

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Acting Today for a Better Tomorrow

Corporate Well-being Plan

2023-2028



Version 1: 2023-2024

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Foreword

Every five years, the County Borough Council has a duty to update our Corporate Plan - one of the most important documents we produce.

In it we set out our hopes and aspirations for a future Merthyr Tydfil - after looking back at what we've achieved to date, what lessons we've learned and how we can make the most of opportunities that come our way.

The past half a decade has seen us have to raise our game in the light of the biggest health challenge we have known. The Coronavirus pandemic affected our previous Corporate Plan – as it did every local authority's - but I'm proud to say that every service the Council provides pulled out all the stops in ensuring its successful response.

That experience has informed the preparation of the 2023-28 Corporate Plan, on which we consulted our community: local residents, businesses, partners, staff and trades unions. I'd like to thank you all for your views and comments, which we value highly.

The Plan will help us prioritise services and target resources effectively over the coming five years, and I was pleased to see our vision reflected in these ambitious objectives.

Our four new corporate well-being objectives directly address the identified needs of our communities and contribute to the seven national goals set out in Welsh Government's Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The objectives we want to achieve are:

- An Aspirational Merthyr Tydfil, focused on learning
- A Healthier Merthyr Tydfil
- A Safe and Prosperous Merthyr Tydfil
- A Clean and Green Merthyr Tydfil

Again, I thank you for playing such an important role in helping us to decide our priorities. Let's continue to work together to create the Merthyr Tydfil we'd all like to see.



Councillor Geraint Thomas
Council Leader

Introduction

As the Chief Executive of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, I am delighted to present our Corporate Well-being Plan.

This plan sets out our vision, values and priorities for 2023-2028. We recognise the significant financial pressures faced by local Councils across Wales, which also impact the communities we serve. As a result, we have had to make some tough decisions on where to prioritise spending while making sure we maintain critical services.

Developing this Plan has been a collaborative effort, involving Elected Members, officers, and partners. It is a testament to how we can work together to overcome challenges and deliver real outcomes for the residents of Merthyr Tydfil, along with those who work in and visit our town.

We value the impact of our regional working across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg area and aim to work better with a broad range of people and communities, offering opportunities for local people to become more involved.

Our Plan sets out ambitious goals that require us to work with communities and key partner organisations to do things differently. Through our programme of transformation, change, and innovation, we aim to secure the changes we need to positively impact the lives and well-being of both current and future generations.

We are excited about the opportunities this plan presents and are committed to working closely with our communities to achieve our goals.

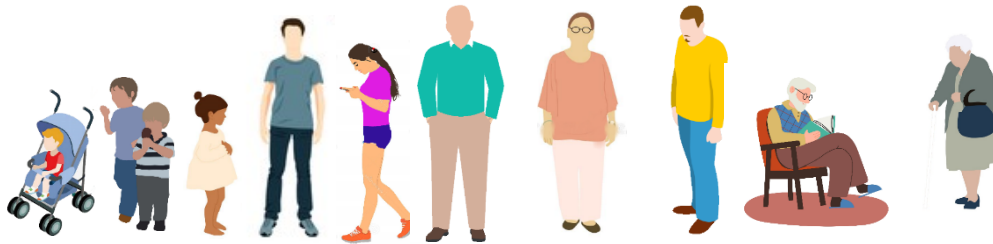


Ellis Cooper
Chief Executive Officer

About Merthyr Tydfil

Located in the Heads of the Valleys area approximately 20 miles from the Welsh capital, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough is the smallest Welsh local authority and sits within the Cardiff Capital Region.

The UK Census 2021 shows Merthyr Tydfil has a recorded population of **58,800**. The population has remained relatively unchanged since the previous census in 2011. Though the numbers are similar; a change in the 'make-up' of our communities has been noted:



An increase of

3.7%

in children aged under 15 years (compared to the Welsh average of 1.0%);

There's been a decrease of

4.3%

in people aged 15 to 64 years (compared to 2.5% in Wales;

There's been an increase of

13.3%

in people aged 65 years and over (compared to 17.7% in Wales).

