

MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE SELF-ASSESSMENT

Reporting Period:
2024-2025

This annual corporate self-assessment report meets our duty as set out in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015



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Foreword

As reported last year, we are continuing to build on our experiences and considering feedback from various sources, to further strengthen our Council. In this report we look at how we are delivering our well-being objectives (as part of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015) as well as the extent to which we are meeting our requirements set out in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, for the financial year 2024/25.

The Corporate Well-being Plan is the main plan for the Council. It sets out our objectives, outcomes and what we are doing to deliver them. This report looks at how we are delivering against our Corporate Well-being Plan. We have continued to collaborate with others and focus on delivering our priorities, for example the work we are doing across the region as part of the Public Service Board and Regional Partnership Board. All our strategic documents set out the plans we have that help us achieve our objectives. In our self-assessment we also consider the four pillars of well-being, namely: economic; social; cultural; environmental.

Learning from previous years, we have continued to focus on delivering our services by using the five ways of working as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, especially in how we integrate our strategies and build on the collaboration that has been in place responding to the pandemic. This has enabled us to become far more focused on what needs to be done in delivering our objectives for our residents. This was demonstrated by the work done through collaboration with partners from across Cwm Taf Morgannwg to engage with the public and others in developing our Population Needs Assessment and Well-being Assessment, both of which were used to build our corporate well-being plan.

We have continued to place greater emphasis on how we monitor our performance against the needs of our communities and are continuing to improve our understanding of data and using it to make better informed decisions.

In this report, we set out how we are using our resources, the effectiveness of our functions and our governance. We consider our engagement and consultation activities especially with local people, our staff, businesses and our Trades Unions. We will use the findings of this report to help us continuously assess ourselves. We want to be as efficient, effective and economical in meeting our outcomes for our residents now and in the future.



Brent Carter
Council Leader



Ellis Cooper
Chief Executive

Introduction

This annual corporate self-assessment report meets our duty as set out in Part 6 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Self-assessment is defined by Welsh Government (WG) as “a way of critically, and honestly, reviewing the current position to make decisions on how to secure improvement for the future”¹. As the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 is “designed to be a more streamlined, flexible, sector-led approach to performance, good governance and improvement”², we have used this approach in the development of this report and performance governance but still considering sound principles such as benchmarking and considering sustainability.

In this report we set conclude extent to which we met our performance requirements in 2024/25. As in previous years, we have set out the actions we have taken and will take to address our findings so that we can continuously improve and increase the extent to which we can meet our performance requirement. This will include short-term (immediate to, and including next year, i.e., 1 year), medium-term (2 to 5 years) and long-term (5 years plus) actions. We will also assess progress in meeting our well-being objectives for this same year.

As a public body, we are committed to carrying out sustainable development. This means improving the way we can achieve our economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being. This starts with setting and publishing our well-being objectives which help us maximise our contribution to the seven nation well-being goals (set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015). Our corporate well-being plan sets out our well-being themes and objectives, that will let us know if things are getting better.

In 2024/25 we reviewed and updated our performance management framework and reintroduced service self-evaluation and service planning. This enabled us to develop our annual delivery plan in 2025. This work informs our corporate self-assessment and the action plan below in this report.

We reviewed our corporate risk management arrangements alongside our performance management. As part of this work, we updated our corporate risk register (CRR) template. This includes our key challenges and how we are going to address them.



¹ Statutory guidance on Part 6, Chapter 1 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

² Performance and governance of principal councils - Statutory guidance on Part 6, Chapter 1, of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021; Welsh Government; March 2021

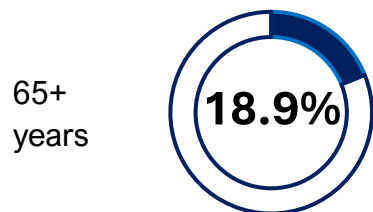
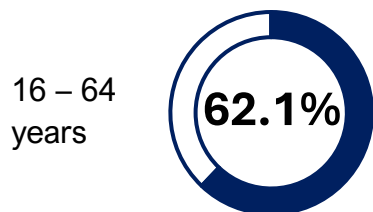
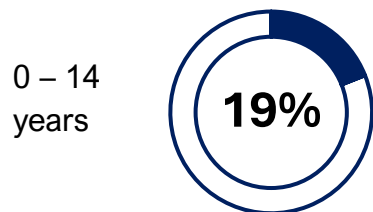
About the Area

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

Total Population

58,839

Population by Age Group:



Source: [Census 2021](#)

Health:



Very Good

45.4%

26,718 people



Good

30.2%

17,786 people



Fair

15%

8,837 people



Bad

7%

4,112 people



Very Bad

2.4%

1,386 people

Source: [Census 2021](#)

Ethnicity:

91.7%

57,140 people

Identify as White

0.9%

510 people

Identify as mixed / multiple ethnic group

1.5%

871 people

Identify as Asian / Asian British

0.2%

91 people

Identify as Black African / Caribbean / British

0.4%

227 people

Identify as other ethnic groups

Source: [Census 2021](#)

Merthyr Tydfil CBC's [Local Development Plan](#) (LDP) shows us that the main town of Merthyr Tydfil has a highest concentration of population (approximately 43,000). The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation identified Merthyr Tydfil as having high levels of deprivation; with 28 of its 36 LSOAs recorded as being in the top 50% most deprived areas in Wales. To address this, the Council has an aspiration to develop a 'Tackling Poverty' plan to deliver targeted and co-ordinated actions collaborating with partners.

Number of Electoral Wards: **11**

Number of Ward Councillors: **30**

What is Self-Assessment?

Self-assessment is a way of critically, and honestly, reviewing the current position to make decisions on how to secure improvement for the future. Self-assessment is more than stating what arrangements are in place; it is about considering how effective these arrangements are and how they can be improved. At its simplest, self-assessment of how the Council meets its' performance requirements under the Act needs us to answer some key questions:

How well are we doing?

How do we know?

What and how can we do better?

Self-assessment is not a fixed judgement: it is something which we should undertake regularly – addressing issues as they are identified; responding effectively in real time to challenges and opportunities.

Our Approach to Self-Assessment

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council undertakes self-assessment by encouraging honesty, objectivity and transparency about the Council's performance and governance. It provides an evidence-based analysis, helping us better understand how the Council is delivering its services/functions, how it's using its resources and governing itself. It focuses on what has been achieved by asking honest questions about the impact of the Council's actions is having on people's lives and experiences.

By using intelligence already held corporately in an insightful way, leadership across the Council can reflect on how the Council is operating at a strategic level and identify what action is needed to make sure it can continue to provide effective services both now and for the long term.

The types of evidence we review includes (but is not restricted to):

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal reports reviewed by Full Council, Cabinet and other Council committees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reports from our regulators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any reports from the Public Service Ombudsman
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-evaluations (including scrutiny self-evaluation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance information (e.g. indicators and information on a local, regional and national level) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The key findings of our Staff Survey
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> User feedback gathered through our engagement and consultation activities (including that with local businesses and Trade Union colleagues) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Council Compliments and Complaints Reporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case studies and qualitative data

Vision Values & Strategic Objectives

Our Shared Vision

“Acting today for a Better Tomorrow”

The Wales we Want



A Prosperous Wales



A Resilient Wales



A Healthier Wales



A More Equal Wales



A Wales of Cohesive Communities



A Wales of Thriving Culture & Welsh Language



A Globally Responsible Wales

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

The Shared Vision for Merthyr Tydfil:

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

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

Merthyr Tydfil CBC well being objectives	Cwm Taf Morgannwg PSB well-being objectives
<p>An Aspirational Merthyr Tydfil focused on learning We will strengthen how we enable people to grow and reach their potential.</p>	<p>Healthy Local Communities A Cwm Taf Morgannwg where our communities are inclusive and feel cohesive and people feel safe, supported and valued.</p>
<p>A Healthier Merthyr Tydfil We will empower people to live independent and dignified lives.</p>	
<p>A Safe & Prosperous Merthyr Tydfil We will support how our economy recovers and grows.</p>	<p>Sustainable and Resilient Local Neighbourhoods A Cwm Taf Morgannwg where we understand and respond to the risk of climate change to our communities. To do this we must value, manage and enjoy our green and blue spaces responsibly.</p>
<p>A Clean & Green Merthyr Tydfil We will support the creation of a clean and green environment now and in the future.</p>	

Our Core Values

- Honesty and Openness
- Trust and Respect
- Accountability
- Learning
- Aspiration
- Team Working
- Communication

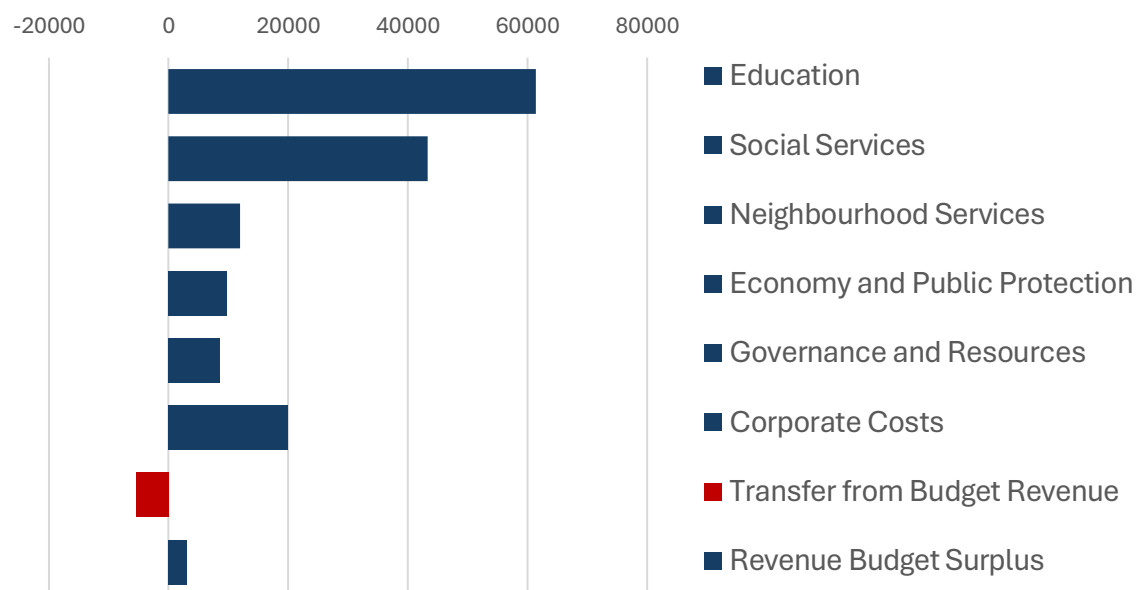
Our Operating Principles

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

Finances Budgets & Expenditure

Revenue Budget - The Council sets a revenue budget each year. This revenue budget covers the costs of the services the Council provides, and is paid for by service users, Welsh Government Grants, Council Tax and Business Rate payers. For 2024-25, the Council's revenue budget was **£152,654**.

	£,000
Education	61,418
Social Services	43,304
Neighbourhood Services	11,904
Economy and Public Protection	9,831
Governance and Resources	8,644
Corporate Costs	19,961
Transfer from Budget Reserve	-5,500
Revenue Budget Surplus	3,092
Total	152,654



We realise we still have challenges to meet so in 2024/25 we identified the need for a Transformation Programme to consider medium- and longer-term options to improve our effectiveness and efficiency. This was later approved in 2025. This programme will help us address the longer-term financial challenges we face. We also identified that reliance on external funding could cause us long term sustainability issues. As such we developed a corporate risk regarding this and are working to address it.

Key Decisions Taken During the Year

When making key decisions the Council considers how these will impact on both the corporate well-being objectives and the 7 national well-being goals. Examples of where positive links between these elements and the decisions made include:

	Our Corporate Well-being Objectives				The 7 National Well-being Goals						
	An Aspirational Merthyr Tydfil	A Healthier Merthyr Tydfil	A Safe & Prosperous Merthyr Tydfil	A Clean & Green Merthyr Tydfil	A Prosperous Wales	A Resilient Wales	A Healthier Wales	A More Equal Wales	A Wales of Cohesive Communities	A Wales of Vibrant Culture & Thriving Welsh Language	A Globally Responsible Wales
Approved the Corporate Parenting Strategy	●	●	●				●	●	●		●
Approved the Local Housing Market Assessment		●	●				●	●	●		●
Approved the Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Approved the Corporate Performance Management Framework	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Approved the Corporate Restructure of the Deputy Chief Executive's Portfolio prior to their retirement	●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●	●
Approved the appointment of the Section 151 Officer	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Ratified/approved the Welsh Public Library Standards report prior to submission to Welsh Government	●		●		●		●	●	●	●	●
Ratified the MTCBC Local Authority Hardship Scheme	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Approved the Corporate Risk Policy and Strategy	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Reviewed, challenges and approved the Corporate Self-Assessment Report	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Approved the Proposed Strategy Framework for Youth Work	●	●	●		●		●	●	●	●	●
Confirmed the Budget Requirements and Council Tax 2025/26	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Approved Corporate Fraud Enforcement Policy	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

Engagement and Consultation

We have an approved Participation and Engagement Strategy which includes how we engage with our stakeholders.

Our consultation and engagement exercises are often as a result of a statutory requirement (e.g. setting our well-being objectives). However, we do undertake other consultation or engagement exercises to gather the views of the public to inform our decision-making process. We have also integrated questions regarding engagement/consultation into our IIA process, especially linking to our socio-economic duty.

Consultation can take place in a number of ways, for example (and not limited to) face-to-face meetings, on-line questionnaires, focus groups, hackathons (a hackathon is a 4-hour event that aims to bring together people with lived experiences, professionals, decision makers and creative producers), drop-in sessions and Group Surveys/Roadshows.

We continue to engage with local businesses and our Trades Unions. We use this feedback to inform how we work.

You can find out more in our Council Priorities and Budget Consultation 2024/25. The findings from this exercise were used to set our budget and understand what our residents need.

We carried out 19 engagement exercises in 2024/25, 17 external and 2 internal (staff engagement). The table below provides a breakdown of these. The findings were used to inform our decisions.

No.	Survey Title	Survey dates	Internal/External	No. of responses
1	Young People Consultation 2025	24 Mar – 18 Jul 2025	External	456
2	Library Opening Hours Consultation 2025	03 Feb – 27 March 2025	External	201
3	Penywern Ponds A465 link	27 Jan – 10 Mar 2025	External	255
4	MTCBC Budget Consultation 2025/26	02 Nov 2024 – 19 Jan 2025	External	1,579

5	Dowlais Primary School and Cyfarthfa High School, ASD units Consultation Response Form.	12 Nov – 22 Dec 2025	External	135
6	Welsh Language Courses	16 Dec 2024 – 6 March 2025	Internal	154
7	Active Travel Survey 2024	07 Oct – 1 Nov 2024	External	42
8	Staff Efficiency Saving Suggestions	28 Oct 2024 – 08 Jan 2025	Internal	25
9	Consultation on Council Tax Premiums 2024	24 July – 20 Sep 2024	External	334
10	Age Friendly Baseline Assessment Survey	03 Oct – 16 Jun 2024		642
11	Consultation: Post16 School/college Transport (Welsh specific questions)	17 Jul – 7 Aug 2024	External	18
12	Post-16 Home to School Transport Provision Consultation	20 May – 7 Aug 2024	External	819
13	Taf Bargoed Local Plan Consultation	09 May – 30 Jun 2024	External	289
14	Coffee Pods	14 Jun – 14 Jul 2024	External	300
15	MTCBC Staff Culture Survey 2024	03 Jun – 12 Jul 2024	Internal	316
16	Young Persons Survey Digital Youth Work	04 Jun – 13 Aug 2024	External	50
17	Young Person Questionnaire - Youth Service	04 Jun – 14 Aug 2024	External	91
18	Public Space Protection Order Consultation – Dog Fouling	08 Apr – 01 Jul 2024	External	763
19	Wesley Place Traffic Improvements	22 May – 18 Jun 2024	External	28

We were able to use the information and data gathered from these exercises to inform our decisions. An example of this is the engagement at Compass Community Hub.

