

CYNGOR SIR CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 7 November 2023

Title: Ceredigion County Council Self-Assessment Report 2022/23

Purpose of the report: To present the Council's Self-Assessment Report 2022-23 as required by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

For: Decision

Cabinet Portfolio and Cabinet Member:
Councillor Bryan Davies, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Democratic Services, Policy, Performance and People and Organisation

Background

Part 6 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 introduced a new Self-Assessment based performance regime for Principal Councils.

The new performance regime is intended to build and support a culture in which councils continuously seek to improve and do better in everything they do, regardless of how well they are performing already. It is the expectation of the Act that councils will always be striving to achieve more and seek to ensure best outcomes for local people and communities.

There are 5 specific duties for Councils introduced by the Act:

- Duty to keep performance under review
- Duty to consult on performance
- Duty to report on performance
- Duty to arrange a Panel Performance Assessment
- Duty to respond to a Panel Performance Assessment

Under its duty to report on performance, the Council is required to publish a Self-Assessment Report once in respect of every financial year setting out the conclusions as to the extent to which the Council met the performance requirements during that financial year, and any actions it will take, or has already taken, to increase the extent to which it will meet the performance requirements. The emphasis of the Report is on understanding how the Council is operating now, the likely demands it will face in the future, and how it can build sustainability.

Current Position

Since April 2023, Ceredigion County Council has been undertaking its latest round of Self-Assessment and a timetable of the activities is attached at Appendix 1 for reference.

The evidence collected has been used to produce the Self-Assessment Report which is attached at Appendix 2. This is the main output from the Self-Assessment process and sets out how the Council is currently performing and the actions it intends to take going forward. The Report has been developed by assessing a wide variety of evidence including internal reports and reviews, external regulatory and inspection reports and crucially engagement and consultation activities.

It is important to note that the Self-Assessment Report for 2022/23 discharges the requirements of both:

- The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 – to set and review progress against our Corporate Well-being Objectives
- The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 – the duty to keep performance under review, consult on performance, report on performance, arrange a Panel Performance Assessment and respond to a Panel Performance Assessment.

Although the Self-Assessment Report is the key output from the process the work on improving outcomes is an ongoing year-round activity. Throughout the year we conduct consultation in support of self-assessment, we collate evidence to inform the workshops, we deliver the actions in our Self-Assessment action plan and we monitor their progress towards completion.

Following positive feedback from Welsh Government and our peers on last year's report, we have retained a similar format for this year to help in disseminating key messages and keeping it succinct, as requested by Welsh Government. A number of improvements have been made this year to strengthen the report:

- Providing further detail on the consultation and engagement undertaken during the year and how it is used.
- Providing details of the stakeholder consultation to support self-assessment.
- Providing further detail in the evaluation commentary of the Council's overall performance.
- Updating the Self-Assessment Action Plan, adding the new actions identified along with a progress update.
- Expanding the benchmarking section (further work is ongoing to develop this in conjunction with Data Cymru).
- Added "Council Structure" section to provide details of how the Council is structured.
- Included links to other related reports and strategies, which is seen as best practice.

The Council's Corporate Strategy 2022-27 sets out its Corporate Well-being Objectives, which were developed to promote sustainability and improve the well-being of the citizens of Ceredigion. They were identified through extensive analysis of evidence and engagement with residents, including the ambitions of the new political administration, the Ceredigion Assessment of Local Well-being and public consultation. Pages 33-48 of the Self-Assessment Report review the Council's

progress in delivering the Objectives. Following this year's review of the Objectives it is proposed that they remain unchanged for the next year:

- Boosting the economy, supporting businesses and enabling employment
- Creating caring and healthy communities
- Providing the best start in life and enabling learning at all ages
- Creating sustainable, green and well-connected communities

The Governance and Audit Committee has a statutory responsibility to consider the Self-Assessment Report and make recommendations on the conclusions and the actions that the Council proposes to take. The Report was considered at its meeting on 27 September 2023 and approved to proceed for approval at Cabinet and Council. No formal recommendations were made to the conclusions or the actions, although minor formatting amendments have been made to improve the quality of the report prior to Cabinet.

Next Steps

The Self-Assessment Report is scheduled to proceed to Council on 30 November, before being submitted to Ministers, Estyn and the Auditor General for Wales, as well as being published on the website.

Panel Performance Assessment Update

Part of the new Self-Assessment Performance Regime is the duty to undertake a Panel Performance Assessment once in every election cycle. Panel Assessments are intended to provide an independent and external perspective of the extent to which the Council is meeting the performance requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. The aim is to support councils to achieve their aspirations through developing and understanding how they are operating and how they can ensure they are able to deliver effective services long-term. Work is continuing to organise the Council's first Panel Performance Assessment due to take place during 2024/25 and supported by the Welsh Local Government Association.

Wellbeing of Future Generations:

Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If not, please state why.

No, the Self-Assessment Report does not introduce any new policies or strategies.

Summary of Integrated Impact Assessment:

Long term:	N/A
Collaboration:	N/A
Involvement:	N/A
Prevention:	N/A
Integration:	N/A

Recommendation(s):

1. That Cabinet recommends that Council approves the Self-Assessment Report 2022/23 including the Annual Review of Performance and Well-being Objectives.
2. That Cabinet recommends that Council approves the Corporate Well-being Objectives to remain unchanged for the next year.

3. That Cabinet approves the Council's first Panel Performance Assessment to take place in early 2024/25.

Reasons for decision:

To ensure compliance with Part 6 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 / Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Overview and Scrutiny:

Governance and Audit Committee 27/09/2023

Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Committee 6/11/2023

Policy Framework:

Part 6 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Corporate Well-being Objectives:

All, the Self-Assessment Report assesses the Council's overall performance

Finance and Procurement implications:

None, all actions contained in the Self-Assessment Action Plan will be delivered within existing structures and budgets

Legal Implications:

The Council has a duty under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to set Well-being Objectives and Steps to deliver those Objectives

Staffing implications:

None, all actions contained in the Self-Assessment Action Plan will be delivered within existing structures and budgets

Property / asset implications:

None, all actions contained in the Self-Assessment Action Plan will be delivered within existing structures and budgets

Risk(s):

The Self-Assessment Report 2022-23 and review of Well-being Objectives is not published leading to failure to comply with legislation

Statutory Powers:

N/A

Background Papers:

Performance and governance of principal councils: Statutory guidance on Part 6, Chapter 1, of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Timetable of activities undertaken in Support of Self-Assessment in 2022-23

Appendix 2 - Self-Assessment Report 2022/23

Corporate Lead Officer:

Alun Williams (Corporate Lead Officer Policy, Performance and Public Protection)

Reporting Officer:

Rob Starr (Performance and Research Team)

Date:

28 September 2023

Appendix 1: Timetable of the activities undertaken in support of Self-Assessment 2022/23

- The review of Year 1 of the Self-Assessment process was undertaken in **December 2022** and resulted in a series of minor adjustments to make the process more efficient in Year 2 and the strengthen the robustness of the evidence recorded.
- The desktop analysis was undertaken in **April to June** to collate and analyse the evidence available (internal data, external evidence and consultation).
- The first Leadership Group Self-Assessment Workshop was undertaken on **18 April** to identify evidence, challenges, opportunities for improvement and scores.
- The Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Committee Workshop was held on **24 April** to record Member's perspectives on Council performance and opportunities for improvement.
- A second Leadership Group Workshop was subsequently held on **18 May to review the evidence and scores**, and sign off the Key Lines of Enquiry Matrix that contains the results of the exercise.
- The 2022/23 Self-Assessment Report was drafted between **June and August 2023** by the Performance and Research Team.
- The Corporate Stakeholder Survey was run between **28 June and 31 August**.
- The Draft Self-Assessment Report was presented to Leadership Group on **30 August** and approved to proceed to Governance and Audit Committee.
- The Draft Self-Assessment Report was presented to Leadership Group/Cabinet on **19 September**.
- The Draft Self-Assessment Report was presented to the Governance and Audit Committee on **27 September** as part of the Committee's statutory role in reviewing and making recommendations on the conclusions drawn in the report and the actions that the Council intends to take. The Governance and Audit Committee approved the report to proceed to publication and no formal recommendations were made.
- Feedback from the Governance and Audit Committee on the Draft Self-Assessment Report was reported to Leadership Group on **28 September**.
- The Self-Assessment Report was updated in **October** with minor formatting amendments to improve the quality of the report prior to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- The Draft Self-Assessment Report was presented to Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Committee on **6 November**.

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

2022/23

SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT

Annual Review of Performance and
Well-being Objectives



Cyngor Sir
CEREDIGION
County Council



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INTRODUCTION

From the Leader of Ceredigion County Council

Welcome to Ceredigion County Council's latest Self-Assessment Report. This report reviews our overall performance and progress towards delivering our Corporate Well-being Objectives in 2022/23.

We conducted our most recent Self-Assessment in the summer of 2023, looking at a wide range of evidence, regulatory reports and extensive consultation feedback. It confirms that Ceredigion County Council continues to perform above its stature and makes good use of the resources it has available, despite the challenges faced in recent years such as extensive budget cuts, the COVID-19 pandemic and the cost of living crisis affecting many households in the County.

In the last year we have pushed ahead with delivering our new Corporate Well-being Objectives and good progress has been made. For example, the £110m Mid Wales Growth deal is a further step closer to unlocking the potential of the local economy after the positive portfolio assessment review. The Lampeter Well-being Centre is now open and offering a range of services to

support local people and plans are progressing for centres in the north and south of the county. We also underwent a Care Inspectorate Wales inspection of our social services in February/March 2023. The inspection reflected positively on our Through Age Well-being Programme that is transforming the delivery of social care in Ceredigion.

We are also investing in new ways of working and new technology to transform the way services are provided to our customers. This is to ensure they meet growing demand, are sustainable in the future, and provide an enhanced experience for our customers.

By adapting the way we work, we can enable the Council to deliver modern services that will enhance the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of the people of Ceredigion.

However, like all local authorities, there are challenges and opportunities ahead, and these are

reflected in this report. The principles of self-assessment are not new to Ceredigion. We have long been using self-assessment as a learning tool to reflect on how we are doing things now, and how we can deliver improvements or provide greater efficiency.

In the last year, self-assessment has helped us identify key actions that will help to drive better outcomes for the county and its citizens. We will be conducting further consultation with citizens, businesses, council staff and Trade Unions over the coming months, to capture further views on how we can improve performance and we look forward to hearing your thoughts.