Merthyr Tydfil CBC's [Local Development Plan](#) (LDP) shows us that the main town of Merthyr Tydfil has a highest concentration of population (approximately 43,000). It is the main retail and service centre in the Heads of the Valleys; fulfilling a key strategic role in the region. Merthyr Tydfil has some of the most deprived areas in Wales.

Austerity measures and welfare reforms have had a greater negative impact in Merthyr Tydfil than in many other areas in Wales. There is a greater concentration of deprivation in the north of the local authority. The Housing Support Programme Strategy confirms Merthyr Tydfil has a significantly higher proportion of older housing stock than elsewhere in Wales, which manifests itself in a high rate of unfit, particularly amongst terraced housing.

The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation identified Merthyr Tydfil as having high levels of deprivation; with 28 of its 36 LSOAs recorded as being in the top 50% most deprived areas in Wales. To address this, the Council is developing a 'Tackling Poverty' strategy to enable and deliver targeted and co-ordinated actions in conjunction with our key partners.

The health profile for Merthyr Tydfil shows the population has high levels of people with a disability (increasing to 1:5 or 28% for people aged 16-64 years). There are high levels of people with chronic conditions; mental illness and low levels of well-being; with obesity being 'flagged' as an area of clear concern within the County Borough.

Looking forward:

Census data 2021 shows Merthyr Tydfil has an ageing population; with projections showing that this trend will continue to increase over coming years. Merthyr Tydfil's LDP confirms the Council preferred growth scenario: a population increase of approximately 8% to 64,400 by 2031, with a resulting dwelling requirement of 2,250 over the LDP period appears to be a level of growth that can be sustainably managed and is considered to be both ambitious and realistic.

Our Council

Number of Council staff:	2,557
Number of electoral wards	11
Number of local Councillors	30
Number of Households	24,974
Number of Primary Schools	19
Number of Secondary Schools	3
Number of 3-16 Schools	1
Number of Special Schools	1
Number of Pupil Referral Units	1

Core Values

The Council has **seven core values**. These were developed with our staff as part of a programme of staff involvement and engagement regarding how we want to work. These values are a link from personal objectives of staff members; to team/ service goals; to our well-being objectives and vision.

Core Values	Honesty and Openness
	Trust and Respect
	Accountability
	Learning
	Aspiration
	Team Working
	Communication

Operating Model

Our Operating Model Our Council approved operating model has been designed to set out how we will deliver our services. It supports us in transforming and improving how we work. Our operating model (built on the 5 ways of working) includes how we should work **economically**, **efficiently** and **effectively**.

We have set out the **8 operating principles** and expectations.

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

Why Update the Plan?

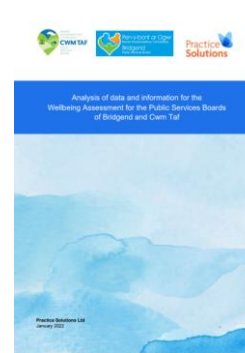


The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires all public bodies to work in partnership to improve wellbeing in their local communities. *You can find out more about this Act by clicking [here](#).*

Producing an Assessment of Well-being is a requirement of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WFG Act); and this assessment is to be undertaken every 5 years.

The first Wellbeing Assessment was undertaken in 2017. Since this period; there have been a number of key changes which have affected both the Council and the communities it supports; it is important that we take time to look back at what has been achieved; and renew our understanding of community needs to ensure the support services we offer remain targeted.

Some large-scale issues have arisen since the initial assessment of well-being was completed (e.g.) the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent impacts; and the UK Government completing Brexit leading to the UK leaving the European Union.

