

# **Corporate Self-Assessment Performance Report 2023-2024**

## **Review of Progress Against Corporate Well-being Objectives**



Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

This document is also available in Welsh.

<https://www.merthyr.gov.uk/media/10922/adroddiad-perfformiad-hunanasesiad-corrforaethol-2023-2024.pdf>



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# INTRODUCTION

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council's Corporate Well-being Plan (Acting Today for a Better Tomorrow) lays out the Council's 4 corporate well-being objectives:

- **An Aspirational Merthyr Tydfil, focused on learning**

*We will strengthen how we enable people to grow and reach their potential*

- **A Healthier Merthyr Tydfil**

*We will empower people to live independent and dignified lives*

- **A Safe and Prosperous Merthyr Tydfil**

*We will support how our economy recovers and grows, ensuring people feel safe in their local area*

- **A Clean and Green Merthyr Tydfil**

*We will support the creation of a clean and green environment, now and in the future*

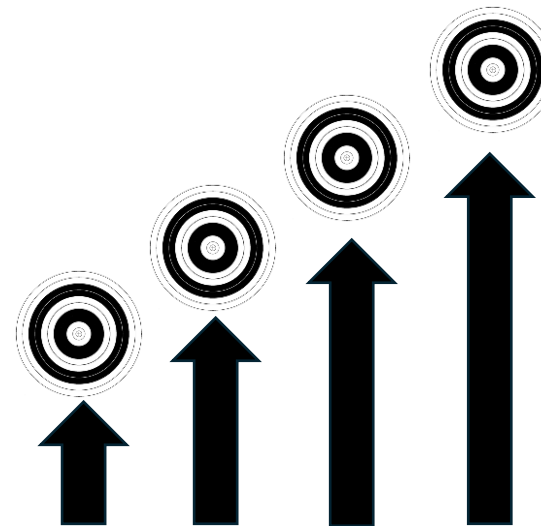
These well-being objectives are how the Council contributes to making the economic, environmental, social and cultural well-being of our communities better. They are based on the areas research of information and data related to Merthyr Tydfil; and the feedback we received from our stakeholders and communities.

## SECTION 1: WELL-BEING OBJECTIVE 1 - An Aspirational Merthyr Tydfil focused on learning

Merthyr Tydfil CBC recognises that for many, the best route for a happy and successful life is through having a good education; and qualifications that will enable them to access employment. We will continue to work with a range of partners to support people to access opportunities so they can work towards their goals. **Our priority outcome for this objective** will be to provide a range of opportunities for all residents across Merthyr Tydfil to gain the knowledge and skills to achieve their life goals.

### What we chose to focus on in 2023/2024:

- Developing ambitious pathways which will support the development of high levels of literacy, numeracy and digital skills from early years through to post-16
- 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
- Connecting with education providers and businesses to better align courses / modules with high level vocational experience and learning
- Developing a system where communities and schools work together to provide exciting opportunities and innovative experiences for all learners, and
- Working with all stakeholders, we will develop aspirational pathways for learning for all.



We focused on a number of key projects to drive forward work on these focus areas, including

- |                             |                             |                                    |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| - Community Focused Schools | - Merthyr Motivates project | - Adult Community Learning         |
| - Communities 4 Work        | - Communities 4 Work +      | - Pathways to Employment           |
| - School Improvement Forum  | - Children's Cabinet        | - Employability training programme |

Our data tells us:

## Attendance



Attendance levels in **primary** schools in Merthyr Tydfil over the past 12 months has been recorded at **91%** - this is below the Welsh average. However, ranked 19/22 this is an improvement on the pre-Covid rank of 21/22.



Attendance levels in **secondary** schools in Merthyr Tydfil over the past 12 months has been recorded at **86.3%** - below the Welsh average. Merthyr Tydfil is ranked 18/22 during this period, which is an improvement on the pre-covid rank of 22/22.

## Fixed Term Exclusions



When reviewing fixed-term exclusions for fewer than 5 days (per 1,000 pupils) for **primary** schools, data recorded shows this stood at **22.8** for the period in question. This was higher than the previous year (19.7), and 7.7 above the target set for this year



When looking at **secondary** schools, data recorded in relation to fixed-term exclusions for fewer than 5 days (per 1,000 pupils) shows this stood at **127.4** for the period in question. This was lower than the previous year (146), but above the target set for this year.

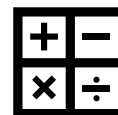
## Outcomes



Data relating to the Capped 9 score showed the latest score to be **346 points** – this is higher than the score of 313.4 previously recorded. In 2022/23 the Wales average Capped 9 indicator (interim measures version) was 358.1 points



Looking at data linked to literacy, a score of **37.7** was recorded for Merthyr Tydfil. The Wales average literacy score for 2022/23 was 39.7, with local performance being slightly below this



When reviewing the numeracy data, we can see the score recorded for Merthyr Tydfil as **33.9**. The Wales average numeracy score for 2022/23 was 37.1, so performance in Merthyr Tydfil is below this



Looking at the score for Welsh (average points score), we can see Merthyr Tydfil recorded a score of **25.4**. This was the first year of published data since the Covid-19 pandemic

## Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

**NEET**

Looking at the Year 11 NEET data, we can see Merthyr Tydfil recorded a score of **1.5** – this was an improvement on the previous year (2.1); and mirrors the trend identified across Wales.

## Percentage of School Inspections with a positive outcome

Local data tells us that **25%** of schools inspected during the year received a positive outcome. Plans have been put in place to address improvement actions identified through the inspection process.



## Percentage of pupils achieving Level 3 qualifications at post-16



40% of pupils achieved level 3 qualifications in the previous year; the most recent data shows this reduced to **33%** over the past 12 months.

## Number of participants in employability programme training that secure a qualification

The data collection method for this changed in 2023 due to a change in funder requirements, so we cannot directly compare this year's performance with last years.

However, a target of 144 was set for 2023/24 and data shows this was not only achieved by exceeded, with a total of **204** participants securing a qualification.



**DATA SOURCE:** All of the data noted above is provided by Council by the Education and Employability Service Leads

## What have we learned?

During 2023/24, 1 secondary schools, 5 primary schools, and 2 registered education providers were inspected. One secondary school and 5 primary schools have been asked to submit effective practice case studies to be shared with wider providers.

The Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) remains in the category of special measures and receives termly inspections from Estyn to judge progress.

The Primary school in special measures was judged to have sufficient progress in relation to the recommendations following the most recent core inspection. As a result, His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales removed the school from the list of schools requiring special measures.

The work Equity Solutions undertakes with those on tuition is making a positive impact on outcomes. These learners previously would have left school with no qualifications having dropped out of all education. Since the Service Level Agreement has been

developed with Equity, the outcomes for these learners have improved and whilst there is still a way to go nearly all of them also have a positive destination post-16.

Attendance remains a priority for the Council with key focus on persistent absenteeism. The change in criteria for persistent absenteeism from 80% to 90% by Welsh government has affected figures and within secondary schools in particular this figure remains too high.

A specific transition project was undertaken with children in the Penydre cluster to improve attendance. The primary purpose of the project was to support pupils with their transition to high school using a variety of engagement sessions. The Community Focused Schools team identified pupils alongside the Education Welfare Service and discussed this project with Penydre High School and all feeder Primary Schools.

The programme was delivered via structured sessions each week for one hour using Penydre High School site. Sessions were delivered between 3:15pm – 4:15pm. The programme focussed on social, emotional, physical activity and family engagement.

Throughout the summer holidays opportunities were provided for pupils to experience a variety of engagements including a beach day, family engagement opportunities as well as sessions at The Compass Community Hub.

The data shows that 16 out of 20 pupils had improved attendance by October half term.

In challenging times, permanent exclusions have increased. Following the pandemic, an increasing number of pupils are presenting with a greater range of issues that are proving very challenging in school settings. To support schools the department has set up more robust processes to discuss and manage the impact of behaviour on school activity – this remains a priority for the department.

