

Well-being in our Community 2017 – 2022

2021/22 - Version 5



FOCUS ON THE FUTURE



Contents

Section 1 – Introduction	3
1.1 An introduction from the Council Leader and Chief Executive.....	3
1.2 Focus on the Future - Summary	6
1.3 The purpose of Our Focus on the Future Plan	7
1.4 Involving our Communities	9
Section 2 – Focus on the Future – Our Plan.....	11
2.1 Our Shared Vision	11
2.2 Our Well-being Themes and Objectives – A summary	12
2.3 Focus on the Future – Our journey so far.....	13
2.4 Our Well-being Objectives – The detail	16
2.5 Contributing to the National Goals	33
Section 3 – Delivering the Plan	34
3.1 Recover → Transform → Improve – Our Plan 2020 to 2025	34
3.2 Our Ways of Working	36
3.3 Our Governance and Supporting the Plan	42
Section 4 – Monitoring the Plan	52
4.1 Monitoring Our Performance	52
4.2 Scrutiny	53
4.3 What the Regulators said.....	54
4.4 Partnership Working.....	56
Section 5 – Glossary	57
Section 6 – Get Involved	59
Appendices	60

Section 1 – Introduction

1.1 An introduction from the Council Leader and Chief Executive



Councillor Lisa Mytton

Council Leader



Ellis Cooper

Interim Chief Executive

On behalf of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, we are pleased to present our updated corporate well-being plan "Focus on the Future: well-being in our community".

This is likely to be the most important plan this Council has developed as we recover from the coronavirus pandemic and continue on our transformation and improvement journey.

In our plan, we set out what we expect from both Elected Members and Officers of the Council to achieve our well-being objectives and corporate priorities. This plan will provide us with focus to sustainably and equitably deliver our services to meet the needs of our residents and support the wider regional plan.

We have 4 well-being objectives each with a primary outcome, you can find out more in [Section 2](#) of this plan. Our objectives are integrated with the regional Cwm Taf Public Services Board's [Well-being Plan – Our Cwm Taf](#).



**Best Start to
Life**



Working Life



**Environmental
Well-being**



Living Well

2020 and the start of 2021 has been exceptionally challenging for us all. As a Council, we have been delivering services to our residents, whilst responding firstly to major flooding and then a global pandemic. This has needed a joint effort of Elected Members, Officers and Partners. It has shown how we can work together to overcome major challenges; something we want to build on as part of this plan in how we work going forward.

How we responded to these challenges has also provided opportunities to do things differently or indeed do different things. We continue to be committed to working closely with our communities to involve them in how we move forward. As Leader of the Council and Chief Executive, we want to continue to build connections between people and empower communities in improving well-being.

After setting a balanced budget for 2019/2020, we took a proactive step and asked Welsh Government to support us in these challenging times. The Minister for Housing and Local Government appointed an Improvement and Assurance Board to carry out a rapid assessment exercise. To address the outcomes from this work, we have developed our '[Recovery, Transformation and Improvement Plan](#)'. This addresses our immediate risks but also the longer-term. We have worked, with the support provided, in identifying 3 areas of priority to help us better deliver our well-being objectives and outcomes. We think this will address the question of 'so what?' - We are focused on improving outcomes for our residents and this remains at the heart of what we do. Elected Member, Scrutiny Member and Officer workshops have enabled us to agree these areas for improvement and ways to support these changes and in line with the expectations of the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

These are improving our education standards, increasing our resilience in social care and supporting economic recovery.



We will continue to work together as Elected Members and Officers in refining our plans to ensure they continue to help our recovery from the coronavirus pandemic and our transformation and improvement journey. In doing this we have also focused on our support services and how this resource can help us transform. Elected Members will continue to lead community development by bringing people and communities together. All involved will use our knowledge, skills and experiences to promote opportunities for community involvement to achieve positive and long-lasting changes.

We must ensure the decisions we take enable sustainable improvements and support the well-being of the people who live and work in Merthyr Tydfil today and in the future. To do this, we will continue to work smarter through using the [sustainable development principle](#) set out as part of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.



As an organisation, we are acutely aware of the impact of austerity on people living and working within the County Borough. In this plan, you will see how we have built on last year in identifying and focusing the services that contribute to [tackling poverty](#) within our communities; a priority for us all.

To make sure we deliver this plan and the recovery, transformation and improvement we set out below, we must also focus on how we support delivery and monitor our performance. Improving our governance will be a focus on the next period to ensure we improve efficiently and effectively. Our scrutiny, both as part of our internal governance and formal committees, will play a major part in our transformation and improvement journey. Our staff performance and their development are also important. As such we have recently, as part of our medium-term financial plan, increased our investment in staff development, apprenticeships and additional capacity in high-risk areas of the Council.



Supporting
Change

Although challenging, this is a very exciting time for us as we reshape the organisation to meet the needs of our residents now and into the future.

Lisa Mytton
Council Leader

Ellis Cooper
Interim Chief Executive

1.2 Focus on the Future - Summary

FOCUS ON THE FUTURE – WELL-BEING IN OUR COMMUNITY

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:

People learn and develop skills to fulfil their ambitions,

People live, work, have a safe, healthy and fulfilled life,

People visit, enjoy and return



1.3 The purpose of Our Focus on the Future Plan

Under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, public bodies in Wales must work in a sustainable way to achieve the common vision to improve the economic, social, cultural and environmental well-being of Wales. Therefore, we need to make sure that when we make decisions, we take into account the impact they could have on the people living in Merthyr Tydfil now and in the future. These are set out in the [5 ways of working](#) (sustainable development principle).

The Act means we have a Future Generations Commissioner for Wales. The Commissioner's role is to act as a guardian for the interests of future generations in Wales and to support public bodies listed in the Act in working towards achieving the seven national Well-being Goals.

As well as wanting to inform and involve you in our plans, we have a duty under the 'Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to publish our well-being objectives and supporting statement (Our Statement of Well-being) at the start of the financial year, showing how we are contributing to the 7 national well-being goals. As part of this plan, we are also publishing our key priorities for improvement.

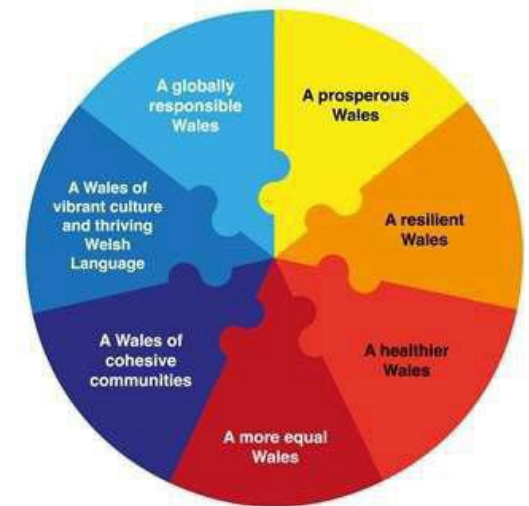
Seven well-being goals

The Act sets out for the first time in law, that public bodies are working towards the same purpose. The Act puts in place 7 national well-being goals which represent the shared vision for Wales and makes it clear that the listed public bodies must work to achieve all of the goals and not just one or two.

Sustainable Development

The Act places a legal duty on public bodies to adopt sustainable development as the central organising principle when setting well-being objectives and in taking steps to meet those objectives.

The Act confirms that sustainable development is the central organising principle that public bodies must apply when making decisions and taking steps to achieve their well-being objectives.



“public bodies in Wales must think about the long term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.”

(Future Generations Commissioner: Sophie Howe)

Five Ways of Working

In the Act, sustainable development is exemplified by five ways of working. There are ways of working that public bodies must adopt to 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. There are details on how we have changed our ways of working in line with the sustainable development principles [below in this document](#).



Our Focus on the Future Plan

In our Statement of Well-being, we set out the scope of each Well-being Objective and outline why we consider that meeting the Well-being Objective will maximise our contribution to the achievement of the 7 national Well-being Goals.

In this plan, we set out how we intend to achieve our well-being objectives. This includes associated priorities, details of key plans and strategies, and how the plan will be financed.

We review our plan annually to make certain that the key priorities, plans and strategies remain relevant and clearly aligned to our well-being objectives. This outlines the changes made as part of this review and the rationale. In addition, we will also publish an [Annual Performance Report](#), which will evaluate the progress we have made.

The diagram opposite is a simple illustration to visualise how our plan sits in relation to the regional work across Cwm Taf.



1.4 Involving our Communities

The County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil has a population of around 60,000; that is more people per square km than Wales as a whole. A brief summary of the County Borough, in comparison to the rest of Wales, shows Merthyr Tydfil has the:

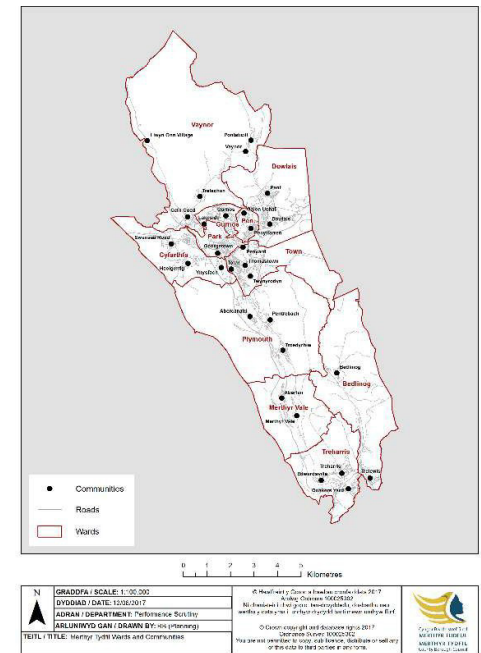
- 4th highest percentage of people aged under 16 in Wales;
- 3rd lowest percentage of people aged over 65 in Wales;
- 2nd highest percentage of people claiming benefits in Wales;
- 3rd highest average band D council tax in Wales.

(Source: www.mylowalcouncil.info; February 2021)

There are 11 Electoral Divisions (wards) in Merthyr Tydfil, represented by 33 Ward Councillors. Our Councillors play a leadership role as community ambassadors, helping provide community intelligence and helping empower local people to improve their communities through the provision of advice, guidance and practical support.

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC), a unitary authority, employs 1,237 corporate staff and 1,133 school-based staff.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires a more 'active' level of community involvement in order to achieve outcomes. As a Council, this means that we need to involve our communities in the planning and designing of services, together with involving communities in understanding how they will be affected.



What did our Cwm Taf well-being and Cwm Taf population assessments tell us?

Cwm Taf is made up of 2 local authority areas, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf. Both the Cwm Taf well-being and Cwm Taf population assessments were produced in March 2017, setting the basis of our local and regional plans. We have continued to review our objectives to ensure that we focus on the outcomes of these assessments.

The [Cwm Taf Well-being Assessment](#) was conducted through the Public Services Board (PSB) to work together to improve services and communities across the region. The report explains how communities have their own identities and data showed the demographic of the population and likely trends e.g. a forecast large increase in the over 85 age range, changing the way we consider social care in the long-term. This work informed the PSB Well-being Plan and our Well-being themes and Objectives.

The [Cwm Taf Population Assessment](#) was conducted in line with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. It considers the 4 pillars of the Act (namely, Well-being, People, Partnership and Prevention) and 3 key areas of: 'What level of care and support is needed?'; 'Where the gaps are and how to fill them?'; 'How services need to change to make sure that they are providing that level of care and support and preventative services?'. 6 overarching themes were concluded: Using our Data more

effectively; Information – Finding out more about support services; Connections; Working together; Stopping problems before they start, or get worse; Making it personal – being listened to and understood. This informs how the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) and MTCBC work. This has informed regional and local objectives, including key themes in our [Recovery, Transformation and Improvement Plan](#).

Developing Community Action

We will continue to provide support to our Councillors so they can carry out community-based work where it is required. We will continue to seek opportunities where Councillors will support community-led initiatives. You will find examples of community group work that has taken place throughout the County Borough by visiting our [‘Contact Magazine’](#) web page.

A number of community collaborative activities are already under development for the coming year. These include:

- The ongoing development of activities within the Cyfarthfa Heritage Area;
- Our Raising Aspirations Raising Standards strategy will be launched in September 2021, where we will engage with our communities;
- We are engaging with our communities regarding our 15-year economic vision for the County Borough, we especially want to involve businesses;
- Our projects around addressing unemployment and training needs will continue, to support our communities.

Section 2 – Focus on the Future – Our Plan

2.1 Our Shared Vision

This visual shows how our shared vision fits with our 7 national goals, together with how our 4 well-being objectives fit with our regional PSB well-being objectives.

We will review our vision as part of our Recovery Transformation and Improvement Plan to ensure we are still meeting the needs of our communities.





Our local and regional well-being objectives will be reviewed and updated as part of community engagement as required.



2.2 Our Well-being Themes and Objectives – A summary

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.

In order to set our well-being objectives, we contributed to the development of a joint needs assessment across Cwm Taf. You can read more about the well-being assessments on the '[Our Cwm Taf](#)' website. This was carried out to inform the development of the Statement of Well-being and subsequently led to the development of the Council's well-being objectives. The four themes and objectives presented in the 2020/2021 iteration of the Plan remain unchanged for this 2021/2022 plan.

Well being Theme	Objective	Primary Outcome
 Best Start	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.	Improve the educational outcomes for all children and young people
 Working Life	People feel supported to develop the skills required to meet the needs of businesses, with a developing, safe infrastructure which makes Merthyr Tydfil an attractive destination.	Developing the environment and infrastructure for businesses to flourish
 Environmental Well-being	Communities protect, enhance, and promote our environment and countryside.	Maximise efficient use of materials and resources by means of the waste hierarchy
 Living Well	People are empowered to live independently within their communities, where they are safe and enjoy good physical and mental health.	Ensure people are able to live independently and safely within their communities

In this plan, we set out the steps that we will take to ensure that we maximise our contribution to the corporate priorities and well-being objectives. This plan will focus on what is being done to achieve the Well-being Objectives, including key corporate priorities and associated plans and strategies.

Since the publication of version 4 (2020-21) of our plan, we have further developed our 'Recovery, Transformation and Improvement Plan 2020 – 2025'. Here we have identified areas that we need to improve to provide the services our residents need now and in the future. This means we have prioritised areas to better deliver our well-being objectives in a sustainable and equitable manner. The '[Recover → Transform → Improve – Our Plan 2020 to 2025](#)' section below provides more detail on the plan.

We have worked with teams from across the Council to refocus our strategies. We have used the sustainable development principle and are doing different things or doing things differently. We are continuing to use our easy to understand 'Strategy on a Page' (SOAPs) for each well-being objective to help us deliver our outcomes. These are considered by all teams as they complete the corporate self-evaluation process: the primary vehicle used to reflect on whether we are making a difference.

As with previous years, we are continuing to learn lessons and further strengthen delivery in line with our agreed outcomes. There are a number of examples of how we will do this:

- integrated scrutiny committee workshops to focus on key aspects or topics;
- collaborative working groups to explore opportunities for joint planning and service delivery with both internal and external partners; and
- cross-service critical challenge sessions to 'test' and explore ideas, key findings of activities and to share lessons learned more widely.

Our Recovery, Transformation and Improvement Plan also identifies ways that our support services can help deliver our priorities. We can't deliver this on our own and we've identified our key partners that we collaborate with to deliver the well-being objectives and corporate priorities.

In order to develop greater awareness and understanding of the changes taking place, and to enable staff and partners to identify how they work they fit into the bigger picture, we have a 'Shared Vision' document which connects not only the Council's priorities, but also those of the Cwm Taf Public Services Board and the Cabinet's priorities.

2.3 Focus on the Future – Our journey so far

We have provided a step-by-step summary below of our journey so far in delivering our services following the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 coming into place. We have been able to look at what we do and how we do it. You will notice through previous versions of our Focus on the Future Plan (sometimes referred to as our Corporate Plan) and Annual Performance Reports, that we have been able to become more focused on our well-being objectives and our outcomes. This has been further strengthened in 2020/21 where we have identified key areas for improvement as part of our Recovery, Transformation and Improvement (RTI) Plan.

2015-2016



The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 receives Royal Assent.



A Population Assessment is jointly undertaken to identify community needs across Cwm Taf

2016-2017



Elected Members and Officers worked together to build the Corporate Well-being Plan



The Corporate Well-being Plan – Focus on the Future: well-being in our community receives Council approval



The Council begins to deliver activities/services to make progress against its corporate priorities and well-being objectives



2018-2019



The Council's scrutiny function reviews and scrutinises the Annual Scrutiny Report - a backward looking report demonstrating performance and impact made through the first year of delivery of Focus on the Future



At the end of Year 2, we reviewed and refocused the Plan, now showing our changed approach using the 5 ways of working e.g. more integrated service delivery; collaborative working



The Public Services Board produces its' first Well-being Plan 'Our Cwm Taf'



Working Better Together

With more integrated objectives and using lessons learned throughout Year 1, the Council uses the 5 ways of working with a view to further maximising their impact on its outcomes



At the end of Year 1, we reviewed and refocused; the 9 objectives initially set within the Plan reduce to 4 in readiness for Year 2 of delivery



Throughout the first year of delivery, the Council's scrutiny committees consistently reviewed progress against the Plan, providing challenge and feedback.

2020-21



Re-launched corporate self-evaluation process to support status review, acknowledgement of good practice; and identification of areas for development and priorities for improvement



Following an examination visit; Wales Audit Office (now Audit Wales) produced a report on the Council's use of the 5 ways of working. The report shows good progress and proposing actions for future improvements.



The Council's DRAFT Tackling Poverty strategy is under development and officers explore the opportunities to integrate this into its' Corporate Plan to maximise and reinforce delivery opportunities across the organisation



TO DO LIST

- ☒ Continue self-evaluation
- ☒ Explore tackling poverty further
- ☒ Refresh/refocus/review Corp Plan
- ☒ Develop 5 ways of working methods
- ☒ Review and improve governance



Moving into 2021-22

- ☐ Continue to respond to the coronavirus pandemic and transition to recovery
- ☐ Deliver our Recovery Transformation and Improvement Plan (focusing on our priorities for improvement)
- ☐ Work with our Improvement and Assurance Board by continuing to focus on our governance, performance and financial position
- ☐ Ensure we remain focused on tackling poverty
- ☐ Continue self-evaluation and prepare for the requirements of the Local Government and Elections Act
- ☐ Ensure we continue to deliver our services by using the 5 ways of working and supporting the delivery of the 7 national goals
- ☐ Deliver other changes to legislation, for example the new Socio-Economic Duty placed on the Council

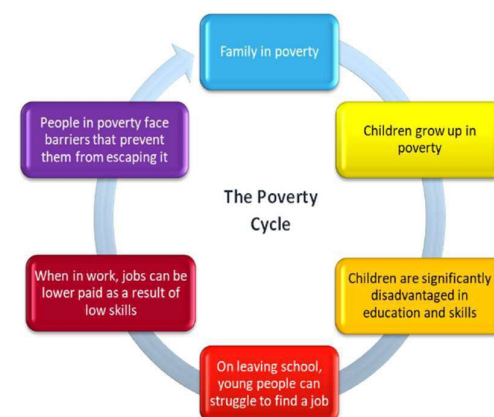


Focus on ... Tackling Poverty

In our Focus on the Future report last year, we introduced a cross-cutting focus on tackling poverty. This is a root cause of many issues we face now and into the future, especially following the coronavirus pandemic. We identified the poverty cycle showing how we work across our well-objectives can positively impact on the cycle. As such we need to integrate our strategies and collaborate to tackle this wicked issue. We are applying the 5 ways of working to tackle poverty, and in doing so, help us better support delivery of the 7 national goals.

Several reports have outlined how the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic can adversely impact upon communities already experiencing high levels of deprivation. The 'Centre for Towns' produced their report called 'The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on our towns and cities' in April 2020. In this report towns with high reliance on retail and pubs and restaurants and ex-industrial towns were highlighted as being impacted upon. This report, and other similar reports, were used when developing our priorities in our RTI Plan to better understand how to prioritise our transformation (hence the 'Economic Recovery' priority being developed). As such, Economic Recovery will play a big part in tackling poverty.

The new socio-economic duty allows us to renew our focus on how we assess impacts on socio-economic disadvantage and enable equity in decision making. We will continue to ensure services consider how we can tackle poverty to reduce the impact our communities. We currently deliver a raft of services in partnership with other organisations that help to do this.



Last year we produced a list of 8 of the main contributors to tackling poverty and how they help us contribute to the 7 national goals. We are continuing this work, building on the work we have done this year. Some of this work has been included in our Annual Performance Report (APR) produced earlier this year and we will include more in next year's APR.

In delivering these 8 programmes we will tackle poverty and contribute to the Wales we want, specifically to the following national well-being goals.



2.4 Our Well-being Objectives – The detail

As stated above, we set our well-being themes through the development of, and findings from, the joint needs assessment across Cwm Taf. This also informs the Statement of Well-being and development of the Council's well-being objectives.

The tables in the sections below outline the service areas from across MTCBC and our partners that collaborate to deliver the well-being objectives and corporate priorities. The detail below is summarised in our [‘Corporate Plan Summary’](#) and [‘Shared Vision’](#) documents. To focus on our transformation, we have also included our improvement priorities this year.

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council's well-being themes and objectives are detailed below.



Best Start to Life



Portfolio Member
Councillor Lisa Mytton

Objective	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
Primary Outcome	Improve the educational outcomes for all children and young people
Lead Officer	Chief Officer - Learning
Improvement Focus	Improving our Education Standards

Well-being of our children and young people is of paramount importance, even more so as we move out of the coronavirus pandemic. When children and young people have better health and well-being they are more likely to be ready to learn and ultimately achieve better academic standards. Raising standards of attainment is a key priority for the Council but this has to be set in the context of post pandemic recovery and partnership working. From the earliest possible opportunity, we recognise the need to work with families to ensure that our children have the best support to be equipped with the skills they need to reach their goals and their academic potential.

Below are examples of how departments of MTCBC contribute to this well-being objective.

Raising Standards	Adult Community Learning	Employability programmes
School Improvement	Youth Services	Parks department
Additional Learning Needs	Inclusion and Well-being	Children Looked After team
Early Years	School Planning and Support Resources	Sports Development, Heritage and Culture team
Safeguarding team	NEETs team	Parenting team
Waste Department	Estates Department	MIA/ Team Around the Family
Licensing/ school transport	HR	Rights of Way/ Active Travel
Equalities	Road Safety and Traffic Management	Welsh Language
English as an Additional Language (EAL)	Music Department	ICT/ Schools ICT

There are other partners that contribute to delivering this well-being objective, these are listed below.

	School Governors	Central South Consortium
		Merthyr Tydfil Borough Wide Youth Forum (MTBWYF)
Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board	Merthyr Tydfil College	Welsh Government
Fire and Rescue Service	Educational consultants	Outdoor pursuit (e.g. Rock U.K.)
Leisure Trust (including library services)	Universities	Duke of Edinburgh
Examining bodies (WJEC)		

This well-being objective offers an holistic and sustainable approach to meeting the well-being needs of children and young people. This approach is important for all children, even more so due to the coronavirus pandemic and will particularly benefit children who face disadvantage or have a high risk of poor outcomes later in life.

Education is one of the clearest predictors of life outcomes, such as employment, income and social status, and is a predictor of attitudes and well-being. The objective integrates the complete educational journey, from the early years through to compulsory schooling, and post-16 and seeks to provide children and young people with the skills and attributes to help them improve their own lives.

The key outcomes that Best Start to Life wants to achieve 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 emotional well-being.

We will deliver these outcomes through our key strategy Raising Aspirations Raising Standards (RARS) and by focusing on the following overarching themes and goals:

Theme 1: Partnership & Collaboration	Goal 3: Supporting Learners' Health and Well-being
Theme 2: Post Pandemic Recovery	Goal 4: Improving Achievement and Progression
Goal 1: Performance Management & Systems Governance	Goal 5: Developing the Environment for Learning
Goal 2: Developing the Education Workforce	



How will we know if things are getting better?

Each objective uses a consistent performance management framework which is captured on a resource known as SOAP – Strategy On A Page. This document identifies the well-being objective, outcomes and key performance indicators (KPIs) and forms the basis of self-evaluation and the departments Business Improvement Plans. It is important to note that for the academic years 2019/20 and 2020/21 Welsh Government will **not** publish a range of performance measures across services, including all attainment measures (Flying Start, Schools, Youth Services) and attendance figures. This affects the current KPIs as identified on the SOAP.

We will know things are better when all children and young people:

- Have high aspirations and expectations for themselves;
- Begin statutory education having experienced a good start to learning both at home and in pre-school education where appropriate;
- Are provided with education experiences that excite them and inspire them to learn and achieve;
- Are educated in settings that are relevant and appropriate to meeting the needs of a 21st century curriculum;
- Leave primary schools' literate, numerate and digitally competent, ready to continue their education confidently and successfully;
- Leave statutory schooling with the necessary attributes and life skills to enable them to make a successful transition to employment, education or training;
- Feel safe and have strong emotional well-being;
- Have a voice in plans that impact on their own future health and well-being and plans for future developments of their local environment; and
- Have the skills to adapt to challenges and are able to work as independent and interdependent citizens.

How does the 'Best Start to Life' theme support the achievement of wider priorities?

Focus on the Future



Working Life

- Supporting children and young people to attain higher skills supports a more skilled labour market
- Schools introduce children and young people to the concept of place, and help broaden their understanding of their heritage and culture



Environmental Well-being

- Awareness raising in relation to the need to ensure they recycle materials

PSB Well being Plan

Community Resilience and Well-being

- Schools provide a learning environment and provide support around skills development to enable children and young people to be more self-reliant/resilient

Lifestyles, Health and Vulnerability

- Schools provide opportunities for young people to learn about different types of sports and activities, supporting improved health and lifestyles choices

- Provision and upkeep of green spaces which can be used by children, young people and their families free of charge
- Re:fit energy efficiency scheme reducing carbon emissions in schools and improving financial sustainability of energy use
- Provision of sustainable, low carbon and energy efficient school buildings with low maintenance costs through the 21st Century Schools Programme



Living Well

- Better qualified young people have a wider choice of options regarding careers and employment: well-paid work can lead to an improvement in their chances to live independently and have positive mental well-being
- Best Start practitioners work closely with the Sports Development Team to ensure equality of access to activities, supporting improved physical and mental well-being

- Schools provide opportunities for children, young people, and their families to be more physically active through a range of partnerships locally and regionally

Economy and Infrastructure

- The Best Start scheme aims to raise aspirations among young people; and make them aware of career options and the path they need to take to improve their chances to achieve their goals
- The 21st Century Schools capital investment programme delivers innovative new build and refurbished schools supporting the economy through local procurement, community benefits and provision of community assets

Tackling Loneliness and Isolation

- Schools and youth clubs offer opportunities for children and young people to make and maintain connections outside the school environment



Working Life



Portfolio Member
Councillor Geraint Thomas

Objective	People feel supported to develop the skills required to meet the needs of businesses, with a developing; safe infrastructure which makes Merthyr Tydfil an attractive destination
Primary Outcome	Developing the environment and infrastructure for businesses to flourish
Lead Officer	Deputy Chief Executive
Improvement Focus	Economic Recovery

As a Council we are focused on supporting our residents, businesses and the economy. We will continue to work together to deliver our 3 key outcomes of: ‘Merthyr Tydfil realises its full economic potential, with a skilled workforce and better employment opportunities’; ‘People value and enjoy the built and natural environment, protecting and enhancing our cultural assets for current and future generations’; ‘We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others’.

Below are examples of how departments of MTCBC contribute to this well-being objective.

Employability and Skills programme teams	Business Support and Inward Investment teams	Sports Development; Heritage and Culture team
Strategic Regeneration	Strategic Infrastructure	Destination Management team
European and External Funding team	Environmental Health	Trading Standards team
Licensing team	Community Safety	Trading Standards
Revenues and Benefits team	Housing, Homelessness & Housing Support Grants	Planning department
Highways team	Engineering team	Social Services
Estates department	Countryside, Parks and Biodiversity teams	Education department
Early Years department	Adult Community Learning	Performance & Scrutiny Teams
Finance & Accounting Team	Human Resources	ICT department
Legal department	Corporate Communications team	Local school representatives

There are other partners that contribute to delivering this well-being objective, these are listed below.

Department of Work and Pensions	South Wales Police	Cardiff and Region City Deal
Heritage Lottery Fund	Valleys Taskforce	Merthyr Tydfil Enterprise Centre (MTEC)
Rent Smart Wales	Tydfil Training Consortium	Town Centre Partnership
British Gas	Taf Bargoed Regeneration Partnership	Merthyr Valley Homes
Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association	Wales & West Housing Association	Bevan Foundation
Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board	Ffos y Fran	UK Border Force
Welsh Food Microbiological Forum	Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Trust	Welsh Government
Canolfan Soar	Welsh Food Law Enforcement Liaison Committee	National Probation Services
Penydarren Boys & Girls Club	BAWSO	Safer Merthyr Tydfil
Community Occupational Health Teams	Llamau	Food Standards Agency
Careers Wales	Citizens Advice Bureau	The Roost, Troedyrhiw
Business Wales	Town Centre Partnership	Alzheimer's Society
Welsh Heads of Trading Standards (WHoTS)	Cwm Taf Morgannwg MIND	The Urbanists
Adref	Design Council for Wales	CADW
Ian Ritchie Architects	The MEANS	

This well-being objective offers a holistic and collaborative approach to reducing social disadvantage by supporting the continued development of the local economy; sustaining and improving communities' awareness of opportunities open to them whilst offering advice and support on how to access these.

Evidence suggests personal well-being and material well-being are not separate: they are linked, with personal freedoms and fulfilment very much reflecting people's resources. By developing a skilled and well-educated population in an economy, both wealth and employment opportunities are created, allowing people to take advantage of these by being supported to secure fair work. The provision of enabling services such as improved, connected public transport will help this to be achieved.

The Council's Protection and Safety Services continue to play a major role in keeping communities safe during the ongoing pandemic. Work will continue to help make sure that consumers are protected from unfair trading and that businesses they access continue to be safe and legitimate. Activities such as the provision of advice and support will continue to be local businesses; licensed premises and other organisations offering services to residents over the coming 12 months; helping them to continue trading safely, sustaining their businesses.

The key outcomes Working Life wants to achieve are:

- Merthyr Tydfil realises its full economic potential, with a skilled workforce and better employment opportunities;
- People value and enjoy the built and natural environment, protecting and enhancing our cultural assets for current and future generations; and

- We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.

We will deliver these outcomes through activities in response to our key strategy, the Economic Growth Strategy, and by addressing our key priorities for improvement:

Improve access and uptake of learning leading to an increase in the number of residents with qualifications	Support suitable tourism, leisure and recreational developments making best use of our natural environment and heritage/cultural assets
Increase the number of local people gaining access to; securing and sustaining employment, improving the availability of labour supply to the local market	Increase opportunities for sustainable and renewable housing, and renewable energy developments
Increase the proportion of new and surviving businesses including social enterprises	Create sustainable communities with a strong sense of place which have increased economic potential
	Improve public transport with sustainable modes of transportation



How will we know if things are getting better?

We will know things are better when:

- Evidence through monitoring key performance indicators shows improvement;
- People in Merthyr Tydfil secure the skills to meet employers changing needs;
- Our developing environment and infrastructure changes to meet identified need and will encourage inward investment and support business survival rates;
- Our heritage and cultural assets will continue to be valued, protected, promoted and drive new economic activity;
- People living, working and visiting Merthyr Tydfil will feel safe and included; and
- Those most disadvantaged in the housing market will feel connected and supported.

How does the 'Working Life' theme support the achievement of wider priorities?

Focus on the Future



Best Start to Life

- Ensure the skills learned at school are further developed, maximising the young person's chance of securing employment
- Our Business, Education and Training Partnership has been set up and will grow connections between the business sector and Merthyr Tydfil's education providers



Environmental Well-being

- Promote opportunities to businesses and inward investors around the use of sustainable resources, including the use of renewable energy
- We are refocusing our plans regarding our Commercial Programme to better understand how we can effectively and efficiently progress



Living Well

- Provide targeted work/learning pathways to children looked after in partnership with key partners/stakeholders
- Protection and Safety Services safeguard community members in their day-to-day lives
- Provide housing support to parents and carers securing a more safe and secure environment for families, supporting all people to remain living independently in their own homes
- We are further strengthening our collaboration to better deliver our outcomes e.g. building employment pathways

PSB Well being Plan

Community Resilience and Well-being

- Offer accessible services so that community members can receive targeted support through community hubs
- Provide advice, guidance and support around issues that impact on families e.g. housing, school transport etc.

Lifestyles, Health and Vulnerability

- Provide advice, guidance and practical support to communities through our Protection and Safety Services

Economy and Infrastructure

- Lead on Cwm Taf PSB's Economy and infrastructure theme. Through the provision of its' services, the Working Life theme fully supports this area of the PSB's Plan

Tackling Loneliness and Isolation

- The Community Safety team will offer support around community cohesion, crime and fear of crime
- The Licensing and Trading Standards team help safeguard community members in their day-to-day lives



Living Well



Portfolio Member
Councillor Chris Davies

Objective	People are empowered to live independently within their communities where they are safe and enjoy good physical and mental health.
Primary Outcome	People live independently within their communities; Children and adults are safeguarded from harm and feel safe; Children and young people live safely with their family or close to home and have transitioned well into adulthood.
Lead Officer	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services, alongside the Chief Officer for Social Services, Corporate Management Team colleagues, the Council's Cabinet and wider Council Members.
Improvement Focus	Early Intervention and Prevention work, as outlined in the detail within this plan. There is positive internal work being undertaken cross directorate, improved relationships with the third sector and good partnership working across the region. Partnership working with neighbouring authorities, Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board and Third Sector has been essential and I feel relationships are stronger than ever as a result. We will continue to work with partners to ensure that we are providing services to our most vulnerable.

As Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services, I, alongside the Chief Officer for Social Services, Corporate Management Team colleagues, the Council's Cabinet and wider Council Members, play a key role in ensuring the successful delivery of the Council's well-being objectives. This includes responsibility for the 'Living Well' objective, which seeks to ensure 'people are empowered to live independently within their communities, where they are safe and enjoy good physical and mental health'.

We will continue to work on our strategies and plans, focusing on three main priority outcomes: 'People live independently within their communities'; 'Children and adults are safeguarded from harm and feel safe'; 'Children and young people live safely with their family or close to home and have transitioned well into adulthood'.

There is a key focus across both Adults and Children Services on Early Intervention and Prevention work, as outlined in the detail within this plan. There is positive internal work being undertaken cross directorate, improved relationships with the third sector and good partnership working across the region. Partnership working with neighbouring authorities, Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board and Third Sector has been essential and I feel relationships are stronger than ever as a result. We will continue to work with partners to ensure that we are providing services to our most vulnerable.

Below are examples of how departments of MTCBC contribute to this well-being objective.

Sustainable Success and Transition	Early Intervention and Prevention	Initial Response and Enablement
Safeguarding Team	Supporting Change Team	Older People and Disability
Early Help Hub	Residential Care	Commissioning Services
Community Mental Health	Children Looked After	Enhanced Care Services

Education Department	Employability and Skills	
Licensing Department	Youth Services	Housing and Supporting People
Children with Disabilities Team	Sports Development, Heritage and Culture team	Team Around the Family
Legal Department	Family Support Team	Revenues Department

There are other partners that contribute to delivering this well-being objective, these are listed below.

	Adref	Gofal
		The College, Merthyr Tydfil
Regional Safeguarding Board	Bridgend County Borough Council	Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT)
Regional Partnership Board (RPB)	Regional Adoption Collaboration	Vale of Glamorgan Council
Llamau	Regional Front Door for Fostering	National Fostering Framework
Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service and Management Board	South Wales Police (SWP)	Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board
National Probation Services	Cwm Taf and Bridgend Emergency Duty Team	4Cs Commissioning Framework
Citizens Advice Merthyr Tydfil	Transformation Steering Group	Social Care Workforce Development
VAMT		Safer Merthyr Tydfil

The Living Well objective is about building the capacity of individuals, families and communities to secure the best outcomes for themselves. It is about building resilience and providing the right level of support before problems materialise or escalate. This will help to reduce the need to be involved in a crisis and enable more preventative work.

Working closely with our partners to address the poor life experiences of children early on will help ensure more vulnerable families remain together; increasing the number of children who are able to live safely at home (or close to home) and preventing them from becoming looked after.

Providing vulnerable older people with the right information and support at the right time will enable them to have more control over their lives, help prevent loneliness and isolation, and live safely within their own home. Through services such as 'Initial Response and Reablement' and '@Home Service', older people will be supported to maintain their health and independence at home, avoiding unnecessary hospital admissions. Where hospital admission is essential, individuals are supported to return home in a safe and timely manner.

The outcomes that Living Well wants to achieve are:

- People live safe and independent lives within their communities.
- Children and adults are safeguarded from harm and feel safe.
- Children and young people live safely with their family or close to home and have transitioned well into adulthood.

We will deliver these outcomes by focusing on our priorities for improvement: (taking into account the implications from Covid-19).



Improve early intervention and prevention (adults, children and families).	
Safely reduce the number of children looked after.	Encouraging and supporting people to learn, develop and participate in society.
Enable a greater number of adults to live independently.	Supporting people to safely develop and maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships.
Working with people to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people wish to achieve.	Working with and supporting people to achieve greater economic well-being have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs.
Working with people and partners to protect and promote people's physical and mental health and emotional well-being.	

There are a number of regional plans and strategies that help to deliver this objective, including the Cwm Taf Social Services and Well-being Partnership Board 'Regional Plan 2018-2023' and the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board Annual Plan 2019-2020. Work will be undertaken with key officers and other stakeholders to review and streamline existing plans and strategies. This will help address duplication and identify new opportunities for joint working.

How will we know if things are getting better?

Each objective uses a consistent performance management framework, which is captured on a resource known as a SOAP – strategy on a page. This document identifies the well-being objectives, outcomes and key performance indicators; and forms the basis of self-evaluation.

We will know things are better when:

- We see a safe decrease in the number of children on the Child Protection Register or becoming looked after;
- There is an increase in the number of children who are able to live safely at home;
- Of the children who are looked after, a greater number have a stable school life;
- There is a reduction in the number of older people having to stay in hospital longer than necessary due to social care reasons;
- There is an increase in the number of adults who are able to live independently following a period of Reablement;
- Of those that have been subject to domestic violence, more people have reported an improvement in their quality of life;
- An increase in the number of families accessing early help;
- An increase in the number of people who are supported to remain at home through Stay Well @ Home Phase 2; and
- We will promote service users having a voice by increasing our offers of advocacy.

How does the 'Living Well' theme support the achievement of wider priorities?

Focus on the Future



Best Start to Life

- Our newly developed fostering programme aims to increase our supply of Merthyr Tydfil foster carers.
- We are working with children, young people and their families to ensure safeguarding and reduce risks of harm to children's welfare.
- We are working together with education to promote Early Help Hub and Prevention.



Working Life

- Through a joint project, we are developing a pathway to work process for care-experienced young people that will maximise their working potential and improve well-being as young adults.
- Social Care creates employment within the area.



Environmental Well-being

- Supporting children looked after to become more active citizens and more socially responsible.
- Tackle fuel poverty by promoting warm homes programmes.
- We are working with Care & Repair through the Healthy Home Project.
- Consideration is given to environmental features in any new builds.

PSB Well being Plan

Community Resilience and Well-being

- We will ensure looked after young people and care leavers achieve a stable and successful transition into adulthood.
- The Early Help Hub is a multi-agency preventative hub that works in collaboration with key partners across the Council, public services and third sector to increase resilience in the vulnerable population.

Lifestyles, Health and Vulnerability

- Many foster carers and providers make good use of the outdoors in their work with young people to build resilience and improve health and well-being.
- We are working with Health colleagues to develop community well-being teams.
- We provide support services (including therapy) to improve the emotional health of looked after young people.

Economy and Infrastructure

- Work with older people to develop a range of homes in dementia friendly communities.
- Tackle fuel poverty by promoting warm homes programmes.

Tackling Loneliness and Isolation

- Work with Housing and RSLs to increase the supply of supported accommodation.
- Work with Corporate Parenting Board and partners to reduce the isolation, impact and stigma of being looked after or a care leaver.



Environmental Well-being



Portfolio Member
Councillor David Hughes

Objective	Communities protect, enhance and promote our environment and countryside
Primary Outcome	Maximise efficient use of materials and resources by means of the waste hierarchy
Lead Officer	Chief Officer – Neighbourhood Services
Improvement Focus	Environmental Well-being

The Environmental Well-being objective provides a holistic and sustainable approach to meeting the environmental well-being needs of Merthyr Tydfil. Our priority is to work towards the all-Wales target of becoming a zero waste nation by 2050 and playing our role in the Welsh public sector becoming carbon neutral by 2030. Our actions, and how we use the environment, will be critical to a sustainable future for Merthyr Tydfil and the benefits of improving our environment will be felt by all. By increasing our resilience to climate change risks, we will reduce our exposure to flood damage caused to buildings, infrastructure and services, whilst enhancing green spaces.

Below are examples of how departments of MTBCB contribute to this well-being objective.

Waste Services	Biodiversity	Property Services
Policy and Implementation	Development Controls (including conservation areas)	Heritage and Cultural Assets
European and External Funding	Landscape Services	Open Spaces
Street Cleansing	Highways and Engineering	Civic Amenity Sites
Building Control	Strategic Regeneration	Strategic Infrastructure
Fly-tipping	Environmental Health	Education Department
Furniture Re-use Centre	Parks & Bereavement	Community Regeneration
Community Safety	Housing and Supporting People	Business Support and Inward Investment
Heritage, Tourism and Culture		

There are other partners that contribute to delivering this well-being objective, these are listed below.

WRAP Cymru	Local Authority Building Control (LABC)	Keep Wales Tidy (KWT)
Caru Cymru	Taff Bargoed Friends	Rhondda Cynon Taff (RCT)
County Surveyors Society	Carmarthenshire Council	Fly-tipping Action Wales (FtAW)
South Wales Trunk Road Agent (SWTRA)	Merthyr Valleys Homes (MVH)	South Wales Police (SWP)
Capita	Waste Data Flow (WDF)	County Surveys Society Wales (C.S.S.W.)
Natural Resource Wales (NRW)	Carmarthen County Borough Council (CBC)	Cardiff City Council
Barod	Redstart	Sustainable Drainage Approval Body (SAB)
Planning Officers Society for Wales (POSW).	South East Wales (and wider) Development Management Managers Group	Energy from Waste (EFW)
Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association	Viridor Waste Management LTD	Dwr Cymru
Biogen LTD	Newport City Council	South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (BGCBC)	South East Wales Flood Risk Management Group	(Scoops) Cafe at Park Taff Bargoed
Gwent Police	Greenspace Wales	Welsh Water
Cyfarthfa Model Railway	Merthyr Angling Society	Aberfan Disaster Charity
Friends of Cyfarthfa Park	Friends of Taff Bargoed Park	Pontsticill Community Group
Vale of Glamorgan	Transport for Wales	

This well-being objective offers a holistic and sustainable approach to meeting the environmental well-being 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 focus of this well-being objective is the work we do with our communities to protect, enhance and promote the environment and countryside. 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 well-being objectives.

The key outcomes the Environmental Well-being wants to achieve are:

- Environmental damage is minimised by preventing pollution;
- To maximise the amount of materials and resources recycled in line with the waste hierarchy;
- Merthyr Tydfil has good quality, biodiverse and connected green infrastructure and open spaces; and
- Decarbonise our buildings by minimising energy waste and using renewable and low carbon technologies where possible.

We will deliver these outcomes thorough the Waste Management Plan, Carbon Management Plan (CMP) and Nature Recovery Plan and by focussing on addressing our key priorities for improvement:

Increase the amount of all recycling in the County Borough in order to meet and exceed the recycling targets set by Welsh	Reduce the levels of fly-tipping
	Increase the number of Priority Open Spaces (out of 23 Priority
Improving the standard of cleanliness on our highways	Reduce Carbon Emissions in buildings and fleet



Other important strategic drivers that will help us deliver on this objective include the Local Development Plan, Nature Recovery Plan, Carbon Management Plan and the Corporate Asset Management Plan.

How will we know if things are getting better?

Each objective uses a consistent performance management framework which is captured on a resource known as a Strategy on a Page (SOAP). This document identifies the well-being objectives, outcomes and key performance indicators, which forms the basis of self-evaluation. Work will also be undertaken to review and develop robust Business Improvement Plans.

We will know things are better when:

- The air quality on Twynyrodyn Road improves;
- The local authority's CO₂ emissions reduce by 3% from its buildings (per annum);
- The time taken to clear reported fly-tipping incidents on Council land improves;
- The cleanliness of our highways improves;
- Our recovery rates improve; and
- There is an increase of Priority Open Spaces (out of 23 Priority Open Spaces) that meet or exceed the quality standard: Healthy, Safe and Secure.

How does the 'Environmental Well-being' theme support the achievement of wider priorities?

Focus on the Future



Best Start to Life

- Support schools in any awareness raising they undertaken in relation to the need to ensure they recycle materials.
- Provision and upkeep of green spaces which can be used by children, young people and their families free of charge.



Working Life

- Providing waste management; recycling and street cleansing services, strengthening the Town's commitment to being a place to be proud of and ensuring the environment is safe, clean and free from risk.



Living Well

- Provision and upkeep of green spaces which can be used by children, young people and their families free of charge.
- Work closely with the Community Regeneration teams to create spaces for low cost social and cultural events.
- During the pandemic to use a clean green open space to walk through and use to assist with mental health.

PSB Well being Plan

Community Resilience and Well-being

- Fulfil the Council's statutory duty of maintaining the streetlights within the County Borough, helping create a safer environment for local communities.
- Ensure the safety and protection of communities by ensuring that new and altered buildings and heritage building comply with current Building Regulations.

Lifestyles, Health and Vulnerability

- Provision and upkeep of green spaces which can be used by children, young people and their families free of charge.
- Work closely with the Community Regeneration teams to provide better pedestrian routes and spaces and encouraging active travel.

Economy and Infrastructure

- Ensuring a safe, clean infrastructure and making Merthyr Tydfil an attractive destination for those who live, work and visit.
- Ensure all new housing developments include an allocated number of affordable units to meet identified demand.





Tackling Loneliness and Isolation

- Work closely with the Community Regeneration teams to create spaces for low cost social and cultural events.

2.5 Contributing to the National Goals

The 7 national well-being goals (you can find out more information on the Act and Well-being Goals in this [Guide](#)) show the kind of Wales we want. Together they provide a shared vision for the public bodies in Wales to work towards. The chart below provides a brief summary of where our Well-being Objectives primarily align to the 7 national well-being goals.

When developing this Plan, the initial planned response to the national well-being goals was mapped out. We are over the half-way point of delivery in relation to this Plan and continue to ensure it is resourced effectively. We have reviewed our current contribution to the well-being goals to identify whether, by doing different things and doing things differently, we are now able to show a larger contribution to the 7 national well-being goals.

Well-being Objective	Contributions to Well-being Goals at 2017							Contributions to Well-being Goals at 2020							Contributions to Well-being Goals at 2021						
 Best Start to Life	Yellow	White	Red	Red	White	White	Blue	Yellow	Orange	Red	Red	White	Blue	Blue	Yellow	Orange	Red	Red	Dark Blue	Blue	Blue
 Working Life	Yellow	Orange	White	Red	Dark Blue	Blue	Blue	Yellow	Orange	Red	Red	Dark Blue	Blue	Blue	Yellow	Orange	Red	Red	Dark Blue	Blue	Blue
 Environmental Well-being	Yellow	Orange	White	White	Dark Blue	Blue	Blue	Yellow	Orange	Red	Red	Dark Blue	Blue	Blue	Yellow	Orange	Red	Red	Dark Blue	Blue	Blue
 Living Well	White	White	Red	Red	Dark Blue	White	Blue	White	Orange	Red	Red	Dark Blue	White	Blue	Yellow	Orange	Red	Red	Dark Blue	White	Blue

Through reflection and evaluation, we have identified many examples of how our contributions have developed as a consequence of us working in different ways. Our Annual Performance Report offers examples of how we have done this. In responding to the coronavirus pandemic, we have increased our contribution to a Wales of cohesive communities through the work done enabling access to free-school meals and increasing digital inclusion for our learners. Regarding the Living Well objective, we have increased how we contribute to a prosperous Wales by working together to better use our limited resources.

Section 3 – Delivering the Plan

3.1 Recover → Transform → Improve – Our Plan 2020 to 2025

Following setting a balanced budget for 2019/2020, we took a proactive step and asked Welsh Government (WG) to support us in these challenging times. The Minister for Housing and Local Government appointed an Improvement and Assurance Board to carry out a rapid assessment exercise. To respond to the outcomes of this assessment, we developed a Recovery, Transformation and Improvement (RTI) Plan.



The development of the RTI Plan was done in 2020, during the Coronavirus Pandemic. As with most organisations, we have firstly had to respond to the needs of our residents during the pandemic. Following this, we will transition to recovery. This is reflected in the RTI Plan.



The RTI Plan is a live document that enables us to focus on sustainability when recovering from the pandemic, transforming the way we work and improving delivery of outcomes for our residents. This plan will provide a 5-year improvement path for MTCBC.

Our RTI Plan identifies **3 areas we need to address urgently** to be able to better deliver our well-being objectives, meaning better outcomes for our residents.

These are our **3 priorities for improvement:**



Improving our
Education
Standards



Increasing our
Resilience in
Social Care



Economic
Recovery

These will address our
priority outcomes:

Improve the educational
outcomes for all children
and young people

Ensure people are able to live
independently and safely within
their communities

Developing the environment
and infrastructure for
businesses to flourish

Working with our Improvement and Assurance Board, we have considered the short, medium and long term. We have prioritised our improvement, allowing us to use our limited resources to best deliver the needs of our residents. With the support of WG, Elected Members, our Staff and Partners we will create a modern and agile Council that is focused on providing quality services to the people of Merthyr Tydfil.



To better deliver our outcomes we must change the way we work. The RTI Plan is supported by 4 council-wide transformation work programmes. These help us consider our **digital opportunities**, become more **commercially aware**, have the right resources (a **Healthy Organisation**) and **good governance** (the way we work).



Our RTI Plan also focuses on carbon reduction and meeting our recycling targets in **supporting Environmental Well-being**.

To achieve our shared vision, we must deliver our services differently - we need to look at how we work better together, with more joined up thinking, increased partnership and embrace new technology and innovation. This approach has been adopted to help us to respond to the Coronavirus Pandemic.

These principles and priorities form the basis of the RTI Plan and were supported by all Elected Members at a workshop in September 2020. The principles align with our operating model and the sustainable development principle.

We will continue to engage with Elected Members as we further refine our RTI Plan. Our RTI Plan can be broken down into eight work programmes as can be seen in [Appendix 1](#).

As we refine the RTI Plan, we will also focus on how best to engage, involve and communicate with our partners and communities.

We have identified external funding that we can use to deliver the plan, this makes good economic sense, but also shows how our plan fits with national strategies in delivering the [7 national goals](#).

This, together with feedback from previous engagement workshops with Elected Members (e.g. budget setting workshops), has led us to developing a mission statement for the RTI Plan.



Our Mission Statement

We will be innovative and adaptable to meet the needs of the communities we serve by:

Engaging with all our stakeholders;

Tackling issues through addressing root causes; and

Adopting new ways of working that lead to better outcomes

3.2 Our Ways of Working

Well-being of Future Generation Act

The sustainable development principle (5 ways of working) and national goals, set out in sections 1 and 2 above, underpin this plan and our RTI Plan.

Our key governance and decision-making documents and procedures have been previously redesigned to allow us to work within the Act. Our integrated impact assessment means we must assess how our decisions will contribute to the 7 national goals but ensure we are working to the 5 ways of working. Both our [core values](#) and [operating model](#) align with the Act, meaning we can work towards delivering our well-being objectives, contributing to the 7 national well-being goals and working to the sustainable development principle.

There are 5 ways of working that public bodies must adopt to 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.

**Long term**

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

We are using the 5 Ways of Working by:

Updating our impact assessments in line with the new socio-economic duty allowing us to make better informed decisions
We have a recovery, transformation and improvement plan with a mission statement that makes us consider the long-term

**Prevention**

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

We are using the 5 Ways of Working by:

Use the Social Services and Well-being Act in our work
Tackling poverty through programmes that will help us to consider prevention, including unintended consequences of wider decisions
Including prevention in our response to the coronavirus pandemic, e.g. mass testing

**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.

We are using the 5 Ways of Working by:

Focusing on integrating our plans, including our recovery, transformation and improvement plan so that we have the greatest contribution to our well-being objectives and national goals
Prioritising our outcomes and implementing our Governance Improvement programme to have the biggest positive impact on our well-being objectives and support our partners (e.g. the Team Merthyr approach)

**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.

We are using the 5 Ways of Working by:

Building on work we have done with partners throughout the pandemic
Taking a Team Merthyr approach with our partners to better use resources and have a greater impact on delivering our well-being objectives and contributing to the national goals
Integrating our PSB objectives into this plan

**Involvement**

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

We are using the 5 Ways of Working by:

Engaging with, and involving, our residents, partners and businesses so that they can help us shape our journey to give better outcomes, some examples include our RARS strategy, Team Merthyr approach and the Business, Education and Training Partnership
Strengthening our scrutiny function as part our recovery, transformation and improvement plan

Our Core Values

We have 7 core values. These were developed with our staff as part of a programme of staff involvement and engagement regarding how we want to work. These values are embedded in our 'golden thread' (a link from personal objectives to team goals to our well-being objectives and vision) where all members of staff test how they are working to our values during in their annual and mid-year reviews (Focus on Performance process).

Our Operating Model

Our Council approved operating model has been designed to set out how we will deliver our services going forward. It supports us to transform and improve how we deliver services. We have updated our operating model to support the RTI Plan. It sets out the framework for how we work. This also aligns with our areas to support the RTI Plan.



Digital Transformation



Healthy Organisation



Commercial Programme



Governance Improvement

Our Core Values



The Council has adopted a set of **core values** and associated **behaviours**, which are:

Honesty & Openness

Trust & Respect

Accountability

Learning

Aspiration







Team Working



Communication



Our operating model (built on the 5 ways of working) includes how we should **economically, efficiently and effectively** work. We have set out the 8 operating principles and updated operating expectations below.

We will continue to review our operating model to ensure it is fit for purpose and we will continue to put our customers and residents first.

Operating Principles		Operating Expectations
	Listening and engaging with our stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our service offer will be informed by the need of our customers • We will make clear the customer contact options for different customer groups
	Clear communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a clear communication strategy • We regularly engage with stakeholders • We manage actively our relationships, reputation and brand • We will focus on leadership
	Embracing digital technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have an integrated, single record for each customer • We will rationalise our systems • We promote self-service and online access • We will consider the use of digital technology to improve access to and delivery of services • We will use the learning from the pandemic to work in an agile way reducing our carbon footprint
	Focusing on the key priorities and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are a resilient and adaptable organisation • Core business is always focussed on realising our Vision • Strategic plans will be set as part of a coordinated approach to reaching our key priorities • Targets are linked to achieving our key outcomes • We will be a healthy organisation investing in staff (e.g. apprenticeships) and addressing our capacity issues
	Consistent and timely implementation of the strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies are up to date and fit for purpose • Delivery plans are clear, understood and owned • We will improve our governance • We use robust project management which ensures timely delivery within budget • We use standardised ways of working • We develop our skills, knowledge and understanding in order to achieve our key priorities • Supporting the business functions will be centralised
	Everyone is accountable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are empowered and accountable for making the right decisions, about the right things at the right time • We fulfil our roles and responsibilities in line with our 'Focus on Your Performance' process • We will recognise achievement and poor performance • We will monitor, challenge and support performance in order to deliver our key priorities • Data will inform decision making • Performance management will be a focus for us all

 Aligning the budget to the key priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will define full service costs • We will understand and manage service demand • We will make financial decisions which are intelligence led (use our data) • We review and identify the best way to provide each service • We will consider our commercial opportunities
 Promoting independence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We empower individuals and communities • We define clearly our service provision and promote and signpost alternative provision working with partners • Issues are resolved at the first point of contact • We agree the level of risk we are prepared to take

Leadership and Governance – Having good leadership and governance is essential to delivering this plan. With Officers and Elected Members continuing to work together, and having the correct systems and processes in place, we will be in a strong position to deliver this plan, continuously improve and recover from the pandemic while transforming the organisation. We can't do it alone, we will need to continue to work with our partners and increase partnership working, building on our learning we gained during the Coronavirus Pandemic.

We will:

- Develop our staff skills enabling them to work in new ways
- Invest in apprenticeship and graduate schemes to support our succession planning, capacity and resilience
- Continue our journey in becoming a learning organisation and develop our own talent
- Continue to monitor our capacity and address any issues
- Be an employer people want to work for (employer of choice)
- Place greater emphasis on transformation and performance through the approved portfolio member for 'Transformation and Commerciality'
- Review our staffing structures to enhance our leadership, supporting our RTI and Focus on the Future plans
- Build on our partnership working arrangements to better deliver outcomes for the residents of Merthyr Tydfil
- Improve our governance to become more economic, efficient and effective

Communication and Engagement – By involving and engaging our staff and residents, we will be better placed to efficiently and effectively deliver the services our communities need.

We will:

- Engage with our residents in a timely and meaningful manner by using various channels
- Use our operating model and core values to be open and transparent in delivering our services
- Apply the Welsh language standards in our communication and engagement
- Keep our Community Council well informed in line with our Charter
- Ensure we have effective communications with all our staff, including using our staff forum

3.3 Our Governance and Supporting the Plan



Portfolio Member
Councillor Andrew Barry

Quote from the Portfolio Member

Service Areas

Strategic Focus

"Good governance and continuously improving the way we work is a primary focus of

Good governance and continuous improvement is a primary focus of MTCBC. Through our improvement we will be able to sustainably and equitably deliver our well-being objectives, meaning better outcomes for our residents. We can build on the work done during the Coronavirus Pandemic. For example, the way our teams are working together to administer Welsh Government business grants across the County Borough is remarkable. This shows how we can collaborate, integrate our plans, involve others, and be proactive; thinking of the long-term benefits in providing better outcomes.

To be able to sustainably support our recovery, transformation and improvement to better deliver this Focus on the Future plan, we must make sure we prepare well, using our resources economically, effectively and efficiently. As we look to place further emphasis on our priorities for improvement and cross-cutting themes in this plan, such as tackling poverty, we must modernise the way we work to meet the needs of our residents.

To be able to deliver our well-being objectives we need to efficiently and effectively support our plans.

We have key legislation such as the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, the Social Services and Well-being Act, Welsh language standards, socio-economic duty (new) and Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act (new), as well as several others, to support us.

Our focus going forward is to adapt in line with changes to legislation and strengthen our governance and performance. We will use our learning from responding to the Coronavirus Pandemic to help.

Working with partners, using new ways of working and better using our data (including compliments and complaints) will feature heavily in how we approach this. This draft diagram of our governance shows (in yellow) the areas we are developing further in line with our improvement journey and changes to legislation.

We will continue to enhance our existing governance frameworks and systems. Our staffing and management structures will be tested if they are fit for purpose against how we need to work going forward. We have already strengthened how we deliver our RTI Plan and improvement by the appointment of a Cabinet Member for Transformation and Commercialisation.

We will continue to work with our Elected Members and Scrutiny Members as we refine the RTI Plan and setting our Medium-Term Financial Plan. As a Council we will continue to address our performance, especially in priority areas, reduce our corporate risks whilst managing our resources effectively: maintaining the status quo is not an option.



Corporate Planning

Corporate planning is key to how the Council operates in delivering our well-being objectives to meet our vision.

As outlined above we have 4 well-being objectives, each with a set of outcomes (one being a primary or priority outcome). To capture this, along with how we measure our success (using key performance indicators and case studies), we have a strategy-on-a-page (SOAP) for each objective. This provides focus and help accountability and monitoring our achievements. To deliver our SOAPS we have departmental business improvement plans and other key documents such as resource plans, financial plans and risk registers. This links with individual staff plans, often referred to as the 'golden thread'.

Our corporate planning is done by considering key pieces of information and data. This includes the outcomes of our self-evaluation, annual governance statement and annual performance report. In doing this we consider qualitative and quantitative sources. To provide a full picture we also consider our corporate risks (captured on our approved corporate risk register), our staffing, assets, how we procure and our finances (how we can finance the plan).

All this is done in line with our Welsh language plan, to ensure that we deliver our services against the Welsh language standards, especially ensuring the Welsh language is not treated less favourably. This helps us support a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language.

This year we are including our Recovery, Transformation and Improvement (RTI) Plan. This sets out key areas where we need to strengthen to better deliver our objectives to produce better outcomes for our residents.

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 provides us with an opportunity to further strengthen our self-assessment or self-evaluation. Coupled with this, the new socio-economic duty comes into place on the 31st March 2021, enabling us to better assess impacts on socio-economic disadvantage, supporting our cross-cutting theme of tackling poverty.

We will ...	Success will look like ...
Build our RTI Plan into our Corporate Plan	A joined-up plan that is understood by all stakeholders. Our resources can be focused on our recovery from the Coronavirus Pandemic and transformation to improvement.
Strengthen our governance and increase the emphasis on performance	Support for our plans. Scrutiny and challenge will improve accountability. A renewed focus on performance. Officers and Elected Members will continue to work together to achieve better outcomes.
Continue to deliver our well-being objectives	Improved outcomes for the residents of Merthyr Tydfil. This will be achieved through considering the economic, effectiveness and efficiency of delivering services.
Implement the Local Government and Elections Act and Socio-economic duty	We will use the opportunities in the new Act and duties to further improve our performance management and continuous improvement.

Financial Planning

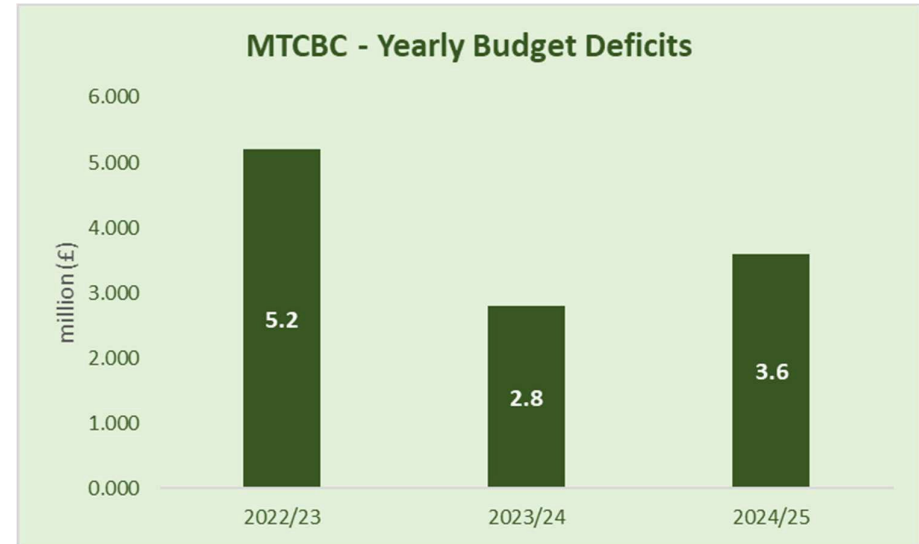
The Council's Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) outlines the budget allocation for the current year and projects future budget requirements. The Council continues to face significant budgetary challenges. The framework for planning and managing its resources over the last 5 financial years has helped us face these significant challenges. The total required service efficiencies for the 4-year period 2021/22 to 2024/25 is projected to lie between £11.6 million and £13.7 million. The graph opposite shows the scale of projected budget deficits over the next three years.

To achieve this scale of change, there has been a requirement to radically refocus and reconfigure what we do, and this process has resulted in the formulation of the Council's Recovery, Transformation and Improvement (RTI) Plan.

To be able to deliver our Recovery Plan and the improvement we need, it is critical to align our finances accordingly. The principles we will adopt will be:

- Explore and utilise external funding to maximise the delivery of our outcomes (working in partnership where possible);
- Reshape our MTFP in line with our priorities and outcomes;
- Adopt new operating models building on investment made during the Coronavirus pandemic to reduce our outgoings;
- Build on work already completed (e.g. a corporate capacity exercise); to review operating models to focus on outcomes and exploit savings opportunities; and
- Build on existing policies, changing as required, to be more commercially focused on our approach to service delivery, ensuring value for money.

To align the Council's financial management to the corporate priorities and well-being objectives, we will continue to develop the prioritisation of services ensuring resources are allocated to clearly defined priority services to meet our statutory duties. At the same time, we will ensure that we are delivering effective, efficient and value for money services that our citizens and customers need.



The work to prioritise services will be reviewed on a continuous basis to ensure the Council will be well informed in providing affordable services. This work will be completed in time for the announcement of the annual provisional Local Government Revenue and Capital Settlement.

This will enable the Council to align future Revenue and Capital Settlements to our priorities and objectives in the future publications of our MTFP, these will be available in March of each year.

Our Response to the Financial Challenges Moving Forward

We need to continue to build on the work done to date by remaining customer-focused and financially responsible in everything that we do. Being a 'fit for purpose' Council underpins all our work and enables the delivery of our well-being objectives and wider corporate priorities.

Over the coming months and years, we will focus on the following areas to positively respond to the challenges we face.

We will ...	Success will look like ...
Transforming our services and investing in our staff	
Further strengthening and developing our partnership working	
Continue to secure investment in our communities	
Maximising our local government financial settlements	outcomes for our residents.

Workforce Planning – Healthy Organisation

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

We are a lean organisation, meaning our challenges include ensuring all our resources (including our Staff) are appropriately supported and are focused on meeting our priorities. This year we carried out a capacity exercise and invested £705,000 addressing critical risk areas identified by our regulators and priorities for improvement. We will continue to review this in line with the challenges and changes we face.

We have been able to use staff data to help us add resilience to our services and support our staff. We have learnt many lessons during the pandemic, most of which can be used in shaping our Healthy Organisation plan going forward.



Our Healthy Organisation programme is a key theme in our RTI Plan. It will help us respond to the challenges the Council and our communities face over the coming years.

We have used the information from our annual culture survey in designing our Healthy Organisation programme. Our aim is to ensure we have A MOTIVATED, ACCOUNTABLE & ENGAGED WORKFORCE WHO HAVE THE SKILLS AND ABILITY TO DELIVER THE ORGANISATION'S GOALS. Following this we are reinstating our staff engagement programme (staff forum).

We are developing ways to gather and analyse our staff data. This will allow us to better understand and support our workforce and our key plans, for example the Strategic Equality Plan and the new socio-economic duty.

We will continue to use our performance management framework and personal development plans ('Focus on Your Performance') to support our staff to better deliver our outcomes linked to our corporate priorities, well-being objectives, and shared vision ('golden thread').

We will ...	Success will look like ...
Continue to carry out our Focus on Performance process	
Gather and analyse data using modern technology in supporting our staff (e-performance)	
Allow people to apply for jobs at MTCBC in an easy to use and modern manner, if they so wish (e-recruitment)	
Increase the number of apprenticeship opportunities at MTCBC	
Continue on our journey in becoming a learning organisation	

will work with partners and use external funding where possible to allow us to achieve this.

Procurement

In 2015, Welsh Government published a Welsh Procurement Policy Statement setting out the Principles of Welsh Public Procurement Policy. Our Procurement Strategy uses these 10 overarching principles to set out the vision for delivering procurement activity throughout the Council. Our strategy is intended to provide guidance to those officers procuring and commissioning services, goods and capital projects on behalf of the Council.

Strategic	Procurement should be recognised and managed as a strategic corporate function that organises and understands expenditure; influencing early planning and service design and involved in decision making to support delivery of overarching objectives.
Professionally resourced	Procurement expenditure should be subject to an appropriate level of professional involvement and influence, adopting the initial benchmark of a minimum of one procurement professional per £10m of expenditure across the wider public sector
Economic, Social and Environmental Impact	Value for Money should be considered as the optimum combination of whole-of-life costs in terms of not only generating efficiency savings and good quality outcomes for the organisation, but also benefit to society, the economy, and the environment, both now and in the future.

Community Benefits	Delivery of social, economic and environmental benefit through effective application of Community Benefits policy must be an integral consideration in procurement.
Open, accessible competition	Public bodies should adopt risk based, proportionate approaches to procurement to ensure that contract opportunities are open to all and smaller, local suppliers are not precluded from winning contracts individually, as consortia, or through roles within the supply chain.
Simplified Standard Processes	Procurement processes should be open and transparent and based on standard approaches and use of common systems that appropriately minimise complexity, cost, timescales and requirements for suppliers
Collaboration	Areas of common expenditure should be addressed collectively using standardised approaches and specifications managed by the National Procurement Service (“NPS”) to reduce duplication, to get the best response from the market, to embed the principles of this Policy Statement for the benefit of Wales; and to share resources and expertise.
Supplier Engagement and Innovation	Dialogue with suppliers should be improved to help get the best response from the market place, to inform and educate suppliers, and to deliver optimum value for money.
Policy Development and Implementation	Deployment of policy which supports the achievement of the seven well-being goals for Wales as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015).
Measurement and Impact	In accordance with good management practice, procurement performance and outcomes should be monitored to support continuous improvement, and examples of good and poor practice openly shared.

Taken from the Welsh Government’s Welsh Procurement Policy Statement 2015

Our strategy considers: Compliance with national legislation and local plans; Governance; Processes; Collaborative Sourcing; e-Procurement and Technology; Community Benefits; Sustainability and Equality; and People.

We will ...	Success will look like ...
Deliver our procurement function by using our Procurement Strategy and the Welsh Government’s Principles of Welsh Public Procurement Policy	ensuring our procurement practices are transparent and comply with our Constitution, our Financial Regulations and Legislative requirements. There will always be accountability and a clear separation of duties.
	undertaking due diligence in all procurement matters. We recognise the need to operate to a high standard of care in all transactions.
	requiring all staff involved in procurement to work in accordance with this Procurement Strategy, Financial and Procurement Rules and to ensure accountability for 3 rd party spend is shared between departments and corporate procurement.

	fostering a professional procurement attitude. Procurement will be undertaken to the highest ethical standards, promoting equality and fair treatment whilst using a level of commercial expertise commensurate with the principles of cost avoidance, cost containment and cost reduction.
	maintaining a robust procurement infrastructure that makes best use of modern technology and resources.
	collaborating with others to maximise procurement leverage and widen the scope for innovative service delivery.
	basing procurement upon the principles of best value and on measurable and effective outcomes.
	at all times seek to identify opportunities for service improvement, innovation, looking for value for money and promoting competition.
	stimulating the local economy and promote the attainment of social and environmental benefits through the procurement process.

Assets

Our Asset Management Plan is currently being reviewed and renewed. This document has 7 overarching priorities aligned to our well-being objectives and underpinned by the 5 ways of working.

Maintenance Strategy	Property Review
Estate Rationalisation	Statutory Compliance
Commercialisation	Carbon Management Plan
Disposals	

As you will notice, these priorities also help us achieve our RTI Plan, we have integrated our plans.

We will ...	Success will look like ...
Review and update our asset management plan	An integrated plan to support the delivery of our RTI Plan and well-being objectives, leading to better outcomes for our residents.

Risk Management

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

We have had an RMS in place for several years, with full reviews made in line with change. As part of our on-going improvement to our governance we are reviewing our RMS along with other key governance documents to ensure we are working as efficiently and effectively as possible.

By using our RMS, we have identified and assessed our position and have 10 corporate risks. This position is reviewed by Senior Officers and Elected Members alike. Our processes allow us to formally review the position at least twice a year by holding workshops with Senior Officers and Elected Members. Our findings are presented to our Audit Committee and then approval is gained at a Cabinet meeting. The latest version of our corporate risk register was published in the autumn of 2020. The systems of governance comply with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounts framework.

As well as our corporate risks, we have processes to identify, monitor and mitigate operational risks. Officer meetings take place through the year with accountable officers assigned to risks. All of this enables us to use the information and data we have on risk to inform how the council plans and operates.

We will ...	Success will look like ...
Review and publish our updated RMS	An easy-to-understand strategy allowing us to identify, monitor and mitigate risk more efficiently and effectively. This means we can act faster and make more informed decisions.
Continue to review our corporate and operational risk – publishing our findings	An open and transparent assessment of the corporate risks identified.
Use of risk data to better inform decision making	Decisions made from using easy-to-understand risk data. This will allow us to address root causes and deliver better outcomes for our residents.

Doing this means we will be better placed able to apply the sustainable development principle.

Section 4 – Monitoring the Plan

4.1 Monitoring Our Performance

We believe efficient and effective performance management is vital to accountability and achieving better outcomes for our residents. We are placing more focus on performance and using data to enable us to make better informed decisions to continuously improve. To do this we are strengthen understanding and delivery of performance and governance. This will set out our governance arrangements and how we will better manage performance. Our data will inform scrutiny, reporting, our Annual Performance Report (APR), Annual Governance Statement (AGS) and inform our Corporate Planning.

As outlined in the Healthy Organisation section above, we are supporting our staff and making clear links between job roles and our shared vision. We will be placing greater emphasis on how we communicate performance internally in our drive to becoming more outcome focused.

We are entering into the third year of our revised self-evaluation process. This year it has been delivered in a slightly different way due to the impacts of the Coronavirus Pandemic but we have been able to complete the exercise. This has helped us with our corporate planning and will be used in our APR. We will build on our learning to use this approach to become focused on areas we need to improve.

We will ...	Success will look like ...
Improve our performance management and governance frameworks	An easy-to-understand framework in one document setting out processes that improvement accountability and lead to better outcomes for the residents of Merthyr Tydfil. It will help us efficiently and effectively monitor and continuously improve, but also adapt to any changes in legislation e.g. quarterly reviews.
Develop an easy-to-understand way of presenting data that can be used to inform decision making (e.g. dashboard style)	Improvements in the way we use data in reports and plans, leading to better decision making. Issues will be spotted sooner and addressed quicker. Planning can be better informed and we will be able to provide greater focus when applying the sustainable development principle to our work.
Develop a performance review process that holds Cabinet Members to account	An economic, efficient and effective process that uses data to improve performance and hold Officers and Cabinet Members to account. Ultimately this will lead to improved outcomes for our residents.
Make data more accessible and easier to understand	Using more modern methods of analysing and displaying data to improve awareness and understanding. This leads to better communication and engagement allowing us to provide greater focus when applying the sustainable development principle to our work.

4.2 Scrutiny

As well as Officer and joint Elected Member monitoring through our internal processes, our Scrutiny Committees (made up of Elected Members, Co-opted Members and specific roles to partners in our Education Scrutiny Committee) play a vital role in monitoring our performance. We will review our scrutiny provision in line with our transformation and changes to legislation. More information about our scrutiny function can be found in our [Annual Scrutiny Report](#).

We have 5 main scrutiny committees and an audit committee covering all aspects of this plan and all that we do. The **5 scrutiny committees** are:

	• Neighbourhood Services, Planning and Countryside
	• Regeneration and Public Protection

The scrutiny function has **4 principles to ensure effective scrutiny** (*The Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS)*):

- Provide **‘critical friend’ challenge** to executive policy-makers and decision-makers
- Carried out by **‘independent minded governors’** who lead and own the scrutiny process
- Drive **improvement** in public services
- Enable the **voice and concerns** of the public and its communities

The role of our scrutiny committees is not decision making nor political but can be encapsulated in these 4 points:

- **Holding the Executive (Cabinet) to account**
- **Policy review and development**
- **Performance Monitoring**
- **External Scrutiny**

Our Audit Committee is independent of our Scrutiny Committees and Cabinet function. The purpose the Audit Committee is to provide to those charged with governance independent assurance on the adequacy of the risk management framework, the internal control environment and the integrity of the financial reporting and governance processes. It oversees and receives reports from our Regional Internal Audit Service and our External Auditors - Audit Wales. This committee approves our accounts as well as playing a key role in our governance, especially regarding our budget setting process and performance. The role of this committee is going to expand from April 2021 as a result of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. The committee will be called the ‘Governance and Audit Committee’ with additional functions including performance assessment and complaints will now be included.

4.3 What the Regulators said

We have continued to work with our regulators as part of our recovery, transformation and improvement journey.

Audit Wales

In a report issued to the Council in April 2021, Audit Wales provide 10 recommendations (see below). Our plans will be developed and integrated with our improvement plans.

R1 - The Council should address the lack of capacity and expertise to drive and sustain the transformation agenda.	R6 - The Council must build on its current financial position to strengthen its financial resilience. It is imperative that it takes a much more medium to long-term approach to its planning including considering the level of savings it expects to realistically achieve through transformation, and the level of investment needed to deliver the RTI Plan.
R2 - The Council should provide more permanency in its senior management structure at the earliest opportunity	R7 - The Council should ensure that as a corporate body it remains focused on improving the education outcomes of all children and young people.
R3 - The Council should continue with its capacity review to reflect the transformation needed and learning from the pandemic. This should be done in conjunction with considerations about the future shape and skills of the Council's workforce.	R8 - The Council should continue to strengthen its performance management arrangements and culture. It needs to use arrangements effectively to monitor and challenge performance at individual, service and corporate levels, and to ensure these arrangements are robust to support the delivery of the RTI Plan.
R4 - The Council should refine the RTI Plan and ensure it is fully costed, that it has the financial and human resources required to deliver it.	R9 - The Council should strengthen its scrutiny arrangements including how scrutiny could have a more focused and impactful role. For example, scrutiny committees could consider their role in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the RTI Plan; and• holding the Cabinet to account in accordance with statutory guidance.
R5 - The Council should strengthen its communication and engagement with staff to ensure there is ownership, and understanding, of the Council's plans and ambitions.	R10 - The Council should build upon its recent partnership working and put in place arrangements to assure itself that its partnership activities are providing value for money.

ESTYN

In January 2021, ESTYN published a national report titled 'Local authority and regional consortia support for schools and PRUs in response to COVID-19'. This report makes 5 recommendations (see below) on how local authorities and regional consortia have worked with schools and pupil referral units (PRUs) to promote learning and support vulnerable pupils during the COVID-19 period (between June and November 2020). These national recommendations are being used to inform our plans.

R1 - Urgently address barriers to learning at home, particularly where this is due to a lack of access to suitable computers or adequate connectivity

R2 - Improve the quality of the distance and blended learning experiences for pupils by supporting more effective teaching across and within schools and PRUs

R3 - Develop a coherent approach to improve progress in literacy, numeracy and personal and social skills of vulnerable pupils disproportionately affected by the pandemic, for example pupils eligible for free school meals

R4 - Establish strategies to monitor and address the long-term impact of the pandemic on the physical and mental health of pupils

R5 - Create opportunities to take stock and evaluate the impact of policies and practices developed since the start of the pandemic to inform future ways of working and curriculum design

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

The 'Performance Evaluation Inspection 2020-2021: Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Social Services' letter outlines findings over the inspection period of the 19th October to 23rd October 2020. The summary of the outcomes is below. These outcomes have been built into service plans.

We have identified strengths and areas for priority improvement and we will review the progress of these areas through our performance evaluation review meetings with the heads of service and director.

We expect the areas of improvement we have identified to be included in the local authority's improvement plans.

4.4 Partnership Working

As with previous years, we will continue to develop our partnership working. We have learnt how collaborative working throughout the Coronavirus Pandemic has helped us deliver our services and improve outcomes for our residents. This starts within the Council. Our departments will continue to build better working arrangements this will help us align our limited resources against outcomes.

We will continue to work with Welsh Government, our Improvement and Assurance Board and the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) on our transformation journey.

We will also form stronger partnerships with other sectors in Merthyr Tydfil. The Team Merthyr approach and Business, Education and Training Partnership are great examples of this. We will continue to work to the charter with our Community Council.

We will continue to work with other Councils, especially when accessing Welsh Government funding. We are looking to expand on the work we are already doing this year to help support our RTI Plan and delivering our well-being objectives. We will also continue to be actively involved in our regional partnerships, for example the 'Regional Partnership Board' and the 'Public Service Board'.

Section 5 – Glossary

5 ways of working & the sustainable development principle	There are 5 things that public bodies need to think about to show that they can work together better, avoid repeating past mistakes and tackle some of the long-term challenges we are facing. This is often referred to as the sustainable development principle. The 5 ways of working are:
1- Long-term	The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.
2 – Prevention	How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives.
3 – 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.
4 – 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.
5 – Involvement	The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.
Well-being Objective	The Well-being Objectives set out what we feel needs to happen locally to help improve well-being for the people of Merthyr Tydfil and achieve the national Well-being Goals. MTCBC has 4 well-being objectives.
Well-being Goal	The 7 Well-being Goals show the kind of Wales we want to see. Together they provide a shared vision for the public bodies in Wales to work towards.
Medium-Term Financial Plan	A plan to balance the financial implications of objectives and policies against constraints in resources, which provides a financial basis for decision making, to ensure financial sustainability over the medium term (5 years).
Poverty	When a person’s resources are well below what they require to meet their minimum needs.

Deprivation	Deprivation can be defined as a consequence of a lack of income and other resources, which cumulatively can lead to a state of poverty.
Relative poverty	Where a household has a low income, they have some money but not enough to afford anything above the basics.
Absolute poverty	Where a person does not have the minimum amount of income needed to meet the medium requirements for one or more basic living needs over an extended period of time.
Cabinet Work Plan	A list of key decisions and other planned Cabinet Member decisions to be taken on behalf of the Council. The purpose of the Work Programme is to give notice of those decisions and an opportunity for consultation.
Corporate Risk Register	Within all large organisations, there exists risks that relate to core business functions, corporate health and strategy – these are categorised as corporate risks. The Corporate Risk Register is a log of all identified corporate risks; it is used to monitor these risks and evidence how they are being managed/mitigated.
Qualitative Performance	We demonstrate this through monitoring performance without comparing data e.g. case studies.
Quantitative Performance	We show this by using more traditional ways to monitor and analyse performance, i.e. by using data.
Well-being <i>(Dodge R, Daly A, Huyton J & Saunders L. (2012) The Wellbeing challenge of defining wellbeing, International Journal of Wellbeing, 2 (3), 22-235</i>	The balance point between an individual's resource pool and the challenges they face.

Section 6 – Get Involved

There are a number of ways to get involved with the Council. One of the main ways to get involved is through your local Councillor. You can find out who your local Councillor is and how to get in touch with them by visiting the Council's [website](#).

We want to maintain community involvement and continue to develop our understanding of the communities within Merthyr Tydfil. We welcome you to share your thoughts on well-being or your ideas on how we can improve well-being in Merthyr Tydfil at wellbeing@merthyr.gov.uk.

Scrutiny Committees have arrangements to allow people who live or work in the local authority area to make representations on any matter being discussed. There are many different ways you may wish to get involved in the work of scrutiny, including:

- suggesting a topic for scrutiny to investigate;
- attending a meeting to listen to discussion and the debate;
- attending a meeting to speak on an agenda item; or
- providing information and evidence as a witness, to inform a particular piece of review work being undertaken by a scrutiny committee.

Guidance on Public speaking at Scrutiny Committee meetings - Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council welcomes and encourages the active participation of its residents whenever possible and an opportunity exists for members of the public to speak at Scrutiny Committee meetings on an item on the agenda.

Scrutiny Committees will consider requests to examine issues put forward from any sector of the public. To qualify; requests must affect a group or community of people; relate to a service, event or issue in which the Council has a significant stake; not be an issue which scrutiny has considered during the last 12 months; not be a matter dealt with by another County Borough Council Committee (e.g. planning issues) except where the issue relates to the Council's decision-making process.

You can also find us on:



www.facebook.com/merthirtydfilcbc



www.twitter.com/merthyrCBC




www.youtube.com/c/MerthyrTydfilCBC

Appendices


Appendix 1 – RTI Plan Summary Work Programmes

Appendix 1.1 – Improving Our Education Standards




Improving our
Education
Standards

Cabinet Member: Councillor Lisa Mytton
Senior Responsible Officer: Chief Officer for Learning



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sani
MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council



Well-being objective: 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

Why is this a priority?	Objectives for this priority?	Projects or Strategies
<p>We need to address our performance by improving our education standards to provide the best opportunities for our learners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put in place robust plans to allow post pandemic recovery Raise attainment levels throughout all educational settings Improve the level of attendance throughout all school settings Raise aspirations of all children and young people Improve the condition of school settings and wider educational settings 	<p>Post pandemic recovery</p> <p>RARS Strategy</p> <p>Data Project (CapitaONE)</p> <p>Strengthen working arrangements with the CSC</p> <p>LIDW Project Schools</p> <p>21st Century Schools</p>

So what does this mean?

We need to make sure that all our learners are provided with the right environment for them to learn and achieve.

We must all work together to engage learners in their education and raise the aspirations of our learners.

*Merthyr Tudful ...
... lle i fod yn falch ohono*

So what needs to be done?

All of us need to work together to deliver our RARS Strategy. We must improve our learning offer across the County Borough and especially as a response to pandemic recovery, support the emotional wellbeing of our learners. All this includes more engagement with partners and increasing accountability.

*Merthyr Tydfil ...
... a place to be proud of*

Appendix 1.2 – Increasing Our Resilience in Social Care



Increasing our
Resilience in
Social Care



Cabinet Member: Councillor Chris Davies
Senior Responsible Officer: Chief Officer for Social Services

Well-being objective: People are empowered to live independently within their communities, where they are safe and enjoy good physical and mental health



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL
MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council

Why is this a priority?	Objectives for this priority?	Projects or Strategies
We need to be more resilient to be able to deliver our well-being objectives, so we need to bolster areas of the service and change how we work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recovery • Resources and Service Improvement • Resilience and Sustainability 	<p>Adapt and respond to a post pandemic environment</p> <p>Improve service outcomes and better manage capacity and finances to meet demand</p> <p>Expand and improve collaboration and integration</p>

So what does this mean?

To be able to continue to deliver our services to the current standards, we need to increase staffing levels and skills in some areas of the service together with undertaking more partnership working to support our service delivery.

So what needs to be done?

We will: continue to monitor or staffing provision following the increased resources, as a result of the capacity exercise; invest resource into our data team allowing us to work more efficiently and effectively; review areas of our service to change the way we work to increase our resilience.

Merthyr Tudful ...
... lle i fod yn falch ohono

Merthyr Tydfil ...
... a place to be proud of

Appendix 1.3 – Economic Recovery



Economic
Recovery



Cabinet Member: Councillor Geraint Thomas
Senior Responsible Officer: Deputy Chief Executive

Well-being objective: People feel supported to develop the skills required to meet the needs of businesses, with a developing, safe infrastructure which makes Merthyr Tydfil an attractive destination



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council

Why is this a priority?	Objectives for this priority?	Projects or Strategies
We need to address our economic recovery to avoid unemployment and support our communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a 15-year Vision for the economy of Merthyr Tydfil and an Economic Recovery Strategy Realign the Economic Growth Strategy and create an Economic Recovery Board Undertake a detailed analysis of business activities and services, with specific focus on the impact of the pandemic We will develop and grow the connections between the business sector and Merthyr Tydfil's Education provision 	<p>15-year Economic Vision</p> <p>Economic Growth Strategy</p> <p>Economic Recovery Board</p> <p>Business Engagement</p> <p>Business, Education and Training Partnership</p>

So what does this mean?

Our situation before the pandemic meant our economy was vulnerable, this has been made worse by the pandemic. We need to align our resources to work together to support our businesses and our economy.

So what needs to be done?

Our Economic Growth Strategy, overseen by the Economic Recovery Board, will provide sound governance. Our Business, Education and Training Partnership will, amongst other things, build partnerships and opportunities for our learners.

*Merthyr Tudful ...
... lle i fod yn falch ohono*

*Merthyr Tydfil ...
... a place to be proud of*

Appendix 1.4 – Environmental Well-being



Cabinet Member: Councillor David Hughes
Senior Responsible Officer: Chief Officer for Neighbourhood Services



Well-being Objective: Communities protect, enhance and promote our environment and countryside



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL
MERTHYR TYDFIL
 County Borough Council

Why is this a priority?	Objectives for this priority?	Projects or Strategies
We need to recover from the pandemic to create a better environment by increasing recycling rates and reducing our carbon footprint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop the knowledge and participation of the community to increase recycling rates Ensure there is business continuity throughout the service Collaborate with and support registered social landlords Reduce carbon emissions from Council buildings, schools and fleet in order to work towards becoming carbon neutral by 2030 	Keeping up with the Joneses Frontline workforce Digital opportunities Recycling and Engagement Programme Decarbonisation

So what does this mean?

We need to recover from the pandemic, to continue on our journey of creating a better environment now and for future generations.

So what needs to be done?

We need to work with partners to engage and involve them in our recycling and decarbonisation programmes. We will change the ways we work and align our resources to focus on recycling and decarbonisation.

*Merthyr Tudful ...
 ... lle i fod yn falch ohono*

*Merthyr Tydfil ...
 ... a place to be proud of*

Appendix 1.5 – Digital Transformation



Cabinet Member: Councillor Andrew Barry



Senior Responsible Officer for Digital Transformation:
Head of Corporate Services
Lead Officer: Head of ICT and Print



Digital Transformation outcomes: Improved agility, flexibility and cost-effectiveness; Transformed business processes; Use data to better inform and transparent decision making

Why is this a priority?	Objectives for this priority?	Strategies or Projects
We need to build on the work done during the pandemic to support our services	To improve our: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Culture • Digital Infrastructure • Digital Economy • Digital Information 	Agile Working Programme Digital Infrastructure Development Digital Transformation – Supporting our Economy Data Project

So what does this mean?

To allow us to efficiently and effectively deliver services that our residents need, we need to improve our digital offer. This has allowed us to continue to work throughout the pandemic and we can learn from this going forward.

So what needs to be done?

We can use the infrastructure we have built and learning during the pandemic to help our staff deliver services and support our priorities.

*Merthyr Tudful ...
... lle i fod yn falch ohono*

*Merthyr Tydfil ...
... a place to be proud of*

Appendix 1.6 – Healthy Organisation



Cabinet Member: Councillor Andrew Barry



Senior Responsible Officer for Healthy Organisation: Chief Officer for Neighbourhood Services
Lead Officer: Head of HR



Healthy Organisation outcomes: Increased workforce support developing new ideas and skills helping **succession planning**; Reduce staff turnover and increase success through **motivating and investing in our staff**; Move to new ways of working by **upskilling our staff**

Why is this a priority?	Objectives for this priority?	Strategies or Projects
We have a wealth of skills and experience across our most valuable resource, the workforce. We must invest in our workforce to achieve our priorities.	To improve our: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skilled Workforce • Engaged Workforce • Motivated and Accountable Workforce 	Staff Development Programme Working Better Together Project Performance and Accountability Project Support our Recovery

So what does this mean?

We must make sure we have the right levels of staff with the correct skill sets to deliver change and work in new ways. This will help us deliver the services our residents need.

So what needs to be done?

We need to: improve efficiency and effectiveness by changing our recruitment, monitoring staff performance and upskilling by using digital technology; utilise apprenticeship and graduate schemes to support succession planning and upskilling our workforce.

Merthyr Tudful ...
 ... lle i fod yn falch ohono

Merthyr Tydfil ...
 ... a place to be proud of

Appendix 1.7 – Commercial Programme



Cabinet Member: Councillor Andrew Barry



Senior Responsible Officer for the Commercial Programme:
Deputy Chief Executive
Lead Officer: Procurement Manager



Commercial Programme outcomes: The delivery of this programme will support the priority outcomes identified

Why is this a priority?	Objectives for this priority?	Strategies or Projects
By being more commercial we can support the financial sustainability of the council	<p>Commercial Environment – Create an organisational environment that enables commercial activity</p> <p>Investment Programme – Create a portfolio of investment opportunities and review current contract to ensure value for money</p>	<p>Commercial Development Plan</p> <p>Commercial Investment Plan</p> <p>Commercial Team Development</p>

So what does this mean?

We need to be aware of commercial opportunities in our services and how to take advantage of them. This can include invest-to-save options.

So what needs to be done?

Following the Council approval of a Commercial Manager as part of the capacity exercise, we will develop an investment programme of commercial opportunities to help address our long-term financial sustainability challenge. We must create a commercial environment across the Council to take advantage of commercial opportunities.

Merthyr Tudful ...
... lle i fod yn falch ohono

Merthyr Tydfil ...
... a place to be proud of

Appendix 1.8 – Governance Improvement



Cabinet Member: Councillor Andrew Barry



Senior Responsible Officer for Governance Improvement;
Head of Democratic Services and Legal
Lead Officer: Performance and Scrutiny Officer



Governance Improvement outcomes: Informed and transparent **decision making**; Continuing to deliver **democracy** and refocus our **scrutiny function**; Our elected members will have a clearer focus in their role and updated PDRs

Why is this a priority?	Objectives for this priority?	Strategies or Projects
We must engage effectively to improve the way we work, including how we challenge performance and increase accountability, to manage risk and achieve our priorities.	To improve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Democracy • Delivering Outcomes • Demonstrating Accountability 	Digital Democracy Programme Governance Maturity Programme Scrutiny Development Programme Performance Programme

So what does this mean?

We need to focus on outcomes for our residents. To do this we need to have clearly defined roles and functions with staff working to core values with the appropriate skills and capacity to deliver.








So what needs to be done?

Develop our data team, building on additional staffing approved as part of the capacity exercise. We will update our constitution and governance documents to reflect our transformation. Further develop our digital options to make sure democracy can still happen during the pandemic.

Merthyr Tudful ...
 ... lle i fod yn falch ohono

Merthyr Tydfil ...
 ... a place to be proud of

Appendix 2 – The 7 National Well-being Goals

	National Goals	Parts of the RTI Plan that improve how we contribute to the National Goals
		Improving our Education Standards Commercial Programme
	A Resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)	Environmental Well being Digital Transformation
	A Healthier Wales People's physical and mental well being is maximised and health impacts are understood	Improving our Education Standards Increasing our resilience in Social Care Healthy Organisation
	A More Equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	Economic Recovery Healthy Organisation Digital Transformation
	A Wales of Cohesive Communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected	Economic Recovery Environmental Well being
	A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language The Welsh language and culture are an integral part of our communities, and contribute to the rich heritage of the country	Economic Recovery Governance Improvement
	A Globally Responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well being when considering local social, economic, environmental and cultural well being	Improving our Education Standards Increasing our resilience in Social Care Economic Recovery Environmental Well being

Our updated **Integrated Impact Assessment (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 Act, protected characteristics, Welsh language, biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems and socio-economic disadvantage. The IIA also requested that data is used as part of the assessment along with how communication and engagement has been undertaken (where required).