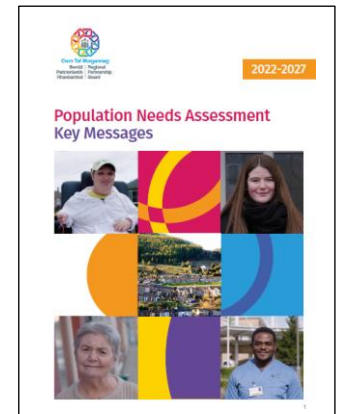


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Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board (PSB) is also subject to the Act (having been created in direct response to this legislation); and has led on the development of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Needs Assessment; with officers and Elected Member representatives from Merthyr Tydfil CBC support the development through the provision of data and information; and playing a part in the community engagement element of development to ensure citizens were involved and had opportunity to support the development of the Plan by sharing their views.

The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board (RPB) are also required to assess needs and undertake a regional Population Needs Assessment, which guides what services are needed, and the range and level of services required to meet that need. RPB partners work together to look at how services and support can be accelerated and improved for these groups, so they have better wellbeing and health outcomes.

To ensure this work genuinely captures local people's voices, the assessment is developed in partnership with community groups, organisations and residents across Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf.



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Financing the Plan

The previous Corporate Plan approved by Council July 2017 was produced at a time of positive economic indicators with low inflation circa the Bank of England's target rate of 2% and extremely low interest rates with the Bank Rate at 0.25%. However, this was offset by negative Revenue Settlement's of -0.5% for the 2017/18 financial year and -0.36% for the 2018/19 financial year as Central Government's programme of austerity began to ease with a positive settlement of +0.81% for the 2019/20 financial year.

The improving Revenue Settlements of +4.85% for the 2020/21 financial year and +4.64% for the 2021/22 financial year allowed the Council to plan more effectively for the future including recovery from the covid-19 pandemic. This process was assisted with low inflation below the Bank of England's target rate of 2% and an historically low Bank Rate of 0.1%. As a result, the Council implemented a Recovery Transformation and Improvement (RTI) Plan supporting additional investment of £1.1 million in Council services. This included improving educational standards, improving social care resilience, addressing environmental wellbeing, embracing increased commercialisation, creating a healthy organisation through workforce development, championing enhanced digitalisation and improving the governance framework. In complementing the RTI Plan, in addressing Council wide capacity issues within priority Council services, further additional investment of circa £1.5 million in Council services was supported with the creation of an additional 30 posts within the organisational structure.

The new Corporate Plan 2023 to 2028 is written at a time of significant unprecedented financial challenges faced by all Local Authorities with high inflation (10.4% at February 2023), relatively high interest rates (Bank Rate 4.25% at March 2023), spiralling energy costs and higher than anticipated pay awards. Thus, even with a Welsh Government Settlement of 7.03% for the 2023/24 financial year the Council is still faced with a 7% real term reduction to services in setting its Budget of **£152.7 million** (opposite).

Economic conditions are projected to improve through the period of the new Corporate Plan with inflation and interest rates expected to fall.

Directorate	£m	%
Education	59.9	39.2
Social Services	45.8	30.0
Neighbourhood Services	12.9	8.4
Economy and Public Protection	10.6	6.9
Governance and Resources	9.1	6.0
Corporate Costs	14.4	9.5
Net Expenditure	152.7	100.0

Even so, based on the assumptions within the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2023/24 to 2026/27, the Council is faced with a projected budget deficit of £10.5 million for 2024/25 and a cumulative budget deficit of £23.3 million over the period of the MTFP. The Council's Transformation Programme will build upon the principles of the RTI Plan in identifying sustainable efficiency savings whilst recognising the priorities within the RTI Plan and aligning to the priorities within the Corporate Plan.










Transformation initiatives are critical in ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council and providing assurance to all stakeholders (including Welsh Government and Audit Wales) that the Council can confidently respond to both current and future financial challenges. Over the period of the previous Corporate Plan, the Council's General Reserves have increased from £4.6 million to £5.7 million and continues to comply with the requirement within the Corporate Reserves Policy for General Reserves to lie between 3.5% and 4% of the Council's net revenue budget.