Engagement at Compass Community Hub: An example of Good Practice

Through a broad offering of employment related support, informal learning, accredited learning and work-related licenses we have improved residents' employment circumstances, skills and qualifications. Anyone who is 16+ can access Compass to improve their employability, however, due to other projects within employability at MTCBC there is a focus on:

- People with complex barriers to move closer towards the labour market by engaging in soft skills training and support through a variety of workshop and courses
- Individuals in employment or the underemployed are supported to change career or gain additional hours at work
- Anyone who is ineligible for other support through the C4W or other funded Welsh Government programs.



What difference has this approach made?

The number of individuals who have signed up to Compass to access support during last financial year (2024/2025) is – **1,236 participants**. The economic status of these participants was as follows:

Employed / underemployed

461

Unemployed

417

Economically inactive (EI)

358

Typically, the unemployed and EI access workshops and courses linked to employability to help participants move closer to the labour market. This can include confidence building, communication, preparation for work and a range of work-related qualifications. Our employed / underemployed are employed in low paid / low skilled jobs and access support and training to enable them to progress in their careers.

Feedback received from our programme participants has identified the benefits they have gained as a result of working with the Employability programmes. Examples of this feedback can be seen in the Case Studies document that accompanies this Corporate Self-Assessment Report.

Scrutiny Feedback Received over the Past 12 Months

The role that overview and scrutiny can play in holding a local authority's decision-makers to account makes it fundamentally important to the successful functioning of local democracy. Effective scrutiny helps secure the efficient delivery of public services and drives improvements within the authority itself. On the other hand, poor scrutiny can be indicative of wider governance, leadership, and service failure.

The scrutiny function in Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC) is performed by five scrutiny groups; these are made up of Elected Members (or Councillors) who are not part of the Council's Executive (Cabinet), along with co-opted representatives. The Council uses the four principles of good scrutiny ([Centre for Governance and Scrutiny](#)) to underpin the function.



Provides critical friend challenge to policymakers and decision makers



Enables the voice and concerns of the public



Is carried out by independent-minded people who lead and own the scrutiny role



Drives improvement in public services

An Annual Scrutiny Report is produced at the end of every municipal year to outline the activities and key findings of scrutiny activity undertaken; you can access a copy of the latest report [here](#).

What Our Regulators Say

Like all Councils in Wales, our work is scrutinised by external regulators to ensure that we use public money effectively to deliver benefits to our communities. Audit Wales (previously known as the Wales Audit Office (WAO)) has an annual programme of audit and assessment work which it undertakes in the Council. Other regulators undertake work relating to specific service areas. The conclusions from all this work are brought together in an Annual Improvement Report. The other primary regulators are Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales (Estyn) and the Care Inspectorate for Wales (CIW). Findings from ESTYN, CIW and Audit Wales are included in this report.

We are working on recommendations from all our regulators. These are being monitored through our audit action plan (AAP) system with regular reports being presented to our Corporate Management Team for monitoring and holding recommendation holders to account. This is also reported to our Governance and Audit Committee to provide assurance that we are acting on our recommendations.

The feedback we have received has helped us become more focused on key improvements regarding our governance. For examples, we have been able to strengthen our approaches to Corporate Risk Management and Performance.

You can visit our regulator websites from the links below:

www.audit.wales/publications

www.estyn.gov.wales/inspection

www.careinspectorate.wales

Key Performance Measures

The following key performance measures are considered when developing this report, charts below will refer to these measures by KPI code.

KPI Code	Indicator
ASP001	Outcomes at Key Stage 4 - Capped 9
ASP002	Outcomes at Key Stage 4 - Literacy
ASP003	Outcomes at Key Stage 4 - Numeracy
ASP004	Outcomes at Key Stage 4 - Welsh (average points score)
ASP005	Primary schools fixed term exclusions 5 days or fewer (rate per 1,000 pupils)
ASP006	Secondary schools fixed term exclusions 5 days or fewer (rate per 1,000 pupils)
ASP007	% attendance - primary schools
ASP008	% attendance - secondary schools
ASP009	% school inspections that have a positive outcome
ASP010	% Year 11 leavers who are NEET
ASP011	% 16–18-year-olds remaining in provision evidence through Tier 5 Model annually (@ 31 March)
ASP012	% pupils achieving Level 3 qualifications at post-16
ASP013	# participants in Employability programme training that secure a qualification

SPMT001	# participants in employment after leaving a programme
SPMT002	# visits to the 5 key attractions within Merthyr Tydfil
SPMT003	% ASB perpetrators who re-offend within a 6-week period, reaching Stage 2
SPMT004	# instances where CCTV has been utilised to detect crime and disorder
SPMT005	% empty private sector properties brought back into use during the year through direct action by the local authority
SPMT006	# businesses financially supported

KPI Code	Indicator
HMT001	# children looked after (@ 31 March)
HMT002	# children on the Child Protection Register (@ 31 March)
HMT003	% new assessments for children completed within timescales
HMT004	Total # adult contacts (incl. as a % of the adult (over 18) population)
HMT005	Total # adult protection enquiries completed within statutory timescales
HMT006	Total # adults receiving community support to enable them to remain living in their own homes (home care and direct payments)
HMT007	# cases where homelessness has been prevented
HMT008	# homeless cases rehoused within 56 days
HMT009	# Priority open spaces where improvements have been made to accessibility

CGMT001	% of municipal waste reused, recycled or composted
CGMT002	Kg residual waste generated per person
CGMT003	# Priority open spaces where improvements have been made to biodiversity
CGMT004	# local businesses signed up to the Decarbonisation Pledge

These indicators are reviewed to help us to understand our performance and will be explored further in upon in the following sections.

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 2024/2025:

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



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 |

Data to inform these measures has been sourced from three Council Departments: Education, Community Well-being and Employability

Attendance: Primary Schools*



Attendance levels in primary schools in Merthyr Tydfil over the past 12 months has been recorded at **92.03%**

This shows an improvement on the previous academic year (91%).

Attendance: Secondary Schools*



Attendance levels in **secondary schools** in Merthyr Tydfil over the past 12 months has been recorded at **88.77%** - this shows an increase when measured against the previous academic year (86.3%).

Capped 9 Score*

Data relating to the Capped 9 score showed the latest score to be **358.9** points – a marked increase on the score previously recorded by Education services (346)



Fixed Term Exclusions: Primary Schools*



When reviewing fixed-term exclusions for fewer than 5 days (per 1,000 pupils) for **primary schools**, data recorded shows this stood at **22.59** for the period in question. This was slightly lower than the previous year (22.8)

Fixed Term Exclusions: Secondary Schools*



Data recorded in relation to fixed-term exclusions for fewer than 5 days (per 1,000 pupils) shows this stood at **138.06** for the period in question. This was lower than the previous year (157.7).

Literacy*

Looking at data linked to literacy, a score of **38** was recorded for Merthyr Tydfil – a minor improvement from the previous year where data shows performance stood at 37.7

**LOVE
LITERACY**



Numeracy*



When reviewing the numeracy data, we can see the score recorded for Merthyr Tydfil in 2024/25 was **34**. This has increased slightly from the previous year where performance was recorded at 33.9

Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

Looking at the Year 11 NEET data, we can see Merthyr Tydfil recorded a score of **2.7** – this shows an increase on the previous year (1.5)



Percentage of 16–18-year-olds remaining in provision evidenced through the Tier 5 model

The most recent data shows performance has fallen slightly in this area; with **97%** achieving for 2024/25, as opposed to 97.4% in the previous 12 months.



Welsh (Average Points Score) *

Looking at the score for Welsh (average points score), we can see Merthyr Tydfil recorded a score of **30.1** in 2024/25.

This shows an improvement on the data captured in the previous year (25.4)



Percentage of School Inspections with a positive outcome*

Following some performance issues noted last year, plans were put in place to address improvement actions identified as a result of school inspections during that period process. The most recent local data shows us that **100%** of school inspections had a positive outcome in 2024/25 – a significant improvement on the previous year (25%)



Number of participants in employability programme training that secure a qualification

Our latest data shows us that **504** people who accessed the Council's Employability programmes achieved a qualification – this significantly exceeded the target set for the year (200), and was over double the outcomes achieved during the previous year (205)



EDUCATION



SKILLS



EXPERIENCE



TRAINING

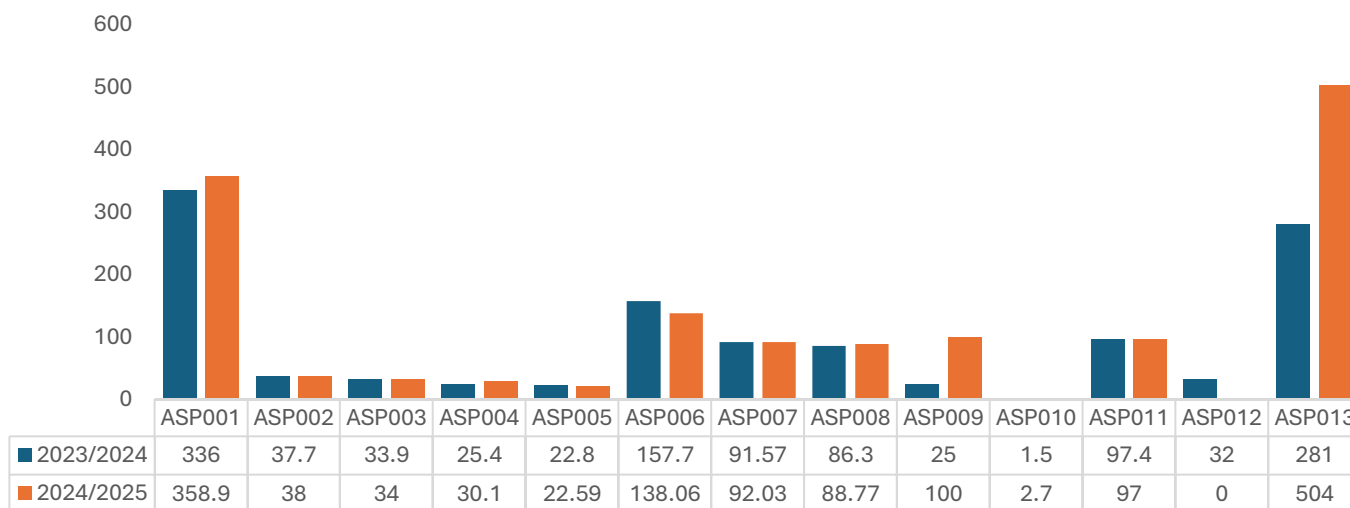


KNOWLEDGE

* External verification of this data is pending at time of publishing, so this data remains **provisional** until that has been received

SUMMARY OF PROGRESS

Comparing Performance: 2023-24 and 2024-25



Comparisons with performance outcomes recorded for 2023/24 showed several positive changes in the following areas:

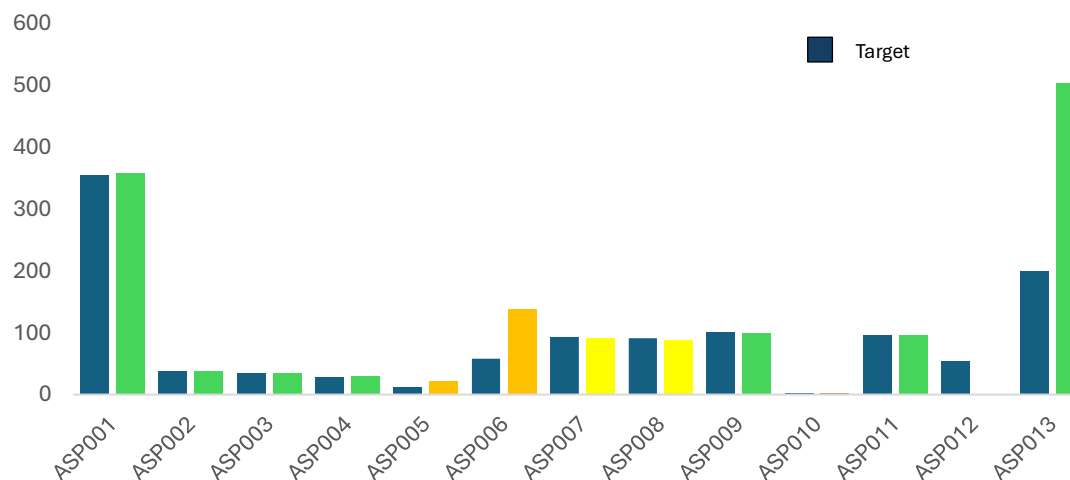
- School attendance at both primary and secondary levels improved,
- A reduction of school exclusions at primary level was noted,
- An improvement in school inspection outcomes was seen, and
- A significant improvement in the number of participants gaining qualifications via Council Employability projects was recorded.
- An increase in the number of Year 11 pupils who are NEET was noted, and this will be addressed in the 2025/26 year

PROGRESS AGAINST TARGETS SET FOR 2024-25

When reviewing the data against the targets set for the 2024/25 period, we identified the following:

- Attendance data shows an improvement at both primary and secondary school levels
- Improvements were noted in relation to fixed term exclusions 5 days or fewer, the data showing this was happening at a slower pace at secondary level than to primary school-level
- An increase in Year 11 pupils who are NEET was anticipated; however, the increase was higher than expected
- The percentage of school inspections securing a positive outcome has improved this year with all schools inspected receiving a positive assessment, and
- A significant increase in the number of Employability programme participants achieving qualifications was noted

Comparing Performance: Targets against Actuals: 2024/25

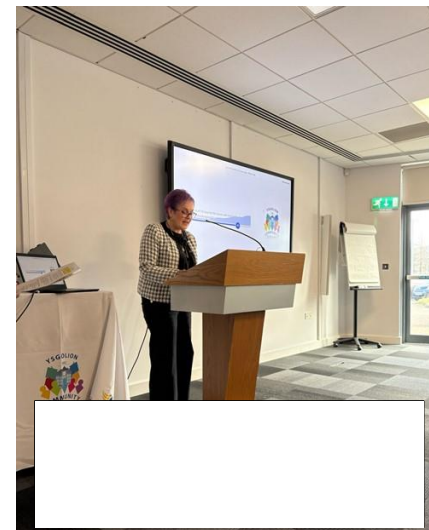


What have we learned?

School attendance continues to be a focus for services with currently externally unverified data showing a slight improvement in the attendance rate. When reviewing 2024/25 data against the previous year, the data shows us we have made a small improvement in attendance at primary school level, however, attendance can be seen to have decreased slightly at secondary level. The 'Team around the School' service has undertaken a piece of work around the issue of persistent absenteeism to explore this and understand the factors affecting this issue. The insights and findings of this work show us that reducing persistent absenteeism will be a priority for improvement in 2025/26.

During 2024/2025, a conference in Orbit to showcase the success of **Community Focused Schools (CFS)** across the County Borough. With contributions from Welsh Government officials, educational leaders, community partners, and local initiatives, the event celebrated collaborative progress and unveiled new approaches such as the 3 Pillar Approach and the innovative CFS Padlet platform. Working with Cardiff Metropolitan University, the findings of the research activity have been widely disseminated. These developments mean there has been a far closer cluster relationship and a clear recognition of community work, and the support communities can give to schools.

Additionally, a more open relationship has also developed between schools and third sector organisations, and capital funding has been secured to improve 3 sites. Significant work undertaken with Health, a number of pilots being undertaken where health-based activities open to schools and families to help people access what they need in their own locality – this work will continue into 2025/26



The **Young People's Participation service** ensures that young people are provided with the opportunity to influence and shape the services that affect them in line with the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Youth Mayor and Deputy Youth Mayor are members of the Youth Cabinet. During 2024/25, Youth Cabinet support service lost a member of staff whose role was to support the Cabinet – this has meant that there was no capacity to deliver on this planned action during this period. The Council continues to explore ways to actively support this activity.

During 2024/25, the groundwork has begun in relation to the **School Improvement Forum**. New arrangements for school improvement have been developed throughout the year meaning, though issues around capacity have been seen to slow the pace of activities. As a longer-term project, the Council will be focus on this in 2025/26 and 2026/27.

