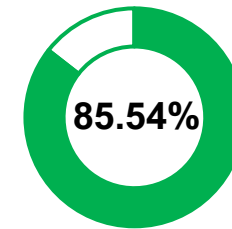


Highways and Infrastructure

Up from 76.3%



developing more cycling and walking routes



work with communities to tackle climate change

What we will focus on in 2024/2025

1. Delivering the Merthyr Tydfil Nature Recovery Plan - Focus on communication and engagement with the public to improve understanding of our biodiversity responsibilities.
2. Delivering the Councils Net Zero Plan - Develop the actions under each of the 6 themes.
3. Ensuring Green spaces are accessible to our residents to support their health & wellbeing - Joint review of the Open Spaces Strategy by Planning & Countryside.
4. Meet the Welsh Government waste Recovery target of 70% - Focus resources on increasing the % of households that recycle food waste.

How can residents help us:

- Make sure you reuse or recycle to reduce waste and better manage our carbon footprint.
- Use our parks and green, open spaces to help people manage their health and well-being.
- Think about how you can make your home more energy efficient, saving you money and helping our environment.
- Take pride in our town by not dropping litter, fly tipping and cleaning up after your dog.
- Share your views on the things that matter to you by taking part in Council surveys or consultations.
- Link in with your local Councillor if you need more information on anything.

Delivering our Objectives

Since the Corporate Well-being Plan received initial approval from Full Council on 19th April 2023; the objectives have been delivered via a number of key projects. These projects include:

An Aspirational Merthyr Tydfil focused on learning	A Healthier Merthyr Tydfil	A Safe & Prosperous Merthyr Tydfil	A Clean and Green Merthyr Tydfil
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Focused School • The Merthyr Motivates project • Adult Community Learning projects • Communities 4 Work • Communities for Work + • Employability projects funded via the Shared Prosperity Fund • Pathways to Employment programme • School Improvement Forum • Children’s Cabinet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pathways to Employment • Profit Elimination projects • The Stay Well @ Home project • Activities and projects at Tŷ Enfys • The Early Help Hub • Delivery of Housing Support Grant projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local community safety partnership projects • Regional community safety partnership projects • Town Centre Partnership projects • Tourism Development Group projects/activities • Delivery of the Town Centre Master Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Places for Nature projects • Green Flag Management Plan projects • Behavioural Change projects e.g. Keeping up with the Jones’; Be Might, Recycle project; the Metal Matters projects etc. • Delivery of Decarbonisation projects

Supporting the Plan

A number of key actions plans and strategies have been developed and approved over the past twelve months which provide a framework which staff can use when working with other services across the Council.

To successfully deliver the commitments in this Corporate Well-being Plan; we are continuing to develop as an organisation to increase our resilience; and to ensure we continue to positively respond to the needs identified in our communities. To do this we must look at how corporately we use our resources effectively, efficiently and economically.

This section sets out how we will use our resources across our Corporate Support Services to enable us to deliver the plan. To do this we will focus on the following key areas:

- Corporate Planning
- Customer Services
- Communications, Engagement and Participation
- Corporate Risk Management
- Welsh Language and Equalities
- Scrutiny
- Digital and Data
- Workforce Planning
- Financial Planning
- Commercialisation and Procurement

Corporate Planning

In the aftermath of the recent post-COVID journey, characterised by dwindling budgets and increasing service demands from our residents, MTCBC must reshape itself. The priority is clear: to become more efficient, effective, and economic. Central to this transformation are key principles that guide our corporate planning, ensuring a recalibrated organisation ready to meet the evolving needs of our community. We have identified essential focus areas as set out below:

Sound Governance

- *Strategic Oversight:* We commit to robust governance practices that provide strategic direction, transparency, and accountability in our decision-making processes.
- *Adaptive Leadership:* Embracing a leadership style that navigates uncertainties, ensuring the Council remains agile and responsive to changing circumstances. We will achieve adaptive leadership by fostering a culture of continuous learning, embracing change as an opportunity, promoting innovation, and empowering diverse teams to make agile and informed decisions.