We hope you find this report informative and a useful way to keep in touch on our performance improvement journey.



Councillor Bryan Davies

Leader of Ceredigion County Council

ABOUT CEREDIGION

Ceredigion covers an area of 1,900km² and is mostly made-up of agricultural land, moorland and forestry, with the upland areas to the east forming a significant portion of the Cambrian Mountains.

The County has a variety of natural landscapes and habitats: coastal cliffs and beaches, marshlands and open upland. The County's landscapes and natural environment are highly valued by local people and visitors alike.

Ceredigion has a high proportion of land recognised for its high environmental value through official designations, including two internationally important wetland areas (the Dyfi estuary and Cors Caron); 13 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC); around 100 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) seven National Nature Reserves and three Local Nature Reserves. The Cambrian Mountains uplands are important for wildlife as are the wet 'rhos pastures'.

The County is bordered by over 90km of coastline, with four sections (around 35km) designated as Heritage Coast. The Wales Coast Path follows a 60 mile (96km) route between the Teifi and Dyfi estuaries. The Coast Path links towns and villages dotted along the spectacular Cardigan Bay coastline.

The rivers in the Ceredigion catchment are the Rheidol, Ystwyth, Clarach, Aeron and Teifi rivers. Ceredigion's

river catchment is varied and distinctive, with each river flowing through a variety of landscapes, before reaching the sea. The Teifi River is one of the longest rivers in Southwest Wales, at 122km long.

The attractive landscapes and remote locations in Ceredigion form the basis of 'rural well-being' tourism, which draws in many visitors to the area. Overall, there are almost 3 million visitors to Ceredigion each year.

Although the environment has always been a valued feature of well-being, over the past few years protecting the environment has become much more important to people. The adverse effects of climate change on the environment and nature are far more recognised and people want to do more to protect our environment. In 2020 Ceredigion County Council declared a global climate emergency, prior to this the Council had also committed to being a net zero carbon council by 2030.

The economy of Ceredigion is fairly typical of that of many rural and coastal areas. A high proportion of jobs are in the tourism industry (12.9%), wholesale and retail (12.9%) and human health and social work activities (12.3%). Education is the largest sector in the county, employing around 4,300 people and accounting for around 13.9% of jobs in the county.

Unlike many rural areas, the County has two universities at Aberystwyth and the



Photo: Aberystwyth Promenade

OUR COUNTY IN NUMBERS



71,468
people

48 years
average age

4%
BAME population*

7,845
university students

22%
with a disability

30,893
households



University of Wales Trinity St. David's Campus at Lampeter. It is also home to national institutions such as the National Library of Wales. The knowledge economy is strong in Ceredigion and it has a growing 'green economy' focusing on low carbon emissions, efficient use of resources and being socially inclusive.

Self-employment is an important element in the local economy, and Ceredigion has one of the highest proportions of self-employed people nationally. Many are farmers with others working in a range of established small-scale enterprises such as building repair and maintenance.

The vast majority (99%) of enterprises in Ceredigion are 'micro' or 'small' sized (up to 49 employees). Only 1% of enterprises in Ceredigion have fifty or more employees. The survival rates of newly established businesses are consistently amongst the highest nationally, making Ceredigion a great place to start and grow a business

Ceredigion is one of the heartlands of the Welsh language, despite a substantial student population. The 2021 Census showed that 45.3% of Ceredigion's residents could speak Welsh, the third highest of all counties nationwide.

There are 43 schools in Ceredigion, a mixture of primary, secondary and through age schools. 37 are Welsh medium schools, meaning that the majority of our younger population are learning and using the Welsh language

from a young age.

Ceredigion's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-32 aims for all pupils in the Authority's schools to attend Welsh-medium immersion education until the age of seven and increase the pupils' opportunity to follow a fully bilingual path throughout their school career and in their future work and social life. It also contributes to the national well-being goal and Welsh Government's aim of increasing the number of Welsh speakers to 1 million by 2050.

Ceredigion is a County well known for its cultural and heritage sites. There are castles and museums situated across the County, which draw many tourists to the area throughout the year.

43
schools and 9,560 pupils

6
leisure facilities

2,265km
of roads

2,500km
of bridleways and footpaths

2,810
active enterprises

45.3%
of residents are Welsh speakers

*BAME = Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic population



THE COUNCIL

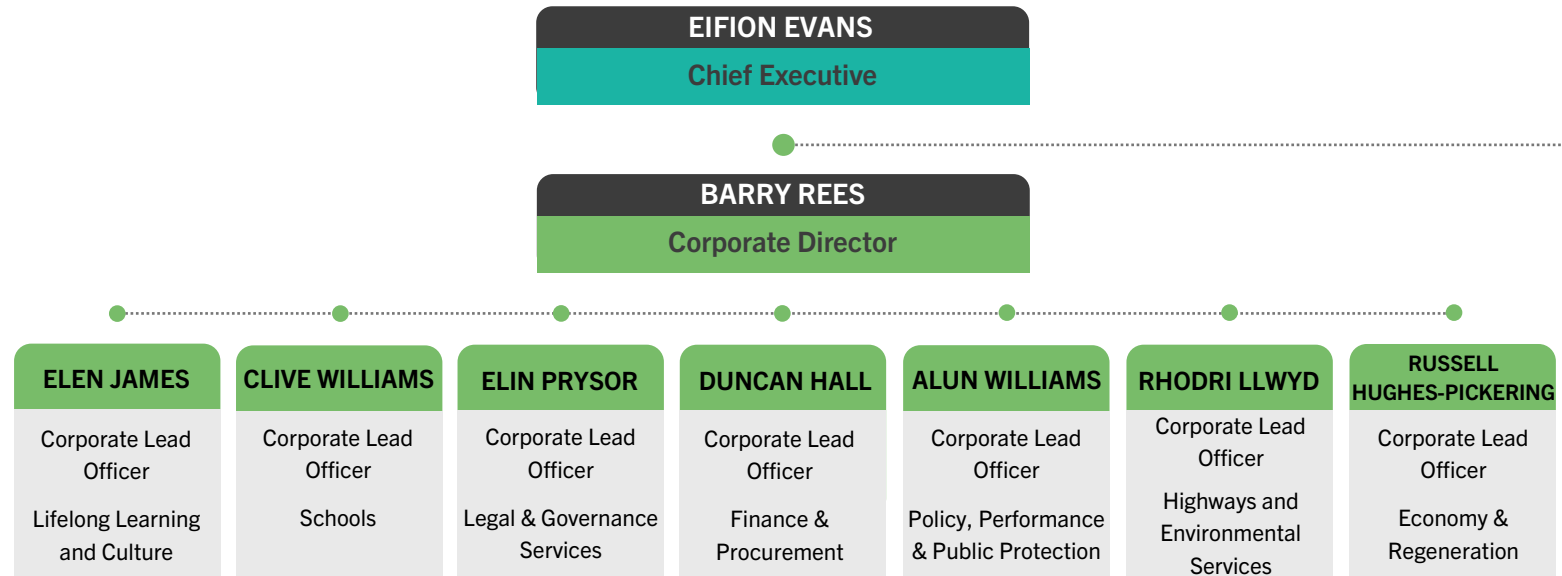
At the local elections in May 2022, Ceredigion residents returned 38 councillors in 34 wards across the County. As at March 2023, the new administration is a Plaid Cymru majority with 20 councillors, along with 9 independents, 7 Welsh Liberal Democrats and 2 un-grouped. The new Leader of the Council is Councillor Bryan Davies and Councillor Maldwyn Lewis is the current Chairman of the Council.

Ceredigion is investing in new technology to transform the way services are provided to our customers. This is to ensure they meet growing demands, are sustainable in the future, and also provide an enhanced experience for our customers.

The Through Age Well-being Programme that is transforming social care and the Customer Contact Centre called 'CLIC' are two good examples of this.

We are operating in a challenging environment with escalating budgetary pressures. To deliver our Corporate Well-being Objectives whilst maintaining effective and efficient services, our workforce's journey must be one of continuous review and change. It is critical we maintain an innovative and agile approach, are open and resilient to change, with the skills to support smarter ways of working in a digitised world.

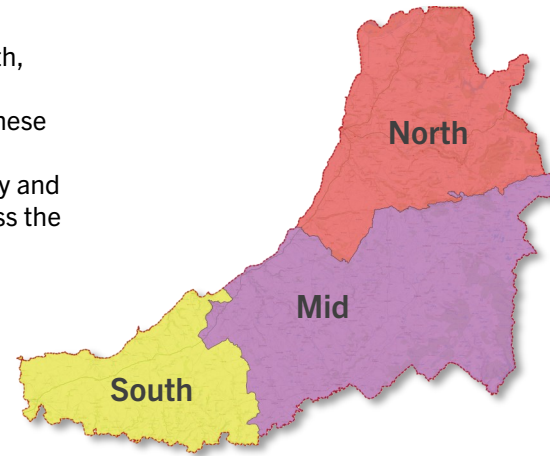
CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE:



Our aim is to enhance the efficiency of our internal processes and systems, enabling us to measure our performance effectively.

The Council employs 2,037 staff (1,567 full-time equivalent (FTE)). Our goal is to advocate for, and build upon, our 'Team Ceredigion' ethos. Promoting our sense of belonging, connection and shared purpose. We aspire for all Team Ceredigion members to be proud of the work that they do, and to recognise the significance of their contribution to the overall success of the Council.