Within Merthyr Tydfil the combined **Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)** and 'unknown' destination figure of 2.9% (19 young people) is higher than the previous year (1.8%), but lower than the Wales average of 3.3%, ranking the local authority as joint 5th of the 22 local

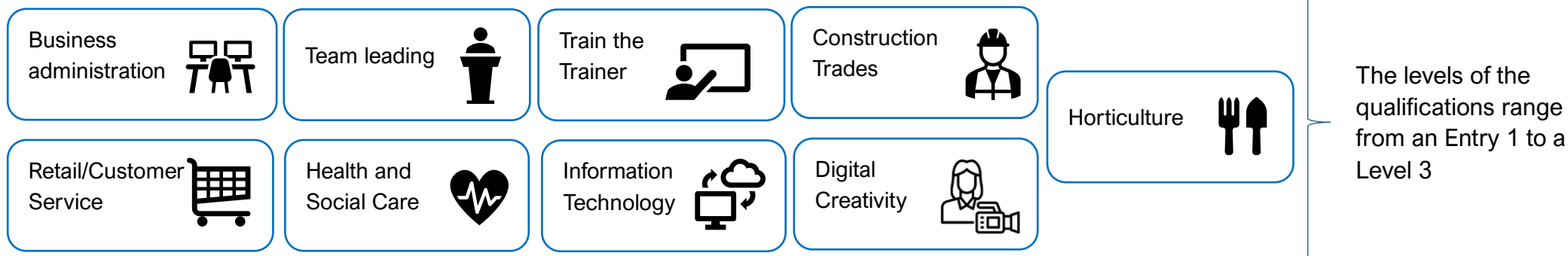
authorities for its combined performance in 2024. In this regard, the local authority had the joint best performance (along with RCTCBC in the Central South region of the neighbouring local authorities).

A wide range of **accredited qualifications** are delivered by the Compass Community Hub and the internal tutor delivery team work to enhance people’s wellbeing, encourage social inclusion, move people closer to the job market and increase their work-related skills.

In addition to delivering Agored and British Computer Society qualifications, over the last year the project has increased its offering of training by becoming a registered Highfields accreditation centre.

This means we can now offer assessment-based courses in Personal License Holder, Environmental Sustainability and Health and Safety in a Construction Environment. These qualifications are key to enabling residents to have the correct licenses for work.

The 6-month curriculum offers a broad range of courses including:



During 2024/25, **173 accredited qualifications** (Agored) were achieved by participants through our internal delivery; **4 learners** completed their level 2 ICDL qualification, and **36 participants** gained the Health and Safety in Construction qualification (Highfields) for CSCS cards to work onsite in construction.



Compass has an **online learning program** to support individuals who prefer to use digital means for learning/training. These online sessions offer a variety of subjects including Food Hygiene Level 2; COSHH; Allergen Awareness; Asbestos awareness; and Manual Handling.

Learners can learn at their own place with support from Compass tutors. During 2024/25, **16 participants** have completed online learning qualifications to help them to progress in work or move closer to employment.



To help to improve the high percentages of digital exclusion Compass has **worked in partnership with the Good Things Foundation to help to provide free SIM cards and refurbished laptops to the community.**

These can help people to stay connected, access training, apply for jobs and gain information from support agencies. 16 laptops and 27 SIM cards have been provided to participants to help to stay digitally connected.

The **Progression in Learning** project works closely with other learning providers such as Adult Learning Wales and the University of South Wales to avoid duplication and offer support to participants to enable them to increase their confidence to complete higher level qualifications. A number of participants have accessed courses in a variety of subjects as a result of mentoring support from Compass. These have included Classroom Assistant Level 2; Manual Handling Level 2; Adverse Childhood Experiences; First Aid Level 3; Counselling Skills Level 2; Paediatric First Aid Level 3; Health and Safety in the Workplace Level 2; Criminology; Animation, and British Sign Language. **237 participants** have been supported to access higher level courses as a result of engagement with Compass.



Compass offers residents the opportunity to increase their skills through **supported volunteering**. The program links in with charities, businesses and organisations within the County Borough to offer a wide range of placements in differing sectors including care, hospitality and retail. Links have been created with larger employers such as Iceland and The Works to offer volunteering opportunities which could lead to employment for the right candidates. During 2024/25, **34 volunteering placements** were completed, with 1 person reporting a career change as a direct result of volunteering. All others reported a positive impact via evaluation forms on completion of the volunteering.

Through engagement initially with Goetre Primary School and Community Focussed Schools, Compass facilitated **Career Academies**. These focused on raising the aspirations of not only the children who attended but also the parents / carers who attended with them. They all experienced a range of “hands-on” activities to help them to experience skills and knowledge needed to pursue careers in different sectors. Adults were given information during the academies on the learning, training and support available through Compass.

At Goetre School, 157 pupils / 150 adults engaged (over 4 sessions); at Gellifaelog School 29 pupils / 24 adults engaged (over 1 session). 17 referrals were received as a direct result of these sessions from adults attending who requested further support from Compass. Due to the success of the initial sessions, this approach is now being rolled out to other primary schools in the County Borough.

Compass has worked in partnership with Education within MTCBC to offer children / young people who are home schooled the opportunity to attend sessions related to employment such as carpentry, hair and beauty and the creative industries. These have run weekly. Transport is provided to the young people to help break down barriers and encourage higher attendance. 18 young people who do not attend school accessed Compass to engage in these sessions. All reported a positive impact on evaluation forms following these sessions. Due to the success of attendance over the last year in these sessions we will be working towards delivering accredited qualifications in the sessions moving forward.

Learn through the Outdoors offers an outdoors learning program to anyone who may be experiencing poor mental health. The sessions provide transport and take participants to places of interest to enjoy the outdoors and improve their mental health. This also supports participants confidence and social inclusion, moving them eventually closer to employment. This type of program can be seen as a preventative measure to people facing a decline in their mental health if not accessing any other support services. It can help health services to be under less pressure as people's health and wellbeing is improved. Importantly, **100% of participants report an improvement in their mental health** following engagement with an activity during 2024/25.

The **Pathway to Work (P2W) programme** has become a vital employment pathway for Children Looked After under the Local Authority's care. With tailored mentoring and intensive pastoral support, the programme has given young people the chance to step into real employment opportunities, providing them with stability, income, and a pathway to independence. Its innovative design and measurable impact have earned national recognition as an IESE Public Sector Award finalist. A key success factor has been the close collaboration between Employability, Social Services, and Children's Services, ensuring that young people furthest from the labour market are fully supported into meaningful, sustained employment.



The P2W programme, through targeted pastoral care, collaborative partnerships, and effective interdepartmental coordination, has played a significant role in helping Children Looked After (CLA) enter and remain in employment. Out of the 30 CLA individuals receiving tailored employability guidance and support, 12 successfully secured jobs, demonstrating a tangible move into the workforce. Notably, 5 of these individuals began apprenticeships at Level 2, Level 3, or higher, providing them with paid employment and the opportunity for long-term career stability. Ongoing mentoring is a core component of the programme, ensuring participants are supported not just in securing employment, but in sustaining their positions over time.

The **Aspire Quickstart programme** exceeded all expectations during 2024/25. The programme under the banner of SPF developed into a wider progression model of delivery, acting as an enabler to progress individuals into further education, apprenticeships and sustained employment. Quickstart secured additional funding due to SPF underspends and were able to create more opportunities for individuals and businesses. 57 individuals secured subsidised employment with 31 gaining employment by providing continuous and intense mentoring and

pastoral care. 5 gained work related qualifications required to undertake their roles within their chosen sector. 9 transitioned onto apprenticeships with the Aspire Shared Apprenticeship Programme.

The **Aspire Shared Apprenticeship programme** has prioritised educational achievement across South-East Wales enabling students to access structured training that leads directly to recognised qualifications, supporting academic progression as well as employability. By facilitating apprenticeships from Level 2 right through to HNC level, Aspire has offered diverse entry points and clear progression routes, ensuring that people at different stages of their career journey can find a path that suits them. This programme primarily focusses on STEM, with 2 of the female participants going on to pursue HNC qualifications within the Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering sector with 1 going on to win CAVC Apprentice of the Year. Additionally, we have a further 3 male apprentices who are advancing to study at the HNC level. The programme actively supported 46 live apprentices (all studying Level 2, 3 and above), with an impressive 30 apprentices securing full-time employment within that period. Of these, 21 (70%) were male and 9 (30%) females, reflecting our commitment to fostering opportunities for all.



All local authorities in Wales face delays in publishing Education data due to a mix of policy shifts, data validation processes, and evolving priorities within the Welsh Government's education strategy. Before data is published, it undergoes multiple phases of validation by schools, local authorities and Welsh Government to ensure accuracy – this leads to a 'lag' that means reporting of this data can be delayed. Many key datasets—such as attendance, exclusions and exam outcomes are captured and used internally by education Services throughout the year but are scheduled for public release up to a year after the data period ends.

Like all other local authorities across Wales, Merthyr Tydfil CBC faces a huge challenge in trying to balance its budget, however, it endeavoured to protect as many services as possible, particularly Education and Social Services. However, the cuts to schools in 2023/24 and 2024/25 have included staff reduction in all our schools and this which has impacted on support (in particular for Additional Learning Needs pupils) and led to narrower delivery option in secondary schools. Additionally, a number of key postholders left the Authority during 2024/25, and these losses have meant the Council has had to review how services have been delivered – the impact on capacity has affected the pace and scope of service delivery.

Over 2024/25, changes have been introduced which have meant that the portfolio now includes properties wider than just schools – primarily linked to leisure services, libraries and museums. There is a continuing need to assess how we release the capital in relation to these assets. Work continues to be undertaken to maximise the release or redevelopment opportunities linked to the assets that sit within our portfolio. Though there are no risks linked to Education Services on the Corporate Risk Register, though a risk around capacity and capability of the workforce is an issue which must be considered by the Director. The issues around the capacity of Property Services to maintain school properties (and all assets within the portfolio) will continue to be monitored closely.

From a workforce planning perspective, the Employability Team's joint management of SPF funded Internal Apprenticeships through the Aspire programme has become a model of synergy and innovation within the organisation. This collaborative approach, rooted in partnership between the Employability Team and Organisational Development, has transformed the apprenticeship experience for participants, ensuring they receive not only practical training but also comprehensive pastoral support from the outset and throughout their journey. The apprentice's benefit from specialised courses, such as 2 taking part in First Aid training, 1 cybersecurity and incident response, 3 confidence building, 1 minute taking 2 secretarial skills and 2 wellbeing training, alongside all 7 apprentices taking part in CV, interview and job application support.

2 Apprentices securing continued employment within their departments at MTCBC and 2 apprentices gaining employment with external business those in which Aspire have close working relationships. This year 4 of the apprentices successfully secured employment before their apprenticeships come to an end, ensuring a smooth transition with no gap in work.



The Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) **Venture Graduates programme** is dedicated to facilitating the recruitment of graduates and enhancing the profile of the CCR initiative throughout the Northern Valleys.

This work is closely coordinated with our Local Authority's Business and Education Together (BETP) group, within which we play an integral and strategic role. In 2024/25, 5 graduates were recruited across 2 businesses. An increase in enrolment in CCR Bootcamps and apprenticeships was noted, and expanded educational and career pathways for graduates, apprentices, and school pupils were secured.

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 2024/2025:

- **ADULT SERVICES:** Move to the implementation stage of the new regional adult community model, reviewing all high-cost placements to ensure that people are receiving the care they need
- **CHILDREN'S SERVICES:** Finalise the Corporate Parenting Strategy (working to the corporate parenting charter), provide safe and stable accommodation within Merthyr Tydfil for looked after children, and increase the support to Special Guardians within Merthyr Tydfil
- **SAFEGUARDING:** Implement revised arrangements for adult safeguarding, continuing to work with Cwm Taf Morgannwg safeguarding board area and reviewing the impact of the implementation of 'Right Care, Right Person'
- **HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS:** Continue to use grants to develop affordable housing to move people from B+B's; turn our data into intelligence to better meet need and stop using 'out of county' Bed and Breakfasts, purchasing additional properties within the County Borough to help meet client needs.



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

Data has been sourced from 4 Council Departments: Adult Social Services, Children's Social Services, Housing and Neighbourhood Services

Number of Children Looked After



In 2024/2025; Merthyr Tydfil CBC recorded **169** children looked after; this is 23 children less than the same time in the previous year.

Number of Children on the Child Protection Register

The number of children on the Child Protection Register on 31 March stood at **67**; this was a lot lower than the figure recorded the previous year (107)



Number of Assessments Completed for Children

The number of assessments for children completed within timescales was **95.64%** (989/1034).

Though slightly lower than the previous year (where data showed 98.02% was recorded – a total of 1,515 assessment completed), the completion rate remains high.



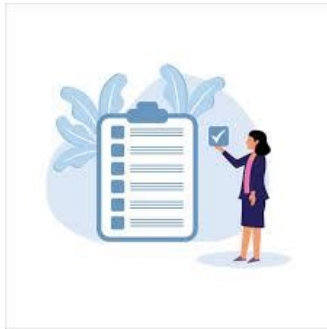
Total Number of Adult Contacts (including as a percentage of the adult (over 18 years) population)

This indicator was introduced for the year 2023/2024 when the percentage recorded was 6.74% (3,131/46,445).

In 2024/25, this increased to **9.14%** (4,642/46,445)



Total Number of Adult Protection Enquiries completed within Statutory Timescales



Introduced in 2023/2024, the number of adult protection assessment recorded during this period was **148** (equal to 78.3%). Data recorded for 2024/25 indicates this had reduced with **89** adult protection enquiries being completed (**69.5%**)

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

Data collected for 2024/25 shows that more adults had received positive outcomes in this area, with **646** adults enabled to remain living in their own home (an increase of 40 people). This was an increase on 2023/24, where data showed us that the number of adults receiving community support which enabled them to remain in their own homes was 608.



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

In response to public feedback, work continued in 2024/25 to target improvements in access to open spaces with a further **2** sites having improvements completed.

This is in addition to the 3 sites improved during 2023/2024



Percentage of Cases where Homelessness has been Prevented

In 2024/25, performance data recorded shows us that **64%** of households at risk of homelessness were prevent with support from the Council. This showed a fall in performance, with data showing a reduction on the previous year (72%)



Percentage of Homeless Rehoused with 56 days

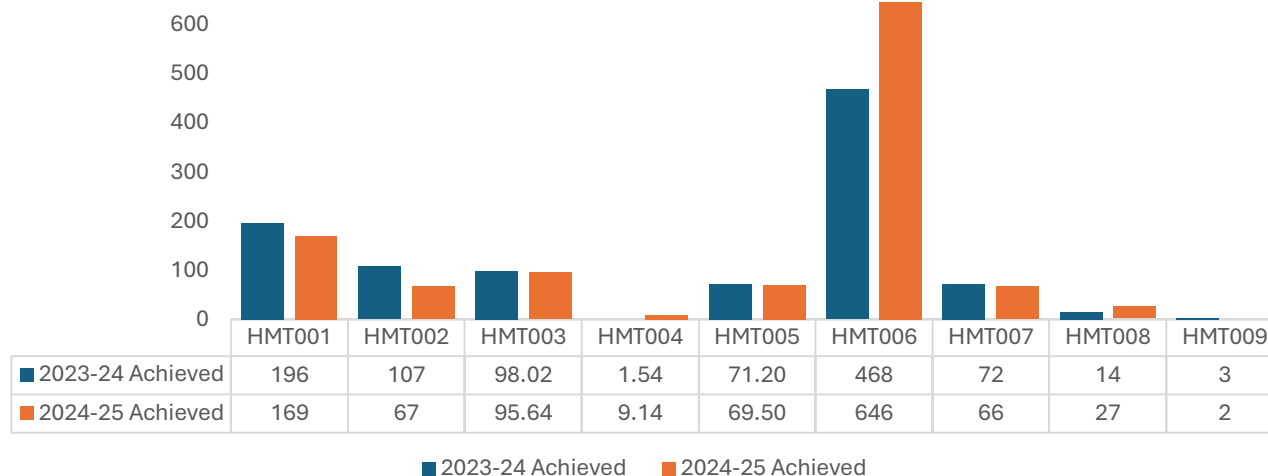
Social & Temporary Housing



A target of 22% was set for this indicator; when reviewing the latest data, we see performance achieved standing at **27%** - 5% above the target, and 13% above the previous year's achievement

SUMMARY OF PROGRESS

Comparing Performance: 2023/24 and 2024/25



Comparisons with performance outcomes recorded for 2023/24 showed several changes in the following areas:

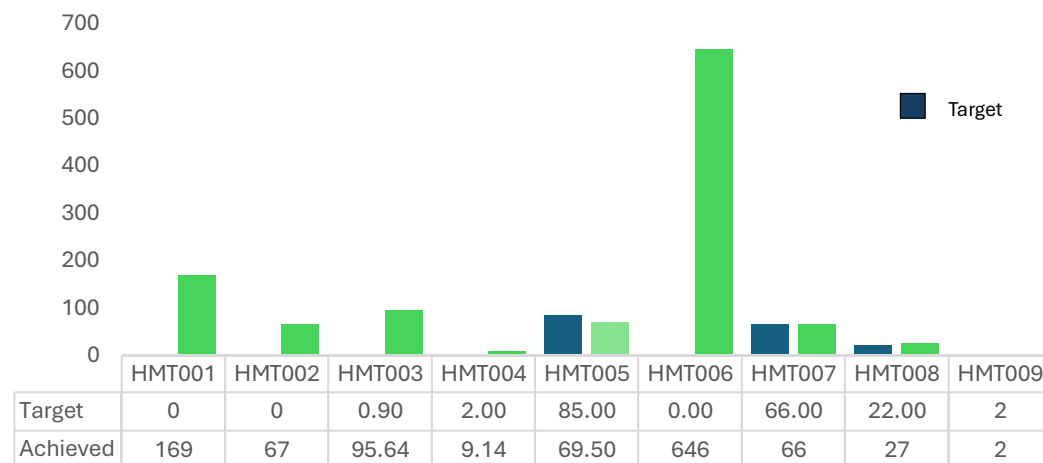
- Both the number of Children Looked After and the number of children on the Child Protection Register have safely fallen, both positive achievements
- The number of assessments requiring completion rose during 2024/25, leading to a slight reduction in the completion rate for both children and adults being noted
- The number of adults receiving community support to remain living in their own homes had increased,
- The support offered to those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless has remained around the same level – the impact of the Early Intervention and Prevention team assisting in sustained support being available; and
- The number of open spaces with improved accessibility remained broadly the same

PROGRESS AGAINST TARGETS SET FOR 2024-25

When reviewing the achievement data against the targets set for the 2024/25 period, we identified the following:

- Positive performance was noted across all indicators when compared to the targets set
- A reduction in both the number of Children Looked After, and the number of children appearing on the Child Protection Register was noted,
- The number of assessments requiring completion rose markedly during 2024/25, with a slight reduction in the completion rate noted for both children and adults
- Demand for support from adults to remain living in their own home increased, and was positively responded to by Council services,
- The performance of homelessness services remained positive, and
- The work around supporting accessibility of open spaces continued, meeting the agreed target.

Comparing Performance: Targets against Actuals 2024/25



What have we learned?

As at 2024/25, MTCBC has two in-house residential homes for children and young people. Both are occupied by young people who were previously placed out of county. During the year we have progressed with the redevelopment of a council-owned property which will provide residential accommodation for children and young people:

- systemic homes for up to 8 young people
- short breaks accommodation for 2 young people
- emergency assessment provision for up to 2 young people.



This work is ongoing and will be completed in Quarter 2, 2025 and the first young person is expected to move in in September 2025.

The **Pathway to Work (P2W) programme** has become a vital employment pathway for Children Looked After under the Local Authority's care. With tailored mentoring and intensive pastoral support, the programme has given young people the chance to step into real employment opportunities, providing them with stability, income, and a pathway to independence. Its innovative design and measurable impact have earned national recognition as an IESE Public Sector Award finalist. A key success factor has been the close collaboration between Employability, Social Services, and Children's Services, ensuring that young people furthest from the labour market are fully supported into meaningful, sustained employment.



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We continued to work with our regional partners to meet the strategic priorities set at the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board (CTMSB). A [report](#) went to Scrutiny in March 2025. There have been steady reductions in the number of children who are in care and whose names were placed on the children protection register. This is despite some



increase in the number of referrals received. This indicates that the Early Help Hub and prevention services are working in de-escalating needs within MTCBC and teams are working systemically to support families and children to remain at home. Our contribution to CTMSB plan includes:

Strategic Priority 1: We will re set and establish where we are and where we need to be:

Merthyr Tydfil Education:

Merthyr Tydfil's Education Department fulfills its statutory duties and contributes towards the Board's priorities by:

- Working in partnership to identify the best outcomes for learners and supporting a greater level of partnership work with Children Services to develop joint pieces of work
- Disseminating and sign posting relevant information such as toolkits, assessments and training to the designated Safeguarding Lead within all schools and education staff
- Providing advice, information and guidance in relation to safeguarding concerns with schools and supporting them to act accordingly and follow reporting procedures.
- Taking action to reduce safeguarding concerns at the earliest opportunity.

Merthyr Tydfil Adult Services

During 2024/25, all statutory safeguarding training for Adults Services staff was completed. This was complemented by a wider "all staff" safeguarding training module provided via an interactive application (Bob's Business). This enabled training to be provided to all staff and supported us to monitor compliance and maintain knowledge within the workplace.

During the year we have reviewed data surrounding the number of referrals and caseloads within the Safeguarding Team. This data has supported further, successful recruitment within the Team.

Within the wider context of the safeguarding environment, we have reached out to significant stakeholders such as Cardiff City FC and Cardiff Blues RFC to explore areas of development within their current community resources.

Merthyr Tydfil Children's Services

MTCBC has supported the Board by contributing to the Board's Risk Register including the identification of any risks that will require recording into 2025/26. We have also been involved in raising the profile of neglect and multiagency working by supporting the regional NSPCC campaign, working with a range of multi-agency partners to contribute to this. We have also worked consistently with partners on the CTM Exploitation strategy, future Cwm Taf MASH

development and the SUSR process since implementation in October 2024. This has included nominating Chairs and Reviewers to support and lead on the Board's Safeguarding Reviews this year.

Strategic Priority 2: We will re learn by reflecting on the past year and agreeing how what we learn as a Board can make a difference to safeguarding practice.

Merthyr Tydfil Adult Services

During 2024/25, Merthyr has been successful in the recruitment of a new Adult Team Manager. This has brought improved consistency and stable leadership for the existing Team. This has resulted in the following:

- A review of existing processes and decision making
- An improvement in the documentation of practice specifically for Section 5 (Professional Concerns) referrals by using WCCIS to record these. This has resulted in data and thematic information facilitating future planning.
- Improvements in Welsh Government returns with over 70% success in making decisions within 7 days whilst also receiving an increase in safeguarding referrals over the year.
- The Safeguarding Team is now fully staffed and developing training strategies to support and encourage positive practice throughout our adult services.

Merthyr Tydfil Children's Services

Merthyr has been involved in highlighting areas of concern, risks and workforce pressures where appropriate. Staff attend training including preventative services.

Communication is undertaken with staff and safeguarding issues highlighted.

Child Practice Reviews are shared with the teams and managers.

Joint work with Education continues with joint audit work identifying areas of strength and areas of development. From an Early Help perspective, we have seen an increase of referrals from Education that are proportionate and the correct referrals for preventative support.

Strategic Priority 3: We will agree on how we can re develop as a Board to maximise opportunities to improve how we safeguard people.

Merthyr Tydfil Adult Services

We acknowledge the paramount importance of working together in the Cwm Taf MASH and sharing information at a leadership level. This has resulted in:

- The Safeguarding team has a duty service to offer practitioners advice and support.
- Developmentally we are using information / lessons learnt from the SUSR process to share via team briefings to reflect and learn positive practice outcomes.
- The Team Manager is working with partners to develop an adult exploitation strategy for the region.
- Team manager is also the lead worker for the region to develop an all-Wales A1 referral form.
- We also support further learning via the Board's Adult Quality Assurance Panel which we also Chair.

Other priorities:

Workforce - Staff are our biggest asset, and we want to ensure we support them as a priority. Staff wellbeing remains a core focus in Merthyr Tydfil, with all agencies committed to promoting a healthy, resilient workforce. A wide range of health and wellbeing initiatives are now in place and reported bi-annually to the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board (CTMSB). These include caseload management, access to counselling and employee assistance programmes, wellbeing apps, development sessions, and supervision, as well as tailored strategies to support individual needs. We offer hybrid and refresher training to ensure accessibility for all staff, including foster and kinship carers.

New staff benefit from a robust induction programme aligned to the All-Wales Induction Framework, with clear pathways to qualification. Over 800 staff across various services accessed training last year, reflecting our commitment to workforce development. In addition, we continue to support anti-racism and cultural competence through cross-departmental action planning, contributing to a more inclusive and culturally aware workforce.

In summary, 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. Work has continued in 2024/25 on developing our regional strategic approach to exploitation, both in relation to children and adults at risk. Partner agencies have worked together to develop our governance arrangements and agree appropriate tools to support the identification and assessment of all forms of exploitation. Recognising early intervention and prevention is crucial in meeting the needs of people we support; a key focus this year has been raising the profile of abuse and neglect. We have successfully worked in partnership with the NSPCC and other key stakeholders to raise and promote public awareness campaigns across the region.

The work undertaken around Cost Elimination links to the first project above – the development of residential homes. MTCBC Children’s Services have developed residential children’s homes with plans to extend these homes to meet the needs of children and prevent out of authority placements. Significant work has been undertaken to re unify children with parents, where appropriate, to transfer foster carers to SGO’s, reduce the number of children entering care and continue to recruit in house foster carers. The work has started to show benefits in reduced numbers of children in care and on the child protection register.

The impact has been a reduction in the number of children in external residential accommodation with plans for more to return in 26/27, there have been significant increases in the number of children on SGOs, and families are being supported to remain at home and with an earlier intervention focus.

An [ESTYN inspection](#) (Autumn 2024) identified strengths in relation to Adult Community Learning (e.g.) Good planning in place by tutors that met learners needs; positive progress being made by learners with most being enthusiastic and motivated; and safe learning environments where strong levels of emotional care and well-being support were noted. A number of challenges were also noted such as the need to increase engagement levels, service capacity and the predicted loss of funding for Multiply. Five recommendations were received following the inspection visit which must now be progressed. The positive approach to delivering Adult Community Learning supports learners to remain motivated and make progress against their individual learning goals. They do so in a safe and nurturing environment and by addressing ESTYN recommendations, this will not only be sustained but developed.



Significant corporate planning has been undertaken during 2024/25, including:

- The **Corporate Parenting Strategy** and the **Placement Commissioning Strategy** were developed and approved were by Full Council during 2024/25.
- Several key policies were developed and approved by Full Council, including Residential Policies and the CCTV Fostering Policy
- The **Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA)** was developed and presented at Council in April 2024, and was approved by Members
- The proposed **Statutory Framework for Youth Work** was reviewed by scrutiny, and was approved in February 2025
- A **Children Services Strategy** was developed alongside team actions plans to continue the development journey.
- Work was also undertaken on developing a Participation Guidance for Children Services to align with the corporate strategy.
- Housing and Homelessness Services continue to **review the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan** to monitor progress, challenges and reprioritise activity based on need. From this work, we are setting sub-groups of our Strategic Housing Partnership to work towards ending homelessness, developing long term/permanent supported accommodation. This work is ongoing

Towards the end of 2024/25, we recruited a new Head of Adult Services. She took up the position in June 2025. She has brought new ideas and new visions for the service. She has consulted and engaged with staff around the adult services strategy and is building relationships to continue to improve the service.

During 2024/25, we recruited to two new posts in Children's Services:

- a new Principal Manager for Fostering and Safeguarding; their role will be to streamline the professional strategy meeting process and to ensure Foster Wales Merthyr Tydfil continues in their development.
- a new Principal Manager and Responsible Individual for Children's residential services; this post is required due to the increasing number of children's homes in 2025/26 to meet Merthyr Tydfil's placement sufficiency requirements.

Both will take up their positions early in 2025/26.

A new team manager for Safeguarding and Quality Assurance started in 2024. Their role is to assist in auditing work and highlighting good practice. This work has highlighted areas of development such as work to improve chronologies and supervision template. This work is being supported by the systemic workstream to embed good practice.

In 2024/25 work was undertaken to bring the Child Protection (CP) and Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) chairs inhouse under the Quality Assurance manager. This enables a consistent approach to chairing meetings, escalating issues and monitoring of practice. An annual IRO/CP chair report will be developed to evidence the practice of the service.

Following a staff review, responsibility of Adult Safeguarding was brought under the management of MTCBC's Adult Services. The newly created Adult Safeguarding Manager post was appointed and took up their role at the beginning of June 2024.

Housing is preparing for a potential restructure in line with forthcoming legislation in 2025/26 to support the delivery of the new Homelessness and Social Allocations Bill. The service is reviewing its structure to ensure it is best placed to meet future requirements, subject to the availability of funding from both core and Welsh Government sources. The team continues to manage evolving demands effectively within the existing framework while planning for future needs.

From a financial planning perspective, work is underway to increase the number of residential homes in 2025/26 to enable children to return home and reduce the out of authority residential budget. Foster carer recruitment and support to family members so children can remain at home all align with this element.

A review of contracts and commissioning - We are in the process of commissioning for domiciliary care providers. We recruited a contracts officer within children services to ensure robust review and monitoring of agency contracts around placements, (independent fostering and residential).

We continue to work closely with our social services accountant to review the budget and address any underspends or overspends. We are aware of pressures in children residential and that is linked to the eliminate profit and the process of developing our own inhouse provisions. We use data to map demand in the service and adjust the budget accordingly.

During 2024/25, the Housing and Homelessness Service has **reduced the core funding allocated to Temporary Accommodation through the growth of housing development and new supported accommodation schemes and made savings of over £1.2million.** The focus on this activity will continue into 2025/26.

Work with Procurement on continues on key projects (e.g.) Connecting Care – procurement of a replacement social services system.

At present in Adult Services, we are currently working closely with procurement on the commissioning of supported living services and planning for homecare contract. This supported living contract is the first contract focusing on outcome focused commissioning and a change in the delivery of care. This contract will be implemented in January 2026. We are currently planning the homecare contract which again focus upon outcome focused commissioning.

From a Housing and Homelessness perspective, no procurement in this financial year, however, we are due to put out a tender for a new supported accommodation project in 2025/26.



We piloted the social work way app in 2024/25 with plans to embed in children’s and adults in 2025/26.

Also in early 2025/26, we are due to go out to tender for the development of an Accommodation Strategy in Adult Services

The Social Services Asset Management Plan is regularly reviewed and updated and includes acquisitions (Daisy House), leases (Plantation House), and new developments (The Flowers). It also identifies decommissioned properties (Ty Gwyn) where the service transferred elsewhere. Future proposals are also included (e.g.) development of Extra Care with Housing partners, 16+ accommodation.

Housing and Homelessness services released the Wheatsheaf Lane property from the Housing portfolio in 2024,25, and the building was surplus following the move from there to the new Town Centre Hub. Use of the Town Centre Hub has proved a positive move, with opportunities for engagement realised. Additionally, the Marsh House lease was transferred to Merthyr Valley Homes (MVH) during this period and is saving money on Temporary Accommodation and delivering good outcomes in terms of positive move on for residents.

Social Services have three specific risks on the Corporate Risk Register, these link to the robustness of Council Safeguarding practices (all staff training); Procurement issues for Connecting Care data management system, and lack of adequate residential care accommodation provision for Children Looked After. These risks are reviewed on a quarterly basis.

Housing does own a risk on the corporate risk register due to limited temporary accommodation available putting the Council at risk of failing its statutory duties. In relation to this, new legislation due to be introduced from 26/27 will result in more resources and growth required and a restructure of services, without which will result in not meeting legislation requirements and failing our duties. A business case is currently being developed identifying conservative estimates on what is required to meet our duties going forward and are upskilling all grant and core staff to be as prepared as possible. The Council is progressing with the HMO Protocol to grow temporary accommodation in the short term to provide sufficient temporary accommodation.

From a corporate performance perspective, all performance data linked to the Healthier Merthyr Tydfil has been promptly reported on a quarterly basis throughout the year (this is despite increased demand on Social Services officers as a result of Connecting Care). Both Social Services and the Housing and Homelessness Service have completed the corporate service self-evaluation process. The insights developed through this enabled a service delivery plan to be developed containing 3 priorities for improvement for 2025/26 - these delivery plans were 'rolled out early in 2025/26 and are being actioned/monitored in 2025/26.

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 2024/2025:

- Work with the new Town Centre Board to support actions arising from UK Government's 'Long Term Plan for Towns' programme
- Implement and continuously review the Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Placemaking Plan by Summer 2024
- Develop a pathway for students at The College, Merthyr Tydfil to progress to enterprise opportunities within the County Borough
- Support businesses to effectively engage with decarbonisation initiatives
- Initiate new programmes for those individuals classed as 'under-employed'..



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

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

Our data tells us

Data has been sourced from 4 Council Departments: Employability, Strategic Investment & Tourism, Enterprise Support and Public Protection services.

Supporting local people into work

The Council's Employability programmes supported 150 participants to secure employment after leaving a programme in 2023/24.

This increased to **323** in 2024/25 - over twice the previous years' achievement.



Increasing Visitor Number to the 5 key attractions in Merthyr Tydfil

Data showing the number of visits to the 5 key attractions within Merthyr Tydfil showed that in 2023/24; 832,392 visitors were recorded. Our latest data shows



this increased slightly in 2024/25, when **837,726** visitors were recorded at these 5 key attractions.

Number of Local Businesses Financially Supported

During 2023/24, 72 businesses were financially supported by the Council. In 2024/25, an increase can be noted, with **90** local businesses receiving financial support.



Anti-Social Behaviour

In 2023/24, 48.7% of perpetrators of antisocial behaviour re-offended within a 6-week period, reaching Stage 2; our most recent data shows **10.3%** of perpetrators re-offending - a significant decrease, and a positive change.



CCTV

The Council monitored the number of instances where CCTV has been utilised to detect crime and disorder, recording a total of **2,252** instances in 2024/25.

This was a significant increase on the previous year when 611 instances were recorded.



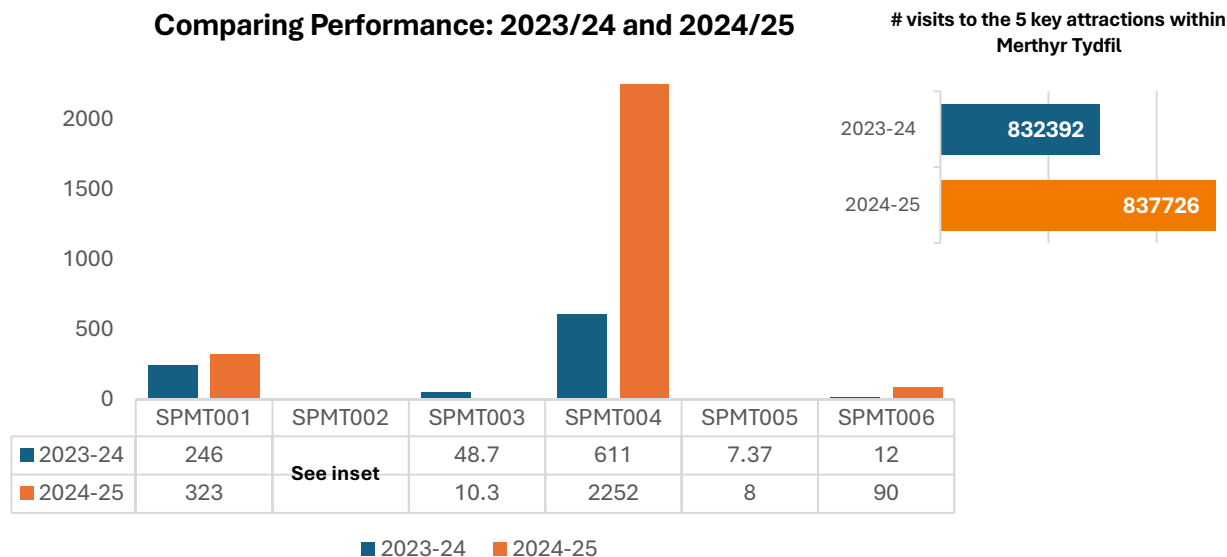
Bringing Empty Properties back into Use

In 2023/24, 7.37% of empty private sector properties were brought back into use through direct action by the Local Authority - this increased to **8%** in 2024/25.



SUMMARY OF PROGRESS

Comparing Performance: 2023/24 and 2024/25



Comparisons with performance outcomes recorded for 2023/24 showed several changes in the following areas:

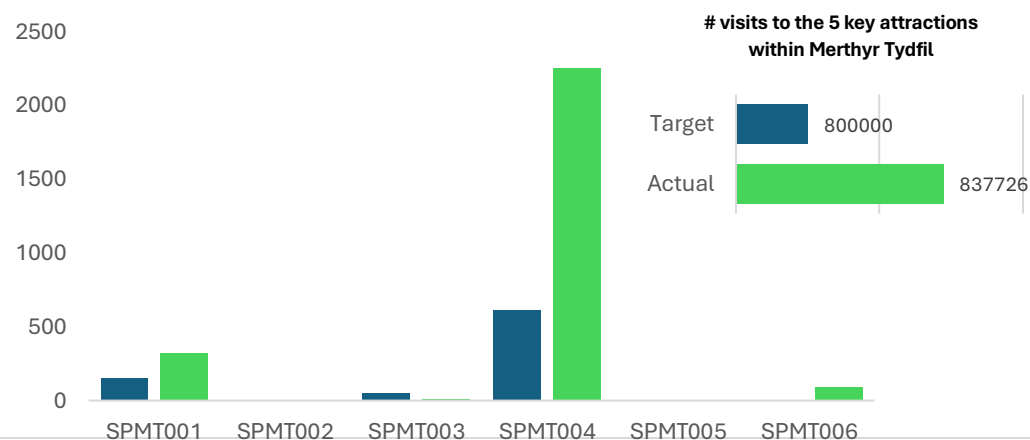
- An increase in the number of Employability programme participants entering work upon leaving their chosen programme was noted
- An additional 5,000 people visited the Top 5 attractions compared to the previous year
- A reduction in the referrals or Anti-social Behaviour have declined. This may be attributed in part to the loss of neighbourhood policing and PCSO numbers.
- A significant increase was noted in relation to CCTV activities - This arises from an upward trend for a period as new categories are added, also enhancing intelligence capture through training and awareness raising.
- Positive performance was noted with regards bringing empty properties back into use – the development of the Empty Properties Strategy supporting this
- A marked increase in the number of businesses financially supported was noted (though it should be noted this was for a full 12-month period, whereas last year’s data reflected only part of a year).

PROGRESS AGAINST TARGETS SET FOR 2024-25

When reviewing the achievement data against the targets set for the 2024/25 period, we identified the following:

- Positive performance was noted across all indicators when compared to the targets set
- Performance in relation to supporting Employability project participants to work was over double the target set
- Visits to the 5 key sites in Merthyr Tydfil also showed a marked increase against the target set for 2024/25 (+ 37,726 visitors)
- There was a decrease in the number of ASB referrals received, this was the desired direction of travel, however, the status will be monitored over 2025/26
- Stable progress was noted in regard to bringing empty properties back into use, a 1% increase noted against the target set
- The process for awarding financial support showed an increase on the previous year, with the majority of activity occurring in Quarter 1 and 2 of 2024/25

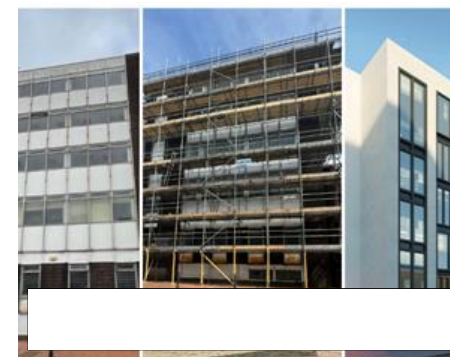
Comparing Performance: Targets against Actuals 2024/2025



What have we learned?

The **Placemaking Plan** was reviewed in 24/25 and a meeting held with DCFW to discuss the Plan in line with their Placemaking Wales Charter. A number of projects continued to be developed delivered including Castle House Re-development, Skate Park, Town Centre Enterprise Developments including 121 High Street and 143b High Street.

Engagement with the Design Council for Wales helped ensure alignment of the Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Placemaking Plan with the Placemaking Wales Charter, ensuring key principles have been included to ensure effective placemaking. Ongoing project delivery is having a positive impact on the community, the economy and the environment with project creating homes, re-developing empty properties, supporting inward investment and considering green infrastructure.



When reviewing progress for **Enterprise Support**, a number of events took place in 2024/25 across the County Borough.

Grants awarded during 2024/25

Grant Scheme	Number of Awards	Value of Awards
Start Up	13	£19,603.47
Private Sector Up to £10,000	35	£192,627.11
Private Sector Up to £50,000	41	£1,212,296.28
Property Development	8	£1,485,845.26
Decarbonisation	25	£690,457.00
Youth Enterprise	17	£24,247.24

The awards outline the amount of grant support that businesses have received in 24/25. This has had a positive impact enabling businesses to enhance, grow and access funding that may not ordinarily be available to them. Funding was available in 2024/25 through the UKSPF (Shared Prosperity Fund) Programme. The funding enabled the safeguarding of 1,554 jobs and the creation of 27 FTEs.

The delivery of events has had a positive impact for the community and the economy.

The events, particularly in the Town Centre, are very well attended and there is an opportunity for businesses to become involved to further benefit from event delivery.

An **Events Policy** has been developed by MTCBC to ensure a more seamless approach to supporting the delivery of events and this will be taken to Committee for adoption in 2025/26.

During 2024/25, actionable referrals declined for **Antisocial Behaviour (ASB)**. Evidence suggests this may be attributed in part to the loss of neighbourhood policing and PCSO numbers.

MTCBC are submitting referrals from the **Community Warden team** which is predominantly Town Centre based. The low number of identified repeat perpetrators being referred over the year shows declining numbers. This is at the same time recorded / reported ASB in Merthyr Tydfil is seen to be higher than Cynon and Taf combined. One contributing factor is lack of identification on referrals preventing further action being taken.



CCTV Control Room at

CCTV recording and the database is undergoing continuous review each quarter to ensure we continue improving. This will result in an upward trend for a period as we add new categories and also enhance intelligence capture through training and awareness.

CCTV records are increasing in line with developing our bespoke database as expected. It is having a positive impact on intelligence going to police partners and other MTCBC departments. Approximately 56% of CCTV work is proactive in nature. In addition to Public Protection services, we have also established close working ties with Street Cleansing who are now sending letters to vehicles littering in town and responding at speed to incidents captured.

2024/25 was the final year of the 3-year approved **UKSPF Programme**. A wide range of projects have been delivered by the Local Authority and partner delivery organisations having a positive impact on the local community and businesses. The Programme was heavily revenue based enabling the creation of jobs to deliver programme achieving significant outputs.

We have seen an increase in 'pop up' Vape shops operating across the County Borough. This has led into investigations of the supply of illegal vapes and supply to underage. There is evidence to support these premises are being operated by Organised Crime Groups.

These investigations require more in depth investigations which include test purchasing, surveillance and financial investigation into organisers. Multi agency operations have revealed illegal workers and weapons being stored at premises.



**Closing Shops selling
Illegal Vapes**



The first year of the interim leisure contract in 2024/25 has been a huge success. **Halo Leisure** have made in-roads in training staff and recruiting new lifeguards and used their sector specific experience to increase income and footfall throughout Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Centre.

Halo Leisure have been instrumental in assisting the Council in re-opening the pool, bringing in their own plant staff to overcome some teething issues with the new pool and plant and have been proactive in bringing in additional people (users and members) and income into the centre.

Targets for our **Employability programmes** were adjusted for 2024/25 as a result of funder requirements changing and it is notable that these adjusted targets were exceeded by the end of September 2024 (Quarter 2). Though this was the case, activities continued with participant outcomes continuing during the last six months of this delivery year. Outputs have demonstrated a diverse range of training has engaged with volumes of residents of Merthyr Tydfil. Through procured delivery, Employability services have been able to support employed/under employed people with vocational qualifications. This has allowed the Employability Team to support more people to remain in work; gain more hours or seek a second income.

To set the **Tourism 2024-25** target, the Council had to consider a number of variables and look at the track history for the top 5 attractions. The last full year pre-Covid totalled 808,000 visitors, the next full year in Covid recovery was 2022-23 at 791,000 so still in recovery but we performed strongly in 2023-2024 (jumping up to 832,000). 2023-24 was our largest spike however, to set as a new baseline reflecting many factors including the cost of living, political climate, energy crisis, weather and change in travelling habits, the Council set a more achievable target of 800,000 visits for 2024/25.

In-year factors affecting performance included poor weather (e.g.) the storm impacting opening hours and causing damage to attractions such as Brecon Mountain Railway which faced forced closures and operating days. Utilising UKSPF funding, Visit Merthyr distributed volumes of promotional literature and campaigns to include Valleys of Adventure, Merthyr is Wild, as well as driving a series of promotional adverts which would have all contributed to increased awareness resulting in actual visits to these specific attractions.

Final data shows **visits to the top five attractions** surpassed the 2024-25 target of 800,000 and performed well as collective within the tourism sector at a total annual figure captured at **837,726**. This record is bucking the national



trend where other areas of Wales have not performed as well and are mostly down in visitors in each region.

The sector wide report called STEAM for 2024 shows an increase in jobs and overnight stays, however this is sector wide for the whole of the County Borough and not just related to the five attractions which are counted in developing the data set. Though not a like for like comparison, it does support the findings that tourism continues to perform positively across Merthyr Tydfil and the County Borough.

With regards to supporting the **Tackling Poverty** agenda, the department has been proactive in supporting a range of third sector organisations in providing emergency food and provisions across the County Borough. The Council has supported 8 food pantries and 2 food hubs by providing financial support for those organisations to purchase provisions to be distributed to individuals affected by the cost-of-living crisis. In addition, the department has also supported ten organisations to provide warm hub accommodation at set times during the week, again, supporting those most vulnerable across Merthyr Tydfil.

The reporting mechanisms in 24/25 did not capture actual numbers so we cannot fully evidence the exact numbers of how many people have been assisted, however, we do have a range of case studies and anecdotal evidence to support how impactful the various schemes have been.

Significant corporate planning has taken during 2024/25. A number of policies have been developed by Public Protection Services including a Compliance and Enforcement Policy, and a Corporate Fraud Enforcement Policy – both of these documents received approval from Full Council during this period (on 04/12/2024 and 05/03/2025 respectively). A review of the Statement of Licensing Principles 2025/28 (under the Gambling Act 2005) has been undertaken and presented to Full Council in December 2024.

Strong, collaborative relationships with businesses across a range of sectors are central to the **Multi-Centre Business Engagement** programmes' success. This engagement spans the whole of the South-East Wales region, ensuring a broad and inclusive approach. By working in partnership, employers help shape training and apprenticeships to meet real workforce needs, provide valuable placements, and support participants' growth. This trusted collaboration ensures individuals gain relevant skills while businesses benefit from new talent, reinforcing shared progress and opportunity.

Compass works with local training providers to provide specialist skills training and licenses to anyone 16+. These have included:

Industry standard beauty qualifications	Personal Track Safety (PTS rails)	Plant machinery training	Forklift license
Waste management qualifications	Security Industry Authority (SIA license)	Electrical testing and inspection	Outdoor learning – walk leader
Green skills – EV charging installation, Solar Photovoltaic Systems, Electric Energy storage systems			

Using local providers for this helps to support the local economy and economic growth. This type of training increases the chances for employment or career change, often leading to participants gaining additional income as a direct result of the training.

The Council has continued to deliver against the adopted **Economic Vision** by delivering a number of projects that focus on business support, employability, creating sustainable communities, tourism, housing and physical regeneration / infrastructure. Projects have been developed and delivered through funding secured from UK Government, Welsh Government, Merthyr Tydfil CBC and a range of other funders targeting economic growth and achieving excellent outputs for the community. A new Regeneration, Investment and Housing Plan will be developed in 2025/26 to support the service area in identifying priorities for the service, the Council and the County Borough moving forward and for the alignment of any future funding opportunities. The projects developed and delivered are having a positive impact particularly through the creation of additional market and social housing, increasing training and job opportunities, improving the visitor destination and creating an improved physical environment.

All services have completed the refocused corporate service self-evaluation (SSE) process, and this has led to the identification of good practice along with areas for improvement. Using these insights, service delivery plans have been developed to manage the delivery of these improvements, and these shall be monitored during 2025/26 to ensure positive progress is made.

Some key roles have been filled during this period; the appointment of Proper Officers for Communicable Diseases were approved by Merthyr Tydfil CBC's Cabinet on 06/11/2024. A restructure of the Community Warden and Parking Services resulted in a reduction of staff, and this led to reprofiling of service delivery based on demand. Following restructure of the Regeneration, Investment and Housing directorate following the Deputy Chief Executive/Director's retirement in December 2024, the appointment of a Head of Regeneration, Investment and Housing was also made.

When looking at financial planning, the announcement of the UKSPF Transition Year and a review undertaken of all projects and deliverability due to the reduction in grant took place during 2024/25. The impact of the Long-Term Plan for Towns funding / Plans for Neighbourhood Funding has been discussed and reviewed with the Board, whilst ongoing fundraising is being undertaken to ensure effective project and programme delivery by Regeneration, Investment and Housing across the County Borough.



UK Shared Prosperity
Fund

The risk of failing to delivery key regeneration programmes has been identified which we continue to mitigate by monitoring the delivery of projects through internal, experienced resources to ensure projects and programmes can be delivered on time and on budget and effective communication internally and with funders. Additionally, there is a risk that Homelessness in the County Borough will impact on service delivery, financial budgets and might mean there is an inability to meet the statutory duty. We continue to work to mitigate this by creating additional homes through a number of funding opportunities and innovative solutions and accessing additional finance to deliver the development programme.

Procurement support continued to be provided for all projects as required, and were developed and delivered through Regeneration, Investment and Housing. No changes to funding for Public Protection were noted in 2024/25.

Regeneration, Investment and Housing Service continues to manage and develop assets and in 2024/25 the following was achieved:

- Ongoing project development in relation to Cyfarthfa Castle, supporting and complementing the work of the Cyfarthfa Foundation.
- Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Centre management of contract and working closely with HALO to achieve successful health and well-being outcomes for the community
- Works commenced on the development of a new Skatepark with this work due for completion in 2025/26
- The completion of the Glebeland Site (former bus station site)
- Operational management of St. Tydfil Shopping Centre including the delivery of successful events and the white boxing of a number of units started in August 2024 and continued into 2025.
- Orbit Business Centre continues to be very busy. New tenants have taken up residence into building, with bookings remaining high and Centre continues to experience high demand.
- The Town Centre Hub continues to support the community and offers a range of services and signposting with a number of outputs being achieved.
- Ongoing work in relation to Aberfan Community Centre and Rhydycar Bowls, and
- Ongoing successful management of Merthyr Tydfil Bus Station.

All corporate-level data being captured on a quarterly basis from Regeneration, Investment & Housing Services, but some lag in the data has been noted and is being monitored. All corporate-level data being captured on a quarterly basis from Public Protection Services, but some lag has been experienced which links back to the collection of data from South Wales Police around anti-social behaviour. This issue continues to be closely monitored. All services have completed the service self-evaluation and developed service delivery plans (see above).

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 2024/2025:

- Delivering the Merthyr Tydfil Nature Recovery Action Plan, focusing on communication and engagement with the public to improve understanding of biodiversity responsibilities
- Delivering the Council’s Net Zero Plan
- Ensuring green spaces are accessible to residents to support their health and well-being
- Meet the Welsh Government waste recovery target of 70%, focusing resources on increasing the percentage of households that recycle food waste



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

Data has been sourced from 4 Council Departments: Biodiversity, Decarbonisation, Countryside and Planning and Waste services.

Percentage of municipal waste reused, recycled or composted*

Data collected during 2023/24 showed us that 64.28% of municipal waste collected was reused, recycled or composted. Our most recent data shows us that in 2024/25, this percentage has increased to **66.21**



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 that year. For 2024/25, a reduction on this figure was recorded, with the percentage of residual (black bin) waste falling to **159.2KG** – a positive improvement on the previous year, but under the target set for the year.



Number of Priority Open Spaces where improvements have been made to Biodiversity



In 2023/24 6 priority open spaces benefitted from improvements. Data collected during 2024/25 showed us that this improvement had continued to secure improvements, with **11** priority open spaces recorded as having improved during this period

Number of Local Businesses signed up to the Decarbonisation Pledge

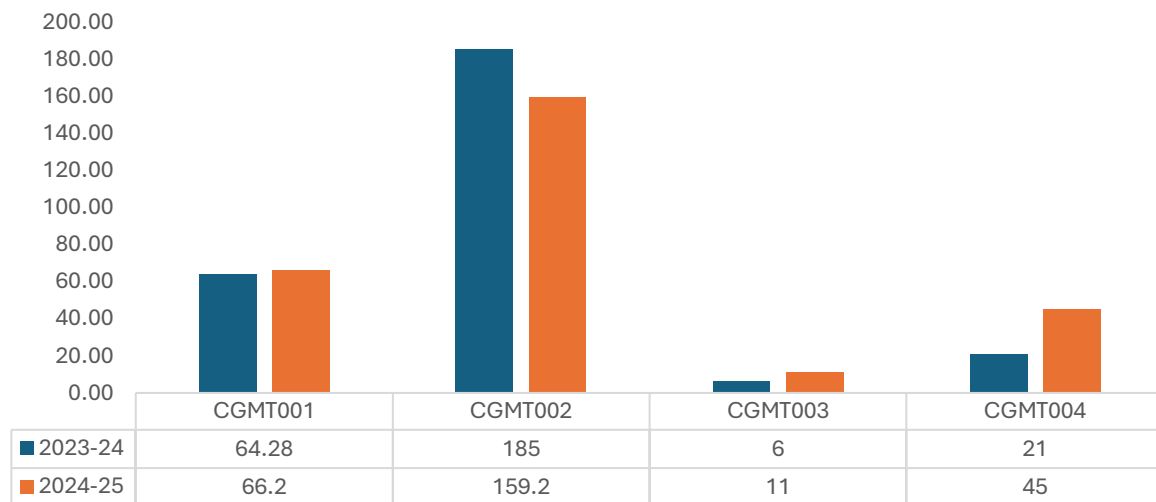
Following introduction of new legislation affecting local businesses in 2023/24, Council data showed us that the number of businesses signing up to the Decarbonisation Pledge had increased in 2024/25, with an additional **45** businesses signing up during the year



* External verification of this data is pending at time of publishing, so this data remains **provisional** until that has been received

SUMMARY OF PROGRESS

Comparing Performance: 2023/24 and 2024/25



Comparisons with performance outcomes recorded for 2023/24 showed several changes in the following areas:

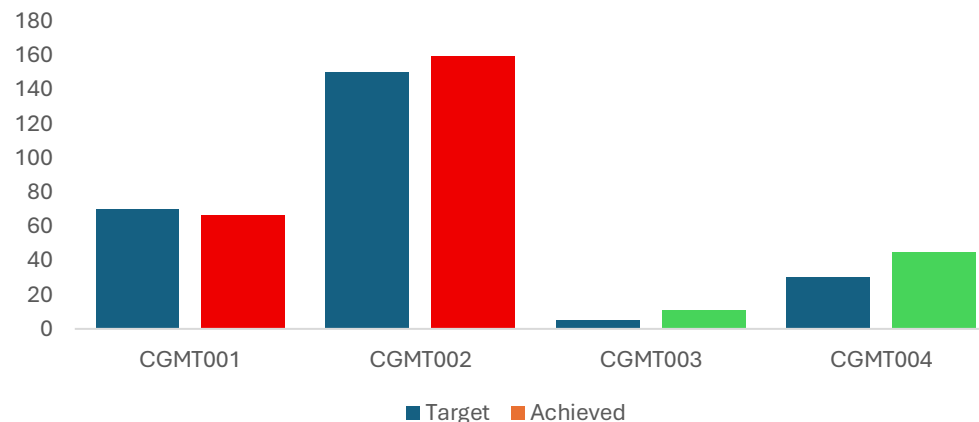
- An increase was noted in the percentage of waste reused, recycled or composted in 2024/25 compared to the previous year (NB: data subject to external verification)
- When reviewing data linked to the Kilograms of residual waste generated per person, reduction of 25.8Kg was noted
- The ongoing work to improve the biodiversity in open spaces shows an improvement has been noted when compared against the 2023/24 data, with an additional 5 sites being improved
- A continued increase in the number of businesses signing up for the Decarbonisation Pledge was recorded, with 45 businesses 'signing up' in 2024/25

PROGRESS AGAINST TARGETS SET FOR 2024-25

When reviewing the achievement data against the targets set for the 2024/25 period, we identified the following:

- Though an improvement in performance was noted in relation to the amount of waste reused, recycled or composted, the current data* did not achieve the Welsh Government target,
- The current data* in relation to KG of residual waste generated per person remained above the target set for the period,
- Data shows us 11 priority open spaces have received biodiversity improvements this year, this was almost double the target set for 2024/25, and
- 45 businesses signed up to the Decarbonisation Pledge in 2024/25 – this was positive when compared to the target of 30 businesses that had been set.

Comparing Performance: Targets against Actuals 2024/2025



What have we learned?

The work we have undertaken during 2024/25 to make positive progress against the well-being objectives has a broad range and scope. A number of key projects helped us do this.

Local Places for Nature: This project delivers activities that link to the work around biodiversity and environment. The activities undertaken during 2024/25 have led to the Local Authority being shortlisted for 2 awards by the Pro-Landscaper Sustainability Awards for 2 projects: the 'Echoes of Water' project, and 'The Incline: A Green Climb' project.

Welsh local authorities play a pivotal role in delivering biodiversity projects because they are legally and ethically bound to protect and enhance the natural environment. Under the **Environment (Wales) Act 2016**, Councils must embed biodiversity into their decision-making and planning processes. This isn't just about saving bees or planting trees—it's about building **resilient ecosystems** that support life, mitigate climate change, and enrich communities. It offers opportunities for meaningful engagement with local people, support cleaner air and water, and directly support climate resilience.



Green Flag management projects: Several successful Council-run sites within the County Borough were awarded Green Flag Status (including Cyfarthfa Park, Thomastown Park, Taf Bargoed Park and Aberfan Cemetery). A further 16 green spaces achieving the Green Flag Community Award. The flags will be flying in recognition of their environmental efforts, excellent visitor facilities, and community involvement.



Securing **Green Flag status** is more than just flying a banner—it's a powerful signal that a green space meets **internationally recognised standards** for cleanliness, safety, biodiversity, and community value.

In Wales, the Green Flag Award is administered by **Keep Wales Tidy** and supported by the Welsh Government, making it a key benchmark for excellence in public green spaces.

Delivery of decarbonisation projects: Multiple activities were delivered throughout 2024/25, including:

- EV transition (including the development of EV charging infrastructure)
- Energy projects such as the work currently being undertaken at Pen y dre
- Solar panels
- Street lighting
- Workplace recycling regulations strengthened
- Installation of a 200kWp solar array at Afon Taf High School

Work continues to identify and source funding opportunities for bigger decarbonisation projects, (e.g.) work undertaken to commission scoping work to explore hydro/solar opportunities.

Welsh Government annual benchmarking data shows a further improvement of assets/energy efficiency of Council buildings during 2024/25. Reduction in waste energy in-house was confirmed. The Corporate Self-Evaluation process now contains a question specifically focusing on how Council services are responding to the decarbonisation regulations, and this has identified several services would benefit from training in this so there are opportunities to focus on this in 2025/26.

Behavioural Change projects (e.g.) 'Be Mighty, Recycle', the 'Metal Matters' project, the 'Keeping up with the Jones' project etc.:

Several projects have been delivered in 2024/25 to support behavioural change:



- A **targeted doorstep engagement campaign** aimed at non-participating household and, from March 2025, a targeted engagement campaign to encourage participation in the Food Waste collection process.
- Introduction of a **Community Repaint scheme** at **Dowlais HWRC**.
- The introduction of a **kerbside household rubble service**.
- The implementation of the **new Workplace recycling regulations**.
- Numerous **communication campaigns**.
- Initial steps to develop a **Recycling Facebook Page**

The introduction of household rubble recycling has had some positive impacts by making collection more affordable for smaller loads (when compared to skip hire costs), and the service is offered at no cost to the Local Authority. Anecdotally, it can lead to a reduction in instances



of fly-tipping which in turn, would support an improved environment for local people and visitors to the County Borough, instilling a stronger sense of community pride.

Focused work continues to be undertaken to ensure governance in relation to services is strengthened/consistently applied. During 2024/25, policies have been reviewed, with a refocused 'Tree and Bench Memorial' policy being developed and approved by Full Council.

Services continue to regularly report on the KPIs aligned to the Corporate Well-being Objectives, however, for 2024/25, provisional data shows us the statutory Welsh Government recycling target (70%) will not be achieved. It is important to note that the Council has increased its overall recovery rate this financial year (2024/2025) by 1.93% to 66.21% (as opposed to 64.28% for the 2023/2024 financial year – this is an improvement). Work to support the development of a new Waste Strategy

With the reintroduction of All services have completed the corporate self-evaluation exercise for 2024/25 and now have in place service delivery plans which focus on making positive progress against focused areas for improvement.

The introduction of the new Procurement Rules over this period has had an impact on service delivery, with both the Engineering and Highways departments experiencing an increased workload in relation to the responding appropriately to complete the procurement aspect of projects. Service Leads continue to explore options and possible resolutions to this effectively manage this impact.

A number of services have carried vacancies during 2024/25, the impact of these reduces resources have had an impact on those services affected e.g.

- the lack of capacity within the Engineering Service has led to a Single Point of Dependency, the need to appoint an additional Chartered Engineer being critical in 2025/26;
- Work has yet to begin on the review of the Local Development Plan, the appointment of an additional officer would enable this statutory review to start, this in turn will provide a more up to date evidence base to make planning decisions against
- Funding has been secured to appoint a Contracts and Compliance Officer in Waste Services (via EPR funding). This appointment would support the service to strengthen its oversight of and ensure Value for Money in contracts, with a view to improving quality/service delivery and financial efficiency

A corporate level risk has been identified relating to climate change, and a service level risk has been identified linked to the potential loss of funding for biodiversity supported resources - this will need to be closely monitored in 2025/26 to prevent it become a corporate level risk during 2025/26. Further positive progress has been made within regards the fleet transition to electric vehicles, supporting the decarbonisation agenda, however, vehicle repair and maintenance continues to be challenging on our non-EV fleet as costs continue to rise.

Leisure Services have returned to Council control in 2024/25, and it has been noted that following the initial transition phase, some additional work is expected from Parks/Grounds Maintenance. The budget in place is insufficient to meet this increased demand and we will need to review this in 2025/26.

Looking forward to 2025/26: We will continue to explore opportunities around Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) projects (e.g.) plastic film recycling, Absorbent Hygiene Products etc. In order to advance these options, the service would require new infrastructure.

Supporting the Plan

The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act contains a core set of activities common to the corporate governance of public bodies. The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 suggests that we use these as a framework for our self-assessment.

All services, whether frontline or back-office / support services, form key components of the Council and undertake annual service self-evaluations and delivery planning. These activities highlight areas for improvement that are outlined in service delivery plans and aim to make the best use of resources.

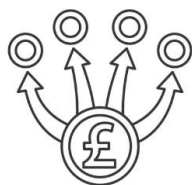
At Merthyr Tydfil CBC, we believe that in addition to front-facing services, there are additional activities that also need to be assessed. These areas are:



Asset Management



Corporate Planning



Financial Planning



Performance Management



Procurement (& Commercial)



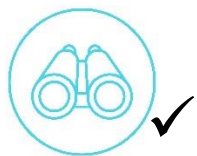
Risk Management



Workforce Planning

The following section reviews key information around the corporate support services which work to provide practical advice, guidance and support to all Council services, ensuring services delivered to the public are as effective and efficient as possible. These areas of work set and support the strategic direction of the Council, helping to ensure the Council has sound governance, is accountable, and meets all compliance requirements.

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



Long-Term



Prevention



Collaboration



Integration



Involvement



Asset Management (including Property Services)

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. A lot of work is carried out to inform the [Asset Management Plan](#) and ensure it is fully aligned to corporate well-being objectives and priorities, and to address high risk areas in collaboration with all internal departments and consultation with the risk register. The Asset Management Board sets the direction for property management corporately and annual update reports have been presented to Scrutiny and Cabinet. Support to front-facing services around asset management has continued throughout 2024/25.

Service staff continue to work closely with colleagues including internal and external audit to identify risks and analyse these to inform the actions in the Asset Management Plan.

What we choose to focus on in 2024/25

Recent changes to legislation regarding minimum energy efficiency standards (MEES) impacts the Council's ability to lease out property. A Property Review exercise is currently underway to fully understand how this will impact the Council and the rental portfolio. This is a priority outlined in the Property Review Strategy and also the service area Operational Plan.

The most recent review of asset management was undertaken by Audit Wales in May 2022. Recommendations were made and all have been implemented. The only exception was in relation to benchmarking, and this work is in progress. A benchmarking sub-group has been set up with the members of the Cwm Taf Asset Management Group to address this, and this is a task and finish group and is expected to be completed within the next 12 months (2025/26).

What progress have we made and what have we learned?	Evidence / Observations of change
<p>Our Estates Management Section continue to lead how we are using assets to support our strategic plans. 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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
<p>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 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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letting of vacant office space. • Disposal of surplus property.
<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change of service practices.
<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopted Asset Management Plan. • Asset Management Board. • Scrutiny and Cabinet Reports.
<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Communities for Schools programme. • Carbon Management Plan and various energy funding schemes.



For several years, severe capacity issues have been experienced across the Asset Management Team. The appointment of a Network 75 student from September 2024 has assisted in easing capacity issues and hopefully provide some succession planning for the future. Two critical areas for improvement have been identified:

- Bring the Assets, Estates and Property Services teams together to reinstate the Corporate Property department; and
 - Increase capacity within the maintenance service in order to deal with the maintenance backlog.
-



Corporate Planning

Corporate planning remains an important aspect of our governance framework.

What we choose to focus on in 2024/25

As part of the ongoing work to continuously review and strengthen corporate governance, significant work has continued linked to corporate planning. During 2024/25, a number of updated plans and strategies have been reviewed and challenged by Members of Cabinet and of Council. During this timeframe, the following strategies and plans have been approved:

- [Local Flood Risk Management Strategy](#)
- [Counter Fraud Strategy](#)
- Placement Commissioning Strategy
- [Outline Transformation Plan](#)
- [Corporate Parenting Strategy](#)
- [Healthy Organisation Workforce Strategy](#)
- [Outline Annual Delivery Plan](#)
- [Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy](#)
-

During the same period, the undertaking of policy reviews has continued, with a large number of policies developed by officers have also been reviewed and approved through the democratic channels. These include:

- [Deferred Payment Arrangement Policy](#)
- Residential Policies
- [Corporate Risk Policy & Strategy](#)
- [Flexible Working Policy](#)
- The Award of Mandatory and discretionary Rate Relief, Hardship Fund and Section 44 Part Occupancy Relief
- [Redeployment Policy](#)
- [Public Protection Compliance and Enforcement Policy](#)

In addition to these activities, broader planning activities have continued across the organisations' services, examples include, an amendment to the Waste Management Operational Enforcement policy – Enforcing S46 of the Environmental Protection Act, the [Local Housing Market Assessment](#) was completed, and the [new Constitution](#) was developed, challenged and adopted by the Council. The [Performance Management Framework](#) has been reviewed and updated in response to recommendations received from Audit Wales, and this has been rolled out.

What progress have we made and what have we learned?	Evidence / Observations of change
<p>During this timeframe, a number of strategies and plans have been developed, and gone on to be approved by Cabinet/Council. These are essential because they provide a clear roadmap for how local authorities plan to meet community needs, manage resources, and respond to challenges</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Flood Risk Management Strategy • Outline Transformation Plan • Outline Annual Delivery Plan • Counter Fraud Strategy • Corporate Parenting Strategy • Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy • Healthy Organisation Workforce Strategy

During the same period, the undertaking of policy reviews has continued, with a large number of policies developed by officers have also been reviewed and approved through the democratic channels (examples of these can be found to evidence this development)

Council policies are important because they provide the rules, standards, and frameworks that guide how local services are delivered, ensuring fairness, consistency, and accountability in decision-making

- [Deferred Payment Arrangement Policy](#)
- [Flexible Working Policy](#)
- [Redeployment Policy](#)
- Residential Policies
- [Public Protection Compliance and Enforcement Policy](#)

In addition to these activities, broader planning activities have continued across the organisations' services (e.g.)

- an amendment to the Waste Management Operational Enforcement policy – Enforcing S46 of the Environmental Protection Act,
- the Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) was completed – this aims to provide evidence-based insights into housing needs, enabling the Council to plan, allocate resources, and shape policies that meet the demands of their communities
- the new Constitution was developed, challenged and adopted by the Authority. This Constitution important because it defines how a local authority operates, makes decisions, and ensures transparency, accountability, and legal compliance in serving its community, and
- The Performance Management Framework has been developed in response to recommendations received from Audit Wales, and this has been rolled out. These resources aims to ensure that the local authority delivers high-quality services, use resources effectively, and remain accountable to the public. It provides a structured approach to planning, monitoring, and improving performance across all departments.

- [Local Housing Market Assessment](#)
- [New Constitution](#)
- [Performance Management Framework](#)

Our Operating Model and Core Values have been approved again as part of our annual review to the Corporate Wellbeing Plan. 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. It will also feed into our Transformation Programme.

- 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.

Future Focus

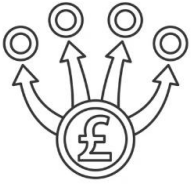


Continue the development of the **Corporate Transformation Programme**. The Transformation Programme has been approved in September 2025.

We have used the information and data gathered as part of our service self-evaluation to identify areas for improvement, many of which to future planning at a more corporate level. These actions include:

- Responding to several major changes in legislation, including that linked to Democratic Services
- Planning to further strengthen the Council's approach to participation and engagement activities
- Workforce planning to ensure each service has a bespoke plan for its area, including succession planning which is essential for a broad range of services across the Council
- Development of data and digital opportunities, including automation of currently manual systems to increase service capacity and resilience

The completed **Corporate Annual Delivery Plan** for 2025/26 is now in place, and the development of a monitoring system and process completed, with quarterly monitoring having started to ensure the improvement areas identified are prioritised and positive progress made against these. The impact of this new practice will be reviewed and included as part of our next corporate self-assessment report.



Financial Planning

Financial management is a key focus for us.

What we choose to focus on in 2024/25

A key focus was placed in strengthening capacity in senior posts across the finance section. Following this we have been focusing on, and will continue to focus on, improving our process and systems to become more effective and efficient in what we do.

What progress have we made and what have we learned?	Evidence / Observations of change
<p>Significant changes were experienced with the Finance and Insurance Team during 2024/25 including the appointment of a new Director of Finance and Head of Finance in early 2025/26. The Head of Finance also covers Revenues and Benefits adding resilience across services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council reports
<p>The financial systems are subject to review by the Regional Internal Audit Service. In respect of the Main Accounting System, the most recent review published in Spring 2025 reached an audit opinion of 'Reasonable Assurance', there is generally a sound system of governance, risk management and control in place. This judgement is consistent with previous audits. The Assurance classifications being 'No Assurance', 'Limited Assurance', 'Reasonable Assurance, and 'Substantial Assurance'.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Audit Report
<p>In setting balanced budgets for the 2024/25 and 2025/26 financial years, services have been protected wherever possible with limited budget reductions impacting upon residents. For 2025/26 in particular, a significant use of Council earmarked reserves (£1.5m) was used in setting the budget thus protecting services to communities and ensuring the council tax increase at 5.5% was lower than the publicised Welsh average.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council reports • Reports to the Governance and Audit Committee

With a new Director of finance taking up post in October 2025, we are working to establish ways to strengthen how we measure our performance. However, a main outcome (and measure of success) is the annual budget setting process and setting a balanced budget for the Council - this was achieved in March 2025.

- [Budget and Council Tax Requirements Report \(to Full Council\)](#)

Future Focus



Areas of development for 2025/26 include:

- A review of current staffing within the finance section to ensure targeted support to the Council is provided. We aim to better deliver customer facing services like Revenues and Benefits, but also have more resource to work with other like services e.g. customer services and housing.
- We will focus on digital and technological opportunities to provide a more effective and efficient service to support our frontline services which, in turn, should lead to better outcomes for residents.
- We will continue to support the Council regarding its long-term financial sustainability; working collaboratively to design, develop and deliver our long-term plan for financial sustainability, and
- We will develop our customer feedback approach to better understand the needs of our internal customers so we can better support them, capturing this feedback to use this to inform future financial planning approaches.
- With a new Director now in post, we are using corporate processes to establish ways to measure our performance. However, a main outcome (and measure of success) is the annual budget setting process and setting a balanced budget for the Council - this was achieved in March 2025.



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 we choose to focus on in 2024/25

In 2023/24, the Council had begun the process of reviewing its performance management arrangements to further strengthen these and ensure they continued to meet identified need. Following engagement that took place across the organisation, an overview of the processes and their strengths and weaknesses was developed. This approach enabled us to identify areas that could be strengthened further. Existing tasks and actions such as quarterly data collection to update the corporate-level performance scorecards continued having been slightly amended following feedback received from senior leaders and officers.

Positive progress has been made during 2024/25. Several key changes were introduced.

What progress have we made and what have we learned?	Evidence / Observations of change
<p>The reintroduction of a refocused service self-evaluation (SSE) process: we linked in with local authority colleagues to re-introduce the self-evaluation process. Directorate-based workshop sessions brought Heads of Service together to review their draft SSE paperwork, reflect on the process, and share insights gained from the process. Feedback captured showed this has proved really useful to identify challenges which appeared to be common in multiple services, helping to inform not just service improvement activities, but also future corporate planning activities (including the early development work linked to the Council's Transformation Plan).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Service Self-Evaluation Paperwork• Service Delivery Plans• Annual Delivery Plan (approved 2025/26)

<p>As mentioned in the corporate planning section, the insights and areas for improvement identified through completion of SSE were used as the basis for the reintroduction of standardised service delivery plans. These plans focused on improvement actions that would support the service to address areas for improvement they had identified, helping them to improve levels of efficiency and effectiveness. These plans were developed in 2024/2025, and for the basis for the Council’s Annual Delivery Plan for 2025/26.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service delivery plans • Annual Delivery Plan (approved 2025/26)
<p>The development of a Performance Management Framework: This has been completed; and was approved by Full Council in April 2024 and has now been rolled out. We must continue to monitor that services are both aware of this Framework and working to ensure they comply with it. To help with this, work has begun to develop a guidance document to assist users to assist them to understand it and use it as a tool to ensure alignment and compliance with its principles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Management Framework
<p>The development of a ‘Performance Information webpage now offers a central point for officers, Elected Members and the public to access data and information linked to Merthyr Tydfil County Borough. This has helped to ensure reliable and verifiable data is used when planning and delivering services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Information webpage
<p>Work also began on the development of a performance, finance and risk reporting system, and though this was at the exploration stage during 2024/25, it has continued to develop since this point, and the first joint performance report has now been delivered. This will continue in 2025/26.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance, finance and risk report (2025/26)
<p>During 2024/25, two appointments were made which impacted on the role and focus of the corporate performance management team. A director of Governance and Resources was appointed, along with a Policy and performance Manager, both of these postholders taking up post in October 2024. These appointments have led to and increased focus and prioritisation of tasks and actions. Though some really positive progress has been made, capacity remains a risk. We have learned to prioritise workloads and focus how we can be efficient in how we work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Risk Register • GAC Report - Audit Management Response Form • Council’s Annual Delivery Plan

Future Focus



Several areas for improvement have been identified. The improvement areas identified include:

- Improving communication – this is critical to effective and efficient service delivery and must be clear and timely. This will improve our focus, accountability and collaborative efforts;
 - Continue to share data and information; and
 - To explore options around the automation of manual processes with a view to addressing some of our capacity risks.
-



Procurement (and Commercial)

Procurement is a vital way for local authorities to deliver public services efficiently while supporting the local economy, and achieve broader social, environmental, and cultural goals.

What we chose to focus on in 2024/25

Procurement continued to support the delivery of the well-being objectives set out in the Corporate Well-being Plan through its support to Council departments. For example:

- Procurement delivers ongoing work with regards to schools spend analysis (commercial) and delivering food frameworks for school meals – this supports the well-being objective “*An Aspirational Merthyr Tydfil focused on learning – strengthening how we enable people to grow and reach their potential*”.
- Procurement supports the management of various contracts (floating support, domiciliary care, direct payments, lifeline business support) – this supports the well-being objective “*A Healthier Merthyr Tydfil – empowering people to live independent and dignified lives*”.
- Procurement supports management of various contracts (St Tydfil Development and other strategies), and 20% of our annual spend is local, directly supporting local jobs. This supports progress against the wellbeing objective “*A Safe and Prosperous Merthyr Tydfil – supporting how our economy recovers and grows*”, and
- Procurement supports the management of various waste contracts, biodiversity programmes and focussing on decarbonisation in our supply chains, EV charging infrastructure (CCR) and the applications of Salix loans to improve our building carbon footprints. This supports the well-being objective “*A Clean and Green Merthyr Tydfil – supporting the creation of a clean and green environment now and in the future*”.

What progress have we made and what have we learned?	Evidence / Observations of change
<p>During this year Procurement delivered its Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy which sets the direction of what and how the Council procures. The aim of the strategy is to ensure that we deliver economic, environmental and social benefits through our 3rd party contracts. This strategy was completed and presented to Full Council within the required timescales and received approval.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy • Full Council Report
<p>New Procurement Legislation coming into force during financial year 24/25 meant a re-write of our procurement rules to refine our processes and close down some of the decentralised operations currently undertaken. This activity was undertaken and the procurement rules updated and communicated to Full council, and the new rules have now been approved.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Procurement Rules • Report to Full Council
<p>A pre-assessment of the resources required to manage the additional demands from the Procurement Act 2023 and the Social Partnerships and Public Procurement Act was determined at around 5170 hours based upon overlaying the transparency requirements over previous years' work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-assessment findings
<p>When comparing the number of invoices paid in 2023/24 and 2024/25, a decrease in the number invoices received and paid was noted. The percentage of invoices paid within 30 days increased by 2% on the previous year; with a corresponding decrease in the number of invoices processed within 31-60 days or more than 60 days</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service self-evaluation
<p>The Commercial Team has provided support to schools with a view to securing savings through their purchasing. The service self-evaluation demonstrated that during the year, circa £300,000 has been saved.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service self-evaluation

Future Focus



The improvement areas identified include:

- To establish a Commercial Steering Group (CSG) and Contract Managers Network - the establishment of a Steering Group and Contract Managers Network will provide tangible benefits to the residents of Merthyr Tydfil through ensuring the outcomes of the procurement and commercial projects that are challenged, approved and endorsed.
 - Improve Procurement Planning and Forms – design, develop and implement a SharePoint site collecting, storing and sharing information with others and provides a level of governance for some of our procurement forms. It utilises a suite of Microsoft products that are available 365 and will help ensure that ownership of projects sits with departments, which would result in better outcomes for Merthyr citizens.
-



Risk Management

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

What we choose to focus on in 2024/25

Key areas of focus were:

- To review and redevelop our corporate risk register;
- Introduction of quarterly reporting (integration of performance, risk and finance information and data);
- Redevelop our Risk Strategy/Policy; and
- Automation of systems and process.

What progress have we made and what have we learned?	Evidence / Observations of change
<p>We have updated our risk strategy and policy. Service risk registers and plans have been updated along with our corporate risk register. The strategy and policy addresses audit recommendations and in doing so enabled us to redefine our risk descriptions and reporting. A further internal audit has been carried out confirming the Council has ‘reasonable’ risk management arrangements in place. The Council has worked on the 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"> • Risk Strategy and Policy • Corporate Risk Register • Cabinet reports • Regular meetings and discussions between departments in addressing risks and integrating plans • Internal Audit Findings
<p>We use 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. 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). All this enables take a preventative approach.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular meetings and discussions between departments in addressing risks and integrating plans • Support materials • Reports to our Governance and Audit Committee (GAC)
<p>Risk reports are taken to our Corporate Management Team and the Governance and Audit Committee (GAC).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update reports to our Governance and Audit Committee (GAC) • Cabinet reports



We will continue to strengthen our corporate risk arrangements. The improvement areas identified include:

- Automation of systems and processes;
 - Training/awareness sessions for Members; and
 - Highlight/quarterly reporting.
-



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 we choose to focus on in 2024/25

- Continuing our work to make positive progress towards achieving the 6 key themes as described in the Healthy Organisation Strategy. This is the workforce strategy which links to the Councils Corporate Well-being Plan to allow us to create a Motivated and Accountable Workforce who work towards achieving the organisational goals.
- Continue to raise awareness and facilitate the skills and development of our existing workforce, including targeted support to services to ensure mandatory training is completed in line with council requirements
- Explore options and opportunities to work with service to develop a series of workforce plans

What progress have we made and what have we learned?	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 and publish the Healthy Organisation strategy. The aims outlined in the Healthy Organisation Strategy and Action Plan have helped to 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. The Healthy Organisation Strategy 2024 – 2026 is due for review and to re-publish an updated strategy in 2026.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy Organisation Strategy • Audit Wales – Springing Forward Report
<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"> • Corporate Well-being Plan.
<p>We have continued to improve how we engage and involve our workforce in a variety of ways. The continuation of the bi-monthly publication of the staff newsletter ‘The Message’ and the introduction of a termly Schools newsletter updating Headteachers and Schools employees on relevant changes to policy/employment legislation. The introduction of surveys around health and wellbeing following Occupational Health appointments, candidate and manager experience of the recruitment and selection process and paternity/maternity questionnaires have all provided employees the chance to express feedback in order to inform our service delivery and that it is fit for purpose.</p> <p>The introduction in Spring 2025 saw structured 8 weekly workforce planning meetings with 21 Heads of Services and key managers ensures that any issues related to people e.g. sickness, recruitment and selection, training, performance and talent management are addressed early on.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate self-assessment report.
<p>The Organisation Development Team continues to deliver a monthly Corporate Induction training programme which enables all new employees into the Council to learn about our organisation, our policies and processes. The aim is to ease the new starters into the culture of the organisation and make them aware of our values which in turn will help with the attraction and retention theme to ensure that a good onboarding process is in place.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate self-assessment report.

<p>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. In addition to this, there is also a Managers Induction run quarterly to ensure that any new managers are equipped with the right tools, skills and knowledge to effectively do their job.</p>	
<p>The development of data dashboards which focus on key workforce data has been implemented to a pilot of 4 Heads of Services and is discussed in 8 weekly workforce planning meetings with the 21 Heads of Services and key managers to support ongoing service delivery. It is also a monthly agenda item for CMT. This data is used to support delivery of our objectives and is helping with how we are developing our workforce plans across the Council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Well-being Plan. • Corporate self-assessment report.
<p>The continuation of embedding Performance Management throughout the organisation remains a priority. People Services continue to support staff and managers through the 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"> • Corporate Well-being Plan. • Healthy Organisation Strategy
<p>We have continued with our apprenticeship programme across the Council using SPF funded routes. The Council's Apprenticeship Scheme recruited in 2021, 2 key posts identified for the future needs of the Local Authority which were a Carbon and Energy apprentice and a Data apprentice. Following the successful completion of degree courses, both apprentices in 2025 been appointed into permanent roles as a Mechanical Engineer and as a Data Analyst.</p> <p>During 2023 - 2025, the apprenticeship programme scheme has collaborated with the Aspire Apprenticeship Scheme to provide support through regular 1:1 meetings outlining guidance 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 has helped support minor succession planning in some areas however with Local Authority budget constraints the future of the apprenticeship scheme will be reviewed as to whether it is a viable option to support workforce planning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy Organisation Strategy



The improvement areas identified include:

- Design and Implement digital and data initiatives to support the service delivery to our customers - to support a more efficient and effective service, which makes it easy and accessible to do business with us.
- Build a sustainable and skilled workforce for current and future needs by developing a workforce plan for each Council services.

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 against the Welsh average:



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	10.3%	8.6%	Above the Welsh average (+1.7%)
Percentage of people aged 16+ with qualifications at RSQ2 or above	80.2%	85.6%	Below the Welsh average (-5.4%)



Earnings

Indicator	Merthyr Tydfil	Wales average	Comparison against Welsh average
Earning by Place of Residence			
Gross weekly pay (full-time workers)	£631.50	£684.40	Below the Wales Average (-£52.90)
Hourly pay (excluding overtime)	£16.57	£17.58	Below the Wales Average (-£1.01)



Employment

Indicator	Merthyr Tydfil	Wales average	Comparison against Welsh average
People who are economically active	73.2%	76.1%	Above the Wales Average (+2.9%)
Males who are economically active	76.8%	79.5%	Above the Wales Average (+2.7%)
Females who are economically active	69.6%	72.8%	Below the Wales average (-3.2%)
People who are economically inactive	26.8%	23.9%	Above the Wales average (+2.9%)



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	8.2	6.7	Above the Wales Average (+1.5)
Clearance cost per fly-tipping incident (£)	£37.85	£45.92	Below the Wales average (-£8.07)



Housing and Homelessness

Indicator	Merthyr Tydfil	Wales average	Comparison against Welsh average
Number of dwellings improved with Disabled Facilities Grants per 10,000 households	29.0%	51.4%	Below the Wales average (-22.4%)
Number of additional affordable housing units delivered per 10,000 households	16.5	23.6	Below the Wales average (-7.1)
Rate of households for whom homelessness was successfully prevented for at least 6 months per 10,000 households	33.6%	36.9%	Below the Wales average (-3.3%)



Social Services

Indicator	Merthyr Tydfil	Wales average	Comparison against Welsh average
Percentage of new assessments for adults resulting in a care and support plan	11.3%	36.7%	Below the Wales average (-25.4%)
Percentage of new assessments for children resulting in a care and support plan	11.2%	18.2%	Below the Wales average (-7%)
Percentage of reablement packages completed where the need for support was maintained, reduced or mitigated	75.2%	86.4%	Below the Wales average (-11.2%)

Our Action Plan

Action	Senior Responsible Officer	Priority	Theme	Overview of progress to date
Continue to improve our governance (e.g. scrutiny improvement, constitution, refocusing our SOAPs and BIPs and delivery of our risk strategy/policy)	Director of Governance & Resources	2	Governance and Resources	<p>UPDATE FOR 24/25</p> <p>The Council has reviewed its risk policy and strategy in line with its audit recommendations, and this was presented to and approved at Council in January 2025.</p> <p>Following the update of the performance monitoring arrangements, performance scorecards (aligned to the Council’s corporate well-being objectives) were introduced and are now used and monitored on a quarterly basis. Further development during 2024/25 have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The refocus and reintroduction of Service Self-Evaluation (SSE) and accompanying written guidance to support completion of this • Using the areas for improvement identified through SSE, standardised service delivery plans have been developed and are being delivered during 2025/26 • The service delivery plans have supported the development of an Annual Delivery Plan for 2025/26 • A monitoring system has been developed to monitor progress against improvement actions, this quarterly monitoring progress has enabled regular progress updates to be secured by Heads of Service and their Directors, and form part of the developing quarterly corporate performance report which also contains data and information relating to both risk and finance. • Development and approval of a Performance Management Framework

Strengthen our key governance plans/strategies (e.g. Workforce plans, Procurement strategy, Financial plans to address future challenges and Digital and Data strategy)	Director of Governance & Resources	2		<p>UPDATE FOR 24/25</p> <p>A number of strategies and plans have been developed during 2024/25, with the following documents being presented to Full Council for review and approval:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Parenting Strategy and Action Plan • Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy • Corporate Risk Policy and Strategy • Healthy Organisation Strategy: Workforce Strategy 2024-26 <p>During 2024/25, work also began on the development of an Annual Delivery Plan for the Council, this Plan was developed using intelligence and insights captured through the SSE process. In tandem with this, work began on the development of a Transformation Plan – Outline Plans for these key governance-related strategies are scheduled to go to Full Council for review and challenge early in the next municipal year.</p>
Improve our customer services offer including how we help support our residents (e.g. cost-of-living) and how we engage and communicate (e.g. participation and engagement strategy)	Director of Finance	2		<p>UPDATE FOR 24/25</p> <p>This is being reviewed as part of our Transformation Programme. Our digital offer is increasing. A full improvement plan is being designed, and work is being done in 2025 regarding our contact centre at the Civic Centre.</p> <p>Both the Council’s Communication & Engagement Strategy 2023-28 was approved by council and has been rolled out across the Council.</p>
Improve our education standards through continuing to collaborate in delivering our RARS strategy	Director of Education	1	An Aspirational Merthyr Tydfil focused on learning	<p>UPDATE FOR 24/25</p> <p>As we move into the last year of the current RARS we are pleased with progress. There is evidence of improved standards for learners and clear impact of other actions set out within the strategy. The next stage is to review next step and to prepare of draft for the next version.</p>

Improve our attendance and exclusion data by implementing our attendance plan and our Business Improvement Plans	Director of Education	1		<p>UPDATE FOR 24/25</p> <p>We have seen significantly improved attendance across both the primary and secondary sector although this remains a priority within our service plans. Improved management of the exclusion process in partnership with headteachers has supported how exclusions are considered.</p>
Focus on delivering our 15-year economic vision	Chief Executive	3	A Safe & Prosperous Merthyr Tydfil	<p>UPDATE FOR 24/25</p> <p>The Council has continued to deliver against the adopted Economic Vision by delivering a number of projects that focus on business support, employability, creating sustainable communities, tourism, housing and physical regeneration / infrastructure. Projects have been developed and delivered through funding secured from UK Government, Welsh Government, Merthyr Tydfil CBC and a range of other funders targeting economic growth and achieving excellent outputs for the community.</p>
Addresses tackling poverty (collaborative working in the delivering our strategies and plans) and cost of living	Chief Executive	2		<p>UPDATE FOR 24/25</p> <p>The department has been proactive in supporting a range of third sector organisations in providing emergency food and provisions across the County Borough. The Council has supported x8 food pantries and x2 food hubs by providing financial support for those organisations to purchase provisions to be distributed to individuals affected by the cost of living crisis. In addition, the department has also supported ten organisations to provide warm hub accommodation at set times during the week, again, supporting those most vulnerable across Merthyr Tydfil.</p>
Address our housing issues as we meet our homelessness duties	Chief Executive	1	A Healthier Merthyr Tydfil	<p>UPDATE FOR 24/25</p> <p>This remains a priority to MTCBC. The Council are continuing to address on-going issues through the development of more affordable homes in line with need and increasing temporary accommodation provision in line with need. Partnership working is imperative to address</p>

				housing issues locally and a robust Strategic Housing Partnership has been created to support this.
Play our part in addressing anti-social behaviour	Director of Governance and Resources	1	A Safe & Prosperous Merthyr Tydfil	<p>UPDATE FOR 24/25</p> <p>Our CCTV services has continued to be more robust helping us address this issue. We continue to work with partners, e.g. the police.</p> <p>Factors to consider include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction of the town centre wardens - Demolition of the old bus station and ongoing plans to redevelop this site <p>Director to provide a more targeted update</p>
Work towards the all-Wales target of becoming a zero-waste nation by 2050	Director of Neighbourhood Services	2	A Clean and Green Merthyr Tydfil	<p>UPDATE FOR 24/25</p> <p>The current waste strategy covers the period 2015 – 2025, as such we have been working with WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme) and Local Partnerships to develop a new Waste strategy to take us from 2025-2030 that should help us meet the current 70% recovery target and move towards zero waste by 2050.</p>
Playing our role in the Welsh public sector becoming carbon neutral by 2030	Director of Neighbourhood Services	2		<p>UPDATE FOR 24/25</p> <p>Factors to consider include:</p> <p>The Council’s Decarbonisation Plan 2023-2030 was presented to and approved by Full Council in June 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Council has introduced Energy Champions to ensure the optimum level of recycling can be achieved within the organisation.
Deliver our EV transition plan, which sets out how we will transition all the Fleet by 2030	Director of Neighbourhood Services	4	A Clean & Green Merthyr Tydfil	<p>UPDATE FOR 24/25</p> <p>We are ahead of targets in the delivery of this plan. Vehicle delivery times has been an issue though.</p>
Continue to strengthen our reporting and future system provision	Director of Social Services	2	A Healthier Merthyr Tydfil	<p>UPDATE FOR 24/25</p> <p>This remains a priority for MTCBC and fits with our social services strategies and our digital and data strategies. We are working with colleagues from across Wales in doing this.</p>
Continue to increase our resilience in Social Care and build on our collaborative approaches	Director of Social Services	1		<p>UPDATE FOR 24/25</p> <p>We have increased capacity in some key areas of the service, but this remains a priority. We are also working well with our regional partners.</p>

Deliver our strategic plans and strategies, e.g. regulator action plans, Children's and Adult Services strategies	Director of Social Services	2		UPDATE FOR 24/25 This work is continuing, and we have built our previous transformation activities into our business as usual or the current corporate well-being plan.
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Legislation








Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

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



The Act introduced 7 national well-being goals – these show the kind of Wales we Want. Together the 7 national well-being goals provide a shared vision for the public bodies in Wales to work towards. All public bodies must evidence how they have used sustainable development as their central organising principle. Following these ways of working offers a huge opportunity to make long-lasting, positive change to current and future generations.

The chart below provides a brief summary of where our Well-being Objectives primarily align to the 7 national well-being goals.

	 A Prosperous Wales	 A Resilient Wales	 A Healthier Wales	 A More Equal Wales	 A Wales of Cohesive Communities	 A Wales of Vibrant Culture & Welsh Language	 A Globally Responsible Wales
An Aspirational Merthyr Tydfil focused on learning	Yellow	Orange	Red	Dark Red	Dark Blue	Blue	Light Blue
A Healthier Merthyr Tydfil	White	Orange	Red	Dark Red	Dark Blue	Blue	Light Blue
A Safe & Prosperous Merthyr Tydfil	Yellow	Orange	Red	Dark Red	Dark Blue	Blue	Light Blue
A Clean & Green Merthyr Tydfil	Yellow	Orange	Red	Dark Red	Dark Blue	Blue	Light Blue

The Act also requires all public bodies to use the sustainable development principle when delivering services – this principle is also known as **the 5 ways of working**.



As we develop our performance framework, we will continue to use the [Future Generations Commissioner's self-reflection toolkit](#) to help us review how we continue to act in accordance with the sustainable development principle (the 5 ways of working).

Local Government and Elections Act 2021

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

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

The key provisions of the Act are:

PART 1:	Elections
PART 2:	General Power of Competence
PART 3:	Promoting Access to Local Government
PART 4:	Local Authority Executives' Members; Officers and Committees
PART 5:	Collaborative Working by Principal Councils
PART 6:	Performance & Governance of Principal Councils
PART 7:	Mergers & Restructuring of Principal Areas
PART 8:	Local Government Finance
PART 9:	Miscellaneous
PART 10:	General

A Quick Guide to the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 has been produced by Senedd research; you can access this guide by clicking [here](#).

Summary of Progress Against Statutory Duty: Performance

This report shows how the Council is making progress and improvement. However, there are areas that we need to focus on to further strengthen our governance and service priorities.

We are continuing to make progress against our regulator recommendations, and we use our audit action plan to update our Governance and Audit Committee as part of this process.

Our case studies which are available on our website show how we are using the 5 ways of working to deliver our well-being objectives and contribute to the 7 national goals as a result. We want to continue to do this in meeting our challenges going forward.

We have received sound information from our engagement exercises. This is being used to inform our plans and improve our services.

In conclusion, we want to continue to self-assess to improve where we need to. The action plan in this report has been designed to help us do this. The action plan focuses on our areas of development but uses lessons learnt and encourages best practice from other areas of the Council and wider.

Although we have made sound progress, we must implement our action plan and reappraise our position this will help show how we are continuously improving.

Certification of our Corporate Self-Assessment Report 2023-2024

Signed on behalf of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council:

Leader:		Chief Executive:	
Date:		Date:	

Have Your Say

We welcome your thoughts on this report and the work of the Council. You can contact us using the details below.

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