Performance Management with a Three-Layer Model

- *Clear Articulation:* We are redefining performance management with a three-layer model, ensuring objectives are well-defined at the organisational, departmental, and individual levels.
- *Alignment with Goals:* Every action will be geared towards achieving our collective objectives, fostering a results-oriented culture throughout the organisation. We need a focus on the 'So What?'

Logical Service Pairings

- *Adding Value:* We're strategically reorganising services to create logical connections, ensuring a seamless and value-added approach to service delivery.
- *Efficient Workflows:* This initiative seeks to streamline processes, eliminating redundancies, and enhancing the overall efficiency of our operations.

Intelligent Data Utilisation

- *Customer-Centric Insights:* By intelligently using data, we aim to make informed service interventions that better meet the needs of our customers.
- *Adaptive Strategies:* Data-driven insights will guide our strategies, allowing us to adapt and tailor services to the dynamic requirements of our community.

Strategic Transformation

- This corporate planning isn't just about adapting; it's about a fundamental reshaping. MTCBC is committed to a future where efficiency, effectiveness, and economic use of resources define our operations.

Our aim is clear: to build a resilient and service-centric organisation that not only meets but exceeds the expectations of our community.

Customer Services

Since April 2023, the Council has received **4,656** calls with an answer rate of **95.5%**. Our website has seen **over 330,000 users** with thousands of webpages viewed for key information. Although part our customer service model changed to mainly an appointment style system, on average 138 ‘walk-in’ customers are assisted weekly at our One Stop Shop reception service.

With the removal of core hours and the introduction of agile working, there was a need to review the accessibility of our front-line services. Through our scrutiny function and appropriate challenge, various customer service models have been updated to meet the needs of the customers, linking to many of our core values including communication, accountability and team working.

In 2024/25

We will sustain the high levels of customer services, sustaining our commitment to good customer service.

Corporate Risk Management

Our Corporate Risk Management Strategy and Policy has been designed and approved to make sure we identify, monitor and mitigate risk. At MTCBC we use a ‘Plan-Do-Review-Improve’ approach underpinned by the sustainable development principle and our operating model. This ensures that risk management is not done in isolation, is not reactive and does not just focus on the short term. We have placed extra emphasis on mitigation over recent years, this will better inform our plans.

Over the past year we have continued to embed the strategy and policy in how we work. This includes regular review of our service and corporate risk registers (including working with our Corporate Management Team and Members).

We have used the strategy and policy to support how the Council delivers corporate programmes such as the efficiencies programme.

We will continue to embed the strategy and policy to support MTCBC deliver the corporate wellbeing plan and further strengthen its governance.

What will success look like – We will be recognised as having sound corporate risk management that supports the Council’s governance.

Communications, Engagement & Participation

This year our Corporate Communications, Consultation & Engagement team have delivered 30 consultations.

Our Annual Budget Consultation took place from November 2023 – February 2024, with over 1,000 people taking part. This is an improvement on recent years, with the number of people engaging with the consultation growing year on year.

We have recently reinstated our Citizens' Panel, the recruitment of which is ongoing.

In May we published our [Participation Strategy](#), which sets out our approach to encouraging two-way communications and making the process of influencing decision making more accessible; and in July we published our [Communications & Engagement Strategy](#), which explains the way in which the Council communicates with residents, partners, businesses and all our other key audiences. This year we produced three editions of 'Contact', our resident's newspaper which is delivered to all households in Merthyr Tydfil and is available online via the [corporate website](#).

We also produced six editions of our bi-monthly staff newsletter 'The Message', in conjunction with HR colleagues, to keep our staff informed and engaged. This has been well-received by staff and goes from strength to strength, with the number of stories being submitted increasing with each edition, and staff providing very positive feedback.

We have created TikTok and LinkedIn profiles on social media to reach different audiences, and have increased our social media following by over 1,400 people; reaching over 1.2 million this year.

We continue to deliver key campaigns in-line with the Corporate Well-being Plan.

Scrutiny

Following feedback from Estyn and Audit Wales; further improvement work has been undertaken linked to the Council's scrutiny work. Some of the key improvements undertaken include:

- Training opportunities for members
- Scrutiny Work Programmes now explicitly show how the topics reviewed support key corporate needs.
- Delivery of Quarterly 'Technical Meetings'
- More 'outside' scrutiny activities – site visits to key sites etc.

Scrutiny members identified holding partners to account as a previous weakness; however, changes introduced have helped broaden the scope to help provide constructive, critical-friend challenge and develop the level of accountability by working more collaboratively with key partners and stakeholders.

In 2024/25

A scrutiny self-evaluation is planned to gather feedback from those involved in scrutiny.

The feedback gathered will help identify any priorities for improvement, scrutiny members will then develop a plan to act on this.

Digital and Data

It is important for local Councils to have a clear, articulated strategic approach to digital.

Digital and Data Transformation - Looking ahead we are committed to modernising our service provision through digital technology and leveraging data intelligently. Our aim is to improve efficiency, cut costs, and enhance overall performance. This needs to be a fundamental shift in how we work, ensuring a council that's ready for the future and responsive to community needs.

To do this, we have two key focus areas:

Digital Efficiency

- *Adopting Innovation:* We need to embrace digital tools to simplify tasks and reshape how we operate including exploring the use of Artificial Intelligence.
- *New Ways of Working:* With the use of new technology, we can explore new operating models that make the best use of digital advancements for efficiency gains.

Strategic Data Use:

- *Secure and Smart:* Data security remains a critical priority while also using it smartly to make better decisions.
- *Informed Choices:* Our goal is to turn data into a valuable asset, guiding decisions that align with community needs.

Where we want to be:

Resilient Operations

- *Quick Adaptation:* Digital integration will make us more adaptable, ensuring we can swiftly respond to changes and provide services more flexibly.

Cost-Effective Services

- *Smart Resource Use:* We need to use digital innovations to do more with less, delivering quality services while being mindful of costs.

Informed Decision-Making

- *Insights from Data:* By using data analytics, we hope to gain useful insights to make decisions that match the evolving needs of our communities.

Community-Centric Change

- Our digital and data strategy is about making things better for our communities. As we move forward, MTCBC will drive and embrace digital change ensuring sustainable and digitally enabled services for everyone we serve.

Workforce Planning

MTCBC has a wealth of skills and experience across its most valuable resource; the workforce. Our employees work with partners to provide services that, first and foremost, meet the needs of our residents. This has become especially apparent when responding to the coronavirus pandemic.

We are a lean organisation, meaning our challenges include ensuring all our resources (including our Staff) are appropriately supported and are focused on meeting our priorities.

Our Healthy Organisation objectives are:

- Skills and Development
- Our Culture
- Attraction and Retention
- Leadership Development
- Health and Wellbeing
- Performance Management

We will continue to engage with our staff; we want to develop a workforce that is resilient and that can adapt to change. This means we will continue to work on succession planning and development of our staff.

Success will look like a workforce that can adapt to the challenges that lay ahead and staff that develop their skills to progress within the organisation.

Assets

We have reviewed and approved of our Asset Management Plan. This has 6 overarching priorities aligned to our well-being objectives and underpinned by the 5 ways of working. These are:

- The Maintenance Strategy
- Statutory Compliance
- Estate Rationalisation/Agile working
- Energy/Carbon Management/Decarbonisation
- Commercialisation
- Disposals and Property

We have, and will continue to, use our asset management plan to support how the Council delivers its corporate wellbeing plan and how it becomes more effective, efficient and economic.