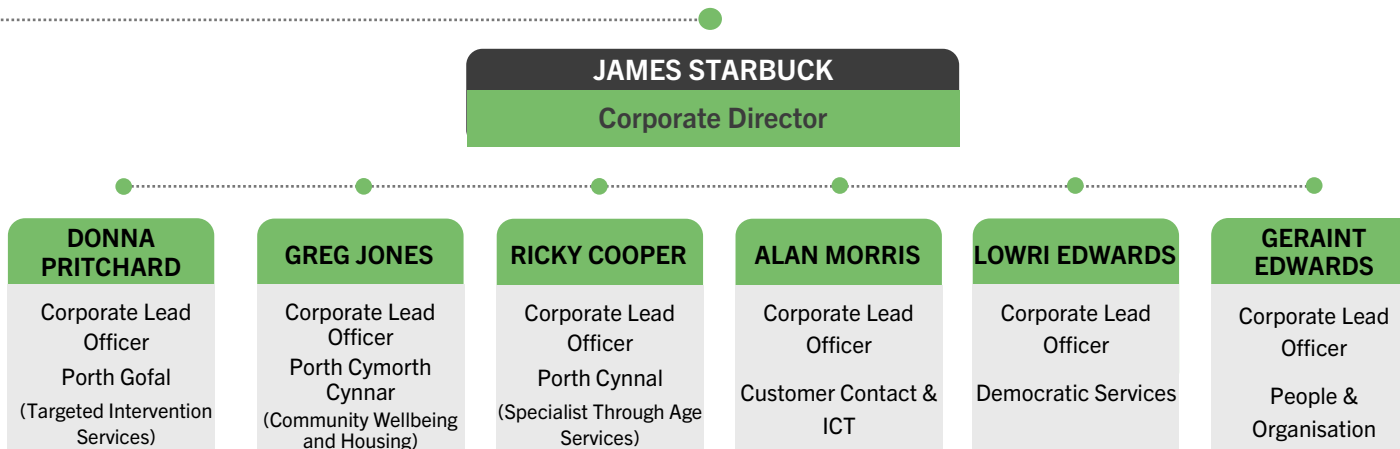
The County is made up of three geographical areas covering the north, mid and south of the County. The Council's services are aligned with these three areas to assist in workforce development and ensure consistency and equity in the delivery of service across the County ►



WE ARE ONE TEAM: TEAM CEREDIGION

The One Team approach is part of the Council's culture and is integral to its new ways of working

One Team supports Self-Assessment by facilitating collaborative working, joining-up thinking and cross-service support to deliver our Corporate Well-being Objectives and improve outcomes for local people and stakeholders



BACKGROUND TO 2022-23 SELF-ASSESSMENT

This is the second of Ceredigion County Council's Self-Assessment Reports. We have learnt a great deal since first implementing the new local government performance regime introduced by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

During winter 2022 we reviewed our approach to self-assessment and made a number of minor adjustments to strengthen the process. This included allocating more time for the desktop review of evidence, adjusting the timescales to start the workshops earlier in the year and providing an additional workshop to review the scores prior to publication. The aim was to fine tune the process based on our experiences in the previous year. We will continue to review the way we conduct self-assessment annually.

In producing this year's Self-Assessment Report which reviews our progress during 2022/23, we have learnt a great deal. The exercise has brought together a wide variety of evidence to assess our performance and review our Corporate Well-being Objectives. It has also highlighted and focused our attention on the challenges we face. These are important because we need to continue to adapt to meet these challenges in order to ensure our services are sustainable and continue to identify opportunities to raise performance levels, identify efficiency savings, or both.

We have built on the first Self-Assessment Report by including further information on the consultation and engagement undertaken during the year, highlighting the outcomes achieved from our activities and providing links to other key strategies and policies that link to, or support, the Self-Assessment Report.

The exercise provides an organisation-wide






view of performance. There are seven themes that we assess ourselves against:

- Exercising our functions effectively
- Using our resources economically, efficiently and effectively
- Ensuring our governance is effective
- Innovation and creativity
- Collaboration
- Involvement
- Risk Management

These themes are derived from a combination of the Statutory Guidance on the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 along with the Sustainable Development Principle. They reflect the seven core activities of public bodies as defined in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. For each theme we assess whether we have plans and objectives in place, whether those plans and objectives are being delivered and whether they are sustainable over the longer-term. These form our Key Lines of Enquiry and the way in which we assess our overall performance.

The following pages provide a summary of the findings and scores from each theme. The scoring system used is aligned to the Council's Annual Governance Statement for consistency. The Council's Governance Framework is based on the CIPFA/SOLACE Delivering Good Governance in Local Government framework. It provides a Red-Amber-Green scale to indicate where performance is good and where further action needs to be taken, see diagram to the right.

KEY TO ASSESSMENT

-  **GOOD**
Overall considered to be good and meets best practice no further action required
-  **ACCEPTABLE**
Minor adjustments may be required
-  **SATISFACTORY**
Action required (before end of year 9-12 months)
-  **BELOW SATISFACTORY**
Urgent action required (within 3-6 months)
-  **UNACCEPTABLE**
Immediate action required

SUMMARY OF 2022-23 PERFORMANCE

EXERCISING OUR FUNCTIONS EFFECTIVELY

The Council's new Corporate Strategy for the period 2022 to 2027 was published in November 2022, setting out its new Corporate Well-being Objectives. The Council has a suite of key strategies in place to support and help deliver the Objectives. These include the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, the Through Age Well-being Strategy, and the Economic Strategy. During 2022/23 we updated our Engagement and Participation Strategy and published new strategies on Equity and Deprivation in schools and adopted the new Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. We are currently reviewing and rewriting our Procurement, Asset Management and Welsh Language Strategies, while our new Workforce Plan has been drafted and is currently going through the democratic process.

Progress in delivering these key strategies continues to be good. The Growing Mid Wales and Regional Skills Partnerships are good examples of this. During 2022/23, the updated Strategic Portfolio Business case was formally submitted to Welsh and UK Governments, which means that we are moving closer to receiving the first tranche of the £110m funding as part of the Growth Deal for the region, which is expected during the 2023/24 year.

Priority setting is also considered to be strong and positive work with the Council's new administration took place during the year to develop the new Corporate Strategy and Corporate Well-being Objectives. The new objectives are based on extensive consultation and research including the Ceredigion Assessment of Local Well-being.

Some other examples are the Through Age Well-being Programme objectives which were endorsed and strengthened through the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) inspection.

Outcomes from the Through Age Strategy are being strengthened as the programme continues to be implemented.

The relaunched business planning process has been further embedded, along with strengthening the 'golden thread', which shows how everyone's activities help to deliver the Corporate Well-being Objectives and maximise our impact on the national well-being goals.

There is a recognition that the Council's Strategies are constructed in-line with 5 Ways of Working which increases their level of resilience and sustainability.

The Council has an ambitious vision for the future, and the overall assessment is that the strategies in place are sustainable and consider the short, medium and long-term context.

However, like all local authorities, there are challenges to delivering these ambitions. There is limited capacity and resources available whilst demand from customers continues to grow. Although the Council has a track record of innovation and creativity in service delivery and seeking new ways of working, it is recognised that managing expectations on services is also important as we move forward. Keeping these strategies up to date is a key way of helping us achieve that by putting in place strong foundations from which to invest in new technology, find new ways of delivering services and maintaining performance levels.

Although it has been a positive start to our performance journey post COVID-19, we recognise there is still a lot of work to do, in particular completing the refresh of key strategies. The Procurement Strategy, Asset Management Strategy, Housing Strategy, Performance Management Framework and Corporate Risk Policy are all in the process of review and due for completion in 2023/24.

SUMMARY OF SCORING BY THEME



Putting these plans in place provides a solid foundation from which to deliver an improved customer experience by working and delivering services in a different way.

During 2022/23 none of the 35 complaints made to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales against the Council were upheld, however, the number of complaints per 1,000 residents referred to the Ombudsman was the highest across Wales. A half yearly report on complaints has been put in place along with the full annual report and are considered by the Council's Governance and Audit Committee.

Last year we reported on the challenges around obtaining regular benchmarking data. Since then, Data Cymru has developed a Self-Assessment Performance Tool which has been used in the production of this report. We

are working proactively with Data Cymru to help support the tool's ongoing development to strengthen the provision of nationally available benchmarking data. This longer-term action will be invaluable in helping to communicate the Council's performance and aligns with our long-term aim of becoming more performance and data-driven.

We recognise there is a lot of work to do around strengthening performance management and realising the benefits that it can bring. The first step is publishing the new Performance Framework that sets out the overall approach and standardised processes for managing performance in the Council, including the new Self-Assessment process. This work has been completed and the Framework is due to go through the democratic process in autumn 2023.

SUMMARY OF 2022-23 PERFORMANCE

There are a number challenges facing all local authorities at the current time, such as local authority funding, recruitment in areas such as social care, the cost of living crisis and our ongoing work to tackle poverty in the County. To help us mitigate these challenges, we are continuing to monitor their impacts and adjust our action plans accordingly.

USING OUR RESOURCES ECONOMICALLY, EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY

The Council has strategies in place for its core activities of Workforce Planning, Financial Management, Procurement and Asset Management. The overall position is assessed as being good, particularly in relation to financial management.

Regulatory reports are positive, notwithstanding that there is further work to do to respond to Audit Wales' Planning service review report. This is evidenced by the unqualified audit opinion on the Council's accounts and the positive feedback from regulators at the Joint Regulatory Workshop in January 2023. This places the Council in a strong position to deliver the new Corporate Strategy and Corporate Well-being Objectives. During the budget setting process for 2023/24 there was unanimous approval from Members for the budget, which demonstrates a coherent approach towards funding resources to deliver front-line services.

Furthermore, the Hybrid Working Policy and home working arrangements are working well overall, and the Council continues to monitor progress and staff feedback closely.

Over the longer term, £60m of cumulative savings have been made since 2013, which has involved a major restructuring of all services.

The financial resilience of the Council is a strength, particularly when assessing the

sustainability of services. However, we recognise the ongoing budgetary challenges that exist and the impact that could have on the delivery of our ambitions. We also recognise that further work is required to maximise the expenditure and impact of the capital programme and we are addressing this through our Self-Assessment Action Plan.

Our learning has also shown that we need to ensure we update key strategies that will impact on our economy, efficiency and effectiveness. These include the Medium Term Financial Strategy which will be refreshed in the first quarter of 2023/24 and the revised Joint Procurement and Commissioning Strategy 2023-27 which is complete and will shortly go forward for approval. Work is also continuing on developing the new Asset Management Plan setting out how we will maintain our property portfolio and maximise the use of our assets.

In the last year the Council has made good and innovative use of its buildings to support new ways of working. Canolfan Rheidol in Aberystwyth for example, is now being used by Hywel Dda to provide outpatient physiotherapy services. The updated strategy will help in developing opportunities for those buildings no longer needed and in repurposing them for other uses or the delivery of improved services.

The other key challenge is the re-writing of our Workforce Plan. We recognise the challenges around recruitment and retention that are being experienced across the whole of Wales. This is important because recruitment to key posts is essential to delivering our ambitions. As a result, a new Workforce Plan has been developed to address these key challenges, including recruitment, retention and succession planning to ensure stable

SUMMARY OF SCORING BY THEME



staffing levels, a sustainable workforce and that vacant posts are filled with appropriately qualified staff.