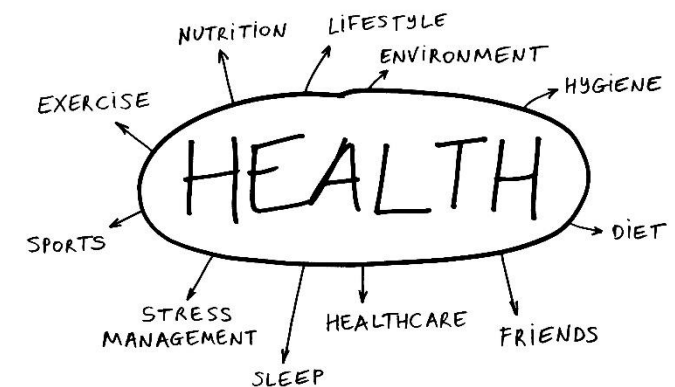
- To improve standards for all learners as set out in the RARS strategy,
- Continue to narrow the gap in performance between eFSM and non-FSM.
- To improve rates of attendance particularly that for persistent absenteeism.
- Reduce the number excluded from school.

## SECTION 2: WELL-BEING OBJECTIVE 2 – A Healthier Merthyr Tydfil

The Council recognises that an individual's health can impact on their overall level of life satisfaction. Health is something that starts in families, schools, communities and workplaces. Residents told us that the Covid-19 pandemic affected people's health and well-being; the impact of this continues to be felt today. The Council continues to work with key partners to provide advice, guidance and targeted support to help people tackle the challenges. **Our priority outcome for this objective** will be to support the emotional and physical health and wellbeing of children and adults.

### What we chose to focus on in 2023/2024:

- Providing support services to enable people to remain living in their own homes
- Developing integrated service responses with health to achieve better well-being outcomes for children and adults
- Provide additional supported accommodation to reduce homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation
- Ensuring green spaces are accessible to all our residents to support their health and well-being, and
- 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.



We focused on several key projects to drive forward work on these focus areas, including

- |                                       |                               |  |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| ▪ Pathways to Employment project      | ▪ Profit elimination projects | ▪ Stay Well @ Home project                   |
| ▪ Activities and projects at Tŷ Enfys | ▪ Early Help Hub              | ▪ Delivery of Housing Support Grant projects |



## Our data tells us:

### Number of Children Looked After



In 2022/2023; Merthyr Tydfil had 194 children looked after registered; the data for 2023/2024 shows this figure a slightly increased to **196**.

### Number of Children on the Child Protection Register



The number of children on the Child Protection Register at 31 March stood at **107**; this was slightly lower than the figure recorded the previous year (109)

### Number of Assessment Completed for Children



The number of assessments for children completed within timescales was **98.02%** - this equates to a yearly total is **1,515**. A new indicator for 2023/24, this will be used as a baseline moving forward.

### Total Number of Adult Contacts (including as a percentage of the adult (over 18 years) population)

The total recorded for the year 2023/2024 for this new indicator is **6.74%**

**3,131**

**46,445**

### Total Adult Protection Enquiries Completed within Statutory Timescales



**78.3%** of adult protection enquiries were completed within timescales in 2023/24 - (**148/189**). A new indicator for 2023/24, this will be used as a baseline moving forward.

### Total Number of Adults Receiving Community Support to Enable them to Remain Living in the Own Homes

The actual number of adults who received community support during the year was **60**. A new indicator for 2023/24, this will be used as a baseline moving forward.



### Number of Cases where Homelessness has been Prevented



Local data shows us that of the cases of where the risk of homelessness existed received by the Council; **76%** of these instances were prevented – this was above the target set (55%)

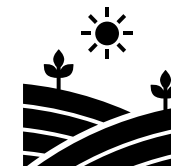
### Number of Homeless Cases Re-housed within 56 days

A target of 21% was set for this indicator; however, when reviewing the data, we could see performance standing at **14%** - **7% under target**, and **17% below** the previous year's achievement



### Number of Priority Open Spaces where improvements have been made to Accessibility

In response to public feedback, work was targeted to improve accessibility of open spaces in 2023/24; with **3 sites** receiving accessibility improvements



## What have we learned?

Partnership working is stronger than ever and continues to be key to deal with the demand in the service. We are working closely with Education colleagues and linking in with Early Help and Prevention, working with public protection, Police and Youth justice colleagues on specific cases in respect of youth behaviour in the community and raising awareness of public safety through safeguarding. We also work with housing colleagues to develop and meet our future accommodation needs and with employability to explore suitable options. As well as that, key partners have been our neighbouring Local Authorities, Voluntary Sector and Health.

Demand across Children and Adult Services has continued to increase. For example:

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Number of contacts for children received by social services during the year	3126	5600	7378	7615
Number of contacts for adults received by social services during the year	2203	2599	2789	3132

There has been the availability of grants from Welsh Government in respect of Recovery, real living wage, Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) and prevention work, which has assisted in providing timely packages of care for children and adults. We have had access to Regional Integrated Funding (RIF) in both adult and children services which has allowed us to be innovative and help with the increased demand in certain areas. However, the variation in demand and grant income continues to create a level of uncertainty when identifying the longer-term budget requirements.

We have had some changes in staffing within key roles, which at times was a major challenge as it impacted on capacity within the service and put added pressure and burden on a small cohort of individuals. However, we have made some excellent appointments and strengthened the management team as a result. The staffing team are working well together and morale is good.

We continue to promote 'passion 4 practice' encouraging staff to reflect on their experiences and the work they do, whilst also allowing time out to build morale in the team. This has assisted in positive recruitment and retention of staff. In areas where there have been difficulties recruiting for periods of time we have been innovative and developed other solutions to the issues. We have 'grown our own' and developed traineeships which we are seeing the benefits of this year as five social workers return to the service qualified in October across adult and children services.

Safeguarding has remained a priority throughout the past year. Managers and staff have worked closely together to ensure that we have discharged our duties to the public, whilst promoting both public and staff safety.

The Performance Framework has been the subject of a review over a few years with a number of key measures changing. This has, and will continue to have, an impact on target setting and trends for future years. The team is working hard to ensure that the relevant changes to business processes and reporting mechanisms will enable more complete reporting of data for 2024/25 and future years. The WCCIS database is due to be replaced. Internal colleagues are working alongside regional colleagues around the details of what a new system will look like, what requirements we need and what data information we need for future performance management.

During 2023/24, Care Inspectorate Wales undertook inspections of our Care Homes.

**Ty Bargoed Newydd:** In their summary the inspector included “People receive very good care and are treated with warmth and dignity in Ty Bargoed Newydd. The service provides meaningful daytime activities to promote people’s wellbeing.”

Based on silent ratings the service achieved:

- Wellbeing – Good
- Care & Support – Good
- Environment – Good
- Leadership & Management – Good

**Ty Gurnos Newydd:** The inspector in summary included “People receive very good care and support and are treated with kindness and respect. Ty Gurnos is an extremely well-presented environment which supports people’s wellbeing”. Silent ratings provided:

- Wellbeing – Good
- Care & Support – Good
- Environment – Excellent
- Leadership & Management – Good

**Llysfaen:**

In summary the inspector described “People receive a very good standard of care and support at Llysfaen. Person centred care is provided, and people are supported to be as healthy as they can be, getting the right support at the right time”. Silent ratings achieved:

- Wellbeing – Good
- Care & Support – Good
- Environment – Good
- Leadership and Management - Good

In addition, an audit of the Early Help Hub which was undertaken by SWAP Internal Audit Services as part of the agreed 2023/24 Internal Audit Plan. It is recognised that Prevention and Early Intervention is key to sustaining services in the longer term. The Early Help Hub (EHH) continues to support children and families, and the Council is committed to continuously developing the work to make sure those children and their families receive the right help at the right time to prevent unnecessary escalation of need. The audit found that there were good controls in place and the Early Help Hub ‘EHH’ was well managed, as such a ‘Substantial’ audit opinion has been provided. Since the development of the EHH in 2019, the team have processed and considered a total of 8215 referrals.

**Specific service improvements and Areas for development:**

Specific **improvements** in Adult Services include:

- We developed a quality assurance framework and internal mechanisms for case audits are in place providing assurance on our quality of care provided.
- We reviewed the structure of the Adult Assessment and Care Management teams to meet demands, particularly in relation to supported discharge from hospital and Discharge to Recover and Assess (D2RA). We now have a supported discharge and D2RA team in place and have seen improved data, analysis, and management of need at the discharge point.
- We reviewed our Learning Disability services and improved some of our day-service environments. We also reconfigured staff resources and recruited of opportunity planners who work with individuals to ensure we are fully capturing what matters most to people and support strength-based person-centred support.
- We have improved support to carers – a new carer’s assessment form has been implemented plus a database of what is available in the area to support carer. This will help staff, third sector partners and organisations to inform and signpost the carers to help and support.