The Development Process

Our duty is to ensure that we continue to deliver services to the most vulnerable members of our community. How we work, what is expected of us and the how we use our resource to achieve this is planned; however, it will likely be subject to many changes over the lifetime of this Plan.

The objectives and actions detailed in this Plan provide the framework for our activities over the next five years. To deliver this, we aim to continue to work with (and for) our local communities in order to work together towards achieving the objectives we have shaped using the feedback they have given us.

When developing the Plan; we also ensured we followed the [10 Steps](#) outlined by the Future Generations Commissioner when developing our Well-being objectives. These are:

	5								
STEP 1: Before you begin, take a step back	STEP 2: Apply the 5 ways of working	STEP 3: Bring people together	STEP 4: Join the dots	STEP 5: Be brave and be challenging	STEP 6: Test and share as you go along	STEP 7: Use your resources	STEP 8: Use language and layout that's easy to understand	STEP 9: Set clear objectives and steps	STEP 10: Making a difference

Involving People and Capturing Views

Data and information captured to date reflected the broader picture across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region. To supplement this and ensure we captured the voice of people in Merthyr Tydfil; the Council decided to undertake some additional stakeholder engagement.

To do this, officers in the Council developed an engagement survey which posed 3 key questions to people.

- What do you like best about Merthyr Tydfil?
- What would you change about Merthyr Tydfil?
- What do you think our Leaders need to hear?



The survey was rolled out in a number of different ways: through face-to-face sessions across the County Borough; using our stakeholder networks; and ensuring the survey questions were available in both paper-based and digital form.

At the end of the survey, the Council had received **over 1,000 responses**. Analysing the feedback received helped the Council to identify community priorities (high level findings can be seen by clicking on the images opposite). Understanding community priorities helped inform the development of well-being themes and draft objectives.

As key connectors; Councillors work with residents to identify key issues; and help to plan ways to address these; providing advice, guidance and/or support as appropriate.

Councillors offer a route for residents to make contact the Council and can make a huge difference to residents quality of life. At Merthyr Tydfil CBC; officers will continue to provide support to our Councillors so they can carry out their role within communities across the County Borough.



The Council has continued to engage with a cross-section of people throughout the development process; to identify issues and areas for improvement; to 'test' options identified and seek positive challenge around whether we were focusing on the right priorities; testing our draft well-being objectives.

Our Well-being Objectives

As a Council, we continue to make progress in transforming how we work whilst working to maintain a high standard of service delivery. Merthyr Tydfil CBC has seen significant changes in how it works – this has been in response to legislative changes (such as the WFG Act; and the Local Government and Elections Act); and through things which might be outside of the Council's direct control; but to which the Council must positively respond (e.g.) Covid-19 pandemic.

We have also listened to our community feedback; our customers and partners; and our regulators. We have been grateful for the guidance, advice and toolkits offered by the Future Generations Commissioner, the Welsh Language Commissioner, the Older Peoples Commissioner, the Children's Commissioner and the Equalities and Human Rights Commissioner.

Additionally, there have been opportunities to secure and challenge from our 'critical friends' – peers within other local authorities; the Public Services Board etc.

Following this process; we have adjusted our original proposal for five well-being objectives and streamlined this down to four – this is as a direct result of the feedback we have received from those who have helped us to shape the Plan. We previously proposed an objective linked to Financial Resilience; however, as this was shown to be a critical area of focus; the Council is developing a 'Tackling Poverty' strategy to enable and deliver targeted and co-ordinated actions in conjunction with our key partners.

The four well-being objectives are:

An Aspirational Merthyr Tydfil focused on learning	A Healthier Merthyr Tydfil	A Safe & Prosperous Merthyr Tydfil	A Clean and Green Merthyr Tydfil
We will strengthen how we enable people to grow and reach their potential	We will empower people to live independent and dignified lives	We will support how our economy recovers and grows	We will support the creation of a clean and green environment now and in the future

These four well-being objectives will together form a cohesive package of activity to deliver not only our local well-being outcomes; but also, to maximise our contribution to delivering the national well-being goals in an increasingly integrated way. Each objective will contribute to multiple goals and although under each objective we have set out a number of specific actions we also recognise that many of our stated actions will deliver a range of outcomes reflecting the links between health, culture the environment and economic well-being. Let's look at each of these well-being objectives in more detail.