ENSURING OUR GOVERNANCE IS EFFECTIVE

Overall, the evidence shows that the Council's governance arrangements are robust and supporting the work of the Council in delivering its Corporate Well-being Objectives and improving outcomes for residents. The Annual Governance Statement, Governance Framework and Code of Local Governance are all in place and relationships with regulators are productive.

Internal and external regulator reports evidence this. For example, the most recent Governance Review conducted in March 2023 provides high assurance that there is a

sound system of scrutiny and robustness in place. The 2022/23 Annual Governance Statement shows that good progress has been made during the year across the seven core principles of governance, and an action plan is in place to resolve a number of minor issues identified.

In the last twelve months, the robustness of the Governance and Audit Committee, in particular its role in challenging the Council, has been working well. It was also recognised that the Development Committee is also working well, although it is accepted that there is further work to do to respond to Audit Wales' Planning Service Review Report.

Ceredigion is also leading on complex work in relation to regional partnerships for Corporate Joint Committees (CJC) and Growing Mid Wales (GMW). The Mid Wales Corporate Joint

Committee has been set up and governance structures are in place.

LONG-TERM INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY

One of the Council's strengths is its long-term innovation and creativity. The Council has a track record of embracing new ways of working and identifying new ways of delivering services to provide an enhanced customer experience, efficiency savings, or both.

The COVID-19 pandemic created windows of opportunity to learn from, to transform services and to bring about sustainable change and improvements. In essence, it allowed us to reconsider the way we work and reorganize it in a way that benefits the customer, the workforce, and has much less impact on our environment.

There are many examples of this, including the new hybrid working model that maintains the high level of service delivery whilst also providing employees with greater flexibility in balancing their work and home lives. Our learning shows that hybrid working has resulted in increased productivity, improved collaboration and provided a more flexible working environment to help maintain the health and well-being of the workforce. The sustainability of the organisation is also supported through a reduction in costs and overall expenditure per employee.

The Through Age Well-being Programme is transforming social care in Ceredigion. This is in response to the changing demographics of the County which has seen increased demand and greater financial pressure on services. Providing support for all ages and needs is a significant challenge for the Council with limited resources.

Many of the individual elements of Through Age Well-being are working well, for example the investment in accommodation for children

in care. The programme improves outcomes by maximising people's independence and enabling them to remain in their own home and in their own community wherever possible. We will continue to push forward with transforming how people's health, wellbeing and safety are supported in Ceredigion.

The Council also worked with partners as part of a multi-agency delivery group to support 90 Ukrainian families fleeing their country. The The Urdd Gobaith Cymru Gwersyll site at Llangrannog was the first Welcome Centre of its kind in Wales and received national acclaim. Refugees were supported and offered unique 'wrap-around' services.

In addition was the improvement actions identified by the Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee in response to waste collection issues during the winter of 2022. Ceredigion was the first authority in Wales to put in place the missed refuse collections reporting, which is now being adopted by other authorities.

Good feedback was also received from Estyn and Welsh Government in supporting schools with digital innovation and collaboration across ICT. Ceredigion is also the only authority across the UK to have a full Lorawan rollout.

Other projects that demonstrate innovation are the setting up of the Well-being Centres across the County, the setting up of Warm Hubs and leading on the rollout of the Additional Learning Needs Code of Conduct systems in schools.

Looking ahead, the adoption of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) has the potential to be transformative for Welsh Language education in Ceredigion.

The investment in and nurturing the use of innovation and creativity in the organisation

SUMMARY OF SCORING BY THEME

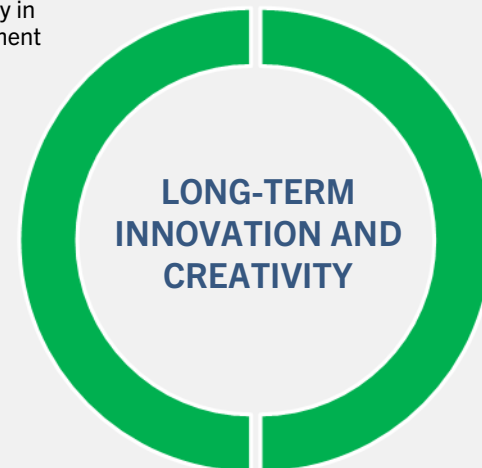
Does the Council work productively with its external regulators and demonstrate good compliance?



Does the Council have a comprehensive local code and governance framework in place for maintaining the corporate governance of the organisation?

How effective is the code and governance framework applied and observed?

Does the Council embrace innovation and creativity in its activities and implement transformation?



How effective have Council transformation projects been in identifying and implementing creativity and innovation across the organisation?

SUMMARY OF 2022-23 PERFORMANCE

cannot be overstated. We recognise that tapping into this creativity is essential to the Council's overall performance and its long term sustainability. The Medium Term Financial Strategy highlights the future funding challenges for the Council. The response to the COVID-19 pandemic was good but the Council will need to identify further areas for alternative service delivery to ensure sustainability of services.

COLLABORATION

The Council is proactive in engaging in local, regional and national partnerships. There are good examples of where this collaborative working is improving outcomes such as through Growing Mid Wales, the Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership, and the Mid Wales Education Partnership.

During 2022/23, we have also worked jointly with Pembrokeshire County Council and Hywel Dda University Health Board in transforming the Contract Tracing Service set up to support the response to the COVID-19 pandemic to an All-Hazards approach to health protection. The Risk Share Oversight Group (RSOG) with Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire County Councils is also working well in supporting community cohesion and people with protected characteristics.

Nationally, the Council also led on, and completed, a project on behalf of Welsh Government to investigate using the Cyber Assessment Framework (CAF) for national critical infrastructure across all Welsh Local Authorities. The Cyber Assessment Framework provides a systematic and comprehensive approach to assessing the extent to which cyber risks to essential functions are being managed by the organisation responsible.

However, the Council focuses on engaging with partnerships which are beneficial for the

people and communities of Ceredigion, and where there are demonstrable benefits. The Council proactively engages in these partnerships and challenges the value of the arrangement if not, pursuing alternative arrangements where necessary. An example of this is in the decision to withdraw from Education through Regional Working (ERW) and instead pursue more effective arrangements through the Mid Wales Education Partnership. In these cases, a robust rationale is always provided to set out why it is not in Ceredigion's interests to pursue the partnership arrangement. This proactive approach to assessing the value of collaborative working is recognised as essential to maximising the impact of collaboration and improving outcomes for local people.

INVOLVEMENT

In July 2022, the Council published its new Engagement and Participation Strategy to ensure compliance with new legislation and keep up to date with best practice.

The new Strategy puts plans in place to ensure the best methods are used to maximise engagement and deliver a consistent approach across the organisation. In doing so, the new Strategy will help ensure that all communities in Ceredigion have a voice, and that we actively seek the views and lived experiences of those groups whose voices are seldom heard. It also adds the new decision making and participation elements required by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

Considerable work has been undertaken in embedding engagement and consultation best practice. This is particularly important following the COVID-19 pandemic period when our ability to engage and consult was compromised by the restrictions in place.

Some of this work includes a new

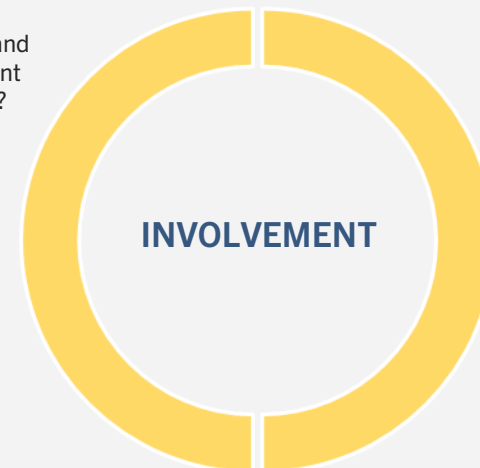
SUMMARY OF SCORING BY THEME

Does the Council proactively engage in local, regional and national partnerships?



How effective are the partnerships in which the Council is invested in delivering their aims and objectives?

Does the Council have a comprehensive strategy and action plan for engagement and consultation in place?



How effectively does the Council use engagement and consultation feedback to review and improve its services?

engagement and consultation register, and an annual report on progress. The Strategy itself includes a detailed action plan which the Council is currently delivering. The outcomes from the Plan have not been fully realised yet but there are some actions still to be delivered such as the relaunch of Integrated Impact Assessments and the introduction of a performance measure around consultation.

There are still some areas to strengthen in moving forward, such as ensuring that consultation feedback is more widely disseminated and in recording respondents' lived experiences to further involve people in, and support, decision making. There are also concerns that there are a low number of responses to some key consultations which need to be increased to ensure they are statistically significant. There are plans in place to achieve this, such as the new E-Newsletter which should help encourage people to respond and the wider use of the Engagement HQ platform that provides new ways of engaging with the Council.

There are some good examples of engagement during 2022/23 where the results are being used to drive improvements and shape services. These include the consultation on the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) which included a pupil friendly version which received a 100% response, the consultation on the Equity and Deprivation Strategy for schools which involved consultation with particular groups who were disproportionately affected, and further engagement on Traffic Regulation Orders which is being used to inform decisions around the measures. Further plans are in place for the year ahead which include the introduction of the Corporate Stakeholder Survey and the consultation on the second Well-being Centre.

The combination of these actions will help us demonstrate that we have listened and

considered the feedback from engagement and consultation. Overall, engagement and consultation is considered to be good in some areas, but there are areas where further work is needed. Work will continue to deliver the Engagement and Participation Strategy action plan over the next twelve months.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The Council's management of risk has developed well over the last three years. The Corporate Risk Register has developed into a 'living' and evolving document as risks change and new risks emerge. The Register is updated regularly, consistently includes a full set of updates and is reviewed regularly by Leadership Group and quarterly by Governance and Audit Committee. The level of understanding of individual risks has increased over time and the quality of scrutiny by the Governance and Audit Committee increased as a result.

We review the risk management process every three years and are in the process of conducting the latest review. Overall, the process is working well, but the review has identified a number of specific improvements needed. In particular, is the need for greater consistency in the management of service risks along with strengthening the process of escalation/de-escalation of risks to the Corporate Risk Register.