- We are working very closely with Housing colleagues to progress the development of an Extra Care Housing Scheme in Merthyr. Engagement with Housing and Community Occupational Therapists have continued to address design considerations. Linc Cymru is optimistic about presenting a new block plan in the early months of the 2024/25.

#### Adult Services - areas for **development**:

- 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.
- Review the information gathered as part of the “Have Your Say” consultation for Adult Mental Health services.
- Work in partnership with mental health services provided by Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board to revise our joint working arrangements. We will gather information from individuals who have received support from the new Supported Discharge Team to review the impact on the people that were supported.
- Continue to work with internal and external partners to develop agreement to provide volunteering, education, and work opportunities to people with a Learning Disability.
- Explore the potential to develop a Carer’s Alliance rather than a number of separate contracts to support carers.

#### Specific **improvements** in Children’s Services include.

- Through our Systemic Model of Practice:
  - The dad’s worker has continued to engage dads and has achieved good outcomes.
  - Supported young people to stay at home safely by providing tailored support.
  - Prevent reoccurring looked after episodes by repairing family relationships.
  - Families have been able to access support when in crisis both during the daytime but also evenings and weekends.
- We now have two pre-birth workers in the service.
  - Helping mums attend important hospital appointments
  - Visits to parents whilst in hospital - provided emotional support and reassurance where the parent(s) have felt anxious.
  - Access to the Baby Bank
  - Pre-natal support
- Grant money has been used to buy and build residential accommodation. We have two homes which can accommodate two children/young people in each
- We are developing Thomastown House site into residential accommodation, short breaks accommodation for children with disabilities and therapy rooms.

- We are continuing to work with our partners in Education to explore and expand our 'Pathways to Employment' scheme.
- A new project called 'Ewch Amdani' (Go for it) has been developed which allows children ages 11 - 16/18 to have a better understanding about different career paths and how to achieve these goals.
- Targeted planning for transition of our children looked after into adulthood commences when a young person is 15¾ years old. Adult's Services and Children's Services continue to meet with partner agencies to support multiagency planning for our young people, to support smooth transitions between services. The transition policy has been reviewed and revised considering changes to legislation, policy, and practice. This has now been uploaded to the Adult and Children's Services Intranet pages. This document was launched with staff in both service areas in December 2023.
- To ensure we support young people into independence, we have successfully created a supportive accommodation environment (Cwmpass Hub). We have reduced the risk of future crisis, by giving them new skills to manage the transition into adulthood, training, employment, and independent living and managing their own finances.
- Monthly Systemic Family Therapy reading groups are held with family therapists and other practitioners. This aims to support social workers to reduce stress within families and aim to:
  - support families to stay together safely.
  - to keep children on the edge of care out of care.
  - to reunify care experienced children or young people with their families where this is safe to do so

#### Children's Services - areas for **development**:

- Continue the ongoing focus on the safe reduction of children looked after by Merthyr Tydfil, keeping children within their family networks and local communities.
- 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.
- Review of the model of Child Protection conferences
- Develop services for 16 plus young people
- Develop Camau Nesaf next steps which supports those parents who have children removed to reduce the risks of this happening again.
- Work with the national stakeholder group and Estyn on the development of the inspection framework for youth services.
- Continue the work of the Early Help Hub including developing new ways of working to offer 'hard to reach' families face to face assessments rather than over the phone.
- Continue to build upon our learning and experience of the Pathway to Work Programme to inform wider Council Policy

- Continue to ensure that we coproduce our services with young people to ensure that we promote smooth transitions into adulthood, offering our young people the same opportunities it would be reasonable for any young person to expect.
- Support Health, Schools, and the wider 3rd sector to engage families via referral to the Early Help Hub.
- Increase our internal foster capacity to meet the needs of our children locally.
- Continue to work regionally across CTM to respond to the National Transfer Scheme for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and develop local supported accommodation and foster provision which is culturally competent, and trauma informed.

## **Safeguarding**

- We will continue to work with our regional partners to meet the strategic safeguarding priorities.
- As part of the reconfiguration of Adult Services, we brought the adult safeguarding team into the line management of the Principal Manager, Adult Assessment and Care Management. We have recruited a Team Manager for the team. This post will also contribute to the achievement of the Safeguarding Board's objectives via membership of the Adult Quality Assurance sub-group and the MASH quality assurance sub-group
- The new model for Child Protection conferences has been reviewed. Positives include the child's voice being clear within the report; however, the reports can be repetitive and therefore a further work is required to ensure the reports fit with the systemic model during 2024/25.
- We have started to include a new child exploitation protocol to prevent children entering the child protection arena and they need to work seamlessly.

We continue to be committed to promoting the Welsh language, actively encouraging staff to attend Welsh Language courses that we provide in order that the residents of Merthyr Tydfil have the opportunity to communicate and receive services in Welsh. New employees must complete Level 1 training in Welsh before commencing employment. The council has Welsh speaking employees who are accessible for translation purposes.

**Children's Services–number of assessments where there was evidence of an active offeror Welsh.**

		<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2022/23</b>
CH/009a	There was evidence of the active offer of Welsh	1,404	1,660
CH/009b	The Active Offer of Welsh was accepted	8	10

**Adult Services – number of assessments where there was evidence of an active offer of Welsh.**

		<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2022/23</b>
AD/006a	There was evidence of the active offer of Welsh	1,568	1,795
AD/006b	The Active Offer of Welsh was accepted	3	4

In relation to the commitment to decarbonisation, the Council was successful with a funded project bid to Health Social Care Wales – Climate Emergency Programme to produce a Social Services Net Zero Plan for Merthyr Council. This included creating a baseline, auditing several properties including Ty Gurnos, Ty Bargoed and Cwm Golau. The baseline showed 3,915 tonnes CO2e and 12% of these are from operation of buildings and 84% from purchased goods/services. The next step is to discuss and agree how to deliver the recommendations.

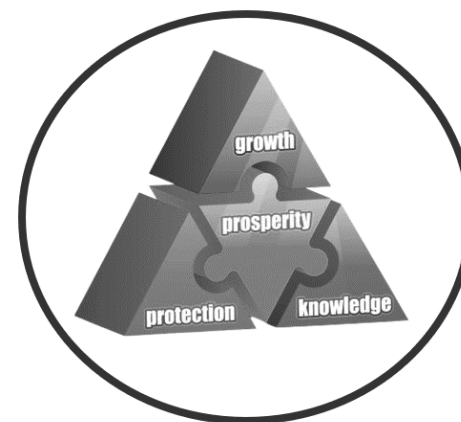


## SECTION 3: WELL-BEING OBJECTIVE 3 – A Safe and Prosperous Merthyr Tydfil

The Council recognises it needs to support people and businesses across Merthyr Tydfil to feel safe and confident in a fast-changing environment. Merthyr Tydfil's local economy experienced challenges in some areas even before the pandemic; the impacts of Covid-19 adding extra pressures; and supporting economic recovery is a key focus for the Council. We also recognise how important it is that people feel safe where they live, work or spend their leisure time, helping build strong, connected and vibrant communities. **Our priority outcome for this objective** will be to diversify our local economy and increase resilience to future challenges by helping the creation of the right type of businesses, supported by the right type of business infrastructure

### What we chose to focus on in 2023/2024:

- Developing and rolling-out an aspirational Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Placemaking Plan
- Increasing economic activity rates through partnership activities; leading to lower levels of worklessness across the County Borough
- Tackling anti-social behaviour in conjunction with relevant partners, using effective enforcement techniques
- Improving business support opportunities throughout Merthyr Tydfil County Borough; promoting business ownership and preparing an engagement/pathway programme to access start-up opportunities, and
- Continue to develop an aspirational Merthyr Tydfil to attract investment.