An Aspirational Merthyr Tydfil focused on learning

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

Why is this a priority?

Merthyr Tydfil CBC recognises that for many, the best route for a happy and successful life is through having a good education; and qualifications that will enable them to access employment. We will continue to work with a range of partners to support people to access opportunities so they can work towards their goals.

Our priority outcome for this objective will be to provide a range of opportunities for all residents across Merthyr Tydfil to gain the knowledge and skills to achieve their life goals.

To deliver this objective; it is important that the Council works to provide appropriate learning and development opportunities for people of all ages; and will support children, young people and adults in this; helping them to feel confident and to have the life skills so they can take up their place in the world of work. It is also important that the Council continues to work to develop the Welsh Government ambition of a million Welsh speakers by 2050 by providing transformational Welsh Language education opportunities & developing the use of Welsh across the County Borough.

Teams from across the Council deliver services which will contribute to making progress against this objective; and by doing this, we aim to respond to community feedback received during both the engagement stage (where we worked to identify needs); and through the consultation on the Council's proposed well-being objectives (where we sense checked our proposals with local people).

What we will focus on in 2023/2024:

- Developing ambitious pathways which will support the development of high levels of literacy, numeracy and digital skills from early years through to post-16;
- Continuing to explore and expand our 'Pathways to Employment' scheme to provide specific training and employment support to children looked after and other vulnerable learners;
- Connecting with education providers and businesses to better align courses / modules with high level vocational experience and learning;
- Developing a system where communities and schools work together to provide exciting opportunities and innovative experiences for all learners; and
- Working with all stakeholders, we will develop aspirational pathways for learning for all.

This objective will be supported by more detailed plans (e.g.)

- Raising Aspirations, Raising Standards Strategy;
- Economic Recovery Plan;
- Care Leavers Strategy (Make my own Decision);
- Council's Workforce Development Plan; and
- the Asset Management Plan.

(This list is not exhaustive).



A Healthier Merthyr Tydfil

We will empower people to live independent and dignified lives

Why is this a priority?

Good health is central to human happiness and well-being. An individual's health can impact on their overall level of life satisfaction. Rather than being something people just get at the doctor's or at hospital, health is something that starts in families, schools, communities and workplaces.

Residents told us that the Covid-19 pandemic affected people's health and well-being; the impact of this continues to be felt today across all realms of well-being: social, cultural, environmental and economic. The Council will continue to work with key partners to provide advice, guidance and targeted support to help people tackle the challenges.

Our priority outcome for this objective will be to support the emotional and physical health and wellbeing of children and adults.

To deliver this objective; the Council will continue to provide health and social services to meet community need. Health and well-being remains a key focus within our schools. Having listened to our residents, we will maintain the open, green spaces across the County Borough which are valued now more than ever; maintaining the Active Travel routes to help reduce the use of cars; and subsequently air pollution.

Work will continue through delivery of Environmental Health services; and work with partners in Health Services to support people and communities to stay healthy; fit and active.

What we will focus on in **2023/2024**:

- Providing support services to enable people to remain living in their own homes;
- Developing integrated service responses with health to achieve better well-being outcomes for children and adults;
- Provide additional supported accommodation to reduce homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation;
- Ensuring green spaces are accessible to all our residents to support their health and well-being; and
- Provide safeguarding advice and support to all vulnerable groups: children looked after; child protection; adults at risk (including domestic abuse) whilst ensuring cross-cutting Council multi-agency approaches to safeguarding and working with the Regional Safeguarding Board are sustained and developed.

This objective will be supported by more detailed plans (e.g.)

- Regional Older Persons Strategy;
- Raising Aspirations, Raising Standards Strategy;
- Strategy for Early Help: People get the right help at the right time; and
- Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board Delivery Plan.

(This list is not exhaustive).

A Safe & Prosperous Merthyr Tydfil

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

Why is this a priority?

The Council recognises it needs to support people and businesses across Merthyr Tydfil to feel safe and confident in a fast-changing environment. A buoyant local economy provides jobs for people; and services for them to use. Merthyr Tydfil's local economy experienced challenges in some areas even before the pandemic; the impacts of Covid-19 adding extra pressures; and supporting economic recovery is a key focus for the Council.

Speaking with local people; we recognised how important it is that people feel safe where they live, work or spend their leisure time. Not only is it about reducing/preventing injury and crime, but also about building strong, connected and vibrant communities. We will continue to develop our partnership approach to tackling crime in direct response to this community feedback.

Our priority outcome for this objective will be to diversify our local economy and increase resilience to future challenges by helping the creation of the right type of businesses, supported by the right type of business infrastructure

To deliver this objective; the Council will continue to roll-out its Economic Recovery Plan; with targeted activities that support the growth of local businesses; attract new businesses to invest with a view to developing our Town Centre and community hubs. We will continue to provide support to local people, so they gain the skills and knowledge to move into better paid jobs; or to start a business. The Council's Public Protection Team will deliver targeted services working with communities to identify and address issues.

What we will focus on in 2023/2024:

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

This objective will be supported by more detailed plans (e.g.)

- Replacement Local Development Plan 2016-2031;
- Economic Recovery Plan;
- Town Centre Placemaking Plan;
- the Highways Maintenance Plan; and
- Public Protection Service Plan.

(This list is not exhaustive).

A Clean and Green Merthyr Tydfil

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

Why is this a priority?

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

The effective management of natural resources within Merthyr Tydfil is hugely important. Local feedback identified a need to focus on increasing awareness of the 'reduce; reuse and repair' approach to waste management. We will work to protect the diverse range of habitats and species found in the County Borough; and continue to protect and enhance the character of our local landscape.

Our priority outcome for this objective will be to work with communities to maintain and enhance the environment.

To deliver this objective, we will work with residents and key partners to sustain our high levels of recycling; and explore/develop opportunities around reuse and repair. Feedback showed residents valued our green spaces highly; so, we will look to maintain our 'Green Flag' parks and open green spaces. We will work collaboratively to tackle stubborn issues like littering; fly-tipping and dog-fouling; using key enforcement rules to hold people to account.

What we will focus on in **2023/2024**:

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

This objective will be supported by more detailed plans (e.g.)

- Replacement Local Development Plan 2016-2031;
- Merthyr Tydfil CBC's Open Space Strategy;
- Waste Management Plan 2015-2025; and
- Merthyr Tydfil Economic Recovery Plan.

(This list is not exhaustive)

Delivering our Objectives

Following setting a balanced budget for 2023/2024, we have taken the decision to integrate the remaining tasks and actions from the Council's **Recovery, Transformation & Improvement** (RTI) Plan into the Corporate Plan. The development of the RTI Plan was done in 2020, during the coronavirus pandemic. As with most organisations, we have firstly had to respond to the needs of our residents during the pandemic. Following this, we will transition to recovery.

By building the RTI Plan into this key corporate document; we are able to streamline our reporting and at the same time, to consolidate understanding of the changes we need to make to become a more efficient; effective and economical organisation.

To achieve **our shared vision**, we must deliver our services differently - we need to look at how we work better together, with more joined up thinking, increased partnership and embrace new technology and innovation.

This approach has been adopted to help us to respond to the coronavirus pandemic and we will use the lessons learnt to inform how we move forward.



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

The Shared Vision for Merthyr Tydfil:

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

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

Merthyr Tydfil CBC well being objectives	Cwm Taf Morgannwg PSB well-being objectives	Merthyr Tydfil CBC Lead Administration s Vision
An Aspirational Merthyr Tydfil focused on learning <i>We will strengthen how we enable people to grow and reach their potential.</i>	Healthy Local Communities <i>A Cwm Taf Morgannwg where our communities are inclusive and feel cohesive and people feel safe, supported and valued.</i>	Our people make Merthyr Tydfil a place with a positive future filled with pride for our communities. Taken from <i>People, Place and Pride: Your Independent Vision for 21st Century Merthyr Tydfil</i>
A Healthier Merthyr Tydfil <i>We will empower people to live independent and dignified lives.</i>	Sustainable and Resilient Local Neighbourhoods <i>A Cwm Taf Morgannwg where we understand and respond to the risk of climate change to our communities. To do this we must value, manage and enjoy our green and blue spaces responsibly</i>	
A Safe & Prosperous Merthyr Tydfil <i>We will support how our economy recovers and grows.</i>		
A Clean & Green Merthyr Tydfil <i>We will support the creation of a clean and green environment now and in the future.</i>		

Supporting Delivery of the Plan

In order to successfully deliver the commitments in this Corporate Well-being Plan; we need to continue to develop as an organisation to remain sustainable; to increase our resilience; and to ensure we continue to positively respond to the needs identified within our communities. In order to do this; we must look at how corporately we use our resources effectively, efficiently and economically.

By looking at the underpinning support service areas, we will endeavour to do this in the following ways:



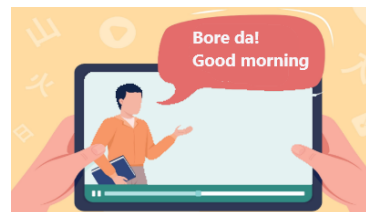
Feedback from our engagement activities showed us that residents wanted to become more involved with the Council. To help this happen **we will improve how we engage and communicate with our communities; and over time we will develop greater opportunities to involve them.**



When working with our residents; and those who work and visit Merthyr Tydfil **we will continue to develop a culture around good customer service;** and demonstrate our corporate values in how we work others.



Ensuring our developing services and plans are reviewed and receive challenge to ensure they continue to be justified and meet identified needs, **we will continue to develop and improve our governance and scrutiny processes; supporting our Elected Members to deliver these and ensuring we offer opportunities for local people to become involved.**



We will **promote the use of the Welsh language** within our communities; and contribute to the Welsh Government's targets of 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050.



To respond to emerging priorities and challenges; **we will use the technology available to us to transform our services; making meeting community needs more effectively; and supporting the Council to become more sustainable in the future.**



Support our communities and **promote equality of opportunity;** working to **understand and remove the barriers people face when accessing our services;** and creating an inclusive and diverse workforce, which reflects the communities in Merthyr Tydfil. (Press the CTRL key on your keyboard and click on the image to access the Report.)

Our Golden Thread

Our **Shared Vision** sets out the vision for the Council in the regional and national context. This fits with our 7 national goals, together with how our 4 well-being objectives fit with our regional Public Services Board (PSB) well-being objectives.

Our main plan is our **Corporate Well-being Plan** and is called '**Acting Today for a Better Tomorrow**'. This sets out what we are going to do and is reflected in our well-being objectives and priority outcomes. To remain focused, we have identified the 4 priority outcomes that have the greatest impact in realising our objectives.

Our **Statement of Well-being** accompanies our Corporate Well-being Plan and sets out **why** we are doing what has been set out.

We are not going to do this on our own, we want to involve our residents, businesses, partners, staff and trades unions.

Council and Cabinet form the main high-level decision-making tier of the Council.

Our RTI Plan was developed in 2020 to address areas that could have a detrimental impact on delivering our shared vision. Good progress has been made in delivering the identified improvements contained in this Plan; with the remaining action and tasks now being integrated into our Corporate Plan.

Workforce plans allow each section of the Council to set out how it will use its resources to achieve the required outcomes. These plans are currently under development and will continue to be developed with clear alignment with this Corporate Plan.

This means there is a '**golden thread**' through all that we do. In other words, each member of staff has objectives set out to deliver team aims which in turn help us deliver our well-being objectives to contribute to our national goals.



Monitoring & Performance

We believe efficient and effective performance management is vital to accountability and achieving better outcomes for our residents.

We are continuing to develop our focus on performance; and are using data to enable us to make better informed decisions to continuously improve. To do this we continue to strengthen our understanding of performance and governance across the Council; and have identified a number of ways in which we can involve people in refocusing current processes with a view to improve.

We will review the touchpoints between delivery of the Plan with the key elements of our governance framework. This will help us to use our systems and processes consistently across the Council and ensure our governance arrangements are used to better manage our performance and provide challenge around delivery and decision-making where appropriate.

By taking this approach we will address the 'So What?' question - we are focused on improving outcomes for our residents and understanding the impact our services are having remains at the heart of what we as a Council do.



Legislation

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act

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










The Act introduced 7 national well-being goals – these show the kind of Wales we want.

Together the 7 national well-being goals provide a shared vision for the public bodies in Wales to work towards.

All public bodies must evidence how they have used sustainable development as their central organising principle. Following these ways of working offers a huge opportunity to make long-lasting, positive change to current and future generations.

In order to set our well-being objectives, we contributed to the development of the Assessment of Well-being across Cwm Taf Morgannwg; and you can read more about the well-being assessment on the '[Our Cwm Taf](#)' website. This was carried out to inform the development of the Statement of Well-being and subsequently led to the development of the Council's well-being objectives.

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

	 A Prosperous Wales	 A Resilient Wales	 A Healthier Wales	 A More Equal Wales	 A Wales of Cohesive Communities	 A Wales of Vibrant Culture & Welsh Language	 A Globally Responsible Wales
An Aspirational Merthyr Tydfil focused on learning							
A Healthier Merthyr Tydfil							
A Safe & Prosperous Merthyr Tydfil							
A Clean & Green Merthyr Tydfil							

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

				
Long Term	Prevention	Collaboration	Integration	Involvement

Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act

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

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

The key provisions of the Act are:

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

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

Socio- Economic Duty & Strategic Equalities Plan

With effect from 31st March 2021; all public bodies are required to respond to a new Socio-Economic Duty.



This Duty requires public bodies to take every opportunity to improve outcomes for people affected by social-economic disadvantage. It is not an additional burden, it helps us to meet the obligations which we already have; and it allows public bodies taking **strategic decisions** (such as when we decide priorities, set objectives etc.) to focus on the impacts on people on low incomes (i.e.) anyone who is living in less favourable social and economic circumstances than others in the same society. It looks at low income; income poverty; low/no wealth, area deprivation, socio-economic background etc.

For the last 10 years, the Public Sector Equality Duty has asked public services to take care not to discriminate against people who fall under the Protected Characteristics. It has not asked us to be mindful of people with low incomes. Responding to this duty; we now need to anticipate the impact of strategic decisions on people on low incomes who are experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.

Unless you have experienced socio-economic disadvantage it can be difficult to understand its impact the decision might have – this is why it is crucial to ask those affected by this issue.

So, in assessing strategic decisions we are making we should:

1. Examine any negative impacts and ensure we have looked at all options to reduce these; and
2. Check whether all opportunities to have a positive impact have been fully exploited.

Welsh Government has introduced non-statutory guidance which will support public bodies to review this new duty, this guidance will be made available to all Scrutiny Committee Members for information. To access more information on this guidance, please click [here](#).

Glossary

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

Contact Us

Thank you for taking time to read our Statement of Well-being. If you would like more information; please contact us using any of the options below:

Social Media

Keep up to date with all the latest news, events and information from the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.



You can 'follow' us on Twitter - **@MerthyrCBC**



You can 'like' Merthyr Tydfil Council' on Facebook – you can find us by searching for **MerthyrCBC**

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