Financial Planning

Much of this section has been detailed above but the key pieces of work completed in the first year of the plan are summarised below:

- Reshaping the Council's budget to reflect the service prioritisation factors;
- Dealing with high turnover of staff;
- Challenging service delivery in terms of effectiveness, efficiency and economic values (this will continue); and
- Considering all aspects of our finances in budget setting (again this will continue).

The longer-term focus relates to financial sustainability, which is summarised in the [diagram](#) above.

Welsh Language and Equalities

Our Vision for the Welsh Language Strategy is:

“Merthyr Tydfil: #Shwmaeronment – a County Borough where the Welsh language is heard, spoken and celebrated through all walks of life.”

We will promote the use of the Welsh language within our communities; and contribute to the Welsh Government’s targets of 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050.

We are currently renewing our Strategic Equalities Plan. In doing this we have engaged and consulted with several groups including our residents.

We want to continue to support our communities and promote equality of opportunity; working to understand and remove the barriers people face when accessing our services; and creating an inclusive and diverse workforce, which reflects the communities in Merthyr Tydfil.

Commercialisation and Procurement

Merthyr Tydfil CBC were lead authority for a large collaborative project. CymruSOC is a 22 Local Authorities plus 3 fire service collaborative for the procurement of a Security Operating Centre which aims to increase our cyber resilience. The project was completed at the end of the financial year and is due to commence in the new financial year.

Commercial staff are working on a flagship private wire project, assisting on the development of collaborating with the health sector to provide electricity to Prince Charles Hospital, linking up Penydre, Goitre and Blessed Carlo Acutis schools in a first of its kind energy project in Wales.

Work has been done to ensure that fees and charges reflect policy and contribute to the budget setting process. We are continuing to explore further ways the Council considers commercialisation. There are changes to legislation (Procurement Act 2023 and the Social Partnerships and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023) regarding Procurement and the Council is working on changing processes to ensure we remain within legislation. We will continue to focus on this in the future in supporting the delivery of the Council’s Corporate Wellbeing Plan.

Our Golden Thread

Our **Shared Vision** sets out the vision for the Council in the regional and national context. This fits with our 7 national goals, together with how our 4 well-being objectives fit with our regional Public Services Board (PSB) well-being objectives.

Our main plan is our **Corporate Well-being Plan** and is called ‘**Acting Today for a Better Tomorrow**’. This sets out what we are going to do and is reflected in our well-being objectives and priority outcomes. To remain focused, we have identified the 4 priority outcomes that have the greatest impact in realising our objectives.

Our **Statement of Well-being** accompanies our Corporate Well-being Plan and sets out **why** we are doing what we’re doing. We are not going to do this on our own, we want to involve our residents, businesses, partners, staff and trades unions.

Cabinet and Full Council form are the main, high-level decision-making tier of the Council.

Workforce plans allow each section of the Council to set out how it will use its resources to achieve the required outcomes. These plans continue to develop following approval of our [Healthy Organisation Strategy](#); ensuring clear alignment with this Corporate Well-being Plan.

This means there is a ‘**golden thread**’ through all that we do. In other words, each member of staff has objectives set out to deliver team aims which in turn help us deliver our well-being objectives to contribute to our national goals.



Governance and Monitoring Our Performance

We believe efficient and effective performance management is vital to accountability and achieving better outcomes for our residents.

We are continuing to **develop our performance management processes**; and use data to enable us to make better informed decisions about what we must do to improve.

During 2023/2024, we have strengthened our understanding of performance and governance across the Council; and have identified a number of ways in which we can involve people in refocusing current processes with a view to improve. We have developed a **delivery architecture**; that provides more clarity around reporting. We continue to develop the tools we use to measure and manage performance.

As part of our performance improvement work in 2024/25, we have committed to developing a **Data Strategy** that will outline corporate expectations around how we use data to help us plan and make decisions.

We continue to review the touchpoints between delivery of the Plan and how this can be best reported using our governance framework. This helps us to use our systems and processes consistently across the Council.

We remain focused on improving outcomes for our residents; and on understanding the impact our services are having as this must remain at the heart of what we, as a Council, do.



Key Legislation



The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires public bodies to work better with each other and communities through involvement and by taking a collaborative approach. This is increasingly important to meet the challenges we face.

The Act introduced 7 national well-being goals – these show the kind of Wales we want. Together the 7 national well-being goals provide a shared vision for the public bodies in Wales to work towards.

All public bodies must evidence how they have used sustainable development as their central organising principle. Following these ways of working offers a huge opportunity to make long-lasting, positive change to current and future generations.

To find out more, click [here](#)



Local Government Act 2000

2000 CHAPTER 22

An Act to make provision with respect to the functions and procedures of local authorities and provision with respect to local authority elections; to make provision with respect to grants and housing benefit in respect of certain welfare services; to amend section 29 of the Children Act 1989; and for connected purposes.

[28th July 2000]

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 ('the Act') was passed by Senedd Cymru on 18 November 2020. It received Royal Assent on 20 January 2021.

The Act seeks to reform and strengthen local government accountability, performance and transparency, and places new duties on principal councils to promote public participation in local democracy. The Welsh Government also anticipate that some of the provisions within the Act will encourage greater diversity in local government.

To find out more, click [here](#)



With effect from 31st March 2021; all public bodies are required to respond to a new Socio-Economic Duty.

This Duty requires public bodies to take every opportunity to improve outcomes for people affected by social-economic disadvantage. It is not an additional burden, it helps us to meet the obligations which we already have; and it allows public bodies taking **strategic decisions** (such as when we decide priorities, set objectives etc.) to focus on the impacts on people on low incomes (i.e.) anyone who is living in less favourable social and economic circumstances than others in the same society. It looks at low income; income poverty; low/no wealth, area deprivation, socio-economic background etc.

To find out more, click [here](#)

Glossary

<p>Well-being objective</p>	<p>The Well-being Objectives set out what we feel needs to happen locally to help improve well-being for the people of Merthyr Tydfil and achieve the national Well-being Goals. MTCBC has 4 well-being objectives.</p>	<p>Well-being Goal</p>	<p>The 7 Well-being Goals show the kind of Wales we want to see. Together they provide a shared vision for the public bodies in Wales to work towards</p>
<p>The sustainable development principle (5 ways of working)</p>	<p>There are 5 things that public bodies need to think about to show that they can work together better, avoid repeating past mistakes and tackle some of the long-term challenges we are facing. This is often referred to as the sustainable development principle.</p>	<p>Long Term</p>	<p>The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.</p>
<p>Prevention</p>	<p>How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives.</p>	<p>Integration</p>	<p>Considering how the public body’s well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.</p>
<p>Collaboration</p>	<p>Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives.</p>	<p>Involvement</p>	<p>The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.</p>
<p>Medium Term Financial Plan</p>	<p>A plan to balance the financial implications of objectives and policies against constraints in resources, which provides a financial basis for decision making, to ensure financial sustainability over the medium term (5 years).</p>		

Contact Us

Thank you for taking time to read our Statement of Well-being. If you would like more information; please contact us using any of the options below:

Social Media

Keep up to date with all the latest news, events and information from the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.



You can 'follow' us on Twitter - **@MerthyrCBC**



You can 'like' Merthyr Tydfil Council' on Facebook – you can find us by searching for **MerthyrCBC**

Telephone 01685 725000

E-Mail Policy&Improvement@merthyr.gov.uk

Ways to Get in Touch:

Via our website: www.merthyr.gov.uk

Via X (Twitter): [@MerthyrCBC](https://twitter.com/MerthyrCBC)

Via Facebook: [Merthyr Tydfil CBC](https://www.facebook.com/MerthyrTydfilCBC)

Via a comment: [Leave a comment](#)

Via a complaint: [Complaints](#)

Via your local Councillor [Find your Councillor](#)

Join our Citizens Panel [Citizen's Panel](#)