We focused on several key projects to drive forward work on these focus areas, including:

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| ▪ Town Centre Partnership projects               | ▪ Delivery of the Town Centre Master Plan | ▪ Local Community Safety Partnership projects |
| ▪ Regional Community Safety Partnership projects | ▪ Tourism Development Group projects      | ▪ Employability projects – training and work  |

Our data tells us:

## Supporting the Local Economy

 <p>Council Employability projects recorded data which confirmed <b>246</b> participants secured employment after leaving a programme</p>	 <p>Data showing the number of visits to the 5 key attractions within Merthyr Tydfil showed that in 2023/24; <b>832,392</b> visitors were recorded. This was a significant increase on the previous year's total (552,924)</p>	 <p><b>72</b> businesses were financially supported by the Council during 2023/24 – this was over double the target set. This was a new indicator for 2023/24, this will be used as a baseline moving forward.</p>
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## Public Protection Services

**48.7%** of perpetrators of antisocial behaviour re-offended within a 6-week period, reaching Stage 2. A change of recording process showed meant no comparator was available for the indicator.



The Council monitored the number of instances where CCTV has been utilised to detect crime and disorder, recording a total of **611** instances. **357** of these were subsequently passed on to South Wales Police



**7.37%** of empty private sector properties were brought back into use during the year 2023/24 through direct action by the Local Authority – a slight increase on the previous year



**DATA SOURCE:** All of the data noted above is provided by Council by the Employability, Strategic Business Support, Tourism/Destination Development and Public Protection teams

## What have we learned?

When reviewing progress made linked to the delivery of **Public Protective Services**, the following points have been noted:

A key concern identified by the public when helping us to develop the corporate well-being plan were **concerns surrounding community safety and more specifically, anti-social behaviour (ASB)**. As part of our improvement activities put in place to address these concerns; the **introduction of the Community Safety Wardens** has been critical in driving up referrals and identifying the issues faced in our communities, especially in the Town Centre. The evidence accumulated over the past 12 months tells us continual funding of the Wardens will be critical to the continuation of performance.

In line with the ASB process, we are now looking at better use of **Community Protection Notices** and will await further guidance on the newly announced Respect Orders. The current ASB stage process will be continued alongside these orders, helping us to closely monitor the impact of activities. Data collected and monitored as part of the Quarterly Performance and Improvement Reporting (QPIR) cycle shows us there has been an increase in Stage 2 progress ASB incidents recorded over the past 12 months – however; this should be seen as a positive as the uniformed presence provided by those supporting delivery of these services is now identifying perpetrators.

**The public also encouraged the Council to use the enforcement powers they have to hold those individuals splaying negative behaviours to account.** Enforcement opportunities for the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN's) for Public Space Protection Order breaches, littering and smoking ban offences form part of this Council's response. These key corporate and community priorities will continue to be reviewed via monitoring of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs); as we take into account matters highlighted above.

An **increase in capacity for Public Protection Services** has allowed us to add further focus to the evening economy- this has assisted us in better determining crime patterns and interventions. The identification of 'Council Crime' has increased, the service has become the front-line eyes for several service areas. Bringing out this data will assist in showing the true value of the service.

Following investment received to update CCTV systems in the previous year; data analysis obtained from CCTV are becoming pivotal in town centre planning and risk. Traffic monitoring can help identify pressure points, monitoring of public realm to identify use alongside major events being delivered in a safe environment. **Assessing progress made, securing funding toward a '24/7' service is critical in terms of service delivery.**

Utilisation of tannoy system in the Town Centre helps us reduce the perception of safety there, and also to supports staff to intervene in ongoing incidents. We will continue to monitor data where tannoy used and outcomes to identify whether it is having an impact from the perspective of local people and visitors to our Town.

Another part of the well-being objective 'A Safe and Prosperous Merthyr Tydfil' captures how the Council, working with its key partners and local businesses, focuses support to the local economy through activities such as business support and sustainability (including grants development and support to local organisation's/community groups to access grant funding etc.

The Council's Employability Team also provide **guidance and practical support to local people seeking employment or looking to work towards achieving their own career goals**. During 2023-24, the Council monitored its activity around the provision of this targeted support for those seeking employment. Due to the changes in how funding for these activities were structured, the targets set in this area were lower than in previous years. However, data collected and reviewed during this financial year showed the target set (215 participants in Council programmes in employment at the point they left the programme), **the target was not only met but exceeded**.

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, local tourism and hospitality businesses were impacted particularly badly, and recovery in these areas was projected to be slower and at a lower level than during the pre-pandemic period. Data captured during the financial year shows us that the recovery recorded within the County Borough post Covid-19 was 'bucking the trend', as Merthyr Tydfil's Top 5 attractions have either recorded the same levels as pre-pandemic, or in some instances have seen increased visitor numbers.



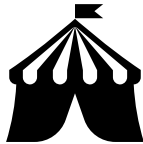







Another priority identified under this well-being objective was **offering support to bring empty properties back into use**. The Council participates in the regional Empty Homes Grants programme which is co-ordinated by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council. The target set for Merthyr Tydfil for 2023/24 stood at 7% - data captured that reflected the verified progress for this period showed the target was slightly exceeded, with 7.37% being achieved.

Since its adoption by Full Council in November 2020, the Council has continued to implement the Placemaking Plan through the development and delivery of several projects including completion redevelopment to become a boutique hotel, redevelopment of the Marsh House site, and the redevelopment of Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Centre during 2023-24. In particular, **our service user feedback was particularly interested in the updating and of the Rhydycar Leisure Centre, and more specifically, the re-opening of the swimming**

**pool at that site.** The projects named have had a positive impact on the Town Centre creating new facilities, introducing new employment opportunities etc.

The Council has also continued to **develop plans for the key strategic sites namely Glebeland Street, 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 Welsh Government's Transforming Towns programme and significant levels of match funding from the private / public sector.

Another development in the town centre (an areas identified by local people has needed renewal and renovation, the **Town Centre Hub** development became operational. 4th December 2023 saw the opening of the new facility funded by UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund. The town centre hub acts as a central 'drop in facility' to support local people that they face with Housing, Employment, Skills and matters linked to Social Services. In the 9 months since it opened, 5,868 activities/queries/interventions have been recorded. This includes direct interventions, sign- posting, partners supporting, events. The types of questions, queries fielded at this site include:

 <p><b>2,552</b> visitors</p>	 <p><b>1,245</b> housing-related queries</p>	 <p><b>655</b> events</p>	 <p><b>249</b> welfare and benefits queries</p>	 <p><b>536</b> accessing support from Communities 4 Work +</p>
 <p><b>26</b> queries linked to Food Banks</p>	 <p><b>11</b> sessions around voter ID</p>	 <p><b>110</b> instances where general advice was sought</p>	 <p><b>32</b> sessions run by partners</p>	 <p><b>229</b> digital booths</p>

A design feature of the Town Centre Hub is the '**Partnership Corner**' – Council staff host various partners throughout each working week at the hub and these key partners offer advice and guidance on various subject matters. This continues the strong sense of partnership at this venue, helping to meet a broader range of visitor needs.

**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. 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.

Various events have been planned with partners. A **Cost-of-Living Event** which was held on the 13th February 2024; and a **spring recruitment fair** held on the 21st March 2024 being examples of these. This allowed 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.

## SECTION 4: WELL-BEING OBJECTIVE 4 – A Clean and Green Merthyr Tydfil

Climate is changing across the globe; and the coming years and decades, we will continue to see increasing impacts arising from historic carbon emissions. These changes have implications for our health, businesses, infrastructure, public services, supply chains, natural environment and ecosystems.

The effective management of natural resources within Merthyr Tydfil is hugely important. Local feedback identified a need to focus on increasing awareness of the ‘reduce; reuse and repair’ approach to waste management. We will work to protect the diverse range of habitats and species found in the County Borough; and continue to protect and enhance the character of our local landscape. **Our priority outcome for this objective** will be to work with communities to maintain and enhance the environment.

### What we chose to focus on in 2023/2024:

- Delivering the Merthyr Tydfil Nature Recovery Plan
- Delivering a Council approved Net Zero Plan
- Increase awareness of our open spaces; removing barriers to enable access for all residents, and
- Meet the Welsh Government Waste recovery target through our reduce, reuse and repair initiatives.



We focused on a few key projects to drive forward work on these focus areas, including

- Local Places for Nature projects
- Green Flag management projects
- Delivery of decarbonisation projects
- Behavioural Change projects (e.g.) ‘Be Mighty, Recycle’, the ‘Metal Matters’ project, the ‘Keeping up with the Jones’ project etc.

Our data tells us:

**Percentage of municipal waste reused, recycled or composted**



Awaiting final data TBC

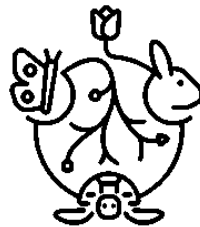
**Kilograms (kg) residual waste generated per person**



When reviewing the kilograms of residual waste generated per person in 2023/24; **185 kg** was recorded in the Council's data – this matched the target set for the year; and was the same level as recorded in 2022/23

**Number of Priority Open Spaces where improvements have been made to biodiversity**

The Council has worked in 2023/24 to improve the biodiversity of status of some of the local priority open spaces; with **6** sites benefitting from these improvements. This was a new indicator for 2023/24, the outcome will be used as a baseline moving forward.



**Number of Local Businesses signed-up to the Decarbonisation Pledge**

Following introduction of new legislation affecting local businesses, the Council chose to measure the number of businesses signing up to the Decarbonisation Pledge. This activity rolled out in January 2024, and **21** businesses signed up in the first 10 weeks.



**DATA SOURCE:** All of the data noted above is provided by Council by the Waste Services, Biodiversity and Strategic Business support Service Leads

**What have we learned?**

As can be seen from the performance scorecard that a good number of businesses signed up to the decarbonisation pledge when it went live, exceeding the target which is positive. This was probably linked to businesses accessing funding for energy improvements.

In relation to this KPI, whilst a number of businesses signed up, the KPI needs to be developed to evidence what that those businesses are doing to implement the pledge that will contribute to decarbonisation in Merthyr Tydfil. Signing up is not enough, in



order to be meaningful, the KPI needs to tell us what those businesses are doing to act on the pledge (e.g. production of a carbon reduction plan, installation of renewables etc)

The percentage of municipal waste reused, recycled or composted decreased each quarter resulting in failure to hit the target by almost 6%. Part of the reason for this is households in MTCBC produce higher levels of food waste and recycle less of it than the Welsh average. Only 48% of residents in the County Borough recycle food waste (compared with 56% across Wales).

A composition analysis of residual (wheelie bins) carried out in 2022 revealed that 30% of it was food waste that could have been recycled in the food waste bin.

In relation to the KG of residual waste generated per person needs to reduce significantly in order to positively impact the recycling target. This will be the priority for improvement in 2024/25 with the target being a reduction to 150kg per person.

## SECTION 5: SUPPORTING THE PLAN

### Managing and Monitoring Performance

The Council monitors and manages performance through its self-assessment report, Quarterly Performance and Improvement Reviews (QPIRs) and, at a service level, through its Strategies on a Page (SOAP) which contain performance indicators. In 2023/24, the Council began the process of reviewing its performance management arrangements to ensure they remain fit for purpose. Following engagement that took place across the organisation, an overview of the processes and their strengths and weaknesses was developed. This approach has enabled us to identify further areas to strengthening them.

The key changes undertaken in 2023/24 includes the SOAPS previously used to collect and monitor performance were updated, and performance scorecards are now in place – these responded to the identified need to strengthen how the Council reviews its performance across all of the corporate well-being objectives. At the end of the first year of use, the scorecards have been refocused to further strengthen these and add value.

A KPI Library has been introduced to capture all relevant aspects of the key corporate performance indicators – this central resource allows a holistic view of progress, links directly to the scorecards and also acts as a resource to support more effective succession planning if this is needed.

Our regulators assessed there was more work required on the performance information provided to senior leaders to support theme to better understand the perspective of service users and the outcomes of the Council's activities. Work has begun to address this recommendation.

Additionally, more work is being undertaken on the information provided on outcomes and the perspective of service users for our key decision-makers as we seek to improve the extent to which the Council can use this information to help it achieve its outcomes is also limited. The work being undertaken to review the Council's performance management arrangements provides us an opportunity to strengthen its information on service user perspective and outcomes. Also, as part of this work, we will continue to review the quality and reliability of data and information used.

## Procurement

We have focused on strengthening our Procurement Service and how we can support the delivery of our well-being objectives. We have set up a Commercial element to our service. This will help support our longer-term sustainability and use our new risk strategy/policy (e.g. risk opportunity and risk appetite) to do so.

What progress have we made?	Evidence / Observations of change
<b>Procurement Processes:</b> Our procurement processes are under constant review. In June 2021 we revised our procurement rules, reducing some of the internal bureaucracy (becoming more efficient, effective and economical) for contract sign offs and have increased our lower threshold from £5K to £15K (where a formal procurement process is not required) with the aim of making it easier to direct Council spend to smaller local companies (supporting our national goals). Our local spend for 20021/22 was circa 21% of the £100m spent in total. Our pre-selection stage questionnaires include standard SPD (Single Procurement Document) questions are were developed collaboratively with other Councils, we have multiple questionnaires which can be selected and revised depending on risk, value and perceived capabilities of the market. This aligns to our risk strategy/policy (integration).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Our procurement rules.</li><li>• Risk Strategy/Policy – Risk Appetite and Risk Opportunities sections.</li></ul>
<b>Social Value:</b> This important area started to be piloted during 2021/22, it can be a complex area which requires upskilling not only for our own staff but also suppliers in order to maximise the value of each pound spent. This area is still developing, with a draft social value policy and core social value measures being drafted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Draft Social Value Policy.</li></ul>
<b>Well-being:</b> All major projects are developed through the lens of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, including and the 5 ways of working (sustainable development principle). We aim to assist our client departments in assessing their needs through the well-being framework to develop specifications and outcomes. Contract management in this area (including social value) needs development across the Council. This helps us think long-term and preventative.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Procurement framework.</li></ul>

<p><b>Collaboration:</b> We regularly engage with other Councils in the South East Wales Regional Procurement Group, sharing best practice and knowledge drops, in addition we engage on collaborative tendering on a regional and national basis to secure best value for common and repetitive spend areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• South East Wales Regional Procurement Group – Learning being built into our design and development.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Purchasing:</b> We implemented a new corporate purchase to pay system, which was launched in the first quarter of 2021/22. This system facilitates, catalogue ordering, free text ordering, punch out to commerce catalogues and invoice matching and payment. The system provides a secure and auditable method for compliant and efficient ordering of goods and services. This allows us to be more effective, efficient and economical in how we work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate purchase to pay system.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Procurement planning:</b> This was the first year we attempted a formal procurement planning exercise across the Council. On the whole the Council returned a comprehensive list of planned procurement projects. This enabled more effective planning of procurement resource, to service Council departments at the time of need. Further work cross Council will be required in this area as there were still requests coming through for support that were not advised in the canvas. This allows us to better use of resources and take a preventative and integrated approach to procurement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procurement planning exercise - comprehensive list of planned procurement projects. This has allowed us to work with other teams (collaboration) to think long-term and prevent any issues reoccur.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Improvement considerations:</b> We are continually monitoring how we can improve and become more effective, efficient and economical in how we procure goods, works and services. This also includes how procurement process can be improved across the Council. We are working collaboratively with other teams to achieve this. We are applying our operating model, e.g. digital by design in doing this.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our service improvement plans.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Procurement Strategy:</b> We have delayed the publication of a new Procurement strategy, this is mainly due to the upcoming Social Partnerships and Public Procurement (SPPP) Bill, which will require the publication of a new strategy inclusive of specific areas, the strategy was due to be published in 2021/22 but in order to reduce duplication of work, the new strategy will be developed along with revised procurement rules to comply with SPPP bill and the Procurement Reform Bill and provide a sound platform for driving forward Procurement across the Council in 2023/24 and beyond.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Partnerships and Public Procurement (SPPP) Bill.</li> <li>• Procurement Reform Bill.</li> </ul>

**Commercial:** We have rebranded procurement to the Commercial Unit, widening our scope of work and moving from Finance but staying within the Governance Resources Directorate; this allows us to collaborate with, and involve more teams in what we do and how we can better support the delivery of our well-being objectives. As part of this rebrand, we have employed an additional procurement officer and a commercial manager.

- Commercial Unit.

**Are we using the five ways of working to change how we think, plan and act?**



**Long-Term**



**Prevention**



**Collaboration**



**Integration**



**Involvement**

## Assets

We are using a strategic approach to our asset management to strengthen our ability to transform, adapt and maintain the delivery of services in the short and longer term. This was studied by Audit Wales during 2021/22. Findings were positive, stating we can demonstrate “applying the sustainable development principle in some of its asset plans”. We need to ensure that this approach underpins our “strategic asset management more broadly”.

### What progress have we made?

Our Estates Management Section continue to lead how we are using assets to support our strategic plans (RTI Plan – Agile working programme). To do this, teams from across the Council are working together. New models of working have been, set up and productivity and wellbeing outputs continue to be reviewed. This integrates with our workforce plans. The management of our Estate also links to our financial plans and how we deliver services in the short, medium and long term.

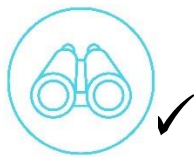
We have also continued to review how we can best use our estate undertaking property reviews across the whole property portfolio, releasing land for disposal and identifying under-utilised

### Evidence / Observations of change

- Springing Forward – Strategic Asset Management – Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (Audit Wales; May 2022) – This report relates to 2021/22.
- Flexible and Agile Working policies.
- Letting of vacant office space.
- Disposal of surplus property.

spaces. For example, we are currently advertising vacant space at one of our buildings at Pentrebach. This work will also help us achieve our decarbonisation targets and is closely linked to the Carbon Management Plan.	
We are strengthening how we manage our estate and monitor compliance. A procurement exercise has been undertaken recently to purchase a new cloud based asset management system which will allow us to manage our assets more effectively, efficiently and economically.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change of service practices.</li> </ul>
We have recently adopted a new Asset Management Plan and continue to ensure it is integrated with other key strategic documents of the Council. We can better deliver our objectives and apply the five ways of working through this approach. The Asset Management Board comprises senior officers and Members to strategically drive continued improvements in asset management planning. An annual update report is provided to Scrutiny and Cabinet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopted Asset Management Plan.</li> <li>• Asset Management Board.</li> <li>• Scrutiny and Cabinet Reports.</li> </ul>
We are continuing to deliver our Sustainable Communities for Schools programme as well as delivering programmes to support how we can reduce our carbon footprint.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable Communities for Schools programme.</li> <li>• Carbon Management Plan and various energy funding schemes.</li> </ul>

**Are we using the five ways of working to change how we think, plan and act?**



**Long-Term**



**Prevention**



**Collaboration**



**Integration**



**Involvement**

## Workforce Planning

We have a wealth of skills and experience across our most valuable resource, our workforce. Our employees work with partners to provide services that, first and foremost, are designed to meet the needs of our residents.

What progress have we made?	Evidence / Observations of change
<p>One of the key successes to any high performing organisation is ensuring that you have the right people with the right skills at the right time and that we are putting the people agenda at the forefront. It is through our people that an excellent service experience will be delivered. We need exceptional leaders who champion our culture, live our values and facilitate high performance, and a highly talented, diverse, skilled and motivated workforce who are empowered and engaged through working in a developmental, collaborative, inclusive and supportive working environment.</p> <p>Work has been carried out to develop a Healthy organisation strategy. The aims outlined in the Healthy Organisation Strategy will help drive the required changes in culture, leadership, talent management, performance, reward and recognition, personal development and efficient ways of working that will be needed to ensure Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council achieves its Corporate strategic goals and our residents receive a service that meets their needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy Organisation Strategy</li> <li>• Audit Wales – Springing Forward Report</li> </ul>
<p>We have continued to collaborate with others in supporting the development of our workforce and meeting our objectives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Well-being Plan.</li> </ul>
<p>We have continued to improve how we engage and involve our workforce. The Staff forum was re-instigated in February 2022 and runs online via Microsoft Teams on a monthly basis. It is a platform whereby it enables two-way communication between Merthyr Tydfil Council and its employees in order to contribute to the Councils' Success and Vision.</p> <p>Managers Network was formed in 2021 with the aim to inform, cascade and engage by actively encouraging networking and training opportunities for Line Managers to help you to contribute to Merthyr's Corporate Objectives. The role of Managers Network is to open a two-way dialogue between all levels of Managers across all departments within the Council to encourage open discussions and debate on a number of topics.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate self-assessment report.</li> </ul>

<p>The Organisation Development Team continues to involve and collaborate with others through our Corporate Induction training programme which was launched in February 2022 which enables all new employees into the Council to learn about our organisation, our policies and processes and will aim to ease the new starter into the culture of the organisation and make them aware of our values for all new starters will help with the attraction and retention theme to ensure that all new starters have a good onboarding process from recruitment through to starting with the Council. Our induction training programme enables new starters to learn about our organisation, our policies and processes and will aim to ease the new starter into the culture of the organisation and make them aware of our values. The corporate induction is evaluated on a monthly basis and the necessary amendments are made to ensure the information provided is up-to-date and relevant.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate self-assessment report.</li> </ul>
<p>We are using available data to deliver our objectives. This is helping with how we are developing our workforce plans across the Council. We have been able to use staff data to help us add resilience to our services and support our staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Well-being Plan.</li> <li>• Corporate self-assessment report.</li> </ul>
<p>The continuation of embedding Performance Management throughout the organisation remains. HR continue to support staff and managers through the transition of performance management to the new online platform. The performance management framework and personal development plans ('Focus on Your Performance') ensures better delivery on our outcomes linked to our corporate priorities, well-being objectives, and shared vision (the 'golden thread').</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Well-being Plan.</li> <li>• Healthy Organisation Strategy</li> </ul>
<p>We have continued our apprenticeship programme across the Council. During 2022 - 2023, the apprenticeship programme scheme has received ongoing continued support with regular 1:1 meetings outlining support and to identify any training needs. In conjunction, there has been a number of development days that have taken place which enables each apprentice to receive general skills training. This is helping us support succession planning (long-term) and mitigation for our corporate risk relating to capacity (prevention).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy Organisation Strategy</li> </ul>



Are we using the five ways of working to change how we think, plan and act?



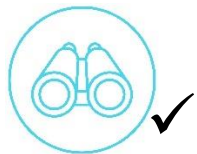
Corporate Risk

Corporate risk management arrangements are due to be strengthened further as the Council continues to focus on strengthening its governance. This will also address recommendations made in an internal audit report (July 2024).

What progress have we made?	Evidence / Observations of change
<p>We have used our refocused risk strategy and policy. In doing this we were able to involve others in our design and development of risk registers and plans.</p> <p>The strategy and policy addresses audit recommendations and in doing so enabled us to redefine our risk opportunities, categories and appetite. This will help us consider the long term and prevent things happen if we don't want it to or enable us to take calculated and managed risks.</p> <p>A further internal audit has been carried out confirming the Council has 'reasonable' risk management arrangements in place. The Council will work on recommendations to further strengthen its position.</p> <p>By working with other areas of the Council (e.g. our Insurance Team) we been able to better integrate our plans. We plan to strengthen these arrangements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviewed Risk Strategy and Policy</li> <li>Reviewed Corporate Risk Register and analysis tools</li> <li>Cabinet reports</li> <li>Regular meetings and discussions between departments in addressing risks and integrating plans</li> <li>Audit Findings (see below)</li> </ul>
<p>We use benchmarking and horizon scanning in our risk management processes, e.g. considering how others manage risk (assess, monitor and mitigate risks) and what future risks we might face.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular meetings and discussions between departments in addressing risks and integrating plans</li> </ul>

This provides the opportunity for us work with others and/or involve others in managing our risks. This is set out in our risk registers. We are part of national risk groups (WLGA and ALARM).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting notes and support materials (including training)</li> <li>Update reports to our Governance and Audit Committee (GAC)</li> </ul>
Risk reports are taken to our Corporate Management Team and the Governance and Audit Committee (GAC).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update reports to our Governance and Audit Committee (GAC)</li> </ul>

### Are we using the five ways of working to change how we think, plan and act?



Long-Term



Prevention



Collaboration



Integration



Involvement

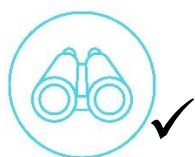
## Performance Management

How we manage performance and continuously improve remains a key focus. This will enable us to better use our resources (effectively, efficiently and economically).

What progress have we made?	Evidence / Observations of change
We are testing and reviewing our Performance Management and Quality Assurance Framework (PM&QAF) (that was approved as part of our Corporate Well-being Plan) this means we are using the 'Plan Do Check Act' model to ensure we remain focused on continuous improvement. This is being reviewed following the first year of implementation and in line with changes to our corporate plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corporate Well-being Plan.</li> </ul>

<p>We are reviewing our quarterly performance and improvement reviews (QPIRs) and delivering our scrutiny improvement programme to improve accountability and support continuous improvement. This remains a focus for us. This is also being reviewed in line with our PM&amp;QAF. This will address recommendations from a recent Audit Wales report on the Council's performance management arrangements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scrutiny work programme and outputs.</li> <li>• Corporate self-assessment reporting.</li> </ul>
<p>As well as appointing a Director of Finance and a Director of Governance and Resources, the Council has further strengthened the Corporate Policy and Performance team, making a role permanent not fixed term in the structure but also recruiting to the Policy and Performance Manager post.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structure changes.</li> <li>• More regular reporting.</li> </ul>
<p>We remain focused on improving how our 'Golden Thread' is understood and implemented. We are working with other support services (e.g. HR) to do this. This integrated approach means we can link individual's objectives to service objectives and through to corporate objectives (well-being objectives).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Well-being Plan.</li> </ul>
<p>We recognise that further work is needed to develop more outcome focused indicators and to ensure that services can effectively demonstrate the impact on residents, as set out in our new corporate wellbeing plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is monitored as part of our self-evaluation process.</li> </ul>
<p>Improving our Customer Services remains a focus. We want to continue to make our processes more efficient but ensure we are meeting our customer needs. We want to use our operating model in being digital by design but also ensure we are not excluding anyone (fairness, inclusion and equality remains important to us).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer feedback and compliments and complaints data.</li> </ul>
<p>We remain focused on strengthening our approaches to digital and data. We will further develop our draft Digital and Data Strategy. This will help our decision making and how we use our resources (effectively, economically and efficiently). This will help how we better consider the long-term and learn lessons to prevent issues happening. We want to involve others in this process to ensure we achieve this.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council, Cabinet, Scrutiny and Governance and Audit Committee reporting.</li> </ul>
<p>We are continuing to refocus our performance management and quality assurance framework.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate self-assessment report.</li> </ul>

Are we using the five ways of working to change how we think, plan and act?



Long-Term



Prevention



Collaboration



Integration



Involvement

## Corporate Planning

Corporate planning remains an important aspect of our governance framework.

### What progress have we made?

### Evidence / Observations of change

We are continuing to apply our Operating Model Design (OMD) and Core Values to our design, development and delivery (at an individual, service and corporate level). However, we will continue to test if these are fit for purpose.

- Corporate Well-being Plan.
- Corporate Self-Assessment.

We continue to use our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) to support our decision making. Our updated IIA plays a key role in how we assess the impact on these 7 national well-being goals as well as other part of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act2015, protected characteristics, Welsh language, biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems and socio-economic disadvantage (we remain focused on inclusion, equality and fairness). The IIA also requests that data is used as part of the assessment along with how communication and engagement has been undertaken (where required). Our IIA has been updated to include decarbonisation.

- Audit Wales – National Report.

We are reviewing our Governance Architecture (key strategies) to ensure our strategies remain aligned to our shared vision (including our well-being objectives) and they we are using our resources effectively, efficiently and economically. This will help us to integrate our strategies and improve how we collaborate.

- Updated strategies.

Through gathering and analysing our staff data we can better understand and support our workforce and our key plans, for example the Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) and various duties such as Older People and Welsh language. We have reviewed our SEP following public consultation.

- Strategic Equality Plan.

**Are we using the five ways of working to change how we think, plan and act?**



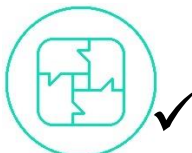
**Long-Term**



**Prevention**



**Collaboration**



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**Involvement**



A More Equal Wales

**Strategic Equality Plan** - Our Equalities Vision for Merthyr Tydfil is:

**A place where diversity is valued and respected and everyone can participate, flourish and have the opportunity to fulfil their potential free from discrimination and prejudice.**

We have continued to collaborate (internal and external) with others in delivering this vision. We produce an annual report building our findings into our plans across the Council.

The Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028 was approved in March 2024 and includes 6 objectives; Inclusive Engagement and Participation, Accessible Services, Inclusive and Diverse Workforce, Equity of Pay, Safe, Inclusive and Cohesive Communities, and Education, Skills and Employment. We are in discussion about including our equality objectives within the Corporate Well-being Plan in the future. We have reviewed our Integrated Impact Assessment and will be implementing updates to the Welsh Language section to enhance our assessment of impact in this area. We continue to monitor changes in legislation and implement where required.



A Wales of Vibrant Culture & Thriving Welsh Language

**Welsh Language** - We are continuing to promote the Welsh language and deliver our Welsh Language Strategy and Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. This supports how we are contributing to the national well-being goal of 'A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language'. Several events took place in 2023/24, more information is available in our annual report. This report sets out events and approaches to how we are delivering our Welsh language programme. We have collaborated with others to develop and deliver this. We are considering the long-term national targets regarding Welsh language as well as focusing on what we need to do now. This helps how we can use our limited resources. We have involved the public in our plans through Welsh language events, e.g. Diwrnod Shwmae Su'mae, Welsh Language Carol Concert and #SHWMAERONMENT Event.

## SECTION 6: NATIONALLY AVAILABLE DATA

Breaking nationally available data which reflects progress in Merthyr Tydfil; we can identify how progress locally compares to the Welsh average in a several areas. The table below show this comparison:



Community  
Safety

Indicator	Merthyr Tydfil	Wales average	Comparison against Welsh average
Percentage of people feeling safe at home, walking in the local area and when travelling	66%	66%	Equal to Welsh average
Percentage of people agreeing they belong to the local area, that people from different backgrounds get on together and people treat each other with respect	62%	64%	Below the Welsh average (-2%)
Percentage of people satisfied with the local area as a place to live	87%	89%	Below the Welsh average (-2%)



Culture,  
heritage, sports  
and tourism

Indicator	Merthyr Tydfil	Wales average	Comparison against Welsh average
Percentage of people participating in sporting activity 3 or more times a week	22%	34%	Below the Welsh average (-12%)
Percentage of people attending or participating in arts, culture and heritage activities at least 3 times a year	61%	65%	Below the Welsh average (-4%)



Qualifications

Indicator	Merthyr Tydfil	Wales average	Comparison against Welsh average
Percentage of people aged 16+ with no qualifications	13.7%	8.6%	Above the Welsh average (+5.1%)
Percentage of people aged 16+ with qualifications at RSQ2 or above	75.3%	84.9%	Below the Welsh average (-9.6%)



Earnings

Indicator	Merthyr Tydfil	Wales average	Comparison against Welsh average
<b>Earning by Place of Residence</b>			
Gross weekly pay (full-time workers)	£617.50	£636.10	Below the Wales Average (-£18.60)
Hourly pay (excluding overtime)	£15.95	£16.49	Below the Wales Average (-£0.54)



## Employment

Indicator	Merthyr Tydfil	Wales average	Comparison against Welsh average
People aged 16+ who are <b>economically active</b>	75.9%	75.6%	Above the Wales Average (+£0.30)
Males aged 16+ who are economically active	81.5%	78.9%	Above the Wales Average (+2.6%)
Females aged 16+ who are economically active	70.6%	72.3%	Below the Wales average (-1.7%)
People aged 16+ who are economically inactive	24.1%	24.4%	Above the Wales average (+0.3%)



## Benefits

Indicator	Merthyr Tydfil	Wales average	Comparison against Welsh average
Claimant count (at March 2024)	3.3%	3.4%	Below the Wales Average (-0.1%)



## Waste

Indicator	Merthyr Tydfil	Wales average	Comparison against Welsh average
Total number of recorded fly-tipping incidents per 1,000 population	10	6.4	Above the Wales Average (+3.6)
Clearance cost per fly-tipping incident (£)	£41.35	£45.84	Below the Wales average (-£4.49)
Percentage municipal waste reused, recycled or composted (statutory target)	64.8%	65.7%	Below the Wales average (-0.9%)
Kilograms residual household waste collected per person	185kg	172kg	Above the Wales average (+13kg)
Kilograms residual household waste collected per dwelling	394kg	365kg	Above the Wales average (+29kg)



## Housing and Homelessness

Indicator	Merthyr Tydfil	Wales average	Comparison against Welsh average
Percentage of households successfully relieved of homelessness	22.5%	30.3%	Below the Wales average (-7.8%)
Percentage of households successfully prevented from homelessness	51.6%	59%	Below the Wales average (-7.3%)
Number accommodated temporarily per 10,000 dwellings	56.5%	27.1%	Above the Wales average (+29.4%)
Number of additional affordable housing units delivered per 10,000 households	19.6	26.1	Below the Wales average (-6.5)



Social Services

Indicator	Merthyr Tydfil	Wales average	Comparison against Welsh average
Percentage of new assessments for <b>adults</b> resulting in a care and support plan	10.8%	33.9%	Below the Wales average (-23.1%)
Percentage of new assessments for <b>children</b> resulting in a care and support plan	15.5%	17.6%	Below the Wales average (-2.1%)
Percentage of reablement packages completed where the need for support was maintained, reduced or mitigated	69.2%	81.9%	Below the Wales average (-12.7%)

## SECTION 7: PROGRESS ON OUR WELL-BEING OBJECTIVES

### An Aspirational Merthyr Tydfil

Key Action	What we've done to date
Developing ambitious pathways which will support the development of high levels of literacy, numeracy and digital skills from early years through to post-16	The work with the National Literacy Trust continues and the primary schools involved last academic year will receive further support through money for books and engagement with various programmes. The baby Bookworm programme run by Stephens and George has been rolled out to most schools and engages parents with early reading. A specific early years focused project with NLT was rolled out in the 3 WM settings at the end of the Summer Term. Several primary schools are working with Value Added Education to develop bespoke apps to support their curricula. A number of schools are also considering ways in which AI can be used by teachers and pupils to enhance learning. Numeracy support for parents is being supported through Multiply – this remains an area of focus for nearly all schools on their development plans
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	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>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>
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	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.
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	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.
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>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>
Continuing to explore and expand our 'Pathways to Employment' scheme to provide specific training	

Connecting with education providers and businesses to better align courses / modules with high level vocational experience and learning	<p>The Business Education Together Partnership is developing appropriately in supporting aspirations across Merthyr Tydfil. The appointment of a Strategic Partnership Co-Ordinator in Sept 2024 led to increased collaboration and partnership between businesses, organisations and schools, with work also developing at a greater pace. The core group of the BETP has been strengthened, with the involvement of key organisations and businesses such as Reaching Wider, USW and the Wales Valleys Engineering Lead. This has allowed a wider understanding of what is going on in different areas across the Borough. A business directory has been developed to allow schools the opportunity to see what support is available from employers as a means of enhancing curriculum delivery. SEAL pledges, the show of support from businesses to engage with education, have risen from 2 to 21. A range of activities have taken place throughout the academic year, including a mentoring programme for disadvantaged and disaffected learners, a cluster careers event focused on the importance of bilingualism in the workplace and an event for International Women's Day to raise aspirations of More Able and Talented girls. Over 850 learners from as young as Year 3 have been engaged in developing aspirations through curricular supported approaches to careers work related education. Business, teacher and learner feedback has been positive and very enthusiastic. This work is now at significant risk due to the coordinator moving to another role and failure to recruit to a grant funded post.</p>
Developing a system where communities and schools work together to provide exciting opportunities and innovative experiences for all learners	<p>The Community Focused Schools agenda is continuing to work across the County Borough. The recent funded study visit by headteachers in the north of the county has provided a framework for further discussions with WG as well as discussions with CMTUHB on how to develop closer working relationships. A planned session for schools and partners facilitated by the Hydra Foundation will provide a framework for this work to be taken forward through the Education Partnership Panel</p>
Working with all stakeholders, we will develop aspirational pathways for learning for all	<p>There are 12 learners engaged with The College Merthyr Tydfil on alternative pathways at Key Stage 4, there are plans to roll this out next year to more learners dependent on funding. Learners within the PRU this year have been offered a wide variety of alternative options for curriculum delivery alongside basic skills of literacy and numeracy – this is proving successful and engaging them in learning. Mainstream schools have reduced their alternative curriculum offer due to funding restraints.</p>

## A Healthier Merthyr Tydfil

Key Action	What we've done to date
Providing support services to enable people to remain living in their own homes	<p>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.</p> <p>The number of hours and people remain consistent and during the first 2 quarters the capacity within domiciliary care services has remained good.</p>
Developing integrated service responses with health to achieve better well-being outcomes for children and adults	<p>Embedding Camau Babi service for Merthyr Tydfil as a part of the regional workstream and pathway to services. Also developing Camau Nesaf (next steps) to work to prevent the cycle of children being removed from parents.</p> <p>Attendance at Parent Infant Relationship regional groups – recruitment of a Parent Infant Relationship strategic psychological lead for the region who has attended children's briefing to promote the service.</p> <p>Commissioned emotional wellbeing preventative therapeutic support. This has been retendered and will continue in the next financial year. This has supported numerous children and prevented placement breakdowns.</p> <p>Developed a new joint regional community model for adults based on urgent care and the health needs of the population.</p> <p>We have been working with health and RCT to develop integrated discharge teams</p> <p>We continue to develop an integrated model of community care</p>
Provide additional supported accommodation to reduce homelessness	<p>Developed supported accommodation for young people 16+. This is ongoing work to help bring children back from out of authority under elimination of profit agenda.</p> <p>Developed supported accommodation for young people and adults at risk of or experiencing homelessness.</p>

and the use of temporary accommodation	<p>Increased the temporary accommodation utilising HMOs to meet our statutory duties.</p> <p>Continued to work with housing and partners to develop an extra care facility by the end of 2027/28</p> <p>Increased the development of general needs affordable housing through WG Grant Funding to increase 1 bed properties and other homes (including adapted homes) in line with local need to reduce overreliance on B&amp;B and work towards a rapid rehousing model.</p>
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	<p>Development of new regional child sexual and criminal exploitation pathways.</p> <p>Review of MASH- to divert work to the correct teams and reduce delay. This will increase IAA support able to be provided.</p> <p>Reviewed the provision of adult safeguarding and revised the structure to improve outcomes for vulnerable adults. New manager appointed for Adult Safeguarding who has undertaken an audit of cases/ incorporated Professional concerns recording into WCCIS</p> <p>The governance around the Corporate Safeguarding Reference Group has been strengthened. The Safeguarding Policy and the Whistleblowing Policy have both been updated.</p> <p>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.</p>

## A Safe Prosperous Merthyr Tydfil

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 Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre 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</p>

	<p>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. The Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Placemaking Plan is currently being reviewed and a first draft will be prepared by end of December 2024.</p>
<p>Increasing economic activity rates through partnership activities; leading to lower levels of worklessness across the County Borough</p>	<p>The Town Centre Hub development is now fully 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 hosts various partners throughout each working week. Partners offer advice and guidance on various subject matters.</p> <p>The 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>Increasing economic activity rates through partnership activities; leading to lower levels of worklessness across the County Borough</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. A Cost of Living Event was held on the 13th February 2023 and a spring recruitment fair was held on the 21st March 2024. The recruitment fair enabled 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>
<p>Tackling anti-social behaviour in conjunction with relevant partners, using effective enforcement techniques</p>	<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 &amp; 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>
Improving business support opportunities throughout Merthyr Tydfil County Borough; promoting business ownership and preparing an engagement/pathway programme to access start-up opportunities	<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>
Improving business support opportunities throughout Merthyr Tydfil County Borough; promoting business ownership and preparing an engagement/pathway programme to access start-up opportunities	<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>
Continue to develop an aspirational Merthyr Tydfil to attract investment	<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>

A Clean and Green Merthyr Tydfil

Key Action	What we've done to date
Delivering a Council approved Net Zero Plan	
Ensuring green spaces are accessible to our residents to support their health and well-being	

Meet the Welsh Government waste Recovery target of 70%	