



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL
MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council



STATEMENT OF WELLBEING

1. Foreword

- 1.1. On behalf of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council I am pleased to present our second year Statement of Wellbeing which sets out our local wellbeing objectives for the community from 2017 to 2022. The objectives were developed as a result of more than a year's work carried out. This exercise included extensive consultation and engagement with communities and other stakeholders.
- 1.2. Over the past year the Council has changed how it works to deliver the objectives. In doing so we have captured key learning points and been able to streamline our processes and objectives to become further focused on the outcomes from of stakeholder consultation and engagement. It is important to note that our objectives have not changed but become more focused. As I stated last year, I am confident that our wellbeing objectives lay the foundation for an effective Council Plan.
- 1.3. Our wellbeing objectives seek to secure sustained improvements in the economic, social, cultural and environmental wellbeing of the people who live and work in Merthyr Tydfil, now and in the future. The focus remains being on supporting people when they need it most and equipping them with the skills they need to lead fulfilled lives. This will be done by changing our approach to focus on the five ways of working as stated in the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. As such we will focus on moving away from being reactive and becoming preventative by thinking long term and involving, collaborating and integrating with communities ('five ways of working').
- 1.4. Our wellbeing objectives have been prepared and being delivered in a time of challenge and change. Doing different things, working smarter, making better use of our assets has never been so important. The Council intends to make effective use of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to safeguard the wellbeing of Merthyr Tydfil now and for the future.
- 1.5. The Act presents us with an opportunity to work differently when delivering our Council Plan. We will do this by utilising the five ways of working and ensuring the seven wellbeing goals are always at the heart of what we do.

Gareth Chapman
Chief Executive



2. Introduction

Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

- 2.1. The Act is about improving the economic, social, cultural and environmental wellbeing of Wales. For the first time in law public bodies have a common purpose and a national shared vision.
- 2.2. The Act puts in place seven wellbeing goals to ensure we are all working towards achieving the shared vision. Each of the goals has a descriptor to build a common understanding ([Appendix I](#)).
- 2.3. The Act places a legal duty on public bodies to adopt the sustainable development principle when setting wellbeing objectives and in taking steps to meet those objectives. In the Act, the sustainable development principle¹ is exemplified by the five ways of working ([Appendix II](#)).

Wellbeing Statement

- 2.4. In our wellbeing statement we set out the scope of each wellbeing objective and outline why we consider that meeting the objective will maximise our contribution to the achievement of the seven wellbeing goals.
- 2.5. The wellbeing statement clearly communicates the connections between each of our wellbeing objectives which will help secure an integrated and collaborative approach to achieving all seven wellbeing goals.
- 2.6. In the long term our wellbeing objectives seek to ensure we secure improvements across all four pillars of wellbeing (economic, social, cultural and environmental) for the people who live and work in Merthyr Tydfil now and in the future.

¹ The sustainable development principle sets out five ways of working to help us work together better, avoid repeating past mistakes and tackle some of the long-term challenges we face.

The Sustainable Development Principle

- 2.7. As a public body, we need to make sure that the way we work aligns to the sustainable development principle. How we have applied the sustainable development principle when setting and reviewing our objectives has included:



Involvement

The involvement of people who visit, live and work in Merthyr Tydfil as we carried out our wellbeing assessment. Local involvement was focused on understanding personal wellbeing and generating strength based intelligence by asking questions such as "What is good in your communities?" and "What would make your communities better?"



Collaboration

We collaborated with senior officers across the Council when analysing the assessment information and developing the wellbeing objectives. This is helping us to grow awareness and practical experience of the 5 ways of working across services.



Integration

Integration of resources within the Council to maximise the collective skills, knowledge and understanding to help build wellbeing objectives that are commonly understood.



Prevention

Reducing the possibility of silo working by involving all services that can contribute to the achievement of a wellbeing objective has helped us work better together, ensured a focus on prevention, and decision making that is more integrated and collaborative.



Long Term

Using the population projections for the county borough has helped ensure a focus on the necessary conditions required in the long term to grow and retain the working age population.