We have updated the Risk Management Policy, Strategy and Framework with a more effective way of managing service risks. The review also highlighted a series of other adjustments such as clarifying the role of Internal Audit and introducing the use of target risk scores. We are currently consulting on the updated Risk Management Policy, Strategy and Framework before seeking approval during autumn 2023. The updated Policy will aim to ensure our arrangements remain up to date and fit for purpose and

SUMMARY OF SCORING BY THEME



based on best practice.

As part of our drive to continually improve, we are also working with the Council's insurers, Zurich, to deliver workshops to support services in strengthening risk management. The Council has a good working relationship with Zurich and has regularly used them to provide training and an independent view on our approach to risk management.

THE SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTION PLAN

In response to these findings, we have identified a number of opportunities for improvement. Through consultation with Council services and elected Members, the actions we propose to take in response to this learning are contained in the action plan overleaf and are also reflected in services' business plans.

Most of the actions will be delivered over the next twelve months but some are longer term and will extend into the following year. The Action Plan retains previously completed actions as a log of progress on our self-assessment performance journey. The Plan builds on last year's action plan as our learning develops and as new opportunities are identified. All actions will continue to be monitored through to completion as part of our ongoing performance management arrangements and progress will be reported in the Self-Assessment Report.

We have prioritised the actions in order to lay the foundations for future work across the seven themes by ensuring the essential building blocks of our Key lines of Enquiry are met before developing further. We have already identified a list of emerging actions that we will reassess during the coming year and move into the live action plan if, and when, appropriate.

SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTION PLAN: OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

DESCRIPTION	TIMESCALES	LEAD OFFICER	OUTCOMES
PROVIDE A STANDARDISED AND EFFECTIVE METHOD OF ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION ACROSS THE COUNCIL AND ENSURE THE COUNCIL ENGAGES WITH THE PEOPLE OF CEREDIGION IN THE BEST AND MOST APPROPRIATE WAY			
Publish the new Engagement and Participation Strategy to improve engagement and participation opportunities for Ceredigion's citizens and stakeholders	January 2023 - March 2024	Alun Williams (Corporate Lead Officer Partnerships, Performance and Public Protection)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a standardised and effective method of engagement and participation across the Council Ensures the Council engages with the people of Ceredigion in the best and most appropriate way Keeps the Council up to date with best practice in the field of engagement and consultation Citizens and stakeholders are involved in the decision making process and in shaping Council services Ensures Council resources are directed to priority areas, such as the current cost of living crisis, as identified through engagement and consultation. Ensures that the voices of all those in Ceredigion are heard
<p>STATUS: In Progress ●</p> <p>Ceredigion County Council is committed to engaging with its residents, service users and other key stakeholders. The new Engagement and Participation Policy has been developed and was approved by Cabinet in October 2022. The new Policy provides corporate direction and guidance to the Council's elected members and officers in order to bring engagement into the heart of the Council's work and to ensure that engagement activities are of a consistently high standard. Further developments will be made over the next twelve months include launching an engagement toolkit and ensuring that all consultation results are shared with decision makers.</p>			
DELIVER WORKFORCE PLAN TO ENSURE THE COUNCIL HAS A SUSTAINABLE AND QUALIFIED WORKFORCE			
Update and deliver the Workforce Plan to address key issues including recruitment, retention and succession planning to ensure stable staffing levels, a sustainable workforce and that vacant posts are filled with appropriately qualified staff. The Workforce Plan to be aligned with the Council's new Corporate Strategy for 2022-27.	January 2023 - March 2027	Geraint Edwards (Corporate Lead Officer People and Organisation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures vacant roles are filled by appropriately qualified and experienced staff to provide a high quality customer experience and level of service Ensures that capacity exists in services to provide quality services Ensures the sustainability of services over the longer-term Allows us to identify and respond to changing customer needs Improves employee recruitment and retention Improves productivity and quality of service
<p>STATUS: In Progress ●</p> <p>A draft of the updated Workforce Plan 2023-28 has been produced and sets out the Council's approach to managing its workforce to meet its current and future service delivery needs. The Plan has been updated to address key issues including recruitment, retention and succession planning to ensure stable staffing levels, a sustainable workforce and that vacant posts are filled with appropriately qualified staff. The draft Workforce Plan was considered by Scrutiny in July 2023 and is scheduled to go to Cabinet for approval in September 2023.</p>			

KEY: COMPLETE (0) ● IN PROGRESS (6) ● NEW ACTIONS (3) ●

DESCRIPTION	TIMESCALES	LEAD OFFICER	OUTCOMES
DELIVER PHASE 2 OF THE THROUGH AGE WELL-BEING PROGRAMME TO TRANSFORM SOCIAL CARE IN CEREDIGION			
Monitor and review progress of the Through Age Well-being Programme to ensure delivery of services that will deliver the outcomes of the programme and enhance the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of the people of Ceredigion	January 2023 - March 2027	Ricky Cooper (Corporate Lead Officer Porth Cynnal and Statutory Director of Social Services)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manages the increased demand and financial pressures on services to provide sustainable services in the future Ensures people get the right level and type of support at the right time Promotes positive health and well-being and supports people to self-support Strengthens families so that children and young people remain with their family Enables individuals to live independently in their own community Provides proportionate approaches to managed care and support Protects individuals and keeps them safe from abuse, harm and neglect
<p>STATUS: In Progress ●</p> <p>Work is continuing to deliver the Through Age Well-being Programme. In November 2022 the governance structure of the Programme was reviewed, and as a result, refreshed workstreams commenced, new supervision arrangements have been published, the new Quality Assurance Model has been approved, the Quality Assurance Team is being recruited to progress with thematic and case file audits, the data sharing strategy is being developed and the longer term solution to the end of the contract for the Wales Community Care information System (WCCIS) is under review by the Steering Group. The CIW inspection in February/March 2023 reflected positively on the Through Age Well-being model.</p>			
DELIVER ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY THAT IMPLEMENTS NEW WAYS OF WORKING FOR THE STAFF OF CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL AND IMPROVES THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE			
Update the Asset Management Strategy to reflect current issues, in particular supporting new ways of working and taking advantage of the opportunities that exist post COVID-19 to ensure sustainable and high quality services	January 2023 - March 2025	Russell-Hughes Pickering (Corporate Lead Officer Economy & Regeneration)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides an updated and long-term strategy to manage the Council's physical assets Ensures efficient and effective use of council assets (funds, land, buildings, staff and information communication technology) Supports new ways of working post COVID-19 including the rationalisation of assets Provides a strategy to release efficiency savings and potential new income streams Ensures the Council's approach to asset management is fit for purpose and that services are sustainable Supports more joined-up and high quality services
<p>STATUS: In Progress ●</p> <p>The updated Asset Management Strategy is currently in the process of being developed and will reflect the new ways of working, the investment to improve the customer experience and the opportunities that exist post COVID-19 pandemic. The Council's approach to developing its portfolio of assets is underpinned by the Council's Corporate Strategy.</p>			

SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTION PLAN: OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

DESCRIPTION	TIMESCALES	LEAD OFFICER	OUTCOMES
ENSURE CAPITAL EXPENDITURE IS MAXIMISED AND UTILISED			
Develop monitoring system to enable the Council to make full use of its capital resources and increase the proportion of capital expenditure in each year	January 2023 - March 2024	Duncan Hall (Corporate Lead Officer Finance & Procurement and Section 151 Officer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures the Council's Capital Programme is delivered and spend maximised Supports partnership working with the Welsh Government on capital projects Supports the delivery of the Council's vision and Corporate Well-being Objectives Supports the reduction of long-term costs and increases in productivity Along with the revenue budget provides the resources to meet the delivery of the services' business plans
<p>STATUS: In Progress ●</p> <p>The Council continues to work to ensure that capital expenditure is maximised. Good use has been made in recent years of capital expenditure, including investment in key areas such as in county children's facilities, the establishment of Well-being Centres, Local Authority Care Homes and piloting for Technology-Enabled Care. A revised Multi Year Capital Programme for 2023/24 to 2025/26 was approved by Cabinet in July 2023. The Capital Programme continues to be reported to Cabinet detailing the outturn position and the amended programme for the next three years.</p>			
SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESSES AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY THROUGH IMPLEMENTING THE UPDATED PROCUREMENT STRATEGY			
Update the Council's Procurement Strategy to support local businesses and the local economy, and to ensure the Council provides value for money in the use of its financial resources	January 2023 - March 2024	Russell Hughes-Pickering (Corporate Lead Officer Economy & Regeneration)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures procurement practices are up to date and fit for purpose Helps to achieve value for money by ensuring the Council spends its financial resources economically, efficiently and effectively Supports the identification of efficiency savings and eliminates waste Delivers savings by capitalising on the savings achievable through greater buying capacity of Local, Regional and National Frameworks Maintains high ethical standards of investment and purchasing Maximises the contribution towards sustainable development through the procurement of sustainable solutions Supports the delivery of the Council's vision and Corporate Well-being Objectives Supports local businesses, supply chains and development of the local economy
<p>STATUS: In Progress ●</p> <p>The revised and updated draft Joint Procurement and Commissioning Strategy 2023-27 is complete and will shortly be considered by the Council's Leadership Group before going to Cabinet in autumn 2023 for approval. The updated strategy is aligned to the Council's Corporate Strategy timescales and has been designed to specifically assist in the delivery of its new Corporate Well-being Objectives in accordance with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 through its procurement and commissioning. The Strategy builds on the Council's strengthened approach to procurement in recent years including the corporatisation of the procurement process, and reflects the situation post COVID-19 pandemic.</p>			

DESCRIPTION	TIMESCALES	LEAD OFFICER	OUTCOMES
DEVELOP THE USE OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEYS			
Introduce regular customer satisfaction surveys such as the annual stakeholder survey	November 2023 - March 2025	All Corporate Lead Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeps the Council up to date with customer perceptions of services and the organisation at large as part of its ongoing engagement activity • Helps to identify areas for improvement to help raise performance levels or achieve efficiencies • Strengthens and develops the ongoing dialogue with customers and their perceptions • Provides a greater understanding of customer's needs, wants and priorities • Helps to strengthen local democracy through greater customer involvement in decision making and service design • Helps to identify where additional communication is needed to support customers and / or advertise services • Aids the Council's learning to improve the customer experience
<p><u>STATUS:</u> New action ●</p> <p>Introduced a new Corporate Stakeholder Survey in the summer of 2023, asking a series of questions about the Council's overall performance, how performance is monitored and the progress being made in delivering the new Corporate Well-being Objectives. The survey closes on 31st August 2023 and the results will be presented to Leadership Group in September 2023. Other activities are being developed such as the possibility of including satisfaction surveys as part of customer contacts via the contact centre (CLIC).</p>			

SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTION PLAN: OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

DESCRIPTION	TIMESCALES	LEAD OFFICER	OUTCOMES
DELIVER THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE CIW INSPECTION OF SOCIAL SERVICES			
Implement the ten recommendations made in the CIW inspection report to help the Council deliver its vision for the delivery of social socials across Ceredigion according to the Through Age Well-being model	May 2023 - March 2025	Ricky Cooper (Corporate Lead Officer Porth Cynnal and Statutory Director of Social Services)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures that people’s voices are central to the work we undertake • Increases provision of respite for parents and carers and positively impacting on people’s outcomes • Ensures people are kept informed of how well social care services are being delivered in Ceredigion • Prioritises a sufficient and sustainable workforce with the capacity and capability to consistently meet statutory responsibilities • Ensures a standardised approach to supervision and oversight of practice • Ensures a competent and confident workforce • Provides a robust quality assurance framework • Ensures complaints are consistently responded to in accordance with the prescribed timescales

STATUS: New action ●

An action plan has been formulated to respond to the recommended improvements outlined in the CIW report. The majority of these are already in progress as the issues identified were already being addressed before the inspection took place. The areas that the Council sought to improve were reflected in the evidence to the inspectors in advance of the inspection and the production of the final report. There were no areas of non-compliance identified during the inspection. The action plan was approved by the Council’s Cabinet in June 2023 and progress will be monitored after six months through the Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee for a period of one year to maintain progress and track through to completion.

DESCRIPTION	TIMESCALES	LEAD OFFICER	OUTCOMES
DEVELOP AND PUBLISH A NEW DIGITAL STRATEGY FOR CEREDIGION			
Develop and publish a new Digital Strategy to continue the development of Information Communication Technology and digital services across Ceredigion	September 2023 - September 2024	Alan Morris (Corporate Lead Officer Customer Contact, ICT and Digital)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a clear strategic vision to develop digital services • Ensures the Council has modern, stable and resilient Digital Infrastructure • Supports the delivery of the Council’s Corporate Strategy and Corporate Well-being Objectives, such as the drive to create well-connected communities through improved digital connectivity and digital services • Supports easier digital access to Council services and an enhanced customer experience • Supports the Council’s work to improve digital inclusion. • Support colleagues to make the best, fullest use of the tools and technologies available to them, developing high levels of digitally skilled collaboration
<p>STATUS: New action ●</p> <p>Ceredigion County Council is currently reviewing the impact of the previous strategy and consulting with stakeholder to understand needs, latest digital trends and issues to address. Later in the year, once these lessons and stakeholder engagements have been undertaken, we will produce a draft strategy for wider consultation.</p>			

WHAT IS SELF-ASSESSMENT?

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 introduced a new process for monitoring the performance of all local authorities, based on self-assessment.

The new performance regime defines principal councils as 'self-improving organisations' through a system based on self-assessment and panel performance assessment. The new approach is intended to build on, and support, a culture in which councils continuously challenge the status quo and ask questions about how they are operating and how they can learn from best practice. A transparent and open self-assessment of a council will form a fundamental part of this approach.

Effective self-assessment provides reliable assurance both internally and externally to regulators and inspectorates and above all helps councils to continually learn and achieve sustainable improvement and better outcomes for citizens, service users and their own workforce.

There are five specific duties introduced by the Act:

- 1. Duty to keep performance under review**
Ceredigion County Council has a duty to keep under review the extent to which it is fulfilling its 'performance requirements by determining the extent to which it is:
 - Exercising its functions effectively
 - Using its resources economically, efficiently and effectively
 - Ensuring its governance is effective for securing the above
- 2. Duty to consult on performance**
Councils must consult a range of people at least once in every financial year about the extent to which they are meeting their

performance requirements. The statutory consultees are:

- Local people
- Other persons carrying on a business in the County
- The staff of the Council
- Every Trade Union which is recognised by the Council

- 3. Duty to report on performance**
The Council must produce a self-assessment report each financial year. The report must set out its conclusions on the extent to which it met the performance requirements, and any actions it intends to take, or has already taken to further improve.
- 4. Duty to arrange a panel performance assessment**
At least once in each election period, the Council must arrange for an independent panel to undertake an assessment of the extent to which the council is meeting the performance requirements and report its results. The Council is currently making preparations to undertake its first Panel Performance Assessment during 2024/25.
- 5. Duty to respond to a panel performance assessment**
The Council must prepare a response to a Panel Assessment Report setting out
 - The extent to which it accepts the conclusions in the report
 - How it intends to follow any recommendations
 - Any further actions the Council intends to take to improve

performance

The purpose of the performance and governance provisions in the Act is to build on and support a developing culture in which councils actively seek and embrace challenge, whether presented from within the council, for example through scrutiny procedures, or externally. The provisions are designed to develop a framework which supports councils, through an ongoing process of review, to think about their performance and effectiveness now and for the future; to encourage more inquisitive organisations willing to challenge themselves to do more; and to be more innovative and more ambitious in what they do.

Reflective Practice

For Ceredigion, the principles of self-assessment already form an integral part of its ongoing strategic and corporate governance arrangements.

We recognise the opportunity for self-reflection and constructive challenge. For example, this form of reflective practice is already an integral part of the Council's Business Planning and Annual Governance Statement, and already well-established in the Council. Reflective practice is a core element of the Council's overall performance management process, and focuses on evaluating *how we do things* and not just *what we do*.

We have taken a similar approach with Self-Assessment - reflective practice forms a key part of our Self-Assessment Workshops where we reflect on how we are currently operating, the challenges we face in the future and how we build sustainability into our activities moving forward.

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act came into force in 2021

The Five Duties on Principal Councils are:

KEEP PERFORMANCE UNDER REVIEW

CONSULT ON PERFORMANCE

REPORT ON PERFORMANCE

ARRANGE A PANEL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

RESPOND TO A PANEL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

HOW WE CONDUCT SELF-ASSESSMENT

Our Approach to Self-Assessment

Our approach to Self-Assessment is based on assessing ourselves against a set of Key Lines of Enquiry. “KLOEs” as they are sometimes referred to, are a series of relevant key questions that we ask ourselves as we work through the Self-Assessment.

The Key Lines of Enquiry approach is a tried and tested approach to conducting self-assessments in Local Government and across the wider public sector. It ensures we remain focused on the corporate or 'holistic' view of the Council's performance as required by the Act. It also provides the clarity of self-evaluation needed to help us identify opportunities for improvement, and in doing so, provides a strong audit trail to explain the actions we have undertaken in response.

The findings are recorded in our Self-Assessment Matrix document. The Matrix records the evidence demonstrating how we are currently performing, our ambitions for the future and the actions we need to take in order to achieve those ambitions. This document is used to identify the opportunities that exist for improvement and is used to develop our Self-Assessment Action plan. The Self-Assessment Matrix is available on request.

Continuous Cycle

Self-Assessment is an ongoing process of improvement - throughout the year we conduct consultation in support of self-assessment, we collate evidence to inform our workshops, we deliver the actions in our Self-Assessment action plan and we monitor their progress towards completion. The Self-Assessment Report is the key output from the

process but the work on improving outcomes is an ongoing year round activity.

The diagram below summarises the main steps and timescales involved in conducting the Self-Assessment and the production of the Self-Assessment Report.

Evaluation, Reflection and Identifying Opportunities

During April each year we bring together a wide variety of evidence to help us in assessing our current performance. This includes internal performance monitoring such as performance dashboards and complaints reports, regulatory reports from inspections and the results from consultation and engagement activities.

We undertake an exercise of reviewing the evidence to identify key findings - where performance has improved, where there are opportunities for improvement and what the key themes are from our consultation.

The findings from this exercise are

presented to Self-Assessment Workshops with the Council's Leadership Group and Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Committee to help in assessing our performance.

The workshops are where we re-assess ourselves against the Key Lines of Enquiry, updating our evidence for each question and using this to identify actions for improvement. They review the evidence available to them and add their own perspective to provide updated scores for each question.

The findings workshops are collated by the Performance and Research Team. They produce the draft Self-Assessment Report by drawing on the evidence matrix, scores and the improvement actions identified in the workshop, along with other key sources such as key strategies and inspection reports.

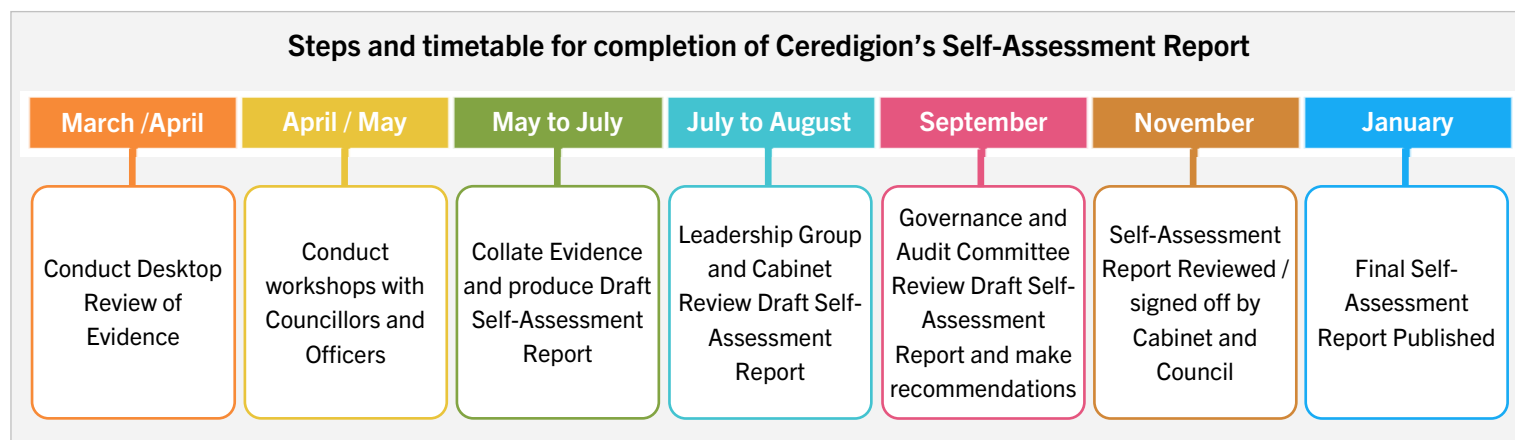
Part of the collation includes cross-checking the scoring with the evidence provided and seeking clarity on our conclusions where necessary. Gaps in evidence and understanding of our performance are also

highlighted, all of which is designed to ensure the process is robust.

By focusing on this, we can learn from our experiences and tap into the innovation and creativity that exists in the Council to identify opportunities to improve our performance, whether that's through raising performance levels, identifying efficiencies or improving customer satisfaction.

The Council's Governance and Audit Committee play a key role in the Self-Assessment process. They are responsible for reviewing the draft Self-Assessment Report and making recommendations for changes to the conclusions drawn or the actions the Council intends to take. The draft Report is reviewed by the Governance and Audit Committee in September.

The Self-Assessment Report is updated following the Committee's recommendations and the final report published in January and submitted to the statutory recipients.



SELF-ASSESSMENT IN OUR PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Integration into the Council's Performance Framework

Self-assessment is not a standalone process, rather it is integrated as part of the Council's ongoing corporate planning and performance management arrangements. The diagram below demonstrates how self-assessment fits into our overall performance framework.

It is integral to driving Business Planning and Risk Management, and in turn draws on the outcomes from monitoring business plans and the corporate risk register to evaluate our current performance and complete the self-assessment. It is, in essence, a two-way communication between each pillar of the Performance Framework.

The timing of Self-Assessment is also important. It has been timed to transparently inform and influence the Council's strategic planning, financial management and budget process, risk management reviews, improvement planning and ongoing performance management. For example, the publication of the Self-Assessment Report in November ensures it is prepared in time to drive the annual business planning and target setting process in the final quarter of each year between January and March.



Self-Assessment in the Wider Performance Framework

Ceredigion has a long history of using self-assessment to good effect in identifying innovative ways of delivering services, most recently in the 'Through Age Well-being Programme' being implemented to transform the delivery of social care in the County over the next five years.

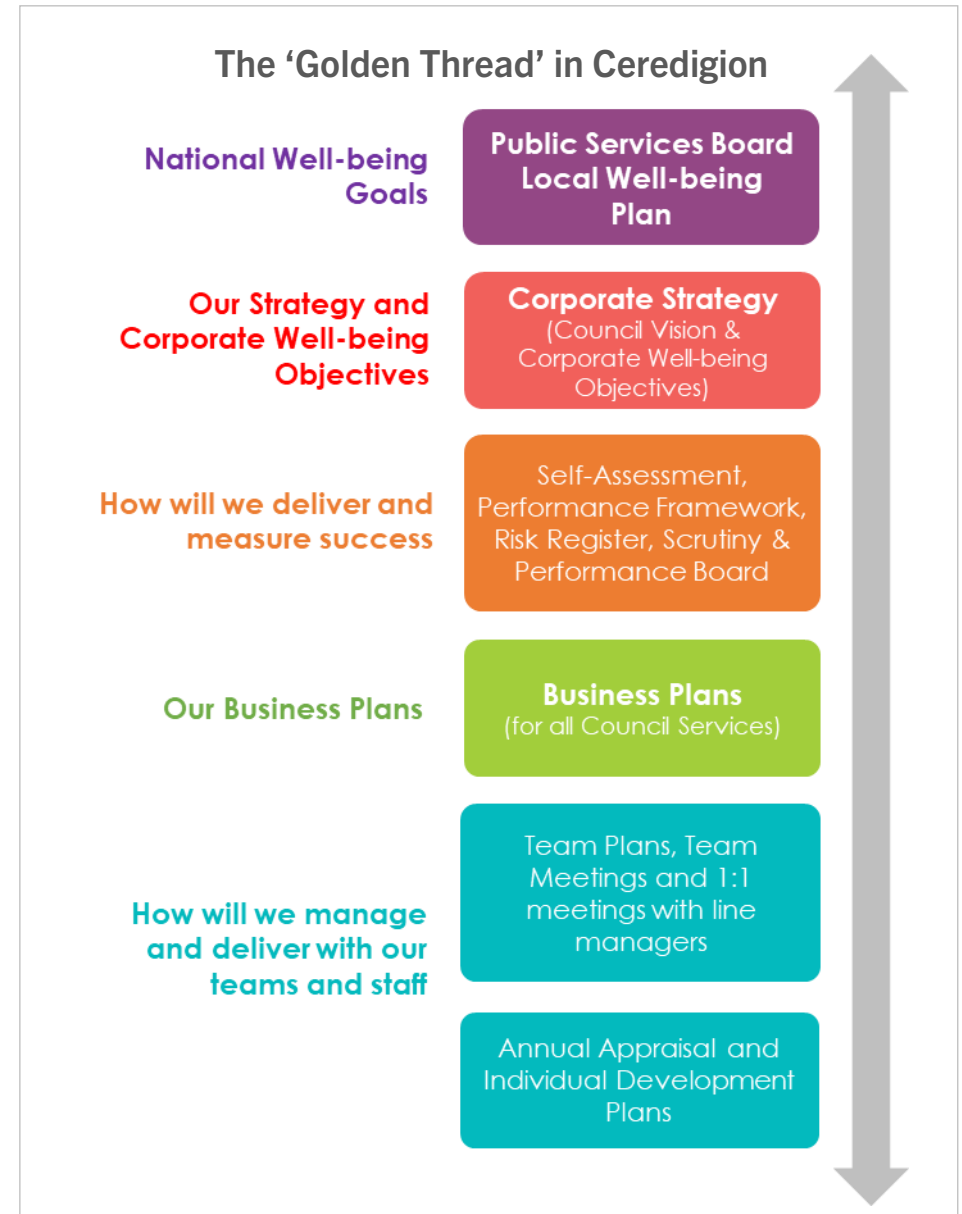
It is also an integral part of operational performance and used in the setting of annual business plans for each service. We all recognise that capacity is at a premium and demand is high, and as a result effective business planning has never been so important to ensure we are delivering 'the right services in the right way'. Having the opportunity to 'reflect' on past and current performance is crucial to understanding our strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. This form of reflective practice is critical in helping us determine our actions and priorities for the years ahead.

The Golden Thread

The Council uses a 'Golden Thread' diagram (shown right) to show the links between its key strategies and plans. It describes the flow of information from national and regional priorities for improvement contained in the Local Well-being Plan and Corporate Strategy, through to individual services, teams and members of staff in the Council responsible for delivering them.

A strong Golden Thread is important as it shows how each level of planning and action contributes to the next level, and how each role within the Council contributes towards achieving Ceredigion's Corporate Well-being Objectives.

Self-Assessment occupies a key place in the Golden Thread as the way in which we measure success and drive performance improvements, along with Business Planning and management and risk.



MANAGING OUR PERFORMANCE

Our Performance Journey

Put simply, performance management is taking action in response to actual performance and predicted performance to make outcomes for the people of Ceredigion better than they would otherwise be.

Over the last four years, Ceredigion's approach to performance management has been revitalised and updated. Since then, good progress has been made in building a strong performance management culture across the organisation and preparing for the Self-Assessment performance regime introduced by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

This is reflected in the new business planning process, the relaunched Performance Board and the positive feedback on the Council's approach to self-assessment. The new legislation emphasizes the importance of embedding a strong performance management culture and achieving this is the overriding principle of the Council's ongoing performance journey.

The learning during the COVID-19 pandemic has created the opportunity to bring about sustainable change and improvements through new ways of working and investing in new technologies to deliver high quality services in an efficient and environmentally friendly way.

The Council has a track record of innovation and over the next five years it will continue to develop this innovative approach and move to more agile and smarter ways of working. Performance management will play a key role

in this transformation.

Who is Responsible for Performance Management?

Performance management is everyone's responsibility – everyone has a role to play in delivering business plan objectives, tasks and measures which support the delivery of the Council's Corporate Well-being Objectives and its overall vision.

Performance Management Framework

To ensure we achieve this, we have a new Performance Management Framework in place which allows us to regularly review and track progress, check how we are performing and ensure we are delivering the Corporate Wellbeing Objectives and improving outcomes for the people and communities of Ceredigion.

The Performance Framework operates alongside the overall structure of Corporate Strategy, Medium Term Financial Strategy, Corporate Well-being Objectives, Annual Governance Statement and Programme/ Project Management.

It is part of the Council's corporate planning process and ensures a consistent understanding of the principles of performance management, and how they are applied in Ceredigion.

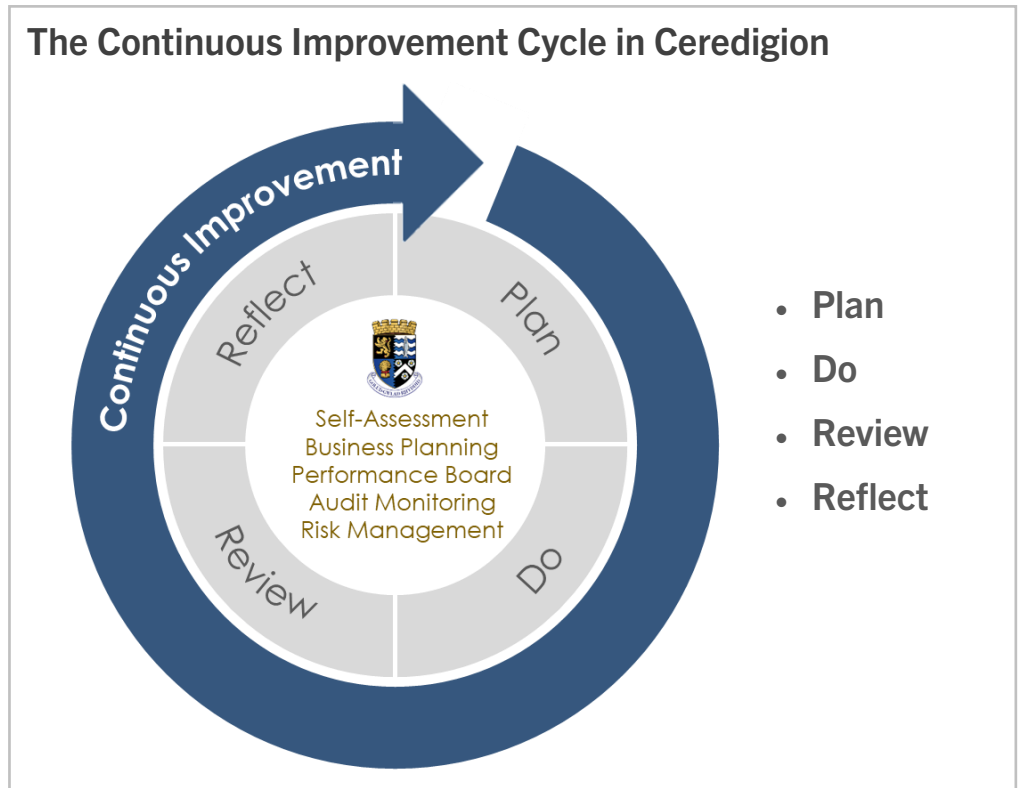
The Continuous Improvement Cycle

Our overall approach to performance management is based on a continuous cycle of improvement, following the industry recognised Plan-Do-Review cycle as shown in the diagram below. This cycle is underpinned by the following steps:

- **Plan** our activities to deliver our vision and Corporate Well-being Objectives
- **Do** or deliver the activities

- **Review** our progress regularly to assess whether we are delivering our objectives
- **Reflect** on how we are delivering our activities to identifying opportunities for improvement, efficiencies, or both

Performance Management is a high priority in Ceredigion. The Council is committed to continuous improvement, regularly seeks citizen's views and undertakes self-evaluation to identify opportunities for improvement.



EVIDENCE-BASED ASSESSMENT

Ceredigion strives to be an evidence and data driven organisation. A wide variety of evidence has been used in assessing our performance and in the production of this report.

These sources are split into three categories which help us check that our conclusions are correct and provide an accurate picture of our current performance.

The three categories are the **internal evidence** available to us through key strategies and internal monitoring, such as the Medium Term Financial Strategy, our Annual Governance Statement and complaints monitoring. This provides us with an internal view of how the organisation is performing.

We also draw on the extensive **regulatory and external evidence** that exists. This includes inspection reports from Estyn, Care Inspectorate Wales and the ongoing work conducted by Audit Wales. This provides us with the regulatory or external view of how we're performing from independent bodies.

The third category of evidence is the **consultation and engagement** undertaken on an ongoing basis. This records the views of all stakeholders in Ceredigion, including citizens, businesses, council staff and Trade Unions, offering the perspective of those receiving services from the Council.

The Council has an ongoing process of

engagement and consultation in place throughout the year which is used to record residents' views on a variety of Council functions (see pages 22-27).

These three categories of evidence help us 'triangulate' or check that the conclusions we draw are robust by allowing us to compare the key findings from each and ensure they align before producing the Self-Assessment Report. This relationship is shown in the diagram opposite, where the evidence equally feeds into the desktop analysis and ultimately the self-assessment report.

Types of evidence used in conducting self-assessment



CATEGORIES OF EVIDENCE

Data Quality

Every stage of the self-assessment and wider performance management process relies on evidence and data to allow the Council to make judgements on what Ceredigion's needs are, what its customers' needs are, what it has achieved, and how it compares. It is therefore vital that all this information is based on high quality, reliable, and timely data to ensure that the judgements that based upon it are sound.

Our performance framework supports this by helping to ensure the provision of complete, accurate and timely data used in internal monitoring and published externally to communicate the Council's progress in delivering its vision and Corporate Well-being Objectives to the public and stakeholders.

The table opposite provides a list of the types and sources of data that are taken into account in Ceredigion's self-assessment, and split by category type. ►

Sources used in conducting the Self-Assessment and Review of Well-being Objectives

INTERNAL EVIDENCE



- Corporate Strategy
- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Statement of Accounts
- Annual Governance Statement
- Overview and Scrutiny Committee Feedback and Reports
- Director of Social Services Annual Report
- Quarterly Performance Dashboards
- Business Plan Monitoring
- Corporate Strategy Dashboard
- Self-Assessment Dashboard
- Corporate Risk Register
- Internal Audit reports
- Compliments, Comments & Complaints Reports
- Performance Measures Results
- Previous Self-Assessment Reports
- National Survey for Wales Results
- Council Tax / Collection Rate
- Digital Skills Audit 2022
- Review of Hybrid Working Arrangements

REGULATORY & EXTERNAL EVIDENCE



- Audit Wales Annual Improvement Report
- Care Inspectorate Wales Annual Performance Report
- Audit Wales Review reports
- Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) reports
- Estyn inspection reports
- Public Service Ombudsman Wales (PSOW)
- Panel Performance Assessment (PPA)
- Future Generations Commissioner Reports
- Ceredigion PSB Annual Report
- Ceredigion PSB Assessment of Local Well-being
- West Wales Population Assessment
- Data Cymru
- StatsWales
- National Well-being Indicators

CONSULTATION & ENGAGEMENT



- Consultation Feedback reports incl.
 - Annual Stakeholder Consultation
 - Childcare Sufficiency Assessment
 - Engagement and Participation policy
 - Maternity and Early Years Strategy
 - Ceredigion Corporate Strategy
 - Local Well-being Plan
- Engagement exercises including:
 - Development of Regional Investment Plan to deliver UK Shared Prosperity fund
 - Mid Wales Employment and Skills survey
 - Flooding at Llanybydder, Llandysul and Pont-Tyweli
 - Post-16 education
 - Crime and Disorder Strategic Assessment
 - Future uses in Council Buildings
- Regional Well-being Survey
- Engagement with stakeholder groups including Disability Forum, Older Persons Forum
- Ceredigion Budget Challenge
- Trade Unions monthly meetings
- Staff New Ways of Working surveys
- Staff Health and Well-being Surveys

LEARNING FROM CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Consultation and engagement with stakeholders is a core theme throughout our self-assessment process and wider performance management approach.

It is an integral part of the evidence used in our performance management and will continue to play an even greater role as we explore opportunities for improvement with a variety of individuals and groups across the County.

It's important that we give residents and stakeholders the opportunity to tell the Council about their own vision for their communities and about what they want in terms of service provision.

Our new [Engagement and Participation Policy](#), that was approved in October 2022, sets out how we will talk and listen with all of those who live, work or study in Ceredigion, including people whose voices are seldom heard.

Our legal duty to consult is set out in various pieces of legislation, including:

- The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 – the Council must involve people with an interest in achieving the National Well-being goals.
- The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 – the Council must encourage public participation in our decision making.
- The Welsh Language Measure 2011 –

the Council must ask the public for their views on the impact that our decisions will have on the Welsh Language.

- The Equality Act 2010 – the Council must involve and engage with people who share Protected Characteristics.
- The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 – the Council must consult with organisations specified in the Regulations and must inform people that are likely to be affected by a traffic order.
- School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 – the Council must comply with the School Organisation Code which outlines the principles that should be taken into account when proposing to make changes to school provision.

Where more feedback is needed from particular groups, we adjust our approach during the year to target those areas and ensure that all of Ceredigion's communities are involved. We engage with the many groups and organisations that represent specific groups in the county, and in particular to ensure that the voices of those seldom heard are indeed heard.

It's not just about our legal duty, however, as engaging and consulting

with the public gives us better information to help our decision making. This can lead to better outcomes for our residents.

There is no 'one size fits all' solution to engagement. We aim to use the best type of engagement for the right situation.

Continuous engagement is achieved through an ongoing conversation between the Council and our local communities. Sometimes a targeted engagement or consultation exercise is the best method. In other instances, the Council has a legal duty to follow a specific process to inform the public and provide opportunity for feedback.

A lot is being done to engage with residents and stakeholders, Feedback on our engagement and consultation campaigns is usually presented to Cabinet meetings

Discussion sessions, thematic workshops, meetings with key stakeholders and face to face drop ins are also offered, particularly where feedback is sought from a specific cohort, for example the Youth Council, or in a specific place, for example flooding in Llanybydder, Llandysul/Pont-Tyweli.

In 2022/23 we have benefitted from some important engagement events that provide a unique insight into the views of citizens and stakeholders.

These include the Corporate Strategy

during September to October 2022, in which residents told us their views on the new Corporate Well-being Objectives, and the Future Use of Council Offices consultation in December 2022 to January 2023 which asked about how best to use the main Council offices in the future. Both of these have been used in the production of this report.

Trade Unions

Monthly meetings are in place between the Council and recognised Trades Unions. These are chaired by the Corporate Lead Officer for People Organisation and provide a consultative forum to engage in and help steer direction for workforce matters and individual concerns around wellbeing and conduct. This ongoing dialogue is important to the Council through ensuring staff have a voice and to build on the intelligence gained from our staff surveys and consultations.

As part of the self-assessment, we met with the Trade Union representatives to outline the process and their role as statutory consultees. No specific issues have been raised by the Trade Unions at this point, although this is likely to develop as the process becomes increasingly embedded. Working in partnership with our Trade Unions is critical to the successful delivery of Workforce Plan, and feedback on the Council's performance can be provided at any time.

Staff Consultation

Ceredigion has a strong history of keeping staff informed and measuring staff sentiment, even before the COVID-19 pandemic and the adoption of the new ways of working initiative. In 2022/23 staff engagement took place in the form of the Interim Hybrid Working Policy to record views on the new working arrangements, the latest annual Health and Well-being Survey to record staff sentiment across a range of issues from their well-being to working arrangements, and the New Ways of Working Project Hybrid Working Review in March 2023 to record feedback on the effectiveness of the new hybrid working arrangements. Some of the regular surveys undertaken to ensure the Council engages with its staff are listed below. The findings from these exercises have been used in the self-assessment.

- IT Working From Home Survey (June 2020)
- Coronavirus Health and Well-being Survey (November 2020)
- The Way We Work Staff Survey (March 2021)
- Interim Hybrid Working Policy Staff Survey (July 2022)
- Health and Well-being Survey (February 2020)
- Employee Health and Well-being Pulse Survey (November 2021)
- Employee Health and Well-being Survey (December 2022)

- NWOW Project Hybrid Working Review

We welcome your views on our Self-Assessment Report, the Council's Corporate Well-being Objectives and our current performance. We would also like to know how you, your family and your community have been affected by our work to improve well-being for everyone in the county.

Public Engagements

Seven targeted engagement exercises were undertaken during 2022-23. Some were run by the Council alone and some were run in partnership with others as we try and reduce 'consultation fatigue'. