



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol  
**MERTHYR TUDFUL**  
**MERTHYR TYDFIL**  
County Borough Council

# CORPORATE SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT

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

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg /  
This document is available in Welsh

Reporting period – 2021/22

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This Corporate Self-Assessment report considers the extent to which we are meeting our 'performance requirements' for 2021/22. We set out how we are using our resources, the effectiveness of our functions and our governance. We consider our engagement and consultation activities especially with local people, our staff, businesses and our Trades Unions. We want to make sure we ensure our well-being planning remains relevant to the needs of people living and working in Merthyr Tydfil. We will use the findings of this report to help us continuously improve. We want to be as efficient, effective and economical in meeting our outcomes for our residents now and in the future.



*Geraint Thomas*  
**Council Leader**



*Ellis Cooper*  
**Chief Executive**

## Background and Legislation

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

This report is a new requirement as part of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and replaces the Council’s Annual Performance Report (APR) which, amongst other things, was in place to meet requirements under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009. However, this document does provide an annual performance report in relation to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. “The Welsh Government’s EM described that improvement regime as ‘process orientated’, focussing on ‘activity or outputs which can be easily measured’”<sup>3</sup>. As a result, this report focuses on activity and outputs together with how internal processes and procedures should change to enable more effective planning, delivery and decision-making to drive better outcomes.

In this report we set out our conclusions as to the extent to which we met our performance requirements for 2021/22. We will also assess progress in meeting our well-being objectives for this same year. This is a requirement of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. To do this we will use input from our consultees (listed below).

We have set out the actions we have taken and will take to address our findings so that we can continuously improve and increase the extent to which we can meet our performance requirement. This will include short-term (immediate to, and including next year, i.e., 1 year), medium-term (2 to 5 years) and long-term (5 years plus) actions. Next year, and going forward, we will be able to make conclusions to the extent to which we have delivered these actions. As this is the first self-assessment report, we are not expected to do this, but we will be able to assess and evaluate the work done in the last year and previous years (including considering trend data).



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

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





<sup>3</sup> Quick guide to the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 Research Briefing; Welsh Parliament Senedd Research; October 2021

As a public body we are committed to carrying out sustainable development. This means improving the way we can achieve our economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being.

This starts with setting and publishing our well-being objectives which help us maximise our contribution to the seven nation well-being goals (set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015). More details on the seven goals can be found in below in this report.

The Council approved its first Statement of Well-being along with its new Corporate Well-being Plan – Focus on the Future: Well-being in our Community for 2017 to 2022 in a Council meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> July 2017. We have reviewed this annually. Within these documents, we set out our well-being themes, objectives and primary outcomes.

Our corporate well-being plan sets out our well-being objectives, primary outcomes and indicators that will let us know if things are getting better. Our objectives and priority outcomes are set out below.

Well-being Theme	Well-being Objective	Primary Outcome
 <b>Best Start</b>	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
 <b>Working Life</b>	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
 <b>Environmental Well-being</b>	Communities protect, enhance, and promote our environment and countryside.	Maximise the amount of material and resources reused and recycled in line with the waste hierarchy
 <b>Living Well</b>	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

We take actions to make sure we meet our objectives and continue to work take all reasonable steps to deliver our services to meet these set objectives.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 puts in place a ‘sustainable development principle’ which tells us how to meet our duty. We must ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. There are five things that we need to think about to show that we have applied the sustainable development principle.



The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 has a national well-being indicators framework. This gives 46 indicators that we can use to inform our performance and how we are contributing to the national goals<sup>4 5</sup>.

In doing this, we will show how we are keeping our performance requirements under review and the extent to which we are:

- exercising our functions effectively;
- are using our resources economically, efficiently and effectively; and
- governed effectively.

We will have regard to any guidance issued by Welsh Ministers about the performance requirements and how we exercise our functions. We will also continue to respond to audits and regulator reports<sup>6</sup>.

This report also sets out how we have consulted on the extent to which we are meeting the performance requirements listed above. These consultees include, but are not limited to:

- local people;
- other persons carrying on a business in our area;
- our staff; and
- each of our trade unions<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021; Part 6; Paragraph 91

<sup>5</sup> Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015; Schedule 1; Paragraph 1

<sup>6</sup> Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021; Part 6; Paragraph 89

<sup>7</sup> Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021; Part 6; Paragraph 90

As reported in our annual performance report for 2020/21, we continued to work with our 'Improvement and Assurance Board' (IAB). The IAB was assigned to us by Welsh Government to support the Council. In doing so, the Council has produced a 'Recovery, Transformation and Improvement Plan' (RTI Plan) that forms part of our Corporate Well-being Plan. Our Corporate Well-being Plan, as well as setting our objectives, prioritises areas for improvement. We have three areas for improvement. We have also prioritised our outcomes to help us better understand our success and how we can keep improving.



During 2019-20 you will recall that we introduced the cross-cutting theme of 'Tackling Poverty' to our Corporate Well-being Plan. This is a very real issue for Merthyr Tydfil, especially due to impact of the coronavirus pandemic, and it is felt that it needs to be built into the work we undertake. We use the logo opposite to highlight where we are undertaking work to address this and a visual reminder of the importance.



We have set out Our Shared Vision (Appendix 1) to show how all this fits together. We have also included on that page our regional well-being objectives. There are clear links to what we are doing locally to support our regional objectives and how we all contribute to the national goals.

Learning from previous years, we have remained focused on delivering our services through the five ways of working, especially through improving our governance, integrating our strategies and building on the collaborations that has been in place when responding to the pandemic. This has enabled us to become far more focused on what needs to be done in delivering our objectives for our residents.



A critical framework to this report is our 'Performance Management and Quality Assurance Framework'. This was approved alongside the annual review of our Corporate Well-being Plan in March 2022. This supports our on-going governance improvement but also sets out how we will continually improve. It is based on the 'Plan-Do-Review-Improve' principle. We have also integrated this with our governance framework to ensure we are all working to improve (appendix 3 provides more information). We also promote the use of data in our work. This can come from a variety of sources, such as Data Cymru's dashboards, and can also include comparative data.

During 2022/23 we are reviewing our Corporate Well-being Plan (including our well-being objectives). We will use the findings of this report to help us.



### Setting the context – key challenges

We have set out below some of the key challenges we faced in 2021/22 and continue to face. We will continue to work with partners to address these issues.

- Impact of the coronavirus pandemic including how this has impacted on available data
- Loss of European Union (EU) funding
- Conflict in Europe
- Recruitment and retention of staff especially regarding highly skilled and technical jobs (including competing with other sectors and potential of staff turnover)
- Impacts of severe weather
- Financial instability
- Cost of living impacts on our residents

## Our Approach

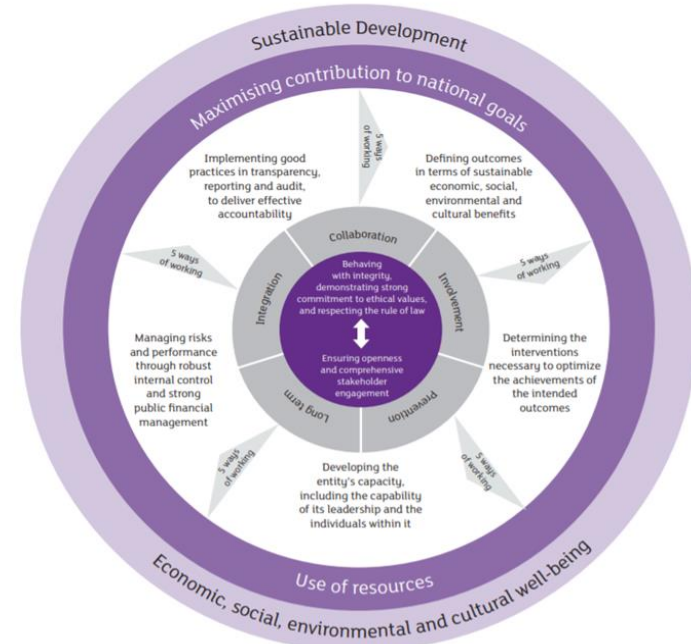
### Our Framework

Our approach to self-assessment is widely based on our governance framework. This has been built around the 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government' produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and SOLACE. We use the version which has been integrated with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, as seen in the figure opposite. We have applied our approved 'Plan → Do → Review → Improve' cycle to our governance framework. This has helped us keep our performance requirements under review. This allows us to consider the effectiveness of our governance arrangements and in turn how we are managing our resources (effectively, efficiently and economically).

To arrive at our conclusions, as well as our governance arrangements such as our Performance Management and Quality Assurance Framework and Budget Board, we will consider key aspects of our governance. These include, but are not limited to:

- achievements against our corporate outcomes;
- performance data (especially focusing on our Well-being Objectives and how we are contributing to the seven national goals and using the five ways of working);
- available benchmarking data;
- feedback from our self-evaluation process;
- Corporate Risk;
- Strategic Equality Plan findings;
- Scrutiny outcomes;
- Annual Governance Statement outcomes;
- Recovery, Transformation and Improvement Plan outcomes; and,
- where relevant, feedback from our Integrated Impact Assessment, which include socio-economic disadvantage.

We will, as part of this and as included in our governance framework, consider feedback from engagement activities e.g. public engagement (for example our Population Needs Assessment, Well-being Needs Assessment, Resident's Survey and Budget Setting process); Staff engagement (Staff Culture Survey, Staff forum outcomes); Trades Unions engagement (feedback from regular meetings); engagement with businesses (engagement to form our 15-year



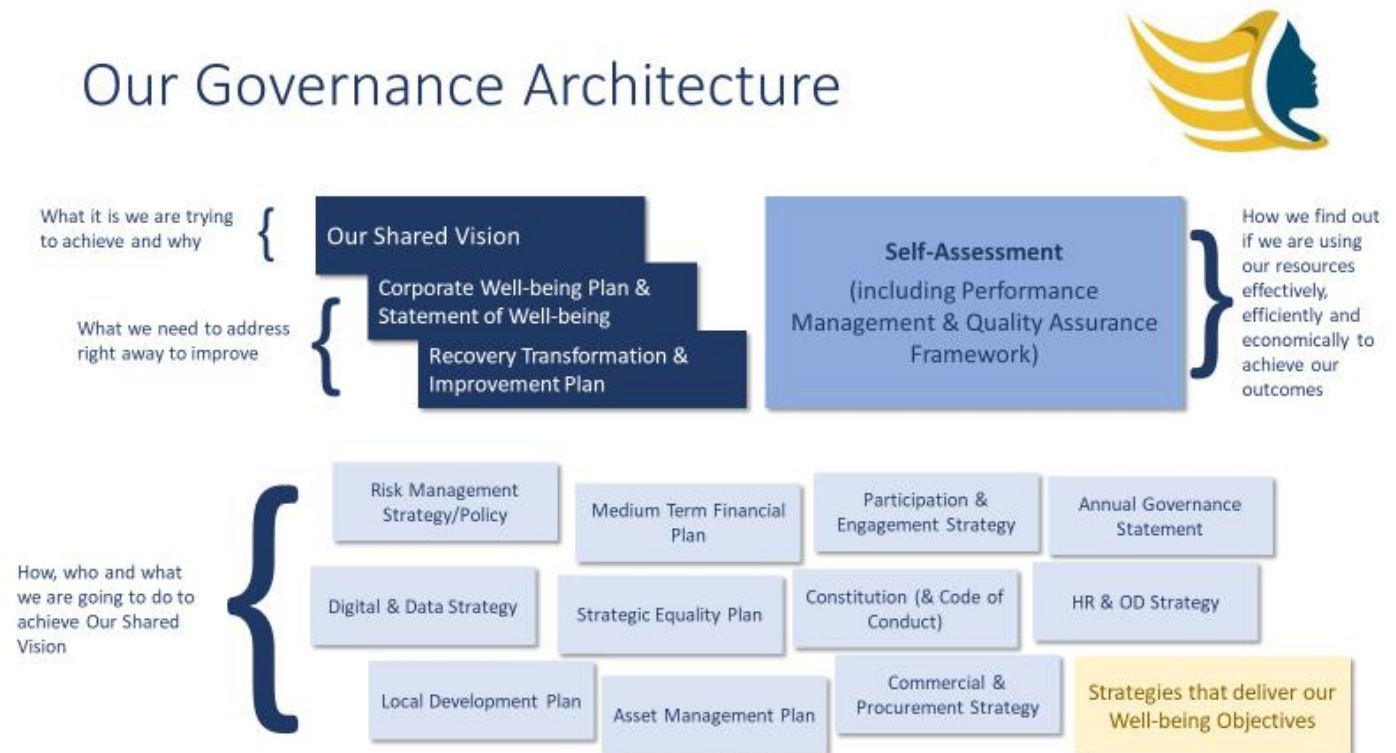
Source: 'International Framework and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015'; Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

economic vision, Business Improvement District Meetings, grant administration feedback); Community Council engagement (Charter, meetings and engagement); feedback from our Corporate Complaints (including any relevant Ombudsman Reports); feedback from regulators; specific partnership feedback (e.g. from our education Central South Consortium, public services board, regional partnership board (although this is likely to come as part of our needs assessments in year one, 2021/22)).

This report has been set out to provide the corporate position (foreword from the Leader and Chief Executive), the purpose and legislation this report addresses, our approach to self-assessment and reporting on it, assessing our corporate areas and how this supports our well-being objectives, our well-being objectives, our conclusions, and our action plan.

## Our Governance Architecture - Reports that feed into this Corporate Self-Assessment

We have included below some of the key document that we use as part of our governance and, as such, have fed into this report.



## Engagement and Consultation

We are currently developing our Participation and Engagement Strategy. Although we don't have an overarching strategy/policy for consultation with our stakeholders, we do have a Consultation and Engagement Framework which provides guidance for services that are planning to engage with our residents.

Our consultation and engagement exercise are often as a result of a statutory requirement (e.g. setting our well-being objectives). However, we do undertake other consultation or engagement exercises to gather the views of the public to inform our decision-making process. We have also integrated questions regarding engagement/consultation into our IIA process; especially linking to our socio-economic duty. Appendix 4 provides an overview of the consultation exercises we undertook during 2021/22.

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

## Our key consultees

We have included below are some ways in which we engage with our key consultees and some general feedback. However, more information is available in the well-being objectives sections below in this report. This information and data have been used to inform our plans and service delivery.

<b>Our Staff</b>
Staff culture survey – Data is available in appendix 5 Staff forum and Managers network Chief Executive blogs Senior Leadership visits to departments Senior Leaders – PESTLE (Political; Economical; Social; Technology; Legal; Environmental) Analysis (considering strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) done to reflect on last year and current position to be used to inform the future states of services to support the delivery of our objectives. Corporate induction for new appointees (attended by the Chief Executive and Leader)
<b>The Public</b>
Population needs assessment and Well-being Assessment – Key findings are available in appendix 6 Residents Survey – Data is available in appendix 7 Annual budget setting survey Specific engagement / consultation activities – Listed in appendix 4 Contact Magazine (a Council magazine delivered to each household in the County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil) Council website and social media

Face-to-face interactions through our one stop shop (OSS)  
Telephone interactions through our '725000' number to our contact centre

### **Trades Unions**

Monthly meetings are in place between the Council and all our Trades Unions. The agenda varies based on need. Positive feedback was received when an agenda item regarding Council performance in this context was discussed. This is now a feature through the year at these meetings.

### **Businesses**

Regular interactions take place, e.g. administration of Welsh Government grants during the coronavirus pandemic. A key engagement/consultation exercise took place to develop our 15-year economic vision (featured as a case study in this report). Regular engagement takes place on the design and development of the Town Centre regeneration work.

### **Our Community Council**

There is one community council within the County Borough, Bedlinog and Trelewis Community Council (BTCC). Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC) and BTCC have agreed to work together for the benefit of local community, recognising respective responsibilities as autonomous, democratically elected statutory bodies, and have agreed to publish a Charter setting out how they will do this. The Charter builds on existing good practice and embraces the common priority of putting citizens at the centre. The Charter is based on equality of partnership and is not a top-down arrangement. We have established a Community Council Liaison Group comprised of appropriate MTCBC and BTCC officers and representatives to meet and discuss matters of mutual significance. The importance of meaningful consultation is appreciated and a genuine commitment between both parties has been set out to consult on matters of mutual concern, agreeing clear, specific and time limited procedures and processes for consultation. Both parties work together to promote the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the community. MTCBC upholds its statutory duty to consult BTCC on all planning applications within its community. MTCBC encourages continuous development and offers member induction training to BTCC Councillors to enable them to understand the role and function of the unitary authority. Both partners work together in ways that are sustainable, reconciling the long-term needs with those of the present, and protecting and improving the quality of life of current generations without compromising the quality of life for future generations.



## Governance and Resources



Portfolio Member  
Councillor Andrew Barry

### Quote from the Portfolio Member

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

### Service Areas

Governance and Resources

### Strategic Focus

Governance and Supporting the Plan

This section of the Corporate Self-Assessment report focuses on key elements of the Governance and Resources Directorate of the Council that support the delivery of our four well-being objectives, and it turn, how we contribute to the seven national goals. This section includes the seven core areas of change as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. We are using the feedback from the service areas supported in the self-evaluation exercise to form our conclusions on performance. We use SWOT (Strengths; Weaknesses; Opportunities; Threat) analysis methodologies as part of this.



A Wales of Vibrant Culture &  
Thriving Welsh Language

**Welsh Language** - We are continuing to promote the Welsh language and deliver our Welsh Language Strategy and Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. This supports how we are contributing to the national well-being goal of 'A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language'. Several events took place in 2021/22. We have built on the success of the initiative ways we held events during the coronavirus pandemic.

We developed our 'Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Welsh language annual monitoring report for 2021-2022' in June 2022. This report sets out events and approaches to how we are delivering our Welsh language programme. We have collaborated with others to develop and deliver this. We are considering the long-term national targets regarding Welsh language as well as focusing on what we need to do now. This helps how we can use our limited resources. We have involved the public in our plans through Welsh language events, e.g. Diwrnod Shwmae Su'mae, Welsh Language Carol Concert and #SHWMAERONMENT Event. We have had positive publicity through features on local television.



A More Equal Wales

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

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

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

### Are we working more sustainably?

Under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 we have a duty to consider how we can work more sustainably across seven core areas of change. To do this we have considered these areas in 2021/22 against how we are applying the five ways of working (sustainable development principle) and the evidence or observations of change, including how we deliver our frontline services. These areas are key features of our governance framework and demonstrate how we implement our governance in supporting service delivery.

### Risk

The Council's risk management arrangements have continued to be significantly strengthened during 2021-22. This addresses all recommendations from an internal audit report in April 2021 (carried out by 'SWAP', who support our internal regional audit team).

What progress have we made?	Evidence / Observations of change
We have refocused our <b>risk strategy/policy</b> . We have worked with others when doing this, e.g. other Councils, our insurers, scrutiny and SWAP in a requested follow up audit. In doing this we were able to involve others in our design and development of the strategy/policy. We were able to gather staff views and, as part of the challenge process prior to approval, we have been able to get views of Members as part of our scrutiny process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Risk Strategy/Policy</li><li>• Council report and approval</li><li>• Regular meetings and discussions between departments in addressing risks and integrating plans</li><li>• SWAP Audit Findings (see below)</li></ul>

The strategy/policy addresses audit recommendations and in doing so enabled us to redefine our risk opportunities, categories and appetite. This will help us consider the long term and prevent things happen if we don't want it to or enable us to take calculated and managed risks.

By working with other areas of the Council (e.g. our Insurance Team) we been able to better integrate our plans.

This has been captured in the updating and refocusing of strategies on a page (SOAPs) for the Governance and Resources Directorate.

We have refocused **operational/service risk registers** and put more robust monitoring process in place. This has meant that teams can work together to address risks. By embedding the five ways of working into our risk registers we can focus on the sustainable principle in managing risk, including the short, medium and long term.

We use **benchmarking and horizon scanning** in our risk management processes, e.g. considering how others manage risk (assess, monitor and mitigate risks) and what future risks we might face. This provides the opportunity for us work with others and/or involve others in managing our risks. This is set out in our risk registers.

We have continued to deliver **risk management training** (including by working with out insurers in providing training to our Elected Members). We have members of our staff as members of ALARM (Association of Local Authority Risk Managers) and they are working on risk management. Key members of staff working on risk have continued to undertake training and are continuing to do so. We have carried out training with our senior management team and have e-learning modules available to all staff and Elected Members.

Risk reports are taken to our Corporate Management Team and the **Governance and Audit Committee** (GAC) more regularly. Risk management has been built into our corporate dashboard to be used in how we monitor progress and continuously improve.

**April 2021**

**July 2022**

(Prior to Risk Strategy/  
Policy approval)



- Regular meetings and discussions between departments in addressing risks and integrating plans
- Update reports to our Governance and Audit Committee (GAC)
- Regular meetings and discussions between departments in addressing risks and integrating plans
- Update reports to our Governance and Audit Committee (GAC)
- Memberships and available materials to improve our risk management
- E-learning modules
- Update reports (where appropriate)
- Update reports to our Governance and Audit Committee (GAC)



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



Long term



Prevention



Integration



Collaboration



Involvement



## Performance Management

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

What progress have we made?	Evidence / Observations of change
We are implementing our <b>Performance Management and Quality Assurance Framework</b> (that was approved as part of our Corporate Well-being Plan) this means we are using the 'Plan → Do → Check → Act' model to ensure we remain focused on continuous improvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corporate Well-being Plan.</li> </ul>
We have continued our <b>quarterly performance and improvement reviews (QPIRs)</b> and delivering our scrutiny improvement programme to improve accountability and support continuous improvement. This remains a focus for us. As part of this process and in the development of this report, we have been able to refocus key performance indicators (KPIs) where we have not had fully data sets due to the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic (e.g. our Best Start to Life objective – Education).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-evaluation reports to scrutiny.</li> <li>Corporate self-assessment reporting.</li> </ul>
We have developed a <b>Corporate Dashboard</b> to support how the Corporate Management Team (CMT) manage our performance. We have improved how we report on our Social Services data. We have collaborated with our Regional WCCIS (Welsh Community Care Information System) and neighbouring Councils to do this. This is something we will continue to do going forward.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The use of our Corporate Dashboard has helped us hold people to account and refocus our resources (using our resources effectively, efficiently and economically).</li> </ul>
We remain focused on improving how our <b>'Golden Thread'</b> is understood and implemented. We are working with other support services (e.g. HR) to do this. This integrated approach means we can link individual's objectives to service objectives and through to corporate objectives (well-being objectives).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corporate Well-being Plan.</li> </ul>

We recognise that further work is needed to <b>develop more outcome focused indicators</b> and to ensure that services can effectively demonstrate the impact on residents. We will use our Business Improvement Plans (internal documents that services use to continuously) to do this.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is monitored as part of our self-evaluation process being reported to scrutiny. It is envisaged that this will lead to improv overall outcomes for residents. This will be monitored as part of this self-assessment reporting.</li> </ul>
We want more <b>regular performance reporting</b> to ensure we remain focused on meeting the needs of our residents. We produced the Well-being Assessment and Population Needs Assessment, analysing the needs of residents considering well-being.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-evaluation reports to scrutiny.</li> <li>Corporate self-assessment reporting.</li> </ul>
We have collaborated with our Organisational Development Team and external bodies (e.g. WLGA) to carry out training, staff development and <b>reporting on performance and using data</b> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cabinet and scrutiny reporting.</li> </ul>
<b>Improving our Customer Services</b> remains a focus. We want to continue to make our processes more efficient but ensure we are meeting our customer needs. We want to use our operating model in being digital by design but also ensure we are not excluding anyone (fairness, inclusion and equality remains important to us).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customer feedback and compliments and complaints data.</li> </ul>
We remain focused on <b>strengthening our approaches to digital and data</b> . We will further develop our draft Digital / Data Strategy. This will help our decision making and how we use our resources (effectively, economically and efficiently). This will help how we better consider the long-term and learn lessons to prevent issues happening. We want to involve others in this process to ensure we achieve this.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council, Cabinet, Scrutiny and Governance and Audit Committee reporting.</li> </ul>
We are continuing to <b>refocus our strategies-on-a-page (SOAPs)</b> across the Council. This has been done as part of our recovery from the impacts of the coronavirus. This will continue in 2022/23 as we redevelop our Corporate Well-being Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corporate Well-being Plan.</li> <li>Corporate self-assessment report.</li> </ul>

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



Long term



Prevention



Integration



Collaboration



Involvement



## Corporate Planning

Corporate planning remains an important aspect of our governance framework.

What progress have we made?	Evidence / Observations of change
We are continuing to apply our <b>Operating Model Design (OMD) and Core Values</b> to our design, development and delivery (at an individual, service and corporate level).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Well-being Plan.</li> <li>• Corporate Self-Assessment.</li> </ul>
We continue to use our <b>Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)</b> to support our decision making. Our updated IIA plays a key role in how we assess the impact on these 7 national well-being goals as well as other part of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act2015, protected characteristics, Welsh language, biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems and socio-economic disadvantage (we remain focused on inclusion, equality and fairness). The IIA also requests that data is used as part of the assessment along with how communication and engagement has been undertaken (where required).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audit Wales – National Report.</li> </ul>
We are reviewing our <b>Governance Architecture</b> (key strategies) to ensure our strategies remain aligned to our shared vision (including our well-being objectives) and they we are using our resources effectively, efficiently and economically. This will help us to integrate our strategies and improve how we collaborate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated strategies.</li> </ul>
We have continued to ensure our <b>business continuity plans</b> are relevant and can be used at any time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our working practices.</li> </ul>
We are continuing to build <b>peer challenge</b> into our processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cabinet and Scrutiny Reporting.</li> </ul>
Through gathering and analysing our staff data we can better understand and support our workforce and our key plans, for example the <b>Strategic Equality Plan</b> and various duties such as Older People and Welsh language.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Equality Plan.</li> </ul>

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



Long term



Prevention



Integration



Collaboration



Involvement



## Financial Planning

Financial management remains a focus for us and is a key element of our governance framework (as reflected in our Annual Governance Statement, see below).

What progress have we made?	Evidence / Observations of change
We continue to use our now embedded <b>Budget Board</b> and regular financial reporting to Cabinet. Managing our finances and financing critical plans is discussed regularly at corporate management meetings and is part of our corporate dashboard. This supports how we mitigate our corporate risk relating to finance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cabinet Reports.</li> </ul>
<b>Monthly budget monitoring reports</b> and meetings with budget holders remain in place. This supports management of in-year budgets, again helping us mitigate our corporate risk relating to finance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cabinet Reports.</li> </ul>
Level of <b>engagement and involvement</b> across the Council remains high. Consideration of financial data in decision making is still in place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cabinet Reporting.</li> </ul>
We have been able to use recent settlements to <b>strengthen our capacity</b> through our Council-wide capacity exercises. This supports the delivery of our Recovery, Transformation and Improvement (RTI) Plan and Well-being Objectives. This has allowed us to learn lessons and address capacity issues in critical areas and change the way we work in others (we have involved services in how we do this and collaborated with others). We have integrated our plans with our workforce plans to mitigate our corporate risk relating to capacity. This will help us prevent issues arising going forward.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council reports.</li> </ul>
We have collaborated with other teams from across the Council to support the administration of <b>Welsh Government grants in supporting businesses</b> during the coronavirus pandemic. This supports our working life well-being objective and how we can support long-term thinking. We will build on this approach to ensure we continue to collaborate and use our resources effectively, efficiently and economically.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Returns to Welsh Government.</li> <li>• Businesses being supported.</li> </ul>
To ensure we continually improve, we are <b>refocusing our strategy-on-a-page (SOAP)</b> and ensuring our performance indicators align to ensure we support the Council in meeting its vision and the delivery of its well-being objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our quarterly performance and improvement reviews have shown how refocusing our SOAP can help support the Council in meeting its vision.</li> </ul>

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



Long term



Prevention



Integration



Collaboration



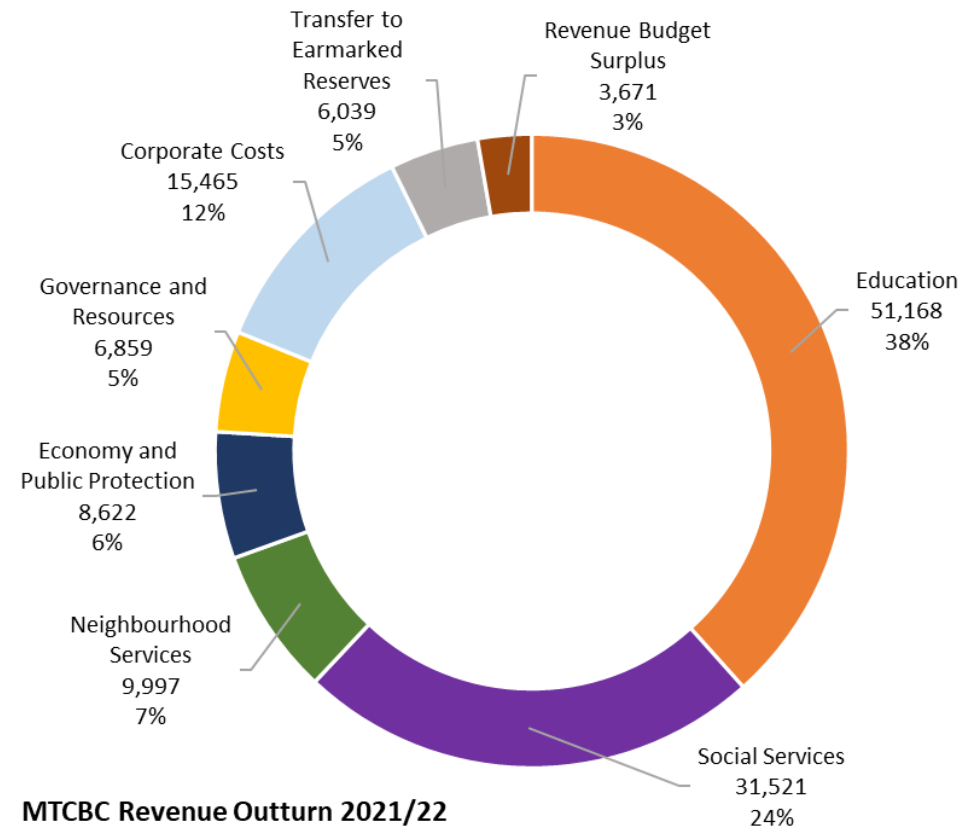
Involvement



**Revenue Budget** - The Council sets a revenue budget each year. This revenue budget covers the costs of the services the Council provides, and is paid for by service users, Welsh Government Grants, Council Tax and Business Rate payers. For 2021-2022, the Council's revenue budget was **£133,342 million**.

The table below and the chart opposite shows the revenue outturn for 2021/2022 by main service area. This aligns to our priority areas and well-being objectives.

Revenue Outturn	£,000
Education	51,168
Social Services	31,521
Neighbourhood Services	9,997
Economy and Public Protection	8,622
Governance and Resources	6,859
Corporate Costs	15,465
Transfer to Earmarked Reserves	6,039
Revenue Budget Surplus	3,671
<b>Total</b>	<b>133,342</b>



**Medium Term Financial Plan** - The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) was revised in 2021/22 to take account monies received from the Welsh Government. The Council set its MTFP to achieve any required savings resulting from settlements. The revenue outturn is reported annually to Cabinet.

### Workforce Planning

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

What progress have we made?	Evidence / Observations of change
We are a lean organisation, meaning our challenges include ensuring all our resources (including our Staff) are appropriately <b>supported and focused</b> on meeting our priorities (being effective, efficient and economical in what we do). The Council has invested in its workforce following capacity exercises and in financing the Recovery, Transformation and Improvement (RTI) Plan. In addition to general growth approvals, approximately £1.5million was invested in 2021/22. This has strengthened how we can deliver our objectives and priorities. This investment has helped how the Council has strengthened areas identified by our regulators and our priorities for improvement. We will continue to review this in line with the challenges and changes we face. This has help us think of long-term planning and prevention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Well-being Plan.</li> <li>• Cabinet Reports.</li> <li>• Audit Wales – Springing Forward Report</li> </ul>
We have continued to <b>collaborate</b> with others in supporting the development of our workforce and meeting our objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Well-being Plan.</li> </ul>
We have continued to improve how we engage and <b>involve our workforce</b> . We ran our staff culture survey and relaunched our staff forum in 2021/22. The findings from these exercises are used in this report and are being used to improve our services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate self-assessment report.</li> </ul>
Our new <b>Organisation Development Team</b> continues to involve and collaborate with others from across the Council to support teams to develop skills to help meet individual, service and corporate objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate self-assessment report.</li> </ul>
We are using available data to deliver our objectives. This is helping with how we are developing our <b>workforce plans</b> across the Council. 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Well-being Plan.</li> <li>• Corporate self-assessment report.</li> </ul>

We will continue to use our performance management framework and personal development plans ( <b>'Focus on Your Performance'</b> ) to support our staff to develop, better deliver our outcomes linked to our corporate priorities, well-being objectives, and shared vision (the 'golden thread').	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corporate Well-being Plan.</li> </ul>
We have continued our <b>apprenticeship programme</b> across the Council. This includes in-work apprenticeships. This is helping us support succession planning (long-term) and mitigation for our corporate risk relating to capacity (prevention).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council report.</li> </ul>
We are refocusing our <b>strategy-on-a-page</b> (SOAP) to ensure we able to support the Council in delivering its objectives and priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corporate Well-being Plan.</li> <li>Corporate self-assessment report.</li> </ul>

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



Long term



Prevention



Integration



Collaboration



Involvement



Our Healthy Organisation programme is a key theme in our Recovery, Transformation and Improvement (RTI) Plan and Corporate Well-being 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 staff 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).



## Assets

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

What progress have we made?	Evidence / Observations of change
Our Estates Management Section continue to lead how we are using assets to support our strategic plans (RTI Plan – <b>Agile working programme</b> ). To do this, teams from across the Council are working together. New models of working are being, or have been, set up. This integrates with our workforce plans. The management of our Estate also links to our financial plans and how we deliver services in the short, medium and long term.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Springing Forward – Strategic Asset Management – Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (Audit Wales; May 2022) – This report relates to 2021/22.</li> </ul>
We have also continued to review how we can best <b>use our estate</b> . For example, we have a tenant for one of our buildings at Pentrebach. We have involved businesses in understanding need. This work will also help us achieve our decarbonisation targets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tenant situated in one of our key buildings.</li> </ul>
We are strengthening how we <b>manage our estate and monitor compliance</b> . The Corporate Data Team have supported the digital design for monitoring using a bespoke dashboard. This will help us to use our resources more effectively, efficiently and economically and also prevent us having to be reactive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change of service practices and development of a dashboard to address internal audit recommendations.</li> </ul>
We are refocusing our <b>Asset Management Plan</b> and integrating it with other key strategic documents of the Council. We can better deliver our objectives and apply the five ways of working through this approach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft Asset Management Plan.</li> </ul>
We are continuing to deliver our 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Schools programme and well as delivering programmes to support how we can reduce our carbon footprint.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools programme and associated funding programme.</li> </ul>

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



Long term



Prevention



Integration



Collaboration



Involvement





## Procurement

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

What progress have we made?	Evidence / Observations of change
<p><b>Procurement Processes:</b> Our procurement processes are under constant review. In June 2021 we revised our procurement rules, reducing some of the internal bureaucracy (becoming more efficient, effective and economical) for contract sign offs and have increased our lower threshold from £5K to £15K (where a formal procurement process is not required) with the aim of making it easier to direct Council spend to smaller local companies (supporting our national goals). Our local spend for 2021/22 was circa 21% of the £100m spent in total. Our pre-selection stage questionnaires include standard SPD (Single Procurement Document) questions are were developed collaboratively with other Councils, we have multiple questionnaires which can be selected and revised depending on risk, value and perceived capabilities of the market. This aligns to our risk strategy/policy (integration).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our procurement rules.</li> <li>• Risk Strategy/Policy – Risk Appetite and Risk Opportunities sections.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Social Value:</b> This important area started to be piloted during 2021/22, it can be a complex area which requires upskilling not only for our own staff but also suppliers in order to maximise the value of each pound spent. This area is still developing, with a draft social value policy and core social value measures being drafted.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft Social Value Policy.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Well-being:</b> All major projects are developed through the lens of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, including and the 5 ways of working (sustainable development principle). We aim to assist our client departments in assessing their needs through the well-being framework to develop specifications and outcomes. Contract management in this area (including social value) is in need of development across the Council. This helps us think long-term and preventative.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procurement framework.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Collaboration:</b> We regularly engage with other Councils in the South East Wales Regional Procurement Group, sharing best practice and knowledge drops, in addition we engage on collaborative tendering on a regional and national basis in order to secure best value for common and repetitive spend areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• South East Wales Regional Procurement Group – Learning being built into our design and development.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Purchasing:</b> We implemented a new corporate purchase to pay system, which was launched in the first quarter of 2021/22. This system facilitates, catalogue ordering, free text ordering, punch out to commerce catalogues and invoice matching and payment. The system provides a secure and auditable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate purchase to pay system.</li> </ul>

method for compliant and efficient ordering of goods and services. This allows us to be more effective, efficient and economical in how we work.	
<b>Procurement planning:</b> This was the first year we attempted a formal procurement planning exercise across the Council. On the whole the Council returned a comprehensive list of planned procurement projects. This enabled more effective planning of procurement resource, to service Council departments at the time of need. Further work cross Council will be required in this area as there were still requests coming through for support that were not advised in the canvas. This allows us to better use of resources and take a preventative and integrated approach to procurement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procurement planning exercise - comprehensive list of planned procurement projects. This has allowed us to work with other teams (collaboration) to think long-term and prevent any issues reoccur. We can better involve others in our service design and delivery.</li> </ul>
<b>Improvement considerations:</b> We are continually monitoring how we can improve and become more effective, efficient and economical in how we procure goods, works and services. This also includes how procurement process can be improved across the Council. We are working collaboratively with other teams to achieve this. We are applying our operating model, e.g. digital by design in doing this.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our service improvement plans.</li> </ul>
<b>Procurement Strategy:</b> We have delayed the publication of a new Procurement strategy, this is mainly due to the upcoming Social Partnerships and Public Procurement (SPPP) Bill, which will require the publication of a new strategy inclusive of specific areas, the strategy was due to be published in 2021/22 but in order to reduce duplication of work, the new strategy will be developed along with revised procurement rules to comply with SPPP bill and the Procurement Reform Bill and provide a sound platform for driving forward Procurement across the Council in 2023/24 and beyond.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Partnerships and Public Procurement (SPPP) Bill.</li> <li>• Procurement Reform Bill.</li> </ul>
<b>Commercial:</b> We have rebranded procurement to the Commercial Unit, widening our scope of work and moving from Finance but staying within the Governance Resources Directorate; this allows us to collaborate with, and involve more teams in what we do and how we can better support the delivery of our well-being objectives. As part of this rebrand, we have employed an additional procurement officer and a commercial manager, providing additional internal resource to serve our client departments (building resilience).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commercial Unit.</li> </ul>

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



Long term



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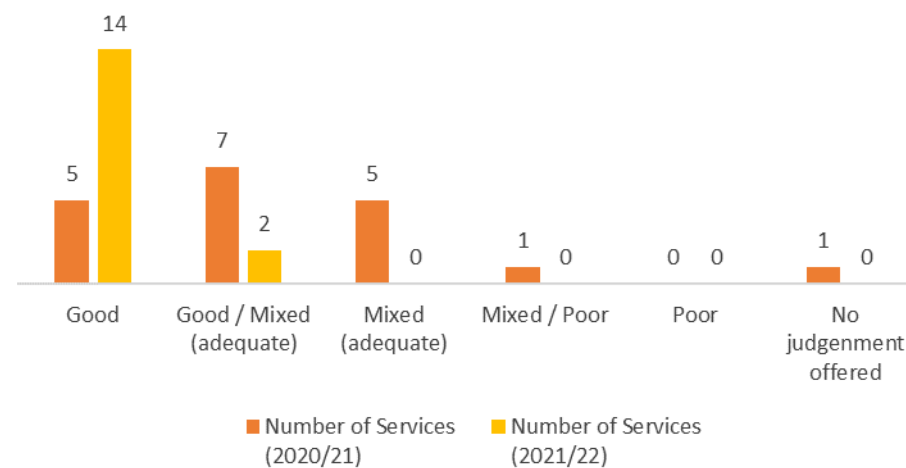


### Feedback from Frontline Services

This includes how the Governance and Resources Directorate is supporting the delivery of our frontline services and our well-being objectives.

As part of our self-evaluation process, we capture if support services are meeting the needs of our frontline services. A breakdown of the findings can be seen in appendix 8. A summary is shown opposite.

### Overall Judgement

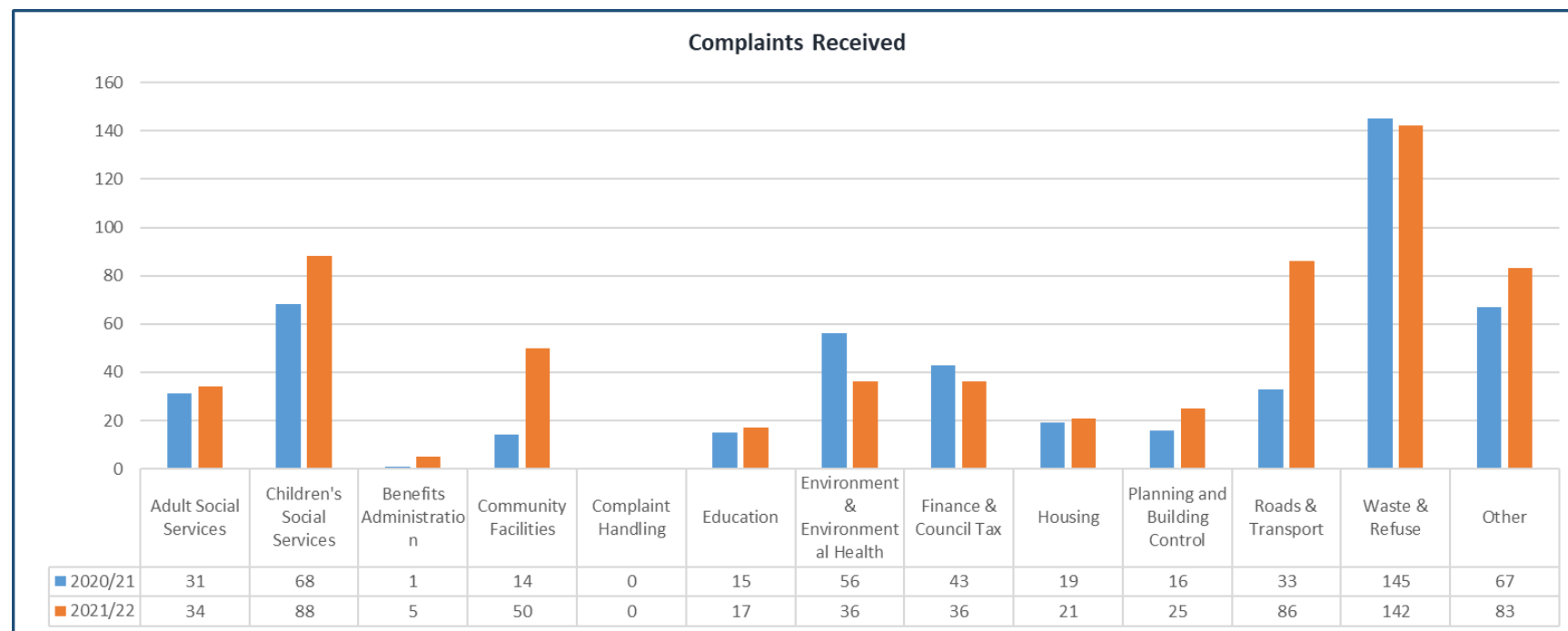


## Complaints

This section has been included as another aspect of viewing our performance and service quality. It should be noted that the chart below shows the number of Corporate Complaints made to the Council in 2021/22 broken down by service per quarter together with last year's data (to show the trends). There are also informal complaints received by the Council that are resolved before becoming Corporate Complaints.

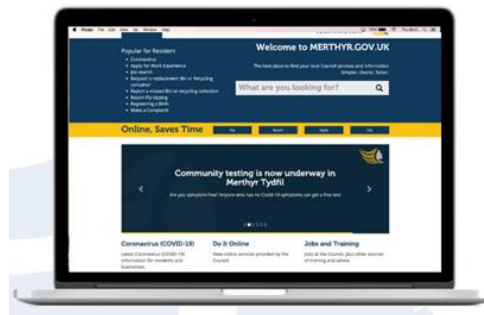
This data is being used to shape operational/service plans by being able to discover any underlying issues (root causes), continuous improvement. This helps improve efficiency and effectiveness in how we allocate our resources and ensure service availability. Addressing the issues helps the Council better achieve its outcomes and use its resource to fix the issue rather than constantly deal with complaints.

On initial analysis but not yet confirmed, our data is relatively high when compared to other Welsh Councils, this will be investigated further. This doesn't necessarily mean we are providing poor services. We have worked to ensure people can use our complaints process and that we can learn from this to continuously improve. More information can be found in our annual complaints reports. This report has been challenged at our officer led quarterly performance and improvement reviews (QPIRs) and Governance and Audit Committee (GAC).



In 2021/22 we received 623 complaints compared to 508 in 2020/21. The greatest increase being in 'Roads and Transport' with the biggest decrease being in 'Environment and Environmental Health'. 9 of the 13 areas have seen an increase in complaints; 1 of the 13 remaining the same; and 3 of the 13 seeing decreases. Initial analysis suggests we receive a higher number of complaints compared to other Councils. More information is available in our annual compliments and complaints report. This is due to be presented at Governance and Audit Committee before going to Cabinet for approval this autumn.

## Customer Services Data



The Council received over **96,000 telephone calls** in 2021/22 with **98.3% of these calls being answered**.

Our **website has seen over 420,000 users in 2021/22**, seeing a **9% increase** on the previous year, with over 4.7 million pages viewed.

**78.6% of those viewing the website were new visitors in 2021/22**, compared to 76% new users the previous year.



## Recover → Transform → Improve 'Our RTI Plan'

The Council's RTI Plan has three priorities (Improving our Educational Standards; Increasing our Resilience in Social Care; Economic Recovery). It also focuses on how the Council will meet its decarbonisation, recycling and reuse targets. This is all underpinned by four work programmes that support the plan (namely: Healthy Organisation; Digital Transformation; Commercialisation; Governance Improvement). As with the Corporate Well-being Plan, the RTI Plan will be reviewed annually to ensure it still meets the requirements of the Council.

The RTI Plan is monitored by the Council's Corporate Management Team (weekly). Following the departure of the Improvement and Assurance Board in March 2022, the Council's RTI Board continues to regularly monitor progress of delivery of the Plan through the RTI Plan dashboard.

						Achieved	Target Completion*
Overall Status	Projects	2	0	3	20	81.54%	84.59%
Best Start - Education: Improving Standards	5	0	0	0	5	74.03%	78.75%
Living Well - Social Services: Increased Resilience	14	2	0	0	4	81.46%	91.40%
Working Life - Economic Recovery	5	0	0	0	5	77.40%	78.15%
Environmental Wellbeing - Recovery	4	0	0	0	0	90.71%	90.92%
Digital Transformation	4	0	0	3	1	92.58%	98.56%
Commercial Programme	1	0	0	0	1	49.74%	50.24%
Healthy Organisation	4	0	0	0	0	77.38%	98.62%
Governance Improvement	4	0	0	0	4	88.25%	90.08%

The Council has delivered 81.54% of its RTI Plan as at 14 September 2022, this is an increase in the completion rate of 23.54% from the completion rate noted in September 2021 (when progress stood at 58%). After reviewing this position (at both steering group and CMT), some delays which had been noted to be affecting the delivery of the priorities or critical paths (predominantly caused by impacts of responding to the coronavirus pandemic) appear to have been managed effectively.

Regular review has identified that, in some cases, some actions originally included are no longer required, in other areas, new actions have been required to deliver the plan. This is to be expected as the environment in which the Council operates continually changes.

### Governance Performance

Our Annual Governance Statement (AGS) provides a full outline and assessment of the governance processes that have been in place. The Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (CIPFA/SOLACE, 2016) guidance has been used in this process. In addition, further CIPFA Guidance Bulletin 06 (Application of the Good Governance Framework 2020/21) was issued in February 2021. The Council has a Local Code of Corporate Governance which was updated and approved in 2020/21.

The AGS states:

“Given the progress made in addressing previous concerns around governance the Head of Internal Audit’s opinion on governance is also Reasonable Assurance.

**Therefore, the Head of Internal Audit’s annual opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council’s framework of governance, risk management and internal control for 2021-22 is: Reasonable Assurance”**

The following table has been produced as part of the AGS. This provides us with areas to focus on to improve our governance.

Issues	2021/22 AGS Position & Action Taken/Planned
<p><b>Financial Pressures: Limited financial resources versus increasing demand for services and capital projects causes budget pressures which impact upon the delivery of public services.</b></p> <p><b>E.g. Reduction in funding from the Welsh Government, lack of investment income, capital receipts, costly care packages, reductions in grant funding.</b></p>	<p>The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2021/2022 to 2024/2025 was approved by Council of 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021 and indicated a revised estimated budget deficit of £13 million over the 4 year period 2021/22 to 2024/25. The MTFP 2022/23 to 2025/26 was presented for approval to Council on 2nd March 2022 and indicated an estimated cumulative budget deficit of circa £16.4 million over the period of the MTFP based on assumptions contained within the MTFP. Although the Council aligns the MTFP with its priorities determined by its wellbeing objectives, it must be appreciated that a MTFP is a rolling programme continuously updated for changing circumstances, new developments and priorities. Consequently, it was recognised that a significant amount of work was still required to fully align spending requirements to Corporate Wellbeing Objectives and available finance. The Council's Operating Model Design defines how the Council is to carry out its business and supports the Council's Corporate Strategy, Wellbeing Objectives and Chief Officer's 'Strategies on a Page'. The Performance Board will monitor achievement against the measures of success and desired outcomes. In addition, financial sustainability and resilience of the Council is monitored by the Chief Finance Officer.</p> <p>It is proposed that General Reserves will be set at a minimum of £5.722 million for the duration of the MTFP 2022/23 to 2025/26. This would allow the Council the flexibility to adequately respond to the risk of potential budget overspends in volatile service budgets whilst addressing the financial implications of demographic pressures. It is not considered prudent for the Council to further utilise general reserves to support its future revenue budget plans owing to the unacceptable risk and exposure to the Council of an inadequate level of reserves to address potential future revenue budget overspends. In addition, the level and adequacy of Council general reserves is also subject to scrutiny by external regulators.</p>
<p><b>Further COVID-19 implications</b></p>	<p>The implications of Covid-19 had a significant impact on the financial performance in 2021/22 and without Welsh Government support it would have been impossible to stay within Budget. Following the +9% settlement increase for 2022/23, Welsh Government has provided indicative settlements of +3.5% for 2023/24 and +2.4% for 2024/25. Owing to the cost of living crisis with spiralling inflation and increasing bank rates together with recovering from the covid pandemic, the Council is faced with significant financial challenges resulting from additional costs, loss of income and supporting the local economy and the council tax payers.</p>

Issues	2021/22 AGS Position & Action Taken/Planned
	<p>The Welsh Government provided financial support for the whole of 2021/22 to support Local Authorities with their significant financial challenges from both additional costs and loss of income. Without continued Welsh Government financial support the Council would have been faced with significant budget deficits requiring in-year service reductions and/or utilisation of reserves.</p> <p>The Council has set out a number of principles which align to the Council's RTI Plan and will be built upon as the Council recovers from the pandemic and continues its transformation and improvement journey.</p>
<b>Impact of the flooding</b>	<p>During February 2020, Storm Dennis inflicted extensive flooding and storm damage on certain areas within the County Borough necessitating the Council submitting to the Welsh Government a schedule of capital repair works totalling £8.453 million for the 3 year period 2020/21 to 2022/23. The Council has received notification of £5.4 million support for 2020/21 to 2021/22 with a further £3 million financial support expected to be confirmed for 2022/23.</p>
<b>Capacity Issues for the Council</b>	<p>Audit Wales, supported by the Welsh Government's Improvement and Assurance Board, has expressed concerns relating to lack of capacity within the Council inhibiting effective planning and essential service succession planning. We have increased capacity in key areas across the council. A first phase of the Council's capacity exercise was undertaken during 2020/21 with investment of £705,000 approved February 2021. The second phase of the capacity exercise was undertaken during 2021/22 with further investment of £725,000 approved October 2021. Potential further capacity issues are currently being considered.</p>
<b>Educational Attainment</b>	<p>The recent Estyn inspection of the Local Authority recognised the journey of travel outlined with the Raising Aspirations, Raising Standards policy. This remains the driver for school improvement across all schools, a recent headteachers conference has identified the need to refresh the strategy over the next 12 months in light of any areas for improvement or otherwise that arise from this years GCSE examinations. There is recognition that the rollout of the Curriculum for Wales will have an impact on reporting of progress measures and ongoing work with schools and Central South Consortium Joint Education Service (CSC) will enable the Local Authority to be increasingly confident about the performance of its schools.</p>
<b>Strengthen Performance Management Arrangements</b>	<p>To accompany its member led scrutiny, the Council has developed and implemented an officer led quarterly performance and improvement review process. This is used alongside the Council's self-evaluation process and has been built into the Council's existing governance and forms part of the Council's approved Performance Management and Quality Assurance Framework (this was approved as part of the Council's Corporate Well-being Plan).</p>



Issues	2021/22 AGS Position & Action Taken/Planned
	<p>A corporate dashboard has been developed to inform Corporate Management Team (CMT) meetings. This will continue to be strengthened in line with the requirements of the Council and will be used as part of the Council's Self-Assessment Report (meeting the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021).</p> <p>On a staff level, the Council has implemented its new e-performance module. This allows the effective and efficient monitoring of 1-2-1 meetings with staff and focus on the performance process. This supports the Council performance improvement but also capacity balancing and succession planning.</p>
<b>Strengthen scrutiny arrangements</b>	<p>Following analysis of a self-evaluation survey (carried out with all those involved in the scrutiny function) and several workshops with Members, the Council has further strengthened its scrutiny improvement plans. The Council has continued to engage, and work with, the WLGA on this. The Council has also worked with independent support provided through the WLGA (a member of the Improvement and Assurance Board that was in place within the Council). Peers from other Councils have provided feedback on key elements of the improvement plans to ensure continuous improvement and challenge is built in.</p> <p>Work programmes have been developed, led by Members, and are being implemented. This has strengthened integration across the delivery of strategies and the forward plans for scrutiny. Further developments to the forward work programmes are in place with a framework for Chairs to use to ensure the right issues are scrutinised. This forms part of the scrutiny improvement plan through a '4 R's' approach i.e. the Right Issues being scrutinised in the Right Way at the Right Time and in the Right Place. As such a focus is being placed on different ways of delivering scrutiny, e.g. pre-decision scrutiny, enquiry days, task and finish groups. Ways to engage the public in the scrutiny process is also being developed and being built into the work programmes.</p> <p>The Council will learn lessons of 2021/22 to promote advertising of co-opted Member vacancies on committees.</p> <p>A practical guide to scrutiny has been developed and shared with all Members to support them in their roles. Training is being delivered, focusing on adding value and the role of scrutiny (in line with the WLGA's 'Improvement Programme – Training Material Overview'). The Council is also making use of on-line material and e-learning training developed by the WLGA. Specific training workshops are being delivered by the WLGA (e.g. Scrutiny Charing).</p>

Issues	2021/22 AGS Position & Action Taken/Planned
	<p>More practical changes are also being implemented such as earlier pre-meetings to enable additional information to be provided or a greater chance to develop questions and lines of enquiry. Quarterly Technical Meetings and Scrutiny Surgeries are being developed to allow scrutineers to gain a better understanding of issues to improve the level of scrutiny.</p> <p>An overarching aim of ‘making a difference together’ is being tested with Members to form the basis of a strategy on a page for scrutiny. This will help assess the impact of scrutiny.</p>
<b>Curriculum Compliance</b>	<p>As the Curriculum for Wales is rolled out there are a number of compliance issues that schools may face. These have not been factored into the roll-out by Welsh Government and the Local Authority together with Central South Consortium Joint Education Service (CSC) will need to ensure that schools are aware of these and supported to be fully compliant.</p>
<b>Property Maintenance Inspection Plans &amp; Regimes</b>	<p>One completed Internal Audit review issued in 2021/22 in relation to Property Maintenance Inspection Plans &amp; Regimes has been given an audit opinion of <b>no assurance</b>, that is, no assurance can be placed on the current systems of internal control, governance and risk management.</p> <p>The objective of the audit was to evaluate the system of internal control with a view to delivering reasonable assurance to the Authority over the adequacy of the internal control environment. The audit work undertaken identified weaknesses in the system of control and also a level of non-compliance to the Authority's Rules &amp; Policies which puts the Authority's objectives at risk. The overall opinion on the internal control environment was graded Poor and resulted in 13 audit recommendations being made, 8 of which were of a high priority. All recommendations have been agreed by management, and progress against these recommendations will be monitored in accordance with routine internal audit monitoring procedures. This audit area will also be included in the internal audit plan for a follow up review during 2022/23. The key issues identified during the audit were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliance inspections need to be undertaken as a matter of urgency and monitored closely.</li> <li>• Compliance visit surveys require updating to include detailed information of the inspection undertaken independently and legislation. Any actions reported on the survey should be monitored for completeness.</li> <li>• The 2020/21 completed compliance visit surveys completed remotely should be inspected by the Statutory Compliance Officer to ensure the</li> </ul>

Issues	2021/22 AGS Position & Action Taken/Planned
	<p>actions are addressed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RAMIS (IT system) requires urgent updates from Building Managers or Property Services Officers providing an independent check/verification to confirm all overdue maintenance works have been addressed/actioned. Additionally, the system should include legislation and statutory guidelines for all buildings/properties.</li> <li>• The Contract Monitoring spreadsheet requires updating to ensure the correct detail is recorded.</li> <li>• Contracts must be reviewed to ensure compliance with the Financial Procedure Rules and Procurement and Contracting Rules.</li> <li>• Training should be provided to all Building Managers and officers who are required to update the RAMIS (IT system).</li> </ul> <p>The matter was reported to the Governance &amp; Audit Committee on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022 and the Building &amp; Property Services Manager attended the Committee meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> February 2022 and advised that positive progress was being made in implementing the recommendations.</p> <p>Internal Audit will conduct a follow up review during 2022/23 with the outcome reported to management and the Committee.</p>

#### What did the regulators say?

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

Findings from ESTYN, CIW and relevant findings from Audit Wales are included in the sections of this report relating to our well-being objectives. As such, this section contains information from Audit Wales linked to the Governance and Resources Directorate and general governance.

Audit Wales completed the work outlined below during 2020-21. This is detailed in their 'Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Annual Audit Summary 2021' report.

- **Continuous improvement**

The Council had to put in place arrangements to make continuous improvements, including related plans and reports, and the Auditor General had to assess whether the Council met these requirements during 2020-21.

- **Audit of Accounts**

Each year the Auditor General audits the Council's financial statements to make sure that public money is being properly accounted for.

- **Value for money**

The Auditor General examines whether the Council has put in place arrangements to get value for money for the resources it uses, and he has to be satisfied that it has done this.

- **Sustainable development principle**

Public bodies need to comply with the sustainable development principle when setting and taking steps to meet their well-being objectives. The Auditor General must assess the extent to which they are doing this.

*(Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Annual Audit Summary 2021; Audit Wales)*

We are working on recommendations from all our regulators. These are being monitored through our audit action plan (AAP) system with regular reports being presented to our Corporate Management Team for monitoring and holding recommendation holders to account.

We have ten recommendations that relate to the corporate position of the Council. We have built these into our improvement plans and they are worked on as part of the governance around our Recovery, Transformation and Improvement (RTI) Plan. These recommendations have been included below along with the status.

Recommendation	Status
1. The Council should address the lack of capacity and expertise to drive and sustain the transformation agenda.	Amber
2. The Council should provide more permanency in its senior management structure at the earliest opportunity.	Complete
3. 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.	Complete
4. 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.	Complete

5. The Council should strengthen its communication and engagement with staff to ensure there is ownership, and understanding, of the Council's plans and ambitions.	Green
6. 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.	Amber
7. The Council should ensure that as a corporate body it remains focused on improving the education outcomes of all children and young people.	Complete
8. 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.	Green
9. 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"> <li>the RTI Plan; and</li> <li>holding the Cabinet to account in accordance with statutory guidance</li> </ul>	Green
10. 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.	Green

#### **Status Key**

Blue - Complete	Red - Significant Issues or Delays	Amber - Some Issues or Delays	Green - No Issues and on Track
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You can visit our regulator websites from the links below:

[www.audit.wales/publications](http://www.audit.wales/publications)

[www.estyn.gov.wales/inspection](http://www.estyn.gov.wales/inspection)

[www.careinspectorate.wales](http://www.careinspectorate.wales)

## Conclusion – Governance and Resources

When forming our conclusion, we have taken into account the various sections detailed above in this section but also considering the corporate position.

We have made progress against our recommendations and strengthen our plans across all aspects of the Governance and Resources Directorate (a conclusion from a recent officer led quarter performance and improvement review). This report has been presented to the Corporate Support and Resources Scrutiny in October 2022. Questions and suggestions have strengthened this report and how we further improve.

In conclusion, using feedback and input from regulators, scrutiny, governance and audit committee, frontline services (as part of our self-evaluation), the public (including external customers), the public, trades unions, businesses and our staff, a **conclusion of adequate** for the Governance and Resources Directorate is included in this self-assessment report. We will monitor this position, against our newly developed strategies-on-a-page (SOAPs) to provide additional evidence next year, where **a target of good is proposed**.

Below we have set out high-level actions that we will deliver and monitor to report on in our corporate self-assessment report next year.





- Continue to deliver changes following the approval of our new risk strategy/policy.
- Continue to collaborate with partners (e.g. Welsh Local Government Association – WLGA) to strengthen our scrutiny function, building on the good work already done.
- Continue to review and update our SOAPs and business improvement plans (BIPs) in line with the renewal of our Corporate Well-being Plan. This includes addressing any arising issues and/or recommendations (e.g. strengthening how we address building compliance).
- Continue to develop and strengthen our workforce plans (including considering succession planning, capacity and skills).
- Further develop our Digital and Data strategy to further enhance decision making and how we use data to meet the needs of our residents.
- Improve our customer service offer (making it more effective, efficient, and economical while still meeting the needs of our residents).
- Continue to review our corporate well-being plan and build in our RTI Plan principles.
- Use horizon scanning to focus on the likely upcoming challenges such as the cost-of-living position and wider financial challenges.
- Strengthen our communication and engagement including the development of our participation and engagement strategy.
- Continue to deliver our Welsh language, ageing well, inclusion and equality plans.
- Continue our preparations regarding the Social Partnerships and Public Procurement (SPPP) Bill and Procurement Reform Bill.
- Continue to strengthen our general governance (e.g. renewing our constitution).

## How well are we doing?

### Our Overall Position

In the last section we were able to see how we use our governance and how well we are doing against our support services and the elements of our governance. In this section we will consider our well-being objectives.

The Council has used the Well-being of Future Generations Commissioner's self-reflection tool to review progress against our well-being objectives, as well considering how the Council has used the five ways of working. The tool considers where we are now and offers prompts for reflection. The Council has moved from 'getting started' in year one of the plan through 'making changes' and 'being more adventurous' to where it is now, i.e. 'owning our ambition'. This is true across all four well-being objectives.

Well-being Objectives	<i>Getting started</i>	<i>Making simple changes</i>	<i>Being more adventurous</i>	<i>Owning our ambition</i>	<i>Leading the way</i>
 <b>Best Start</b>				✓	
 <b>Working Life</b>				✓	
 <b>Environmental Well-being</b>				✓	
 <b>Living Well</b>				✓	

As a quick guide:





- **‘Getting started’** means this is a new objective or a change in direction for the organisation. This could also mean you have faced challenges or barriers to progress.
- **‘Making simple changes’** should be quick and easy to implement. They’re often actions that are ‘low hanging fruit’, that have been tested by others and have a low risk of failure. They mobilise and involve people, aligning the agendas of different departments. In 2018, the Commissioner published some examples of the ‘simple changes’ some public bodies are already making in taking steps to meet their well-being objectives and maximise contribution to the national well-being goals: <https://futuregenerations.wales/the-art-of-the-possible/>
- **‘Being more adventurous’** involves stepping out of a ‘business as usual’ mindset and acting to change how things are currently done. Signalling early progress to wider change, this might involve a change in strategy or team approach to doing something and could involve more departments and organisations than a ‘simple change’.
- **‘Owning our ambition’** can be a similar stage to ‘being more adventurous’ with initiatives developing and more people becoming involved. The organisation will be taking more well-managed risks, reaching out to other sectors to make progress and collaborating on funding or staffing. The organisation defines its approach as ambitious and staff feel empowered to work across sectors and influence change.
- Those that are **‘Leading the way’** may be the first people or organisation to be taking these actions and are a guide for others to follow. This is a systemic, transformational change to how things have always been done and will require reallocating resources, time to put the changes in place and collaboration with other bodies. Actions are innovative, inspirational and collaborative, putting the Act into practice across larger portfolios to achieve the Wales we want. This way of working becomes embedded in the organisation and good practice is shared with others.

(Making progress towards your well-being objectives Self-reflection tool; Future Generations Commissioner for Wales)







The 7 national well-being goals 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 report, we mapped the initial planned response to the national well-being goals. We want to continue to ensure we use our resources effectively and efficiently in delivering our objectives. 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. Through reflection and evaluation, we have identified examples of how our contributions have developed as a consequence of us working in different ways. In addition to this, we have also considered case studies (see below in this report).

Well-being Objective	Contributions to Well-being Goals at 2017						
 <b>Best Start to Life</b>	Yellow	White	Red	Red	White	White	Blue
 <b>Working Life</b>	Yellow	Orange	White	Red	Dark Blue	Blue	Blue
 <b>Environmental Well-being</b>	Yellow	Orange	White	White	Dark Blue	Blue	Blue
 <b>Living Well</b>	White	White	Red	Red	Dark Blue	White	Blue

Well-being Objective	Contributions to Well-being Goals at 2022						
 <b>Best Start to Life</b>	Yellow	Orange	Red	Red	Dark Blue	Blue	Blue
 <b>Working Life</b>	Yellow	Orange	Red	Red	Dark Blue	Blue	Blue
 <b>Environmental Well-being</b>	Yellow	Orange	Red	Red	Dark Blue	Blue	Blue
 <b>Living Well</b>	Yellow	Orange	Red	Red	Dark Blue	White	Blue

Contributions to Well-being Goals at 2020						
Yellow	Orange	Red	Red	White	Blue	Blue
Yellow	Orange	Red	Red	Dark Blue	Blue	Blue
Yellow	Orange	Red	Red	Dark Blue	Blue	Blue
White	Orange	Red	Red	Dark Blue	White	Blue

Contributions to Well-being Goals at 2021						
Yellow	Orange	Red	Red	Dark Blue	Blue	Blue
Yellow	Orange	Red	Red	Dark Blue	Blue	Blue
Yellow	Orange	Red	Red	Dark Blue	Blue	Blue
Yellow	Orange	Red	Red	Dark Blue	White	Blue

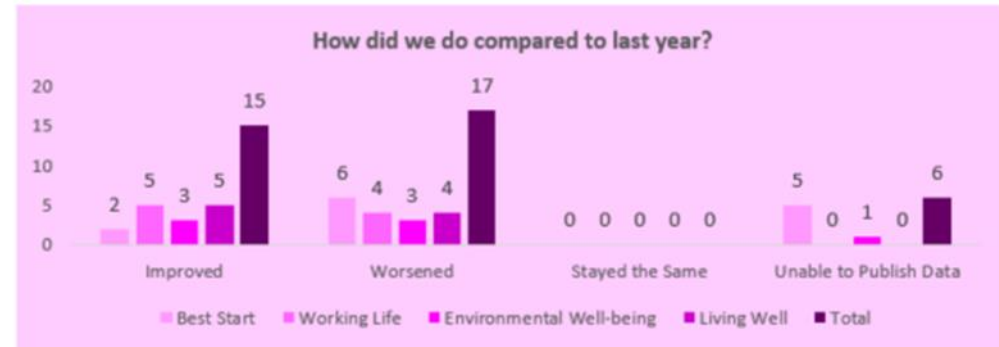
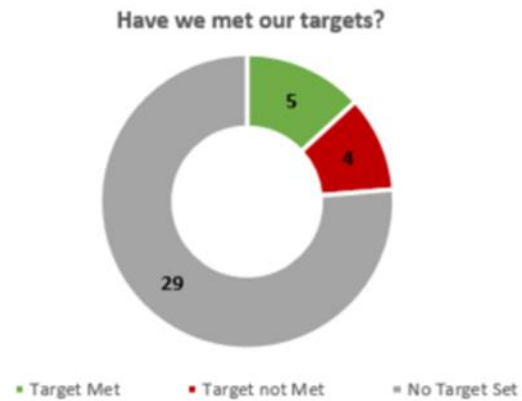
Our corporate position below considers our self-evaluation, our key performance indicators (KPIs), trend data and comparative data (where possible). We have also considered our well-being objectives in more detail.



What did our self-evaluation say?

What is our conclusion?  
(Self-Assessment Report)

How did we do compared to last year?



The **Trades Unions** have provided positive feedback regarding how we are working together. Regular meetings are in place and Officers can attend to discuss any issues and performance.

We have used findings from our **staff culture survey** (appendix 5) and staff feedback as part of our self-evaluation process to help us support our staff to deliver our services.

We continue to have a **Youth Cabinet** and listen to their views on our performance and use this in how we plan and deliver our services.

### How will we work?



Long Term



Prevention



Integration



Collaboration



Involvement

All these findings are being used to inform our service delivery and plans. It will help us to continue to take a preventative and long-term approach. We will also monitor resident's feedback as part of our performance and monitoring. We will not do this on our own. We will continue to collaborate with others (internal and external to the Council). We have integrated our plans and will continue to do so. A summary chart showing how we are using the sustainable development principle (5 ways of working) can be found below in this report.

As we deliver our Well-being Objectives, we will continue to contribute to our **7 National Goals**. This is demonstrated in our case studies (qualitative) and in our performance indicators (quantitative). A summary table showing how we are supporting the 7 national goals can be found below in this report.



A Prosperous Wales



A Resilient Wales



A Healthier Wales



A More Equal Wales



A Wales of Cohesive



A Wales of Vibrant Culture &  
Thriving Welsh Language



A Globally  
Responsible Wales



## Best Start to Life



Portfolio Member  
Councillor Michelle  
Jones

<b>Objective</b>	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
<b>Primary Outcome</b>	Improve the educational outcomes for all children and young people
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Director - Education
<b>Improvement Focus</b>	Improving our Education Standards

### Background

Raising standards of attainment is a priority for the Council. Well-being is strongly linked to attainment. Pupils with better health and well-being are more likely to be ready to learn and achieve better academically. Improving our Education Standards is a priority for the Council. This has been approved as part of the Council's Corporate Well-being Plan and Recovery, Transformation and Improvement Plan.

We recognise that early years are fundamental to a child's potential for learning and their future life chances as is the support of the family. We want all children to be equipped with the skills they need to reach their academic potential and contribute as responsible residents to their own development and that of the wider community.

In schools, our priorities are to drive improvement in standards of literacy and numeracy, through improving the quality of teaching and leadership, and to reduce the impact of socio-economic deprivation on educational attainment.

It is vitally important that the whole Council works together, and with its partners to achieve this objective. There are clear links to this objective from across our objectives. For example, how Living Well and the work undertaken by Social Services can support early years and families. Another example is how Working Life and Best Start to Life are linked through the Business Education Training Partnership (BETP) concept which aims to provide pupils with information and understanding on the various job opportunities and career pathways that exist.

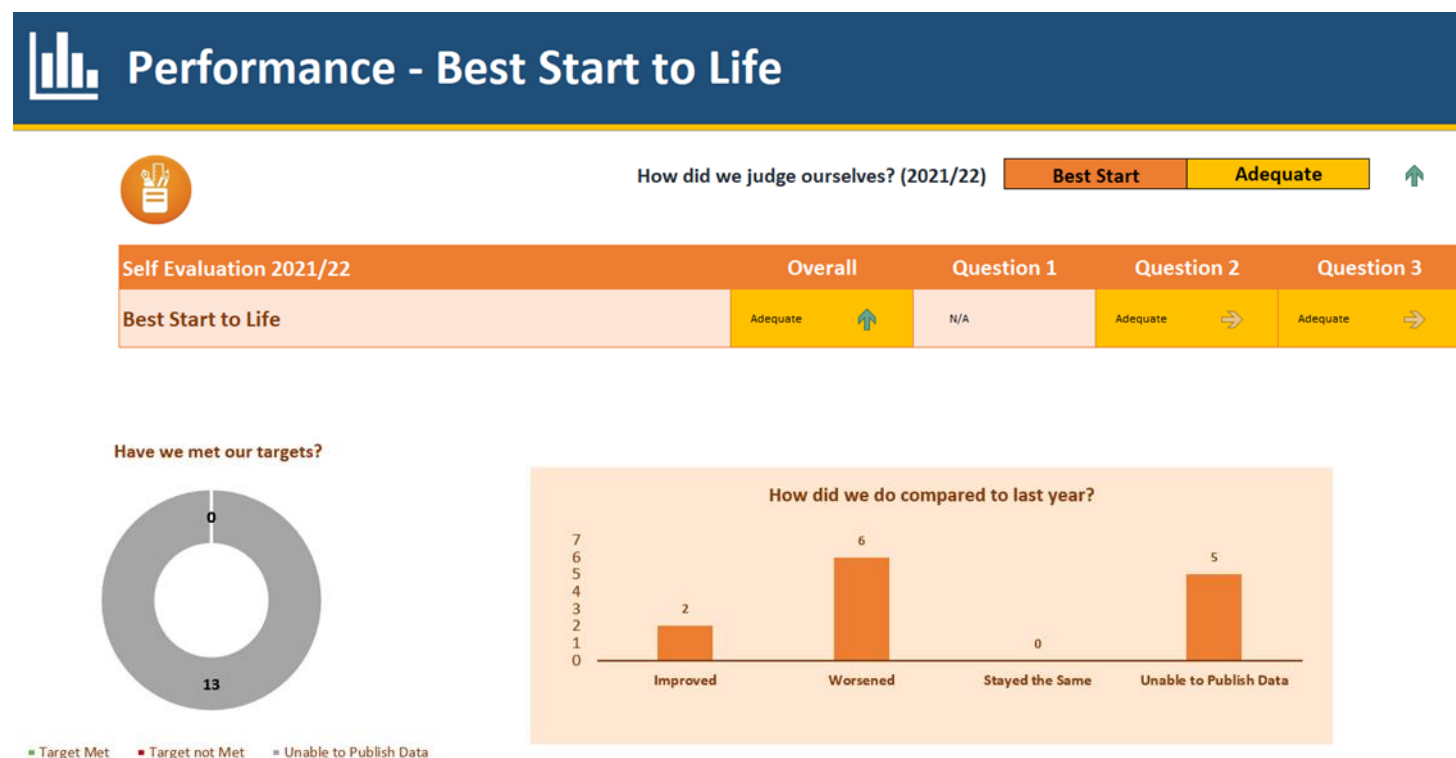


A Prosperous Wales

## Our Performance

### The Data and Self-Evaluation

Up to date national data (including the Public Accountability Measures (PAMs)) is not available for many of the key performance indicators previously used. There isn't data available for the traditional Education performance indicators for 2021/22 due to impacts of the coronavirus pandemic and changes to how data can be shared. As a result, we have developed alternative performance indicators (most of which have trend data) to measure our success and target how we can use our resources effectively, efficiently and economically in supporting our continuous improvement. These are set out below. We will also be able to consider if it is appropriate to set new targets to fit with our ambitions to achieve our outcomes.



**Question 1** – Outcomes

**Question 2** - Provision and Service Delivery

**Question 3** - Leadership & Management

Key Performance Indicator	2020/21	2021/22 (Target)	2021/22	Did we meet our target?	How did we do compared to last year?	Trend
Percentage of Flying Start children taking up full or reduced offer of childcare (FY)	91%	-	94%		▲	↗
Family support cases closed without re-engagement or escalation to Social Services within 6 months of closure **	-	-	-			—
Percentage of persistent absentees in Primary schools (AY)	10.90%	-	9.72%		▼	↘
Percentage of persistent absentees in Secondary Schools (AY)	20.37%	-	24.29%		▲	↗
Secondary schools fixed term exclusions 5 days or fewer (Rate per 1,000 pupils) (AY)	5.5	-	19.7		▲	↗
Primary schools fixed term exclusions 5 days or fewer (Rate per 1,000 pupils) (AY)	56.4	-	146		▲	↗
Number of pupils on reduced timetables for more than 4 weeks in primary schools (AY)	19	-	37		▲	↗
Number of pupils on reduced timetables for more than 4 weeks in secondary schools (AY)	39	-	59		▲	↗
Percentage of schools inspected having a positive inspection outcome (AY) *	-	-	100%			↗
Average number of pupils using the 'Food and Fun' programme (SHEP) over the summer holidays which benefits their health & wellbeing. (AY) ***	69	-	-			↘
The percentage of pupils educated through the medium of Welsh in Year 1 (AY)	13.60%	-	13.20%		▼	↘
The percentage of year 11 leavers that are not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) (AY) ***	1.90%	-	-			↘
Increase the number of pupils achieving level 3 qualifications at post 16 (AY) ***	40.00%	-	-			↘

\* Unable to collect/publish data  
 \*\* New measure, data being developed  
 \*\*\* Awaiting data validation

[View More Measures](#)

- All secondary schools are able to articulate in a highly effective manner the progress and standards of their cohorts, giving specific examples of support provided to enable pupils to achieve in line with their school set targets. Where this has not been the case, the schools are able to give detailed explanations.
- The gap between the local authority and Wales in English language has narrowed from 12.3 percentage points to 10.4 percentage points, and in English literacy from 21.6 percentage points to 18.7, however, both are still below the Welsh averages. As a result, support for English teams in two of the four secondary schools has been brokered to support raising attainment in English language in line with the Raising Aspirations Raising Standards (RARS) strategy.
- The average numeracy point score has improved at a greater rate than other indicators and is now above the 2019 Wales averages

- Despite the pandemic, most schools were able to ensure that most pupils could provide sufficient evidence to grade and leave school with qualifications. In three out of four secondary schools, no pupil left without a qualification, and at Level 1, for three out of the four schools, they achieved 100%.
- The gap between non-free school meals and free school meals has narrowed but has fluctuated. Eligible for Free School Meals (EFSM) boys across many schools are achieving less well than girls.
- The ambition outlined in the RARS strategy can be seen with improvements in the number of pupils achieving A\*/A.
- Pupils identified as Additional Learning needs (ALN) have achieved well in making progress from their starting points. They are making good progress in line with targets and expected outcomes identified on their Individual development plans as well as baseline assessment data.
- The performance of English as an Additional Language (EAL) and Children Looked After (CLA) pupils is variable due to the low numbers involved.
- The Gender Gap has fluctuated and widened this year across schools but the three-year trend across most schools is narrowing. Boys (middle to low ability) are performing less well than girls. This is an emerging theme.
- Despite improvements, the local authority's performance in most key indicators is still below the 2019 Wales averages.

### Regulator Feedback

Feedback from the **Estyn** Inspection (undertaken in January 2022) was positive for the most part with plenty of good practice highlighted. Some examples of good practice are included below - these have been taken directly from the Estyn report.

- Senior officers and elected members share a clear vision for education in Merthyr Tydfil, and this is articulated well in the corporate plan and the education directorate's five-year 'Raising Aspirations, Raising Standards' strategy.
- The development of the 'Team Around the School' approach provides constructive opportunities for local authority and CSC officers to share valuable information relating to individual school needs and agree actions to address any concerns.
- The local authority works well with CSC to identify schools causing concern and usually provides timely and helpful support for these schools to improve.
- The local authority works well with a wide range of partners to reduce the impact of poverty and disadvantage on pupils' learning. The strength of partnership working enabled the local authority to deliver an engaging and successful 'Summer of Fun' programme of activities in 2021, which supported learners from disadvantaged backgrounds especially. Partnership work between the local authority, early years providers, primary schools and other partners is particularly strong in supporting children's early development of skills.
- Open access youth work is of a very good standard. The local authority highly values the voice of young people and provides them with significant opportunities to influence decisions that affect them, at service and strategic levels.

We will use these areas of good practice to build on and improve how we deliver our services and explore how we can replicate this good practice in other areas that require improvement.

4 recommendations were made as part of this ESTYN inspection. Work is ongoing to strengthen the identified areas for improvement and to address the recommendations. Our Learning Away Days have been fundamental in shaping our responses to the recommendations and our plans to improve the identified areas for improvement. We will continue to work with our key stakeholders both internally and externally to ensure that our plans and direction of travel are robust and will meet the needs of our communities. We will use the Council's Audit Action Plan (AAP) system to monitor our progress, this will be challenged by our Corporate Management Team (CMT) and Governance and Audit Committee (GAC).

## Case Studies

The following case studies have been developed for this area and they can be viewed in full in appendix 9.

- Pen Y Dre High School Wins Cymraeg Campus Gold Award
- School Council Pupils Question Councillors over the Environment
- Food and Fun 2021
- School Meal Prices Frozen for 2021/22


We have developed these four case studies to help us celebrate success and share lessons with other areas of the Council. However, we realise that we can learn lessons from things we do not do well or where data highlights issues. In future we will consider case studies that show this. This is also a view of our Corporate Support and Resources **Scrutiny** when our case studies were challenged.

We received positive feedback from the **Future Generations Commissioner** when we involved our schoolchildren to hear their views to inform how we address our environmental challenges.



## Well-being Toolkit

We have used the Well-being of Future Generations Toolkit against each of our Well-being Objectives.

Well-being Objectives	<i>Getting started</i>	<i>Making simple changes</i>	<i>Being more adventurous</i>	<i>Owning our ambition</i>	<i>Leading the way</i>
 <b>Best Start to Life</b>				✓	



The key focus for the Education Department is to meet the objectives set out within the RARS Strategy (2021–2026). This is our key strategic document which will be used to monitor progress of our key commitments over the next 5 years and beyond. It is too early to measure progress of RARS in a meaningful way as we are in the early stages of our journey. However, it has been positive to see the level of buy-in from our key stakeholders; the appetite shown towards achieving the objectives of the RARS has been an area of encouragement.

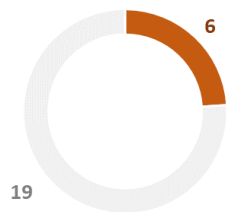
It is our priority to continue the work of the RARS and to ensure that the key commitments set out within the RARS are captured in everything we do. In order to achieve the RARS objectives, we will continue to work closely with our stakeholders and continue to explore different ways of working to improve the delivery and outcomes of our services.

The full impact of the coronavirus pandemic is yet to be determined, and will no doubt continue to be measured for years to come. However, as a Council, we have reflected on the many lessons learned from the pandemic and have developed a number of plans over the last 12 months to help us move forward. The Council's Recovery, Transformation and Improvement (RTI) Plan continues to be monitored and will be integrated into our Corporate Well-being Plan for 2023.

We have also considered feedback from our regulators when using the toolkit. This is set out above in this report.

### What other feedback did we have?

6 of the 25 consultations directly relate to the Best Start to Life objective.



The details of these consultations, along with other consultations, can be found in appendix 4. It may be the case that some of these consultations involve more than one of our well-being objectives.

We introduced an additional question to our **residents survey** this year. This asked our residents 'How satisfied are you overall with Merthyr Tydfil's education and learning provision?'. This question compliments the question 'How satisfied are you overall with Merthyr Tydfil's services and support for children and young people?'. Findings for these questions and the rest of the resident's survey can be found in appendix 7.

Findings - How satisfied are you overall with Merthyr Tydfil's services and support for children and young people?

- 29.8% of respondents said they were 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied';
- 42.7% of respondents said they were 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied'; and
- 29.8% of respondents said they were 'fairly dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied'.

Findings - How satisfied are you overall with Merthyr Tydfil's education and learning provision?

- 44.6% of respondents said they were 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied';
- 40.4% of respondents said they were 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied'; and
- 14.9% of respondents said they were 'fairly dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied'.

Our **budget survey** found that those taking part viewed Schools and Education as the **joint second priority** important to them. As part of the survey, consultees were asked to use 8 votes against 10 service areas.

Our **complaints data** showed that we received 17 corporate complaints in 2021/22 (an increase of 2 since 2020/21).

Our **needs assessment** findings can be found in appendix 6. These findings are being used to improve our services but will also be used to inform the review of our Corporate Well-being Plan. A summary of key points is set out below.

- **Data** – This shows that in all areas of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg footprint, attainment levels are lower than the Wales average and all adult age ranges (16-64 years), Merthyr Tydfil has the highest level of adults with no qualifications.
- **Challenge** – The impact of the coronavirus pandemic has been difficult for pupils and learners to manage; the fragmented patterns of access to learning is anticipated to have a negative effect on achievement of qualifications.
- **Opportunities** – Provide work experience opportunities; better identifying current job demands; and anticipating the future business growth and development areas.

We are continuing to work with departments from across the Council, partners and businesses to help strengthen our plans. An example of this is the Business Education Training Partnership.

### Rationale

There have been a number of changes to the reporting of education data over the last 2-3 years. In 2018/19, Welsh Government introduced changes to published data, which removed school level data for Key Stage 2 & 3, and the Foundation Phase, which meant year on year comparative data could not be made. Subsequently, in 2020, the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic meant there was not nationally collected or reported data for key stage 4 or attendance. The pandemic also caused the suspension of inspections of schools and most other education providers between March 2019 and September 2021.

Despite these issues however, we have worked closely with our key stakeholders including our Education Senior Leadership Team (ESLT) to develop a new accountability framework which includes a set of new measures for monitoring our performance data. These measures have been captured in the Performance Indicators section below. This will help us to deliver against our priority of 'Improving our Education Standards'.

Prior to the global pandemic, there was a downward trend in standards and progress overall. As a result, the learning department, together with a range of stakeholders, formulated the Raising Aspirations, Raising Standards Strategy as well as our Business Improvement Plans (BIPs) to raise and monitor standards and overall progress of schools.

In partnership with the Central South Consortium (CSC), the local authority has continued to effectively challenge low expectations, low standards of attainment and poor-quality leadership through regular monitoring, challenge and support framework.

The BIP process has yielded visible progress in nearly all schools and enhanced the Local Authority's knowledge of the issues that need supporting. The Local Authority and CSC work well to shape and provide enhanced support to schools with higher support needs.

Improving rates of persistent absences remains a focus for the Council, as does reducing exclusion rates across all our schools.

Self-evaluation revealed that provision and service delivery (including service availability) and leadership and management were both 'adequate'. A judgement could not be reached for outcomes due to data being unavailable as a result of the impacts of the pandemic. These judgements have been challenged at scrutiny committees throughout 2021/22. They have also been challenged at quarterly performance and improvement reviews by corporate management and Cabinet Members.

Our overall self-evaluation conclusion for 2021/22 was 'adequate', an increase from unsatisfactory in 2020/21. It must however be noted that we could not report on standards (key question 1 - Outcomes) due to the lack of reportable performance measures. Despite this, nearly all schools are able to articulate, in a highly effective manner, the progress and standards of their cohorts, giving specific examples of support provided to enable pupils to achieve in line with their school set targets.

## Conclusion

When forming our conclusion, we have taken into account the various sections detailed above in this section but also considering the corporate position.

We acknowledge the hard work done by all those involved in raising aspirations of our learners and raising our education standards. This has been shown in our self-assessment. We can also celebrate our successes, like the positive feedback from the Future Generations Commissioner, but we must also remain focused on the challenges we have in the short, medium and long term.

It is important however to focus on the attainment of all of our learners to give them the best start to life. By delivering our Raising Aspirations Raising Standards (RARS) strategy and associated plans, we will also support wider issues that face our communities, for example tackling poverty, cost of living issues and climate challenges to state a few.

There are many examples coming from our needs assessment that would benefit from focusing on the outcomes from the Best Start to Life will help support the needs of our communities. Through delivering our objective we will also address some of our corporate risks, especially relating to performance and education standards.

As such we have identified actions for improvement that form part of the action plan developed as part of this report. These are summarised below.

- Improve our education standards through continuing to collaborate in delivering our RARS strategy in order to provide our learners with the opportunities they deserve.
- Improve our attendance and exclusion data by implementing our attendance plan and our Business Improvement Plans.
- Use recent investment and remain focused on ensuring our resources are supporting our outcomes.
- Continue to take innovative ways to support our learners in collaboration with a range of partners.
- Address the recommendations from ESTYN, for example work with the Governance and Resources Directorate to build on the work done to strengthen our scrutiny function.



## Working Life



Portfolio Member  
Councillor Geraint Thomas



Portfolio Member  
Councillor Michelle  
Symonds

<b>Objective</b>	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
<b>Primary Outcome</b>	Developing the environment and infrastructure for businesses to flourish
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Deputy Chief Executive
<b>Improvement Focus</b>	Economic Recovery

### Background

The Working Life theme within the Corporate Well-being Plan has led to opportunities for a more inclusive approach to be developed to strengthen the wider work which supports the improvement of skills and the environment and infrastructure for business to flourish.

Work undertaken during 2021-22 continued to integrate the wide range of activities undertaken which had a strategic focus on both economic and wider infrastructure; and aimed to improve the economic position in Merthyr Tydfil. Economic Recovery remains a priority in the Council's Recovery, Transformation and Improvement Plan. Good progress has been made in relation to this with both the Economic Vision/Recovery Plan and the creation of an Economic Recovery Board workstreams of this Plan being completed.

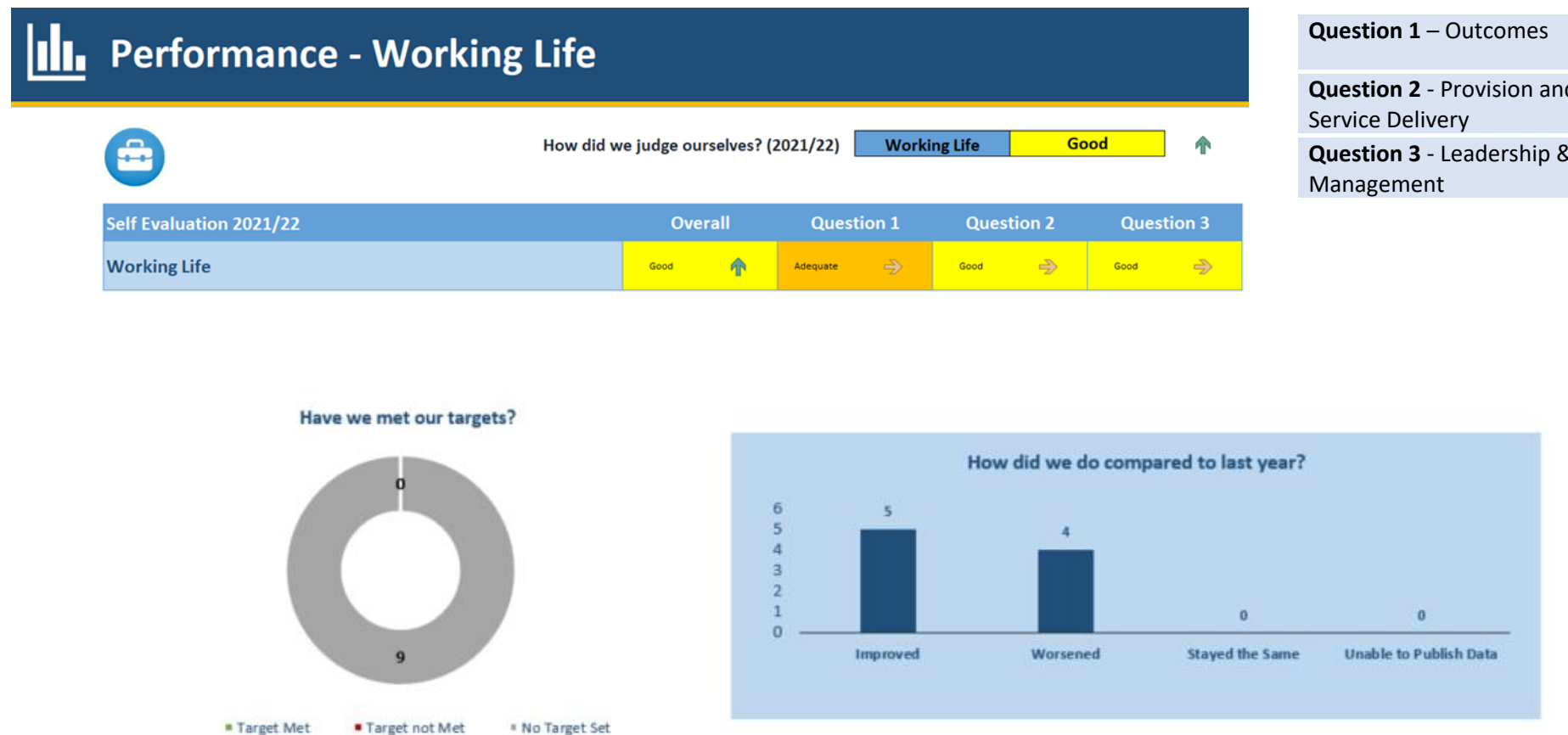
When looking at the Council's response in relation to the labour market and skills, we continued to embed a collaborative culture to tackling unemployment and to offer more co-ordinated programmes and interventions to support adults and young people (16 plus) in developing their skills for employment, self-employment or volunteering opportunities.

The 'Business Education Together Partnership' (BETP) formed in 2021 continues to strengthen the links between the Working Life and Best Start to Life corporate objectives. The work of this partnership aims to provide greater opportunities for learners and school leavers, connecting them with the world of work.

## Performance Indicators

### *The Data and Self-Evaluation*

Appendix 10 provides national and local performance data over 5 years with comparisons against the Welsh average. Analysis is also included. This helps how we plan and continuously improve at a service level but helps support our corporate position, e.g. delivering our Well-being objectives. This is used to inform business improvement plans (service level) and our quarterly performance and improvement reviews (corporate level) as part of our governance and as set out in our performance management and quality assurance framework (which forms part of our corporate plan). It should be noted that Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council's services contribute to; but are not wholly accountable for, this data. As such, we need to continue to work collaboratively and integrate our plans.



Key Performance Indicator	2020/21	2021/22 (Target)	2021/22	Did we meet our target?	How did we do compared to last year?	Trend
% of working age population in employment	65.8	-	69.2		▲	
% of working age population who are qualified to NVQ level 2 and above	63.3	-	58.4		▼	
% of population with no qualification	14.9	-	20.3		▲	
% of 16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training	2.7	-	1.9		▼	
Number of business births	190	-	180		▼	
Number of business deaths	165	-	155		▼	
% of participants in employment upon leaving the EU funded programmes	39	-	67		▲	
% of participants who gain a qualification on completion of an 'out of work' training programme	21	-	24		▲	
% of participants who gain a qualification on completion of an 'in work' training programme	84	-	58		▼	

### Regulator Feedback

Audit Wales published their 'Regenerating town centres in Wales' report in September 2021. This report explained:

"... one in seven shops on Welsh high streets now empty, despite the Welsh Government investing and leveraging in £892.6 million in the last seven years. Local authorities do not have the capacity to respond to this situation and are not always using the powers they have to help regenerate towns. To deliver the best local outcomes, policies and joint working need to be aligned and integrated, and resources prioritised on town centres."

*Regenerating town centres in Wales; Audit Wales; 2021*

### Case Studies

The following case studies have been developed for this area and they can be viewed in full in appendix 9.


- Aspire Apprenticeship Scheme
- Bringing Affordable Homes to Merthyr Tydfil County Borough
- Town Centre Safer following £500,000 Security Boost

- New Bus Station Winning Numerous Awards
- Introducing Natasha's Law (Food Labelling)
- Supporting Local Businesses and Community Group to access Grants
- Merthyr Tydfil City Status Bid

We have developed these 7 case studies to help us celebrate success and share lessons with other areas of the Council. However, we realise that we can learn lessons from things we do not do well or where data highlights issues. We have included an example of this. In future we will consider more case studies that show this. This is also a view of our Corporate Support and Resources **Scrutiny** when our case studies were challenged.

#### Well-being Toolkit

We have used the Well-being of Future Generations Toolkit against each of our Well-being Objectives.

Well-being Objectives	<i>Getting started</i>	<i>Making simple changes</i>	<i>Being more adventurous</i>	<i>Owning our ambition</i>	<i>Leading the way</i>
 <b>Working Life</b>				✓	

Over the past 12 months; a further improvement of connectivity across teams supported improved delivery of services that continued to meet existing community needs, whilst also working to develop and secure approval for an Economic Vision for the next 15 years (and beyond) as part of the Council's Recovery, Transformation & Improvement Plan.

A deeper understanding of existing collaborative working within the Community Regeneration, Public Protection and Housing services; and much more widely across the Council and with other external key partners/stakeholders has been developed. This has enabled teams to more clearly identify how the work they deliver contributed not only to the Working Life well-being objective, but also other corporate well-being objectives, wider regional priorities and the national wellbeing goals. The identification of opportunities to work together to do different things which could improve the services offered - using lessons learned will help us to work towards further improving outcomes and to meet set targets.



2021-22 has continued to provide some challenges in relation to all elements of the services' workload. A number of impacting factors noted include:

- The local economy is still suffering from the impact of Covid to some degree, but increasingly from the significant cost of living crisis which we know is predicted to get worse. Teams continue to work with communities and key stakeholders to develop support to manage these significant additional pressures in a proactive way;
- The issues identified around housing and homelessness may be further exacerbated by the increasing pressures brought to bear by the cost of living increases; and the projected rise in the number of people in work who could fall into poverty;
- Uncertainty around the economy; and the introduction of funding to replace the significant amount of European funding previously received have led to some uncertainty around the sustainability of certain services offered by the Council; this uncertainty is still a factor being dealt with;
- Though work has been undertaken to improve capacity in services; the volume of work being undertaken by service teams is still significant and managing this can be a challenge; and
- Our services have made a concerted effort to prioritise looking at how teams would work effectively with other Council services to maximise opportunities to make positive progress against joint targets and objectives with a view to improving outcomes for citizens.

Economic recovery following the pandemic will be challenging over the short, medium and long-term, so we will need to ensure our recovery actions reflect this.

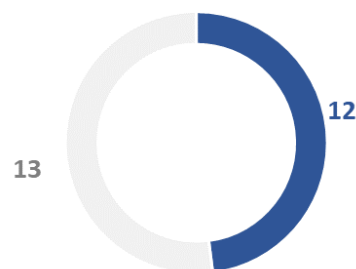
Despite these challenges, the services have made good progress; key achievements include:

- Involvement of businesses and key stakeholders in the consultation and design of the 15-year Economic Vision;
- Ensuring that the corporate approach was discussed with all potential partners demonstrating what each partner could bring to the table;
- Key staff aligned to local and regional working groups to ensure MTCBC are part of regional planning for future replacement funding;
- The Deputy Chief Executive & Employability Manager attending EPP meeting to highlight corporate approach and aspirations along with previous working examples of how Community Regeneration have worked with businesses and schools to enhance curriculum delivery;
- Involvement in the collaborative design of the Business & Education Together Partnership (BETP) Action Plan to develop ways to bring the worlds of education and business closer together;
- Integration and collaboration have been the cornerstone of the work undertaken by the service areas. We have changed the way we work across the organisation in many cases further developing working relationships to achieve unforeseen benefits e.g. closer working arrangements between our service areas and the Revenues and Benefits team has enabled us to more effectively meet the needs of local businesses;

- The preventative work undertaken during the coronavirus pandemic by Protection and Safety Services was critical to ensuring communities continued to live safely; the focus on these services has switched to supporting safe returns to work; and supporting the health; safety and sustainability of local businesses; and
- Community Regeneration building relationships with new inward investors i.e. Future Valleys and Morgan Sindall and utilising social value plans to compliment education in Merthyr Tydfil and securing seats for them as part of the longer-term planning of the BETP.

What other feedback did we have?

12 of the 25 consultations directly relate to the Working Life objective.



The details of these consultations, along with other consultations, can be found in appendix 4. It may be the case that some of these consultations involve more than one of our well-being objectives.

There are three questions in our **resident's survey** that directly link to our Working Life objective, these are summarised below.

Findings - Thinking specifically about regeneration projects, how important is it for you to be able to comment on individual regeneration developments in Merthyr Tydfil?

- 93.14.% of respondents said 'very important' or 'fairly important'; and
- 6.86% of respondents said 'not very important' or 'not important at all'.

Findings - How safe do you feel when outside in Merthyr Tydfil after dark? (Please consider your local area to be the area within 15–20 minutes walking distance from your home)

- 39.80% of respondents said they were 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied';
- 17.84% of respondents said they were 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied'; and
- 42.35% of respondents said they were 'fairly dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied'.

Findings - How safe do you feel when outside in Merthyr Tydfil during the day? (Please consider your local area to be the area within 15 – 20 minutes walking distance from your home)

- 69.16% of respondents said they were 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied';
- 17.09% of respondents said they were 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied'; and

- 13.75% of respondents said they were 'fairly dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied'.

Our **budget survey** found that those taking part viewed Physical Regeneration as the ninth priority and Community Regeneration as the seventh priority. As part of the survey, consultees were asked to use 8 votes against 10 service areas.

Our **complaints data** showed that we received no specific complaints regarding regeneration but 50 corporate complaints in 2021/22 (an increase of 36 since 2020/21).

Our **needs assessment** findings can be found in appendix 6. These findings are being used to improve our services but will also be used to inform the review of our Corporate Well-being Plan. A summary of key points is set out below.

- **Data** – Claimant Count data shows the number of people aged 16-64 that are claiming out of work benefits in Merthyr Tydfil is 1,475 (3.9%) and Claimant Count data also shows the age group where the highest percentage of people claiming 'out of work' benefits is: 18-21 years (3.9%).
- **Challenge** – Tackling poverty continues to be a long-term challenge across the County Borough.
- **What are we already doing to address the challenge** – we are supporting local businesses to recover from the pandemic with the Economic Recovery Town Centre Master Plans being the core strategies to manage this activity. We also offer support to inward investors and businesses looking to develop expand with recruitment support; and run targeted employability programmes to prepare for emerging vacancies; enriching the labour market.
- **Opportunities** – The current situation relating to lack of staff entering the health and social care workforce will be a challenge for the near future; but could also offer an opportunity is the training and development offer is a good one.
- **Data** – The number of anti-social behaviour occurrences has increased year on year in Merthyr Tydfil.
- **Challenge** – Anti-social behaviour occurrences have increased significantly over the past 3 years.
- **What are we already doing to address this challenge** – Our community safety team have secured funding and invested in new digital CCTV equipment which is supporting the improvement of outcomes; further funding was secured to install lane gate in the areas surrounding the Town Centre to act as a deterrent and respond to feedback from communities suggesting that issues had shifted from the Town Centre to neighbouring areas.
- **Opportunities** – There are opportunities to raise the profile of community safety initiatives and work with partners to address anti-social behaviour.



A Wales of Cohesive  
Communities

We are continuing to work with departments from across the Council, partners and businesses to help strengthen our plans. An example of this is the Business Education Training Partnership; another example is how departments from across the Council have collaborated to administer grants and offer support to businesses, as part of our response to, and recovery from, the coronavirus pandemic.

## Rationale

### *Summary*

The Working Life well-being objective is delivered using a collaborative approach to reduce difficulties faced by people living across the County Borough. By supporting the continued development of the local economy; sustaining and improving communities' awareness of opportunities open to them; and offering advice and support on how to access these, services aim to empower people to work towards their personal goals.

Evidence shows personal well-being and economic well-being are not separate: they are linked. By developing skilled and well-educated people, both wealth and employment opportunities are created which people can take advantage of. By the Council providing services such as free training/development; supporting local businesses to access grants so they can develop and grow; helping make streets and active travel routes safer; we can support people to have better well-being; and improve their situation.

Some improvements have been made over the last 12-months, for example:

- Although targets were not set, 5 of the 9 measures (55.6 %) showed an improvement when compared to the previous year.
- It should be noted that the majority of the data above are national indicators – this means the Council's services contribute to; but is not wholly accountable for the outcomes achieved. The last 3 indicators in the list above are local measures which contains outcomes solely achieved by the Council's Employability Services. Of these measures, 2 out of 3 (67%) improved when compared to last year.

### *What is the reason for the findings?*

As a Council we are focused on supporting our residents, businesses and the local economy. Using the 15-year Economic Vision for the County Borough and the Economic Recovery Plan approved by Council in November 2021, we will work together with the community and key partners to develop targeted responses to challenges faced that will enable us to improve how we support our communities.

The challenges faced by the communities we serve are multiple and sometimes complex, evidence shows these include:

- The [employment rate](#) for working aged people across the County Borough saw a 3.4% improvement over the period under review and now stands at **69.2%**; this is still below the Welsh average employment rate of 73.1%;

- [National indicator data](#) shows that the percentage of working age people in Merthyr Tydfil County Borough with no qualifications stands at **20.3%**; significantly higher than the Welsh average of 8.1%. This can be a barrier to local people getting a job which helps them to manage the increasing cost of living pressures faced across the County Borough.
- [National data](#) also shows that the percentage of working age people in Merthyr Tydfil County Borough with qualifications at Level 2 or above has **increased by 2.7% to 66%** over 2021/22; but remains below the Welsh average of 80.1%.
- Local data captured from the Employability programmes delivered by MTCBC shows an increase in the number of participants in employment on leaving a programme (up from 39% in 2020/2021 to **67%** in 2021/22 – a 28% increase in positive outcomes achieved);
- Additionally; **24%** of participants accessing ‘out of work’ Employability programmes achieved a qualification;
- In contrast, a decrease in participants that accessed an ‘in work’ programme successfully secured a qualification was identified, with data recording a 58% success rate; and
- The provisional data around the [number of business births](#) shows a decrease in 2021/22; whilst data shows the number of [business deaths](#) (closures) also decreased on the data recorded for the previous year.

*Data source: Stats Wales*

Improvements were also noted on completing the corporate self-evaluation exercise for this period, please see above. The judgements were presented to Regeneration and Public Protection Scrutiny Members at a meeting on 08/03/2022, where the findings were explored and challenged. **Scrutiny** Members unanimously agreed the judgements were well-evidenced and fair, approving these for 2021/22.

#### *What is being done and how?*

Key developments show some significant improvements have been achieved during 2021/22. These include:

- The new Bus Station was completed and this opened for use in June 2021. Since this date, the Bus Station has been recognised through receipt of a number of national awards: with a ‘Client of the Year’ accolade at the 2021 Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) Awards, being the winner of the ‘Sustainability’ category in the 2021 Constructing Excellence in Wales Awards and being chosen as winner of the RTPI Cymru (Royal Town Planning Institute in Wales) Awards for Planning Excellence;
- The completion, approval and publishing of the Economic Vision for Merthyr Tydfil has been completed, a process which involved a substantial amount of involvement with a range of stakeholders. Work is now underway to develop a delivery plan so work can begin on delivering the content of this critical Plan;
- The Grade II Listed YMCA building (which has been derelict for more than a decade) received confirmation of an investment of £8.6m from the National Lottery Heritage Fund’s Heritage Enterprise Programme, Welsh Government’s Building for the Future and Transforming Towns programmes and the County Borough Council to bring this historic building back into use;

- Continued improvements being made to a series of walking and cycling improvement projects as part of its Welsh Government-funded Active Travel programme. This work not only helps support people to move safely around the County Borough, but also supports the broader work being undertaken by the Council around decarbonisation;
- Issues which have been experienced around the Town Centre linked to instances of anti-social behaviour had been seen to increase throughout 2021/22. Working in partnership with South Wales Police, Merthyr Tydfil town centre has been given a security overhaul with the aim of making our residents feel safe at any time of the day or night. State-of-the-art CCTV cameras now cover the Town Centre, the car parks have been made safer with improved street lighting, and gates have been installed at alleys where there have been issues with drug taking, drinking and fly tipping; and
- Work has also begun to refocus the Commercial activities of the Council. Merthyr Tydfil's Indoor Shopping Centre has been purchased by the County Borough Council with the intention of it playing a major role in the authority's 15-year Town Centre 'Masterplan'. Free parking continues to be given on Sundays and Bank Holidays, with parking now only £1 all day on Saturdays.

#### *So what has the outcome been?*

Despite the challenges faced over the past 12 months; progress continues to be made against the targets set. Stronger working relationships have been developed which have supported sustained performance in most cases. Improving cross-service working within the Council helps us to co-ordinate responses to better meet people's needs.

The corporate self-evaluation findings showed an improvement in 2 of the 3 areas: Provision and Service Delivery; and Leadership and Management – both of which moved from an Adequate to Good status. *Scrutiny Members explored these judgements before agreeing these were well-evidenced and appropriate. The self-evaluation process also identified a number of priorities for improvement which service teams continue to make positive progress against.*

#### Conclusion

When forming our conclusion, we have taken into account the various sections detail above in this section but also considering the corporate position.

We have taken a different approach to how we deliver this objective over the last three years. We are now collaborating (internally and externally) more and taking a long-term approach to planning (e.g. our 15-year economic vision). We will continue to do this. In working with others, we can better understand the problems and thus be in a better position to solve them. Through supporting our businesses during our response to the coronavirus pandemic, we have a better understanding and can use our resources more effectively and efficiently to support them. We will use our operating model (digital by design) in developing a customer relationship management (CRM) system as part of our business support. This will ultimately help address our economic position and prevent job losses and create employment opportunities.

As such we have identified priority actions for improvement that form part of the action plan developed as part of this report. These are summarised below.

- Focus on delivering our 15-year economic vision
- Support how the Council addresses tackling poverty and the cost of living issue
- Address our housing issues as we meet our homelessness duties
- Play our part in addressing anti-social behaviour



## Environmental Well-being



Portfolio Member  
Councillor David Hughes

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

### Background

This well-being objective offers a holistic and sustainable approach to meeting the environmental well-being needs in Merthyr Tydfil.

A healthy natural environment and countryside provides multiple benefits for people and wildlife from improved air, water and land quality, habitat protection and enhanced biodiversity to beneficial implications for physical and mental health. Therefore, 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.

A focus has been around reducing the waste produced, reuse and recycling together with decarbonisation. This is set out as part of the Council Recovery, Transformation and Improvement Plan within the Corporate Well-being Plan. The priority is to work towards achieving the national vision of Wales becoming a Zero Waste country by 2050.

The Welsh Government Net Zero Reporting (Public Sector) states:

- Emissions in Wales have fallen by 31% since 1990 but they need to reduce dramatically in the next decade – the new target is 63% by 2030.
- 2030 target: 63% reduction
- 2040 target: 89% reduction
- 2050 target: 100% reduction (net zero)

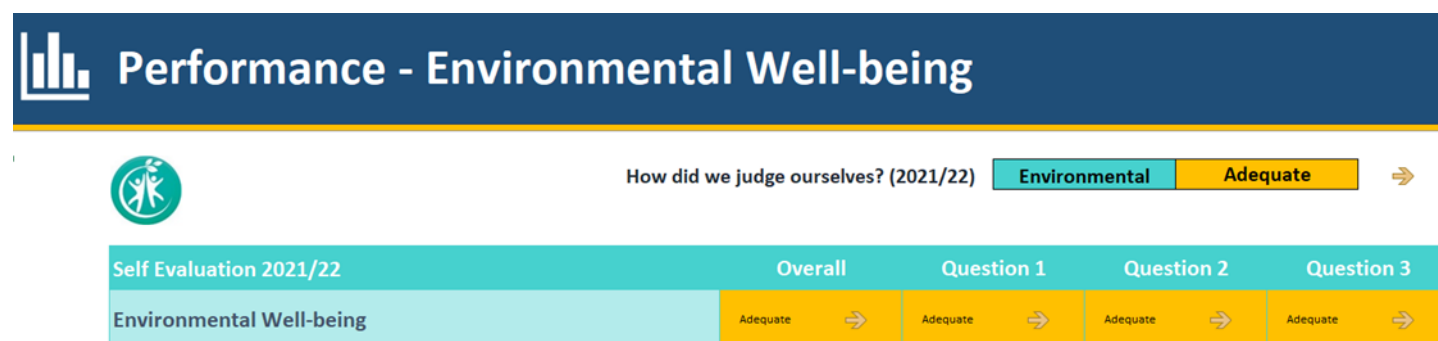


A Globally Responsible  
Wales

## Our Performance

### Data and Self-evaluation

We have used both data (including trends) and our self-evaluation in this section to help us come to a conclusion on how we are doing and what we can improve. Highway cleanliness surveys were not carried out during the pandemic. Therefore, there is no data to report for the percentage of highways inspected.



**Question 1 – Outcomes**

**Question 2 - Provision and Service Delivery**

**Question 3 - Leadership & Management**



Have we met our targets?



Target Met Target not Met Unable to Collect Data

How did we do compared to last year?



Key Performance Indicator	2020/21	2021/22 (Target)	2021/22	Did we meet our target?	How did we do compared to last year?	Trend
Average number of working days taken to clear fly-tipping incidents	2.5	2.2	4.26	✗	▲	
% of highways inspected of a high or acceptable standard of cleanliness	*	100	*			
% of municipal waste reused, recycled, or composted	66.82	64	64.47	✓	▼	
Kilograms of residual waste generated per person1	161	160	153.29	✓	▼	
Total renewable energy generation from local authority buildings	283,780	*	358,706		▲	
Total carbon dioxide emissions from energy consumed by local authority buildings	2,841	*	3170.12		▲	
Number of Priority Open Spaces (out of 23 Priority Open Spaces) that meet or exceed the quality standard: Healthy, Safe and Secure.	9	16	11	✗	▲	

\* Unable to collect/publish data

From the data we can see:

- 2 of our 4 targets have been met with the target being exceeded well for kilograms of residual waste generated per person together with a continuing a successful trend.
- Although we did not meet our target and saw an increase for the average number of working days taken to clear fly-tipping incidents, we started from a reasonably good position in 2020/21. However, the number of reported incidents remained the same and the trend is showing an increase against this indicator. This will be a consideration for us going forward when allocating resources.

- We did not meet our target of 16 for the number of priority open spaces that meet or exceed the quality standard. However, we have seen our trend data increasing showing improvement. This target was adversely impacted on by the coronavirus pandemic, but we can refocus our resources to see continuing improvement.
- 3 of the 6 indicators (with available data) have improved when compared to 2020/21.
- Although we met our target for the percentage of municipal waste reused, recycled or composted, the data shows a decrease compared to 2020/21. This will need to be a focus when meeting service and corporate outcomes.
- We have seen a positive increase in the total renewable energy generation for local authority buildings but also seen an increase in the total carbon dioxide emissions from energy consumed by local authority buildings (something we want to address). This fits with our corporate plans concerning decarbonisation and how we want to allocate our resources and change our culture.

### Regulator Feedback

Audit Wales carried out a piece of work with the Council regarding carbon reduction plans. This has been reported in the 'Assurance and Risk Assessment Review – Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council' report together with the following recommendation.

- In order to meet its net zero ambition, the Council needs to fully cost its action plan and ensure that it is aligned with its Medium Term Financial Plan.

### Case Studies

The following case studies have been developed for this area and they can be viewed in full in appendix 9.

- MTCBC's fleet of vehicles set to go electric!
- Merthyr Tydfil named among country's best green spaces
- Circular Economy Fund (Solar Panels)
- 'Shaping Landscapes, for Wildlife and Well-Being'
- Nature's Gift Garden – 'Changing grey to green through working with nature'


These 5 case studies support how we are working to address our biodiversity and decarbonisation challenge. These help us celebrate success and share lessons with other areas of the Council. However, we realise that we can learn lessons from things we do not do well or where data highlights issues. In future we will consider case studies that show this. This is also a view of our Corporate Support and Resources **Scrutiny** when our case studies were challenged.



A Resilient Wales

## Well-being Toolkit

We have used the Well-being of Future Generations Toolkit against each of our Well-being Objectives.

Well-being Objectives	<i>Getting started</i>	<i>Making simple changes</i>	<i>Being more adventurous</i>	<i>Owning our ambition</i>	<i>Leading the way</i>
 <b>Environmental Well-being</b>				✓	

The pandemic continued to affect the service provided by Neighbourhood Services and a range of adjustments had to be to ensure we followed Government guidance. Despite this, we continued to provide our services and where face to face contact was required, safety measures were implemented and managers and staff worked closely together to look at ways to ensure we discharged our duties to the public, whilst promoting both public and staff safety.

Although the last couple of years has meant there has been significant changes to working methods in all departments, improvements continue to be made on our key performance indicators. However, as we started to move out of the pandemic, we have, and will continue to focus on the recovery from Covid which means our services are continually reviewed and we may need to do things differently.

Nevertheless, in all areas performance and service delivery has not been compromised despite changing procedures and legislation, and below is a brief outline of how the services have continued to contribute to the objectives of the Corporate Well-being Plan (Focus on the Future), Public Service Board (PSB) Plan, Sustainable Principles and the seven Well-being Goals:

- Our focus on Carbon Management and key contributions to the Welsh Government Net Zero reporting continues, with improvements in Waste, meeting Welsh Government targets, use of the Circular Economy Funding to deliver a more efficient service as well as improving material quality, and the opening of the reuse shop continues to divert material from landfill in line with the Welsh Governments Beyond Recycling Strategy.
- The resilience shown by Waste services throughout the pandemic was particularly pleasing, resulting in us being the only Authority to continue to deliver all collection services throughout.
- The contracts which Waste Management has in place ensures we are maximising recycling, composting and preparation for reuse and ensures value for money. Having our own waste transfer station allows us to treat material and sustain the best possible market price for our recycling, and also allows us to store high tonnage so in instances such as haulage failure, it does not have an impact on the residents of Merthyr Tydfil.

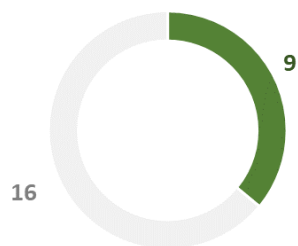
- Despite receiving the highest number of Planning applications in one year, performance and customer service was maintained and improvements made by introducing new procedures including electronic delivery and a duty officer being made available virtually throughout the pandemic, which ensured continued delivery of service.
- Engineering have progressed addressing coal tip safety and we are two years into a £9m flood defence recovery programme.
- Electronic Vehicle transition plan has been established setting out how we transition all our fleet by 2030.
- Closer working relationships between Parks and Countryside following the Neighbourhood Services restructure are positively contributing to how we meet the requirements of the Environment Act 2016 e.g. management and maintenance of green spaces in order to promote biodiversity.
- Building Control department successfully contributes to a number of Well-being Objectives and goals (e.g. Part L of the building Regulations (conservation of fuel and power) promotes and ensures compliance of renewable and lowering carbon based energy and Part M of the Building Regulations (Assess to and the use of buildings) this ensures all new dwellings have provisions helping towards life time homes.
- The Highways Division makes a direct contribution to the Council's wellbeing objectives, by being committed to providing people who live, work and travel within Merthyr Tydfil to benefit from a well maintained highway network and infrastructure, which we do by carrying out minor and major highway repairs, drainage resolution and street-lighting preservation. This links to Our Shared Vision of a more prosperous, resilient healthier, more equal Wales with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language.

Despite continuing challenges, it is praiseworthy that the services have continued to operate their day-to-day services to the public. Enormous credit has to be given to all Neighbourhood Services staff for the efforts and commitments in ensuring minimal disruption in the services provided and the continued efforts in the recovery as we move out of the pandemic. Through their efforts, we have ensured we continue to work towards a healthy, natural environment and protect it for all future generations.

#### What other feedback did we have?

9 of the 25 consultations directly relate to the Environmental Well-being objective.

The details of these consultations, along with other consultations, can be found in appendix 4. It may be the case that some of these consultations involve more than one of our well-being objectives.



9 of the 26 questions in our **resident's survey** directly relate to the Environmental Well-being objective. We have provided a summary below as this data has also been used as part of this self-assessment and how we will continuously improve.

Findings for these questions and the rest of the resident's survey can be found in appendix 7.

- 72.8% of respondents said they were 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied' with Merthyr Tydfil's Waste collection;
- 46.3% of respondents said they were 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied' with Merthyr Tydfil's street cleaning;
- 22.4% of residents said they were 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied' with Merthyr Tydfil's road maintenance;
- 38.6% of respondents said they were 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied' with Merthyr Tydfil's pavement maintenance;
- 46.7% of respondents said they were 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied' with Merthyr Tydfil's parks and green spaces;
- 89.0% of respondents said they felt it was 'very important' or 'fairly important' for your council to undertake activities to tackle climate change; and
- 92.6% (highest of the categories offered) of respondents said to 'Increase biodiversity in the area (for example, planting trees and protecting green spaces)' when answering 'Which, if any, of the following activities would you like to see Merthyr Tydfil CBC do to help tackle climate change'.

Our **budget survey** found that those taking part prioritised our services as follows:

- **Refuse and Waste** to be the **highest priority**
- **Highways and Infrastructure** to be the **joint second priority**
- **Environmental Health and Community Safety** to be the **fourth highest priority**
- **Street Scene** to be the **lowest (tenth) priority**

As part of the survey, consultees were asked to use 8 votes against 10 service areas.

Our **complaints data** can be seen above in this report. A summary of the areas relating to the Environmental Well-being objective have been listed below. More detail can be found in our annual Compliments and Complaints report.

- Environment and Environmental Health - 36 complaints received in 2021/22 compared to 56 in 2020/21, a decrease of 20.
- Planning and Building Control - 25 complaints received in 2021/22 compared to 16 in 2020/21, an increase of 9.
- Roads and Transport - 86 complaints received in 2021/22 compared to 33 in 2020/21, an increase of 53.
- Waste and Refuse - 142 complaints received in 2021/22 compared to 145 in 2020/21, a decrease of 3.

Our **needs assessment** findings can be found in appendix 6. There are several areas that relate to our Environmental Well-being objective. These findings are being used to improve our services but will also be used to inform the review of our Corporate Well-being Plan. A summary of key points is set out below.

## Flooding

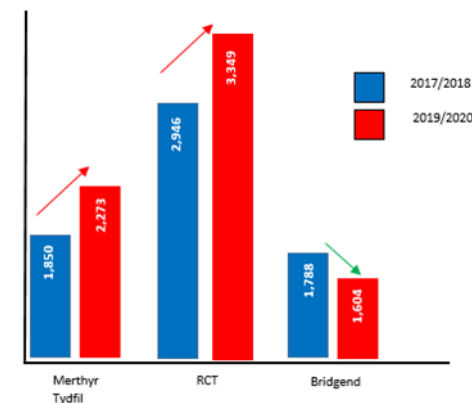
- Data – 3 areas in Merthyr Tydfil are in the top 100 areas in Wales at significant risk of fluvial flooding (e.g. rivers bursting their banks), they are Merthyr Tydfil, Troedyrhiw and Merthyr Vale.
- Data – 5 areas in Merthyr Tydfil are in the top 100 areas in Wales at significant risk of surface water flooding, they are Merthyr Tydfil, Abercanaid, Pentrebach, Troedyrhiw and Merthyr Vale.
- Challenge – To reduce the risk to people and businesses from the impacts of flooding.
- Opportunities – Getting communities engaged and better prepared for the possibility of flooding is a long-term aim. Home or business owners whose properties are at risk of flooding can receive NRW warning messages by phone, email or text message in the event of possible flooding.



## Fly-tipping

- Data – There is an increase in the number of instances of fly-tipping across the whole of the Cwm Taf area.
- Challenge – To reduce the amount of fly tipping and its effects on the environment and communities.
- Opportunities – There is an opportunity for the various agencies to work together to target hot spots and support communities that are subject to fly tipping and littering.

We are continuing to work with departments from across the Council, partners and businesses to help strengthen our plans. An example of this is how we have involved our schoolchildren in addressing of climate change and environment challenges with our Cabinet.



## Rationale

### Summary

The pandemic meant Neighbourhood Services had to make a range of adjustments in line with the Stay At Home Rules and changing measures in place. Throughout the pandemic, most front-line services continued to operate face-to-face contact was required by implementing safety measures. Managers and staff worked closely together to look at ways to ensure we discharged our duties to the public, whilst promoting both public and staff safety.

We have made improvements in some of our key performance indicators and progress in all areas of the plan and we will endeavour to continue this good work moving forward. Clearly as part of our improvement work, we will need to focus on recovery from the coronavirus pandemic. This will mean we will

need to review some service areas and may need to do things differently in future to meet people's needs in the community. Plans will be kept under review and updated accordingly.

In arriving at a judgement of Adequate in our self-evaluation, it is acknowledged that there are many examples of 'Good' use of the sustainable development principle across Neighbourhood Services (notably in Planning and Waste). Coming out of the pandemic, progress is expected in other areas to move us closer to an overall 'Good' judgement next year by sharing best practice with those services who already have the principles embedded.

#### *What is the reason for the findings?*

The Waste Management service has contracts in place to maximise recycling, composting and preparation for reuse; these include regional contracts for certain materials that ensure value for money. High levels of recycling, composting and preparation for reuse are being achieved in line with Welsh Government recycling targets. Having our own Waste transfer station allows us to treat material and sustain the best possible market price for our recycling. It also allows us to store high volumes of tonnages so in instances of haulage failure it does not have an impact on the residents of Merthyr Tydfil.

The Re-Use shop has continued its social media campaign and is receiving positive feedback from both the users/clients and the volunteers. It has increased its footfall through the year and it is becoming an asset to the community.

It is positive to see that the recycling rates have remained stable throughout the period of the pandemic achieving 66.79% of waste reused, recycled or composted; this is above the National target, which is currently 64%. We are continuously exploring avenues for opportunities to recycle more waste in preparation for the increased National target of 70% in 2024/25.

We reported a rate of 358,706 kWh (in 2021/22) for the total renewable energy generation from local authority buildings. This is an increase of 26.40% on the 2020/21 data of 283,780kWh. However, it must be noted there was minimum activity within the local authority buildings in 2020/21 due to the global pandemic.

With the easing of lockdown regulations in 2021/22, the service has been able to improve the number of priority open spaces that meet or exceed the quality standard and there are currently 11 open spaces. This is an increase of two priority open spaces since 2020/21.

The average number of working days taken to clear fly-tipping has increased to 4.26 days. Whilst the number of reported incidents has remained relatively consistent to last year's data, the number of days taken to clear them has unfortunately increased. However, the service has undergone a restructure during the year and we are expecting this figure to improve in 2022/23.

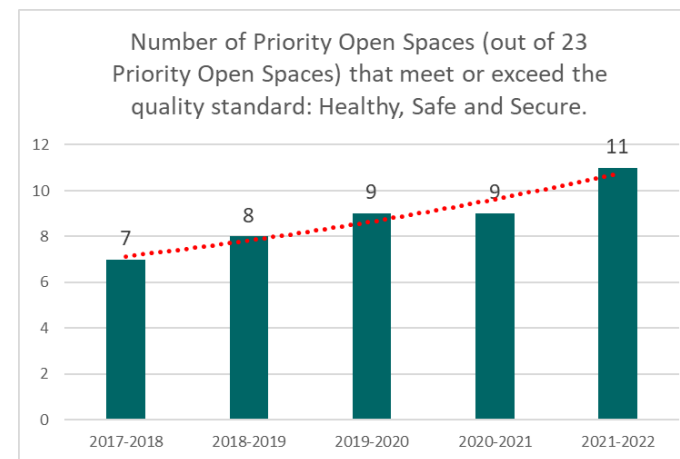
Over the first 12-18 months of the delivery of the RTI plan, significant progress has been made, and two of the four areas have now been completed. Closure reports are in the process of being written to demonstrate the actions identified have been completed or have now reverted to business as usual.

#### *What is being done and how?*

Strategically our focus has been on Carbon Management and identifying those services across the authority that make key contributions to the WG Net Zero reporting. Directly contributing to this is our continued improvements in Waste, meeting the WG targets, use of the Circular Economy funding awards to deliver a more efficient service as well as improving material quality, and the opening of a reuse shop in order to further divert material from landfill in line with WG's Beyond Recycling strategy.

The resilience shown by Waste services throughout the pandemic was particularly pleasing, resulting in us being the only Authority to continue to deliver all collection services throughout.

Staff in some (non-front line) areas of Neighbourhood services working in an agile way; it is important that we utilise our learning on both the benefits and consequences of this way of working to ensure an appropriate balance is gained. Planning and Building Control are examples of services that reacted quickly to the challenge of Covid by moving to electronic solutions and processes to ensure continuity in service delivery and no disruption to the public.





In Planning, despite receiving the highest number of applications in one year performance and customer service was maintained and improvements made by introducing new procedures for electronic delivery. A duty officer was available (virtually) throughout the pandemic.

Engineering have progressed addressing coal tip safety and we are two years into a £9m flood defence recovery programme.

We have established our EV transition plan setting out how we will transition all the Fleet by 2030.

Closer working relationships between Parks and Countryside following the Neighbourhood Services restructure are positively contributing to how we meet the requirements of the Environment Act 2016 e.g. management and maintenance of green spaces in order to promote biodiversity.

However, recruitment has been a challenge across most of the services delivered by Neighbourhood Services. There appears to be a deficiency of Engineers of all disciplines as well as Building Control officers and Conservation Planning officers, all of which are areas we have been unable to recruit suitable staff. For front line services, the availability of HGV drivers (experienced nationally) has proved a particular challenge to operations resulting in other front-line services having to support Waste at the expense of delivering their own services.

#### *Scrutiny response to Self-Evaluation*

The Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Members provided officer's feedback on the content of the report developed through completion of the self-evaluation process. The Members suggested that the report could have been split into departments and each scrutinised separately as they cover a wide range of services, possibly quarterly in workshops and brought back to this scrutiny. Scrutiny Members reviewed the judgements reached, assessing these for validity with a view to agreeing them.

#### *So what has the outcome been?*

A healthy natural environment provides multiple benefits for people and wildlife from improved air, water and land quality, habitat protection and enhanced biodiversity to beneficial implications for physical and mental health (Chief Medical Officer Annual Report 2014-15; Life Course, Greenspace and Health, 2016).

## Conclusion

When forming our conclusion, we have taken into account the various sections detail above in this section but also considering the corporate position.

The Environmental Well-being objective provides a holistic and sustainable approach to meeting the environmental well-being needs of Merthyr Tydfil. 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. The decarbonisation work and improvements completed during 2021/22 has been very encouraging.

It must be remembered that there are many examples of 'Good' use of the sustainable development principle across Neighbourhood services (notably in Planning and Waste). We will build on this.

We have identified actions for improvement that form part of the action plan developed as part of this report. These are summarised below.

- Our priority is to work towards the all-Wales target of becoming a zero-waste nation by 2050.
- Playing our role in the Welsh public sector becoming carbon neutral by 2030.
- Deliver our EV transition plan, which sets out how we will transition all the Fleet by 2030.



## Living Well



Portfolio Member  
Councillor Julia Jenkins

<b>Objective</b>	People are empowered to live independently within their communities, where they are safe and enjoy good physical and mental health
<b>Primary Outcome</b>	Ensure people are able to live independently and safely within their communities
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Director – Social Services
<b>Improvement Focus</b>	Increasing our resilience in Social Care

## Background

Our main objective seeks to prioritise activities which focus on early intervention and prevention. The priority is to deliver services that support people to lead healthy independent lives in a safe environment. We want to motivate and support people to develop positive physical and mental health behaviours, build resilient communities where people live free from harm and have a good quality of life.

Under the 'Living Well Objective' we want to:

- Safeguard children and adults who are at risk of harm;
- Tackle adverse childhood experiences and develop community resilience;
- Promote health behaviours and increased levels of physical activity;
- Promote good emotional well-being and improved mental health;
- Provide clear and accessible information and advice; and
- Services that provide people with the ability to live in their own home.

These focus on early intervention and prevention, which is an area we want to improve on and continue to build on in the future. We want to help people to achieve a higher level of well-being; helping them to help themselves, to make better choices and access different types of support.

**Our primary outcome is:**

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

Our other outcomes are:

- 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.

Increasing resilience in social care is a priority for the Council. This has been included in the Council recovery, transformation and improvement (RTI) plan as part of the Councils Corporate Well-being Plan. This has meant that the Council has increased funding of the social services directorate, together with the support it receives from across the Council.

The last two years has had a significant impact on Health and Social Care. The coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19) has had a devastating impact on many people's lives. The need to lockdown for periods of time, self-isolation and shielding have had a serious impact on well-being and quality of life in local communities. During this time, we worked with our statutory and commissioned partners to support people to stay at home with the support they needed and provided support to the care home sector ensuring that we protected vulnerable residents as much as we could. We worked closely with health



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colleagues in planning the necessary actions needed to ensure that the NHS were able to respond to the anticipated increased pressure arising from the pandemic.

Demand across Children and Adult Services has increased over the past two years. Pressures in Health have translated to increased pressure in Adult Social Care, particularly around discharge from hospital. We have also seen an increase in referrals around Mental Health Services for children and adults. We have had to adapt services to meet increased demand, and in some areas, additional resources have been put in through the recovery grants to ensure services are available in the right place at the right time.

To address the priority of 'Increasing Resilience in Social Care', additional capacity that was proposed in 2020/21 and included in the medium-term financial plan resulted in increased capacity within Social Services but also those areas supporting the service. This includes how we have strengthened how we manage and support the service.

## Our Performance

### *The Data and Self-Evaluation*

The Directorate monitors its performance closely. In relation to 2021/22 we have both quantitative and qualitative information which we use to support improvement of our services. This information is included in the Director of Social Services Annual report with case studies included in appendix 9.

In completing the self-evaluation for 2021/22 as a management team we have evaluated ourselves 'Good', the judgment for previous years has been 'Adequate'. We feel we have made good progress on the plan and have managed the service well during the coronavirus pandemic. Services have been maintained and kept on track during a very difficult period. Although the Recovery, Transformation and Improvement (RTI) Plan was initially delayed due to the pandemic in 2021/22 we were able to look at the plans and areas of improvement, with many projects now being completed. Before leaving, the Improvement and Assurance Board members, congratulated staff for their hard work and were pleased with the progress made. A self-evaluation report was presented to the Social Services Scrutiny in March 2022. Scrutiny Members provided challenge and the feedback was positive on the progress made.

We have refocused our key performance indicators to reflect changes to the national performance framework (metrics) and so that we can measure progress. We have worked with the regional Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS – this is the management information system for Social Services) Team to help us report on national metrics as part of the performance framework. We have also worked with Powys Council to develop skills and approaches to how we use WCCIS to support Social Services.

## Performance - Living Well



How did we judge ourselves? (2021/22)

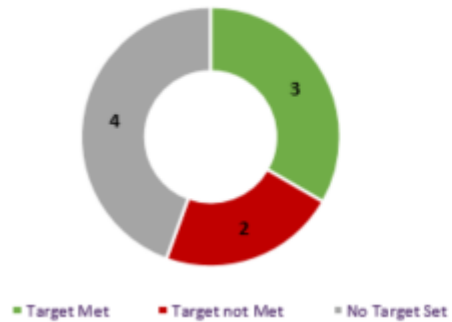
Living Well

Good



Self Evaluation 2021/22	Overall	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3
Living Well	Good	Good	Good	Good

Have we met our targets?



How did we do compared to last year?



**Question 1** – Outcomes

**Question 2** - Provision and Service Delivery

**Question 3** - Leadership & Management

Key Performance Indicator	2020/21	2021/22 (Target)	2021/22	Did we meet our target?	How did we do compared to last year?	Trend
No. of Children Looked After at 31 March	193	-	176		▼	
Number of Children on the Child Protection Register at 31 March	101	-	113		▲	
The percentage of looked after children on 31 March who have had three or more placements during the year	5.18	10	18	✗	▲	
The percentage of new assessments for children completed within statutory timescales	97.2	90	89.62	✓	▼	
Percentage of adult protection (Section 126) enquiries completed within statutory timescales	84	92	92.4	✓	▲	
Percentage of people in receipt of specialist domestic violence support reporting an improvement in quality of life	79	85	86	✓	▲	
The percentage of adults with new assessments (completed during the year) who went on to have a care and support plan to meet their needs	14.5	14	12.3	✗	▼	
The percentage of reablement packages completed during the year which resulted in a reduced need for support	30.4	-	24.8		▼	
The percentage of contacts by adult carers received by statutory social services during the year where advice or assistance was provided	14.3	-	17.9		▲	

Of the nine measures identified, five improved. These five are particularly relevant to the Living Well objective in terms of demonstrating supporting people to remain safe and impact on their mental health (children looked after, child protection and adult protection). However, Welsh Government have been changing the national metrics which means that gathering trend data can be problematic. In completing the self-evaluation for 2021/22 as a management team we have evaluated ourselves 'Good'. This is explained in more detail below.

## Regulator Feedback

When inspecting Local Authorities Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) split the discussions into 4 themes:

- People
- Wellbeing
- Prevention
- Partnership

Findings were reported to Cabinet in March 2022. A summary is provided below. This helps how we are focusing our resources to deliver our objective.

### **People**

It was found in Merthyr Tydfil that we were responding well to safeguarding concerns. Offers of assessments and other services are being used for Welsh and other languages. Both children and adult services have improved. Quality Assurance (QA) post starting from 20th December 2021 which was highlighted as a requirement in the capacity exercise. The QA post will be able to replicate good practice from children's to adult's services. A business support officer was seconded from WG to assist in the improvement. This person is now employed by Merthyr Tydfil CBC to continue the improvement work. There is an improvement plan in place and clear direction with future working, and CIW will continue to monitor our progress.

### **Wellbeing**

In respect of Service capacity/sufficiency, the Capacity exercise was positive as it identified gaps in workforce. As a result, new posts have been added to the structure. In respect of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards/Liberty Protects Safeguards (DoLS/LPS) we set up a regional strategy group combined with both services and safeguarding. In order to place us in the best position from April 2022 we would require agency staff to work on backlog of DOLS assessments along with RCT. Acknowledged reports presented to scrutiny and the positive work of the Safeguarding Board. In respect of Children looked after there has been a safe reduction of CLA over the last 12 months. This has been reduced safely using our safe reduction strategy.

### **Prevention**

We were aware that prevention and early intervention was an area to improve on in social services. Family First moved to be line managed by children services and head of children service is making links with school head teachers and education department.

### **Partnership**

It is felt that overall, the pandemic has strengthened the partnerships allowing open and honest conversations. Sub- groups of children and adult services are meeting on a regular basis which is positive. Both adult and children's services information sharing, and developments have improved and are being

shared on a regional basis to ensure everyone is involved in lessons learned. There is more of a drive to work together across the region, all parties going in to assist in the regional approach rather than coming from a specific Local Authorities viewpoint. Relationships with Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil (VAMT), education and housing have all massively improved.

CIW are continuing to adopt a risk-based approach to work (in line with our principles) - focusing time and resources where serious and or significant risks are identified. They will apply different methodologies to the performance review approach so they can focus the work where improvements are needed and highlight good practice

### Case Studies

The following case studies have been developed for this area and they can be viewed in full in appendix 9.

- Pathway to Work
- Ty Enfys Dementia Care Unit
- Care Home Leisure Scheme

We have developed these three case studies to help us celebrate success and share lessons with other areas of the Council.


However, we realise that we can learn lessons from things we do not do well or where data highlights issues. In future we will consider case studies that show this. This is also a view of our Corporate Support and Resources **Scrutiny** when our case studies were challenged.



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### Well-being Toolkit

We have used the Well-being of Future Generations Toolkit against each of our Well-being Objectives.

Well-being Objectives	<i>Getting started</i>	<i>Making simple changes</i>	<i>Being more adventurous</i>	<i>Owning our ambition</i>	<i>Leading the way</i>
 <b>Living Well</b>				✓	

During 2021/22, Children's and Adult Services continued to work on their specific strategies and plans and focused on three outcomes, as outlined above.



It has again been a really challenging year due to pressures in the system through recovery from the pandemic. However, we have completed some really positive work over the past year. We were working on the Recovery, Transformation and Improvement (RTI) Plan prior to the Pandemic and have been able to make significant progress in 2021/22, which we hope to continue into 2022/23.

As part of the RTI Plan, we have developed an adult advocacy strategy, enhanced the capacity within adult safeguarding, quality assurance and adult services management, and commenced the work around the development of an Extra Care facility and the cultural change around adult care management services.

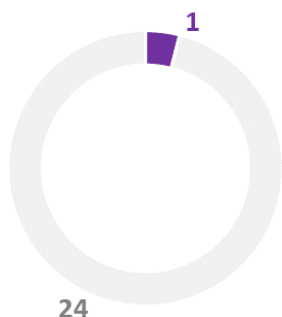
Staff have demonstrated resilience and an incredible commitment to support the local community during the pandemic period. Within Children's Services, to support all key Service Strategies have been updated in light of such a significant change in circumstances. Two key developments with different models of care are being explored and additional resilience has been built into the service to ensure that staff have enhanced support. Passion 4 Practice our staff lead development group continues to inform and support service development. This received a commendation at the Social Care accolade awards.

Our services and staff have demonstrated their ability and commitment to make changes that support our community. Though the full impact of the coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19) on Social Services is yet to be established, we are now planning how services will recover and adapt to the new ways of working and continue to review the position we are in.

Overall, we have made progress in all areas of the plan, and we will endeavour to continue this good work moving forward. Clearly as part of our improvement work, we will need to focus on recovery from Covid. This will mean we will need to review some service areas and may need to do things differently in future to meet people's needs in the community. Plans will be kept under review and updated accordingly.

What other feedback did we have?

1 of the 25 consultations directly relate to the Living Well objective.



**1 of the 25 consultations** directly relate to the Living Well objective (that is our residents survey). The details of these consultations, along with other consultations, can be found in appendix 4. It may be the case that some of these consultations involve more than one of our well-being objectives.

Two questions in our **residents survey** directly apply to the Living Well objective. Findings for these questions and the rest of the resident's survey can be found in appendix 7.

Findings - How satisfied are you overall with Merthyr Tydfil's services and support for older people?

- 25.59% of respondents said they were 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied';
- 51.59% of respondents said they were 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied'; and
- 22.82% of respondents said they were 'fairly dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied'.

Findings - How satisfied are you overall with Merthyr Tydfil's services and support for children and young people?

- 29.76% of respondents said they were 'very satisfied' or 'fairly satisfied';
- 42.66% of respondents said they were 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied'; and
- 27.58 % of respondents said they were 'fairly dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied'.

Our **budget survey** found that those taking part prioritised our services as follows:

- **Adult Social Care** to be the **fifth priority**
- **Children's Social Care** to be the **sixth priority**
- **Community Regeneration** to be the **seventh priority**
- **Leisure and Culture** to be the **eighth priority**

As part of the survey, consultees were asked to use 8 votes against 10 service areas.

Our **complaints data** showed that we received 34 corporate complaints in 2021/22 regarding Adult Services (an increase of 3 since 2020/21) and 88 corporate complaints in 2021/2 regarding Children's Services (an increase of 20 since 2020/21). More information regarding complaints in Social Services can be found in the annual report.

Our **needs assessment** findings can be found in appendix 6. These findings are being used to improve our services but will also be used to inform the review of our Corporate Well-being Plan. A summary of key points is set out below.

- **Data** – The number of children receiving care and support fluctuates from year to year across the Cwm Taf footprint.
- **Challenge** – Responding to the early signs of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) to provide early support and interventions to prevent escalation to statutory services.
- **Opportunities** – Early Intervention and prevention services are now embedded in the support for children and families with the Flying Start and Families First programmes. Both these programmes have a priority for support in the early years. Children having access to Speech and Language Therapy as part of the offer is crucial service for those with communication needs.
- **Data** – For the North Merthyr Tydfil GP cluster 223 (0.6%) of the population have received a dementia diagnosis; For the South Merthyr Tydfil GP cluster 110 (0.4%) of the population have received a dementia diagnosis.

- **Challenge** – Initiatives in the communities and in work providing support and knowledge around dementia will assist those who are living with dementia as well as family and friends carers.
- **Opportunities** – Feedback from the engagement activities identified the need for improved health and social care with more investment in preventative services.
- **Data** – 4.6% of residents across Merthyr Tydfil are in receipt of a mental health-related benefit.
- **Challenge** – Feedback from different communities during engagement consistently identified Mental Health as an issue in accessing support as well as being a challenge for the future.
- **Opportunities** – As a core Public Services Board (PSB) and Regional Partnership Board (RPB) member, MTCBC could raise this topic at these meetings as an opportunity to explore making mental health a core objective in the refocused regional well-being plan with a view to ensuring all those who could have an influence on improving the mental health response activities.

We are continuing to collaborate and work with departments from across the Council and partners to strengthen our plans.

### Rationale

In Merthyr Tydfil the annual judgement for our self-evaluation of the Living Well objective is **Good**.

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 are now embedded into practice. Both require the Council to have strong governance arrangements and performance management. These pieces of legislation mean we will work more closely with our partners through collaboration. During 2021/22, Regional partnership working across Cwm Taf Morgannwg including Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) County Borough Council, Bridgend County Borough Council and the Third Sector has remained strong. We are doing more collectively to deliver better services and there are regular meetings with partners to discuss key themes and sharing of information.

During 2021/22 demands within the service have increased with pressures evident in both Adult and Children's Services due to high demand for packages of care and how we responded to the pandemic. In addition to this, gathering performance data from the Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS) database still remains a challenge, although it is improving each year. The pandemic has also caused issues with the availability of some data. However, Safeguarding Adults and Children will always be our priority.

Early Intervention and Prevention is key to sustaining services in the longer term. With the Early Help Hub, the Council is committed to continuously developing this area of work to make sure those children and their families receive the right help at the right time to prevent unnecessary escalation of need. As reported last year, evaluation of the Hub has included feedback from families, which has been positive with the number of assessments leading to

take up of preventative services being positive. Assessments undertaken by the Early help Hub has allowed more effective signposting and greater utilisation of preventative services within our community.

We continue to support adults within their own home and react promptly to safeguarding concerns for both children and adults. This is against a backdrop of the coronavirus pandemic. We have been supported by Welsh Government funding through the transformation fund.

Social Services monitors its performance closely. In relation to 2021/22, we have both quantitative and qualitative information which we use to support improvement of our services, and this is included in the Director of Social Services Annual report and self-evaluation.

The key performance indicators listed above were designed to meet our objective. The Performance Framework for Social Services forms part of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and has been the subject of a review with a number of key measures changing. This has, and will continue to have, an impact on target setting and trends for future years.

Of the nine key performance indicators identified, five show improvement. These five are particularly relevant to the Well-being objective in terms of demonstrating supporting people to remain safe and impact on their mental health (children looked after, child protection and adult protection). In terms of reablement, although the wording and calculation method has changed following review which meant we could not report in the format in the list, data is still captured on packages of reablement and the outcome in terms of reduced packages of support. Reablement is closely aligned to supporting people to remain independent.

We have continued to improve how we report on our data, including redesigning businesses processes to capture the new metrics for 2021/22 and future years. We have also been able to report on more data as part of our recovery from the coronavirus pandemic. This means we have more data this year, and this is reflected in key performance indicator table above.

A self-evaluation report has been presented to Social Services **Scrutiny** in March 2022. A further thematic review report (looking back at how we have delivered our Well-being objective) was presented to the Corporate Support and Resources Scrutiny in June 2022. Scrutiny Members provided challenge around the judgements/conclusions provided. The strengths identified were as follows:

- There is clear evidence across Social Services of strong partnerships and collaborations working (regional, private or third sector and public agencies) in order to set the right priorities and achieve joint outcomes.
- There are strong examples of partnership and collaborative working with other Councils, public agencies and third-party organisations throughout all of the services areas.
- There is evidence of strong political engagement within the overall service area as the Cabinet/Portfolio Member is active in the budget challenge process and seeks to support the development of new / reconfigured services wherever possible. The Cabinet/Portfolio Member regularly visits services so as to be visible to staff and service users.

- Welsh Government Legislation plays a key part in the direction of the services delivered within the County Borough and the services continue to evolve in line with revised legislation and good practice.
- All of the areas within Social Services have clear strategic direction and many areas work to long-term plans.

Priorities for improvement are focused on by the Council as part of its plans for recovery, transformation and improvement. Social Services will review measures to ensure that they are relevant and able to be captured going forward (we will use existing data to consider trends where possible). This will be in line with the Performance Framework.

## Conclusion

We have improved in several areas which is reflected in our self-evaluation, regulator feedback, data and qualitative analysis. However, we can continue to improve. We want to ensure we are still using our resources, effectively, efficiently and economically.

Overall, we have made progress, and we will endeavour to continue this good work moving forward in 2022/23. Clearly as part of our improvement work, we will need to continue to focus on the key elements of the Recovery, Transformation and Improvement (RTI) Plan. In summary, they are: Recovery; Resources and Service Improvement; and Resilience and Sustainability. This will mean we will continue to review some service areas and may need to do things differently in future to meet people's needs in the community.

As such we have identified actions for improvement that form part of the action plan developed as part of this report. These are summarised below.

- Continue to strengthen our reporting.
- Consider options regarding improving our WCCIS service provision.
- Continue to increase our resilience in Social Care and build on our collaborative approaches.
- Deliver our strategic plans and strategies, e.g. regulator action plans, Children's and Adult Services strategies and RTI Plan.








## Our Case Studies

Appendix 9 outlines 29 case studies from across the Council. This provides us with another way (qualitative) of understanding our performance and how we are delivering our well-being objectives, using the 5 ways of working (sustainable development principle) and contributing to the 7 national goals.

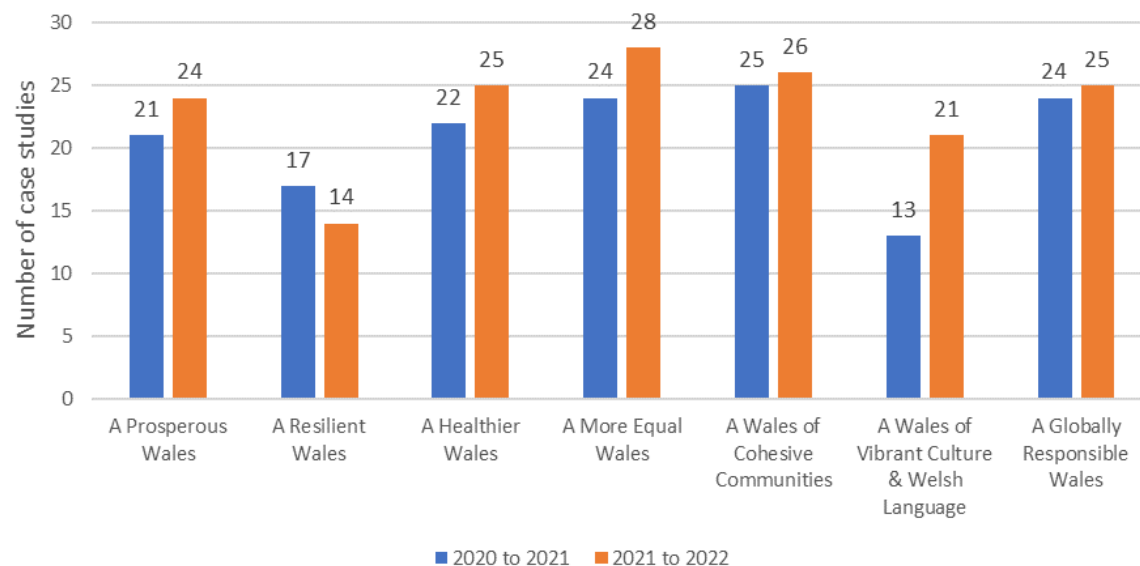
### *What have we learned from looking back at progress made during 2021-2022?*

We are committed to support the achievement of the 7 national well-being goals and using the 5 ways of working. Following completion of the process to produce this report (which looks back at 2021/22), we have been able to present a snapshot of what we have done. We have considered a sample of 29 case studies in 2021-2022. On evaluation, we can see that there are some areas of general improvement and some areas where we could change how we work. For example, we can use our asset management plans to support addressing the cost-of-living issues by considering our buildings for warm banks. We have increased our activities contributing to 'A Wales of Vibrant Culture & Welsh Language'. We have also analysed how we are tackling poverty (a cross-cutting theme in our corporate well-being plan).

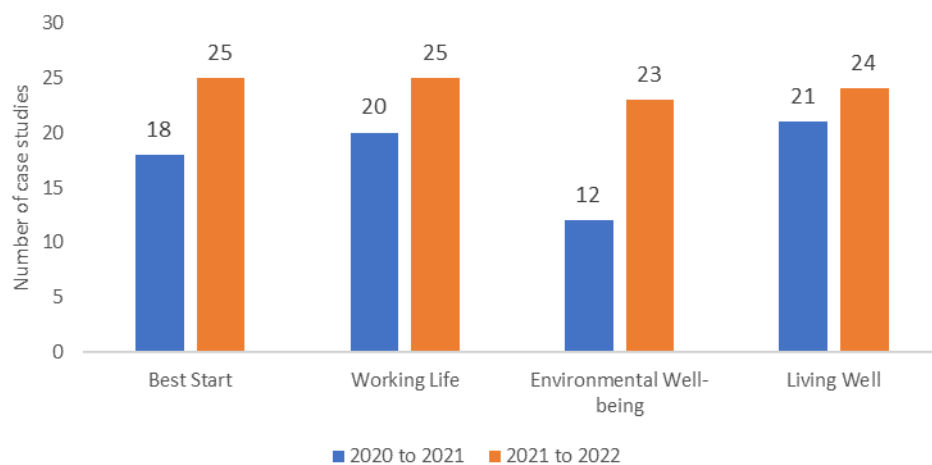
An analysis of our case studies has enabled us to identify the following.

	 A Prosperous Wales	 A Resilient Wales	 A Healthier Wales	 A More Equal Wales	 A Wales of Cohesive Communities	 A Wales of Vibrant Culture & Welsh Language	 A Globally Responsible Wales
<b>2018-2019</b>	48%	15%	96%	93%	89%	44%	100%
<b>2019-2020</b>	100%	31%	100%	100%	94%	63%	100%
<b>2020-2021</b>	84%	68%	88%	96%	100%	52%	96%
<b>2021-2022</b>	83%	48%	86%	97%	90%	72%	86%
	<b>-1</b>	<b>-20</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>-10</b>

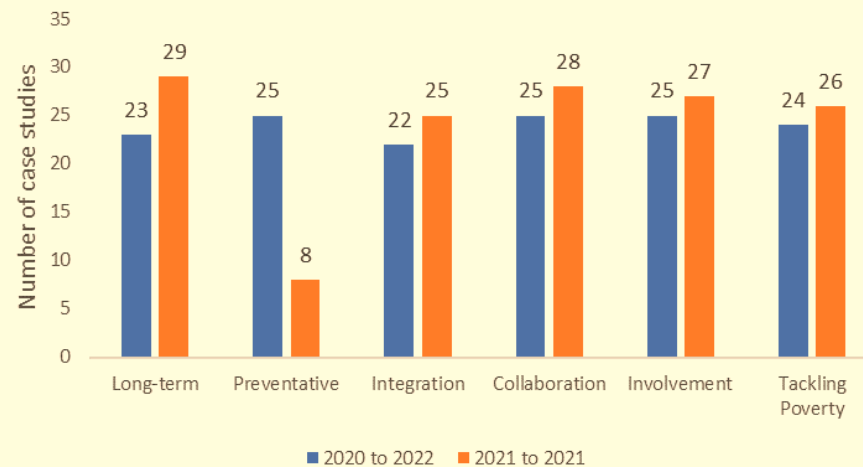
How we are contributing to the 7 national goals - Case studies



How our case studies helps us achieve our well-being objectives



How we are using the 5 ways of working - Case studies



## Our Conclusion and Action Plan

### Conclusion

This report shows how the Council is making steady progress and improvement. However, there are areas that we need to focus on to further strengthen our governance and continuously improve. We have shown improvement in our self-evaluation outcomes and **got better in 15 out of 32** (compared to 11 last year, but data was unavailable for the majority of our indicators last year due to the coronavirus pandemic) of our key performance indicators; the sections above explain this in more detail and where we need to improve. As we review our corporate plan, we want to address this position and improve this trend.

We continue to make progress against our regulator recommendations, with **4 of the 10 recommendations from Audit Wales being complete**. These relate to our governance and priorities for improvement. We want to continue to prioritise this and complete all 10 in 2022/23.

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

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

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

Last year we provided an overall judgement of 'adequate', if asked the same question this year, although we have made sound progress we have to implement our action plan and reappraise our position before having the evidence to be able to progress to 'good', which is our aim.



## Action Plan

It should be noted that these actions also address recommendations from our regulators. These have been themed by well-being objective and how Governance and Resources supports the plan to deliver our corporate plan. These actions have been prioritised (impact and timescales) as set out below. These actions will be monitored by the Councils RTI Board and can form part of scrutiny and Governance and Audit Committee forward work programmes. It should be noted that we will consider SMART (Specific; Measurable; Achievable; Realistic; Time-bound) principles when addressing these actions especially in the context of available budget and capacity to deliver.



Action	Senior Responsible Officer	Priority	Theme
Continue to improve our governance (e.g. scrutiny improvement, constitution, refocusing our SOAPs and BIPs and delivery of our risk strategy/policy)	Director of Governance and Resources	03	Governance and Resources
Review and refocus our Corporate Well-being Plan	Chief Executive	03	
Strengthen our key governance plans/strategies (e.g. workforce plans, procurement strategy, Financial plans to address future challenges and Digital and Data strategy)	Director of Governance and Resources	03	

Improve our customer services offer including how we help support our residents (e.g. cost-of-living) and how we engage and communicate (e.g. participation and engagement strategy)	Director of Governance and Resources	02	
Improve our education standards through continuing to collaborate in delivering our RARS strategy	Director of Education	01	Best Start to Life
Improve our attendance and exclusion data by implementing our attendance plan and our Business Improvement Plans	Director of Education	01	
Focus on delivering our 15-year economic vision	Deputy Chief Executive	03	Working Life
Addresses tackling poverty (collaborative working in the delivering our strategies and plans) and cost of living	Deputy Chief Executive	02	
Address our housing issues as we meet our homelessness duties	Deputy Chief Executive	01	
Play our part in addressing anti-social behaviour	Deputy Chief Executive	01	
Work towards the all-Wales target of becoming a zero-waste nation by 2050	Director of Neighbourhood Services	02	Environmental Well-being
Playing our role in the Welsh public sector becoming carbon neutral by 2030	Director of Neighbourhood Services	02	
Deliver our EV transition plan, which sets out how we will transition all the Fleet by 2030	Director of Neighbourhood Services	04	
Continue to strengthen our reporting and future system provision	Director of Social Services	02	Living Well
Continue to increase our resilience in Social Care and build on our collaborative approaches	Director of Social Services	01	
Deliver our strategic plans and strategies, e.g. regulator action plans, Children's and Adult Services strategies and RTI Plan	Director of Social Services	02	

## Certification of our Corporate Self-Assessment Report 2021-2022

Signed on behalf of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council:

<b>Leader:</b>		<b>Chief Executive:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	

## Contact Us

Have Your Say

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

### Address

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council  
Civic Centre  
Castle Street  
Merthyr Tydfil  
CF47 8AN

### Email

wellbeing@merthyr.gov.uk

## Appendices

### Appendix 1 – Our Shared Vision



## Appendix 2 – Useful Data

### Overview



Population

**60,567**

Households

**25,800** (+6.3% since 2011)



Welsh Speakers

2019 – 18.5%

2020 – 19.8%

2021 – 20.2%

### Waste

Residual Waste  
going to landfill

**196kg**



Percentage of waste being re-  
used, recycled or composted

**65%**

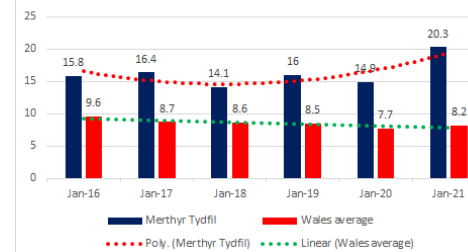
Clearance rate for reported  
fly-tipping incidents within 5 days

**100%**



### Skills

Percentage of People aged 16-53 with No Qualification



### Access and Recreation



Green Flag Awards:

Cyfarthfa Park  
Parc Taf Bargoed  
Aberfan Cemetery  
Thomastown Park

Hectares of accessible  
natural green space

**95**

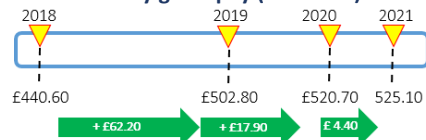


Households in Merthyr Tydfil that live near  
accessible, natural green spaces

**57%**

### Employment and Income

Weekly gross pay (Full Time)



People aged 16-64 claiming  
out of work benefits

**1,475 (3.9%)**



Highest percentage of people claiming 'out of  
work' benefits

**18-21 years (3.9%)**



### Care and Support

In Merthyr Tydfil, the number of children  
receiving care and support 2020 reduced

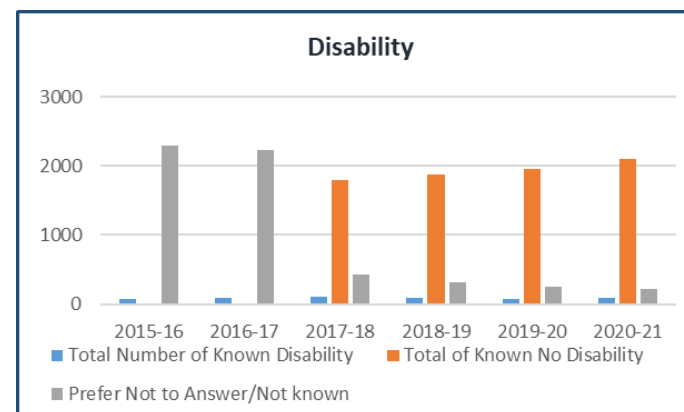
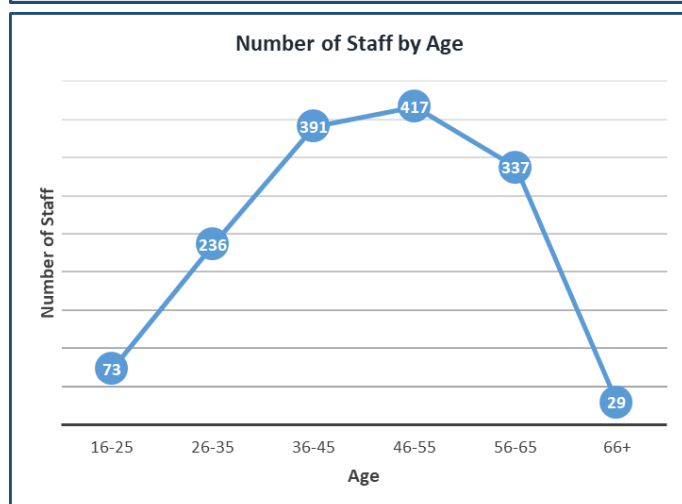
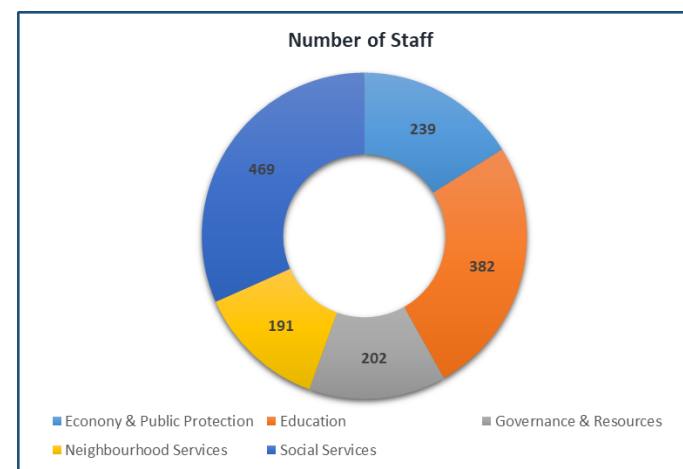
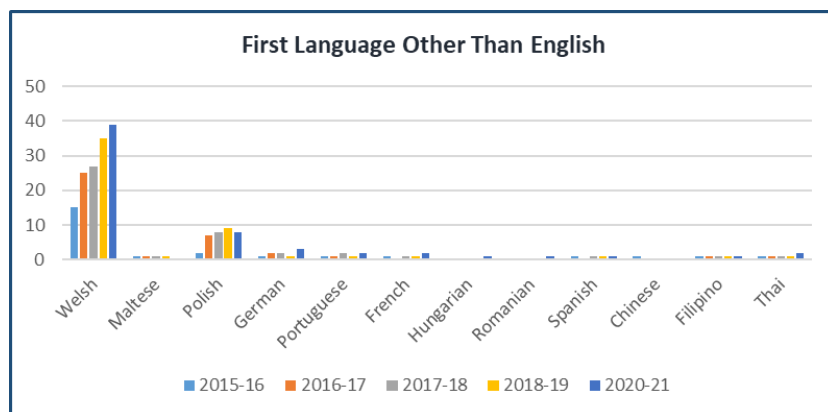
**485** **430**  
2019 2020

Parcels issued by food banks  
2019/2020 2020/2021  
**3,623** **5,218**



Residents in receipt of a mental health-related  
benefit

**2.6%**



Total Number of Staff	1,483
Average Length of Service	12.14
Average Age	45.85
Sickness in Previous Month	78
Welsh Level 1 Completion	190

The County Borough has 8 (22%) of its 36 areas deemed the most deprived 10% of areas in Wales, this is the second highest of the 22 unitary councils in Wales.

*An area in this context is defined as a 'Lower Super Output Area'. Source: Stats Wales*

The County Borough's population is projected to increase by 4.3% between 2020 and 2040 from 60,567 to 63,154, including a predicted 4.4% decrease in the number of children, no change in the number of the working-age population and a 27.1% increase in the number of people aged 65 and over.

*Source: Stats Wales*

### Appendix 3 – Integrated Governance Framework and our ‘Plan-Do-Review-Improve’ model



#### Appendix 4 – Our Consultation

Internal or External	Name of project	Date	Background	Number of responses	Outcome/Latest update
External	Beechgrove Cemetery	Apr 2021	Seeking the views of residents and service users on the restriction of vehicle access to Beechgrove Cemetery, Treharris during the evening.	77	73% agreed with the proposals and the changes were implemented.
External	Consultation on economic recovery survey	April 2021	Economic Vision and Recovery Plan consultation survey drawn up to find out how businesses have been impacted by the pandemic.	50	
External	Consultation on new options for the 3-16 Voluntary Aided Catholic school	April – May 2021	Following further investigative and scoping works an alternative site option was proposed that located the school building on the Greenie with the fields being relocated to the bottom end of the site.	84	Cabinet approved the recommendation
External	Extended consultation on Options for the 3-16 Voluntary Aided Catholic school	July – September 2021	Announcement of extended consultation including an option to build on the Greenie as well as the initial option to build on the Buttercup Fields.	702	
External	MTCBC & BGCBC Private Rented Sector	June 2021	Survey of landlords who own and/or manage homes in the area to know more about the nature of the business that make up the private rented sector and develop an accurate and reliable database of landlords.	40	Results and comments fed back to department.
External	Avenue de Clichy Improvements	June 2021	Consultation on plans to create a better environment entering the town centre by making improvements to Avenue de Clichy and the gyratory system.	54	Work carried out



External	Penyard - One Way System (Phase 1)	June 2021	Consulting with residents and members of the public on options to introduce a one-way system	497	Further comments and suggestions prompted a Phase 2 – see below
External	Road Safety Improvements - Pontycapel Road	June 2021	To support the new Ysgol Y Graig school we proposed to introduce a number of road safety and traffic flow improvements around Pontycapel Road.	37	73% agreed with the changes, which have since been implemented.
External	Cefn Coed Traffic Improvements	May – June 2021	Proposal to remove a mini roundabout and replace with traffic lights to deal with the increased traffic from the new parking/drop off area at Ysgol Y Graig.	28	95% agreed and changes were implemented.
External	Bethesda Street - Public Consultation	June 2021	Plans to improve the safety of and environment for pedestrians and cyclists using a busy town centre section of the Taff Trail.	26	Work carried out with revisions to reflect public opinion
External	Merthyr Tydfil City Status application	September – October 2021	Engagement with residents to ask if they agree with MTCBC making an application for City Status.	1,447	Incredibly contentious issue that resulted in the Council deciding not to apply.
External	Consultation on plans to improve pedestrian provision at Caedraw	July 2021	Consulting on plans to create a better environment entering the town centre by making improvements to Caedraw roundabout and Lower High Street.	34	Work carried out
External	Consultation on plans to improve pedestrian provision in the town centre	July 2021	Consulting residents and businesses on plans to create a better environment within the town centre by making improvements to the existing crossing on Victoria Street.	18	Work carried out

External	A4054 AVERAGE SPEED CAMERAS	September – October 2021	Urgent action required following multiple speed surveys, which indicated excessive speeding on a continuous basis. Consultation to ask if residents agreed on average speed cameras being installed.	1,223	63% agreed with the proposal and cameras have now been installed.
External	Council seeks views on former bus station site	August – September 2021	Two public consultation events to ask residents their opinions on plans for the former bus station site at Glebelands.	560	Second consultation to take place in 2022.
External	Draft Gambling Act Policy	September 2021	Gambling Act 2005 requires a Licensing Authority to review and publish a statement of its Licensing Policy at least every three years. We are required to consult with the public to see if anybody has any comments to make on the new draft policy.	3	Licensing policy published
External	Council asks for support in finalising 'Economic Vision'	September – October 2021	A second and final consultation to help determine if residents and businesses agree with plans.	28	
External	Welsh Language Strategy and Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP)	October – November 2021	Consultation on two plans; Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, September 2022 until 2032; and Welsh Language Strategy, July 2022 to July 2027.	29	Fed comments back to Welsh Language Officer.
External	MTCBC Budget Consultation 2022/23	November 2021 – January 2022	Annual budget and corporate priorities consultation.	277	Results collated and report taken to Full Council for consideration when setting budget.
External	Merthyr Tydfil CBC Residents' Survey 2021/22	November 2021 – January 2022	Annual Residents Survey asking for feedback on service delivery, trust in the council, how people feel within their areas.	518	Information collated and sent to service areas for feedback.  Need to feedback to residents on 'We Asked, You Said, We Did'.

External	Public Space Protection Order Community Alcohol Consultation	December 2021 – March 2022	Consultation on the planned introduction of a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) to prevent street drinking and drug taking in the town centre exclusion zone.	492	This has been put on hold.
External	Final consultation on Revised Options for the 3-16 Voluntary Aided Catholic school	January – February 2022	Further consultation on revised options for the siting of the school: Greenie, with additional open space on current Bishop Hedley High School (BHHS) phase 2; or on current BHHS site with school rugby pitch on one of the Buttercup Fields.	739	County Borough Council approved the land south of the Greenie, west of Galon Uchaf Road as the site for the school development.
External	Council consults on plans for transport interchange improvements	March 2022	Consultation on plans to improve the 'corridor' between the new bus interchange and railway station by making the areas linking the transport connections more attractive.	64	Second consultation to take place in 2022.
Internal	Relaxation of Core Hours & Changes to Flexi Scheme	March 2022	Asking staff their opinions following the removal of core hours.	160	
External	Penyard - One Way System: Phase 2	March – April 2022	Following Phase 1 in June 2021, alternative suggestions were put forward by residents. This consultation incorporates those suggestions in to the proposals.	529	86% agreed that changes were needed and the scheme has since been completed.

## Appendix 5 – Staff Culture Survey

The Council issues an annual staff culture survey. This invites all members of staff to complete the survey. Positives and areas of development are being used to improve how we work. The Corporate Management Team have been allocated these to deliver.

In 2021/22, 285 staff responded. The survey comprised 39 questions (including 5 open questions), grouped under 8 different categories. These being:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Leadership which inspires and motivates people             | 5. A culture of empowerment and continuous improvement |
| 2. Performance is managed and high performance is recognised  | 6. High levels of staff morale                         |
| 3. The values and behaviours on the wall are lived day to day | 7. Employees learn and develop skills                  |
| 4. Strong internal dialogue and corporate communications      | 8. Employees are clear on our strategic direction      |

A summary of the findings is provided below.






1. Leadership which inspires and motivates people - 49% positive responses: Highest responses were to 'my Manager understands what support I need to carry out my role and creates a positive workplace environment'
2. Performance is managed and high performance is recognised - 63% positive responses: Highest responses were 'my Manager and I have set personal objectives for my role' and 'my Manager sets high expectations for my performance'
3. The values and behaviours on the wall are lived day to day - 49% positive responses: Highest responses were 'I trust my Manager' and 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is respected and valued'
4. Strong internal dialogue and corporate communications - 51% positive responses: Highest responses were 'My Manager holds regular team meetings'
5. A culture of empowerment and continuous improvement - 68% positive responses: Highest responses were 'I look for ideas to improve the way my team and I work'
6. High levels of staff morale - 55% positive responses: Highest responses were 'I feel I can be myself in work'
7. Employees learn and develop skills - 60% positive responses: Highest responses were 'I receive the training I need to do my job well'
8. Employees are clear on our strategic direction - 46% positive responses: Highest responses were 'I understand how my role contributes to the Council fulfilling its vision and objectives'

## Appendix 6 – Needs Assessment






This available as a background paper to the 'CORPORATE SELF-ASSESSMENT 2021-22/ HUNAN-ASESIAD CORFFORAETHOL 2021-22' report to Council.

## Appendix 7 – Residents Survey






### Question 1 – Overall, how satisfied are you with Merthyr Tydfil as a place to live?

1. Overall, how satisfied are you with Merthyr Tydfil as a place to live?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very satisfied		15.44%	80
2	Fairly satisfied		52.70%	273
3	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied		16.22%	84
4	Fairly dissatisfied		11.78%	61
5	Very dissatisfied		3.86%	20
			answered	518
			skipped	0





### Question 2 – Overall, how satisfied are you with the way Merthyr Tydfil CBC runs things?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very satisfied		6.56%	34
2	Fairly satisfied		38.80%	201
3	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied		24.90%	129
4	Fairly dissatisfied		18.53%	96
5	Very dissatisfied		11.20%	58
			answered	518
			skipped	0






**Question 3 – To what extent do you agree or disagree that Merthyr Tydfil CBC provides value for money?**

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		5.03%	26
2	Tend to agree		20.89%	108
3	Neither agree nor disagree		31.91%	165
4	Tend to disagree		25.73%	133
5	Strongly disagree		16.44%	85
			answered	517
			skipped	1





**Question 4 – To what extent do you think Merthyr Tydfil CBC acts on the concerns of local residents**

4. To what extent do you think Merthyr Tydfil CBC acts on the concerns of local residents?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	A great deal		9.14%	47
2	A fair amount		38.52%	198
3	Not very much		41.05%	211
4	Not at all		11.28%	58
			answered	514
			skipped	4













**Question 5 – Overall, how well informed do you think Merthyr Tydfil CBC keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides?**

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very satisfied		15.44%	80
2	Fairly satisfied		52.70%	273
3	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied		16.22%	84
4	Fairly dissatisfied		11.78%	61
	Very dissatisfied		3.86%	20
			answered	518
			skipped	0

**Question 6 – Overall, how involved do you feel in how Merthyr Tydfil CBC delivers its services?**





Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very involved		5.65%	29
2	Fairly involved		27.88%	143
3	Not very involved		42.69%	219
4	Not involved at all		23.78%	122
			answered	513
			skipped	5

**Question 7 – How do you currently find out about Merthyr Tydfil and the services it provides?**




Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Council website		54.88%	281
2	Council's magazine or newsletter		19.92%	102
3	Printed information provided by the council (e.g. leaflets, flyers, public notices)		9.96%	51
4	Council texts, emails and e-newsletters		4.30%	22
5	Direct contact with the council (e.g. contact with staff, public meetings and events)		9.18%	47
6	Council's social media sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube)		45.70%	234
7	Social media outside the council (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube)		44.53%	228
8	Council noticeboards in council buildings		0.78%	4
9	Advertising on billboards/buses etc.		2.34%	12
10	From your local councillor		18.55%	95
11	Local media (e.g. newspapers, TV, radio)		7.42%	38
12	Word of mouth (e.g. friends, neighbours, relations)		36.33%	186







**Question 8 – How much do you trust Merthyr Tydfil CBC?**

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	A great deal		8.01%	41
2	A fair amount		42.58%	218
3	Not very much		34.96%	179
4	Not at all		14.45%	74
			answered	512
			skipped	6





**Question 9 – Who do you trust most to make decisions about how services are provided in Merthyr Tydfil?**

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Your local council		38.28%	196
2	Welsh Government		23.05%	118
3	Neither		38.67%	198
			answered	512
			skipped	6





Question 10 – Which individuals do you trust most to make decisions about how services are provided in Merthyr Tydfil?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
Local councillors		53.13%	272
Members of Parliament		1.56%	8
Members of the Senedd		15.23%	78
None of the above		30.08%	154






Question 11 – Thinking specifically about planning decisions, how important or not is it for you to be able to comment on individual plans for all housing developments in Merthyr Tydfil?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very important		56.47%	288
2	Fairly important		32.55%	166
3	Not very important		8.82%	45
4	Not at all important		2.35%	12
			answered	510
			skipped	8






**Question 12 – Thinking specifically about regeneration projects, how important is it for you to be able to comment on individual regeneration developments in Merthyr Tydfil?**

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very important		65.10%	332
2	Fairly important		28.04%	143
3	Not very important		5.88%	30
4	Not at all important		0.98%	5
			answered	510
			skipped	8






**Question 13 – How safe do you feel when outside in Merthyr Tydfil after dark? (Please consider your local area to be the area within 15–20 minutes walking distance from your home)**

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very safe		8.04%	41
2	Fairly safe		31.76%	162
3	Neither safe nor unsafe		17.84%	91
4	Fairly unsafe		28.04%	143
5	Very unsafe		14.31%	73
			answered	510
			skipped	8






**Question 14 – How safe do you feel when outside in Merthyr Tydfil during the day? (Please consider your local area to be the area within 15 – 20 minutes walking distance from your home)**

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very safe		23.58%	120
2	Fairly safe		45.58%	232
3	Neither safe nor unsafe		17.09%	87
4	Fairly unsafe		10.02%	51
5	Very unsafe		3.73%	19
			answered	509
			skipped	9






**Question 15 – How satisfied are you overall with Merthyr Tydfil’s Waste collection?**

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very satisfied		35.50%	180
2	Fairly satisfied		37.28%	189
3	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied		10.45%	53
4	Fairly dissatisfied		9.86%	50
5	Very dissatisfied		6.90%	35
			answered	507
			skipped	11






**Question 16 – How satisfied are you overall with Merthyr Tydfil’s street cleaning?**

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very satisfied		11.68%	59
2	Fairly satisfied		34.65%	175
3	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied		19.80%	100
4	Fairly dissatisfied		20.40%	103
5	Very dissatisfied		13.47%	68
			answered	505
			skipped	13

**Question 17 – How satisfied are you overall with Merthyr Tydfil’s road maintenance?**






Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
Very satisfied		3.17%	16
Fairly satisfied		19.21%	97
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied		22.38%	113
Fairly dissatisfied		30.69%	155
Very dissatisfied		24.55%	124
		answered	505
		skipped	13

**Question 18 – How satisfied are you overall with Merthyr Tydfil’s pavement maintenance?**






Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very satisfied		6.14%	31
2	Fairly satisfied		32.48%	164
3	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied		26.53%	134
4	Fairly dissatisfied		20.99%	106
5	Very dissatisfied		13.86%	70
			answered	505
			skipped	13








**Question 19 – How satisfied are you overall with Merthyr Tydfil’s services and support for older people?**

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very satisfied		4.76%	24
2	Fairly satisfied		20.83%	105
3	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied		51.59%	260
4	Fairly dissatisfied		14.29%	72
5	Very dissatisfied		8.53%	43
			answered	504
			skipped	14






**Question 20 – How satisfied are you overall with Merthyr Tydfil’s services and support for children and young people?**

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very satisfied		8.53%	43
2	Fairly satisfied		21.23%	107
3	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied		42.66%	215
4	Fairly dissatisfied		17.86%	90
5	Very dissatisfied		9.72%	49
			answered	504
			skipped	14

**Question 21 – How satisfied are you overall with Merthyr Tydfil’s education and learning provision?**

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very satisfied		14.34%	72
2	Fairly satisfied		30.28%	152
3	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied		40.44%	203
4	Fairly dissatisfied		8.96%	45
5	Very dissatisfied		5.98%	30
			answered	502
			skipped	16





Question 22 – How satisfied are you overall with Merthyr Tydfil’s parks and green spaces?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
Very satisfied		14.17%	71
Fairly satisfied		32.53%	163
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied		18.56%	93
Fairly dissatisfied		18.16%	91
Very dissatisfied		16.57%	83

**Question 23 – As the country starts to recover from the pandemic, which, if any, of the following do you think it is important for Merthyr Tydfil CBC to do?**

Answer Choices	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important	Not at all important	Response Total
Delivering housing for local people	57.29% 283	32.59% 161	8.30% 41	1.82% 9	494
Supporting local businesses and high streets	67.81% 335	27.73% 137	3.44% 17	1.01% 5	494
Introducing measures to encourage more cycling and walking	33.60% 166	38.46% 190	22.27% 110	5.67% 28	494
Supporting people who still have to self-isolate	49.80% 246	37.25% 184	11.13% 55	1.82% 9	494
Supporting people who lose their jobs	68.22% 337	26.92% 133	3.85% 19	1.01% 5	494
Supporting parks and green spaces	60.93% 301	32.59% 161	5.06% 25	1.42% 7	494
Promoting activities that improve the public's health	53.64% 265	37.04% 183	7.89% 39	1.42% 7	494
Supporting children who have been disadvantaged by the pandemic	71.26% 352	24.49% 121	3.44% 17	0.81% 4	494
Helping older people and disabled people who need support	73.28% 362	24.09% 119	1.82% 9	0.81% 4	494
				answered	494
				skipped	24

Question 24 – How important or not do you think it is for your council to undertake activities to tackle climate change?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very important		56.47%	288
2	Fairly important		32.55%	166
3	Not very important		8.82%	45
4	Not at all important		2.35%	12
			answered	510
			skipped	8

**Question 25 – Which, if any, of the following activities would you like to see Merthyr Tydfil CBC do to help tackle climate change?**

<b>Answer Choices</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Response Total</b>
Encourage people to cycle, walk or use public transport	76.02% 371	23.98% 117	488
Encourage people to be more eco-friendly (for example, to recycle or use less plastic)	89.14% 435	10.86% 53	488
Increase the number of on-street and public charging points for electric cars	67.01% 327	32.99% 161	488
Increase the use of renewable energy and improve insulation in buildings in the area	91.60% 447	8.40% 41	488
Require all contractors that work for them to undertake their own activities to tackle climate change	76.02% 371	23.98% 117	488
Bring together local organisations, for example businesses and community groups, to tackle climate change together	78.89% 385	21.11% 103	488
Increase biodiversity in the area (for example, planting trees and protecting green spaces)	92.62% 452	7.38% 36	488
Support people impacted by the effects of climate change (for example, dealing with flooding and over-heating)	88.11% 430	11.89% 58	488

**Question 26 – Overall, do you think that the media has viewed the following positively or negatively in the last few months?**

<b>Answer Choices</b>	<b>Positively</b>	<b>Neither positively nor negatively</b>	<b>Negatively</b>	<b>Response Total</b>
The Government	11.98% 58	30.17% 146	57.85% 280	484
Local council(s) across the country	9.71% 47	61.78% 299	28.51% 138	484
Merthyr Tydfil CBC	11.36% 55	52.48% 254	36.16% 175	484
			answered	484
			skipped	34



Appendix 8 – Frontline Services Feedback (Self-evaluation)

Service Area	Overall Judgement	Judgement from support provided to delivering the Best Start objective	Judgement from support provided to delivering the Working Life objective	Judgement from support provided to delivering the Environmental Well-being objective	Judgement from support provided to delivering the Living Well objective
Transformation (Business Change)	Good	Limited Contact	Good	Good	Good
Compliments and Complaints	Good	-	-	-	Good
Communications and Consultation	Good	Good	Good	Good	Mixed
Corporate Support Services (Business Support)	Good	Good	Good	Good	-
Customer Support (Contact Centre)	Mixed / Good	Limited Contact	Mixed / Good	Good	-
Democratic Services	Good	-	Good	Good	Good
Executive Support	Good	-	-	Good	-
Finance and Accountancy	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
HR (including H&S)	Good	Mixed / Adequate	Good	Good	Good
ICT and Print	Good	Mixed / Adequate	Good	Good	Good
Internal Audit	Mixed / Good	Mixed	-	Good	Mixed
Legal	Good	Mixed / Good	Good	Good	Good
Performance and Scrutiny	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Procurement and Payments	Good	Good	Good	-	Good
Revenues, Benefits and Financial Assessment	Good	Good	Good	-	Good
Risk, Equalities and Welsh Language	Good	Good	-	Good	Good

## Appendix 9 – Case Studies

This available as a background paper to the 'CORPORATE SELF-ASSESSMENT 2021-22/ HUNAN-ASESIAD CORFFORAETHOL 2021-22' report to Council.

## Appendix 10 – National and Local Data (Working Life)

This available as a background paper to the 'CORPORATE SELF-ASSESSMENT 2021-22/ HUNAN-ASESIAD CORFFORAETHOL 2021-22' report to Council.

## Appendix 11 – Performance and Project Keys

### **Performance**

**The following contains information that will help you to understand the analysis of our progress, particularly in relation to our priority areas.**

Each priority area has an associated outcome, which describe the benefits we aim to deliver for our communities. An outcome is not in itself measureable, so in order to be accountable and to assess whether we are achieving the desired benefits we use indicators and improvement activity. This enables the Council to quantify achievement and understand its impact on outcomes.

### **Current Position**

Where possible, our indicators are evaluated based on our ranked position when compared to the other Welsh local authorities. The purpose of using comparative data is to enable us to understand our relative performance across Wales. Where we are unable to compare that measure with other local authorities in Wales, indicators are compared against Local Authority targets and/or previous trends.

### **Indicator status definitions**

Performance definition	Rank	Status
The current position is excellent	1-6	Excellent
The current position is good	7-11	Good
The current position is adequate	12-16	Adequate
The current position is unsatisfactory	17-22	Unsatisfactory
There is no comparable information or only local data	Not applicable	

#### Descriptor for each status

<b>EXCELLENT</b>	Very strong, sustained performance and practice
<b>GOOD</b>	Strong features, although minor aspects may require improvement
<b>ADEQUATE and needs improvement</b>	Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but important aspects require improvement
<b>UNSATISFACTORY and needs urgent improvement</b>	Important weaknesses outweigh strengths

#### Project Status

Category	Explanation
Blue	Project 100% complete and savings accrued
Green	Successful delivery of the project/programme to time, cost and quality appears highly likely and there are no major outstanding issues that at this stage appear to threaten delivery significantly
Amber	Successful delivery appears feasible but significant issues already exists requiring management attention. These appear resolvable at this stage and if addressed promptly, should not present a cost/schedule overrun
Red	Successful delivery of the project/programme appears to be unachievable. There are major issues on project/programme definition, schedule, budget required, quality or benefits delivery, which at this stage does not appear to be manageable or resolvable. The Project/Programme may need re-baselining and/or overall viability re-assessed