Our Shared Vision

- 2.8. Over the past year the Cwm Taf Wellbeing Plan objectives has been agreed by partners and there has been a change in the political administration of the Council. As such the Council has revised its Shared Objectives document ([Appendix III](#)). This is an 'at a glance' document connecting political, local and regional objectives in how the Council will adopt the five ways of working in delivering the objectives to meet the national wellbeing goals.
- 2.9. All elements of the Shared Objectives document has been informed with engagement with communities and developed in collaboration with key stakeholder groups. Examples include the public responses captured as part of the political election campaign and the consultation process in developing the Cwm Taf objectives.
- 2.10. Clear alignment can be seen between the three political priorities, the three Cwm Taf regional objectives and the four local wellbeing objectives, together with synergy in how these are being delivered. In each element the five ways of working are at the heart of delivery; with focus on achieving the seven wellbeing goals.
- 2.11. Our Shared Vision document is the start of a thread through the delivery of services across the Council. The local objectives form service focus and the outcomes or components of each objective form service outcomes. These are summarised into a strategy-on-a-page (SOAP). The five ways of working form the mechanism for service delivery and change. The Council's project and change management framework (including an updated integrated impact assessment) has been reviewed with the seven national goals, four local objectives and five ways of working being at the heart.
- 2.12. This means that operational plans, team objectives and individual workings are also fundamentally driven by the seven national goals, four local objectives and five ways of working. This can then be reflected in individual 1-2-1 meetings and appraisals held between staff members and their manager. As such, each team member will be able to see how their role helps to deliver the four local objectives and indeed the seven national goals. Equally, or perhaps more importantly, ways of working are being reviewed and changed with the five ways of working from the Act being implemented.

3. Wellbeing Objectives

Wellbeing in Merthyr Tydfil

- 3.1. As part of our wellbeing duty under the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act, the Council published its wellbeing objectives in July 2017 as set out in the plan *Focus on the Future: Wellbeing in our community*.
- 3.2. An assessment of wellbeing was carried out to develop our understanding of how to positively impact wellbeing and to identify what matters to communities. The assessment was published in March 2017 and can be accessed on Our Cwm Taf². In addition, we worked with residents to establish a baseline understanding of subjective wellbeing in Merthyr Tydfil. This knowledge helped shape the wellbeing objectives, understand potential responses to improve wellbeing and potentially set a wellbeing score for the population.
- 3.3. The Council has a duty to ensure its wellbeing objectives are designed to maximise its contribution to achieving each of the seven wellbeing goals. In doing so, the Council must take all reasonable steps in exercising its functions to meet those objectives.
- 3.4. As outlined in the Chief Executive's foreword section, our local wellbeing objectives have been streamlined from nine to four, to ensure a greater focus on delivery and improve accountability. Organised by wellbeing theme, each wellbeing objective has clear outcomes that will help us to respond to local community needs and contribute to the seven national wellbeing goals.

BS Best Start to Life

Children and young people get the best start to life and are equipped with the skills they need to be successful learners and confident individuals.

WL Working Life

People feel supported to develop the skills required to meet the needs of businesses, with a developing, safe infrastructure that establishes Merthyr Tydfil as an attractive destination.

EW Environmental Wellbeing

Communities protect, enhance and promote our environment and countryside.

LW Living Well

People are empowered to live independently within their communities, where they are safe and enjoy good physical and mental health.

² You can read the [population wellbeing assessments](#) and the [well-being assessments](#) on the [Our Cwm Taf](#) website.

4. Children and young people get the best start to life and are equipped with the skills they need to be successful learners and confident individuals ³

Children, have a positive early experience to ensure they are ready to learn, ready for school and can develop the knowledge skills and attributes they will need to flourish in life, learning and work.

- 4.1. This objective is the integration of two separate objectives as published in our *Wellbeing Statement* (March 2017) and wellbeing plan *Focus on the Future: Wellbeing in our community* (July 2017). The decision to integrate was based on the lessons learned during year 1 of the *Focus on the Future*. Merging the objectives provides a greater focus on the key transitions, which are milestone events for children and young people that have a definite effect on their development. We define the transition events as, early childhood, childhood and adolescence, and later adolescence and early adulthood.
- 4.2. Education is one of the clearest predictors of life outcomes, such as employment, income and social status, and is a predictor of attitudes and wellbeing. The objective integrates the complete educational journey, from the early years through to compulsory years, and post-16. The objective provides children and young people with the skills and attributes to help them improve their own lives.
- 4.3. Improving early years support is crucial in tackling the root causes of adverse childhood experiences, which we know have a detrimental impact on future health and wellbeing. We define early years as pre-birth to 7 years old. This broad definition recognises the importance of pregnancy in influencing outcomes and the transition into primary school as a critical period in children's lives.
- 4.4. Research evidence shows that there is value for schools to promote health and wellbeing among pupils. Pupils with better health and wellbeing are more likely to be ready to learn and achieve better academically.
- 4.5. This wellbeing objective offers a holistic and sustainable approach to meeting the wellbeing needs of children young children. While this approach is important for all children, it will particularly benefit children who face disadvantage or have a high risk of poor outcomes later in life. The key outcomes (or components) for Best Start to Life are:
 - Children live in a nurturing and stimulating home environment;
 - Children have access to high quality pre-school and school education;
 - Improve the educational outcomes for all children and young people; and
 - Children and young people have good health and wellbeing.

³ This wellbeing objective recognises the right of all young children to high quality relationships, environments and services and will contribute strongly to promoting and upholding children's rights as defined by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

- 4.6. The risk of poorer outcomes for children and families are strongly correlated to underlying factors, including poverty and low qualification levels of parents. Wider stresses such as debt, substance misuse, poor housing and lack of employment also impact on the development of children and young people.
- 4.7. The best start to life has to work alongside our other wellbeing objectives which address these underlying factors, particularly:
- People feel supported to develop the skills required to meet the needs of businesses, with a developing, safe infrastructure making Merthyr Tydfil an attractive destination.
 - People are empowered to live independently within their communities, where they are safe and enjoy good physical and mental health.
- 4.8. To maximise our chances of achieving the best start to life will require an integrated response across all our wellbeing objectives by applying the five ways of working.

5. People feel supported to develop the skills required to meet the needs of businesses, with a developing, safe infrastructure making Merthyr Tydfil an attractive destination

People live in safe, well-connected communities where heritage, language and culture are valued and strengthened for future generations. Highly skilled and qualified people are equipped to meet the changing needs of employers. The developing infrastructure sustains and improves both the built and natural environment.

- 5.1. Following a 'Lessons Learned' exercise which has been undertaken at the end of year 1 of the wellbeing plan, findings have led to this objective being broadened to encompass 4 of the former objectives. This change aims to make clearer the links across the areas of skills development, employability, a safe environment and the heritage, language and culture across the County Borough. It is important to note that the emphasis of this objective, and indeed the other objectives, has not changed. We have not deviated from the outcomes of the community and stakeholder engagement sessions but become more focussed on delivery.
- 5.2. Research⁴ shows that people who report no educational qualifications are more likely to have relatively low income and that people who are not in employment with no qualification are more likely to be economically inactive. There is also evidence to suggest that a well-managed urban environment and high quality local services are important to create conditions that are attractive to business investors, visitors and local residents.
- 5.3. When local people talk about culture, it is often referred to as an opportunity for celebration. The refurbished Town Centre has become an asset for hosting cultural activities that bring people together such as the Merthyr Rising festival, the Awesome Annual Chilli Festival. Making these social connections is directly correlated with improvements in physical and mental wellbeing and can help combat the growth in social isolation and loneliness. Cultural events can also help bolster the prosperity of the County Borough by attracting visitors and tourists, providing employment and skills development opportunities.
- 5.4. The key outcomes (or components) to support the response to this objective include:
 - Making skills work for Merthyr Tydfil: developing the workforce of the future;
 - Developing the environment and infrastructure for business to flourish;
 - Communities protect, enhance and promote our heritage and cultural assets;
 - Developing safer communities; and
 - Supporting and accommodating those most disadvantaged in the housing market.

⁴ [JRF \(2015\) Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion 2015](#)

- 5.5. This objective has to work alongside our other wellbeing objectives which address these underlying factors, particularly:
- Children get the best start to life and are equipped with the skills they needs to be successful learners and confident individuals;
 - Communities protect, enhance and promote our natural and built environment and countryside; and
 - People are empowered to live independently within their communities, where they are safe and enjoy good physical and mental health.

6. Communities protect, enhance and promote our environment and countryside⁵

People, proud of the area's outstanding landscape, regularly spend time outdoors in good quality, accessible greenspace. Communities help improve their local areas, learning new skills, building strong social bonds and helping wildlife flourish.

- 6.1. There has been a minor change to this objective as part of the lessons learnt in year one of the wellbeing plan. We now make reference to the 'environment'; this includes both the urban and natural environment, and not just the natural environment that has been stated previously.
- 6.2. Research shows that a healthy natural environment and countryside provides multiple benefits for people and wildlife from improved air, water and land quality, habitat protection and enhanced biodiversity to beneficial implications for physical and mental health^{6,7}. Therefore, the focus of this wellbeing objective is the work we do with our communities to protect, enhance and promote the environment and countryside.
- 6.3. How we act toward the environment and countryside will be a critical factor of a sustainable future in Merthyr Tydfil because the benefits of improving our environment will be felt across all of our wellbeing objectives. We define the environment as countryside and all greenspace (natural environment) and urban locations (urban environment) within the Council boundary. This broad definition of the environment recognises the importance of nature in both rural and urban environments.
- 6.4. This wellbeing objective offers a holistic and sustainable approach to meeting the environmental wellbeing needs in Merthyr Tydfil. Those needs should be interpreted broadly to include quality greenspace and connectivity, habitat protection and biodiversity, resilient ecosystems, landscape character and pollution prevention. While this approach is important for the environment as a whole, it will particularly benefit areas where there are key environmental issues or risks. The key outcomes (or components) for communities to protect, enhance and promote our environment and countryside include:
 - Minimise environmental damage through prevention of pollution;
 - Maximise efficient use of materials and resources by means of the waste hierarchy;
 - Developing good quality, biodiverse and connected green infrastructure and open spaces; and
 - Promoting and supporting the use of renewable and low carbon energy.

⁵ The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 requires the Council to seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems taking into account diversity between and within ecosystems; the connections between and within ecosystems; the scale of ecosystems; the condition of ecosystems (including their structure and functioning) and the adaptability of ecosystems.

⁶ [Chief Medical Officer Annual Report 2014-15](#)

⁷ [Life Course, Greenspace and Health, 2016](#).

- 6.5. A degraded environment means our residents, communities and businesses will have a lower resilience to environmental risks. As the environment is an underlying factor and influencer to many other wellbeing objectives, the risks presented by degraded environment also include a range of economic, social, health, community safety and cultural perspectives.
- 6.6. Communities protect, enhance and promote the environment and countryside has to work alongside our other wellbeing objectives to address these underlying factors, particularly:
- People are empowered to live independently within their communities, where they are safe and enjoy good physical and mental health; and
 - People feel supported to develop the skills required to meet the needs of businesses, with a developing, safe infrastructure making Merthyr Tydfil an attractive destination.

7. People are empowered to live independently within their communities, where they are safe and enjoy good physical and mental health

People who are empowered to live independently within their communities, have the appropriate support, advice and assistance to meet their personal needs, live safely and access opportunities available to them. People, adopting health behaviours earlier in their life, are healthier, feel good and function well.

- 7.1. As a direct result from lesson learned during year one of the wellbeing plan, it was agreed to combine the three previous Living Well objectives in to one comprehensive objective. This was actioned as it is recognised there are strong relationships between good physical and mental health, safeguarding adults and children and living an independent full life. This will create one focus and avoid potential duplication.
- 7.2. People need support to live independently and well in their communities for longer. Research undertaken by the Office for Disability Issues suggests that independent living provides significantly more benefits at an individual level than conventional forms of service provision. There is also evidence to suggest that older people living locally wish to remain living in their homes as long as possible.
- 7.3. The link between physical health and mental health is incontrovertible. Poor physical health can lead to poor mental health and vice versa. Conversely, good physical health can improve a person's state of mind; a strong and healthy mind can greatly improve our ability to cope with physical ailments. There is a growing body of evidence that indicates nature provides added value to the known benefits of physical activity.
- 7.4. Feeling safe influences how people value their community, and is important to people's quality of life; often making the difference between people wanting to live and stay in their neighbourhood or not. There is evidence to suggest that building confidence and resilience in individuals and their communities is an important step towards improving wellbeing.
- 7.5. To ensure a holistic approach is met in this objective, the key outcomes (or components) for Living Well will include:
 - Safeguarding children and adults who are at risk of harm;
 - Tackling adverse childhood experiences and developing community Resilience;
 - Promoting healthy behaviours and increased levels of physical activity;
 - Promote good emotional wellbeing and improved mental health;
 - Clear and accessible information and advice; and
 - Services that provide people with the ability to live in their own home.
- 7.6. This objective has to work alongside all our other wellbeing objectives which address these underlying factors, particularly:

- Children get the best start to life and are equipped with the skills they needs to be successful learners and confident individuals;
- People feel supported to develop the skills required to meet the needs of businesses, with a developing, safe infrastructure making Merthyr Tydfil an attractive destination; and
- Communities protect, enhance and promote our natural environment and countryside.

8. Appendix I: Seven Wellbeing Goals

GOAL	Description of the goal
A prosperous Wales	An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.
A resilient Wales	A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).
A healthier Wales	A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.
A more equal Wales	A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).
A Wales of cohesive communities	Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.
A globally responsible Wales	A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.

9. Appendix II: Sustainable Development Principle

The WFG Act puts in place a ‘*sustainable development principle*’ which tells organisations how to go about meeting their duty under the Act. Any reference to a public body doing something “*in accordance with the sustainable development principle*”, means that the body must act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Public bodies need to make sure that when making their decisions they take into account the impact they could have on people living their lives in Wales in the future.

There are five things that public bodies need to think about to show that they have applied the sustainable development principle. Following these ways of working will help us work together better, avoid repeating past mistakes and tackle some of the long term challenges we are facing.



Long term

The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.



Prevention

How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives.



Integration

Considering how the public body’s well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.



Collaboration

Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives.



Involvement

The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the wellbeing goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.

10. Appendix III: Our Shared Vision

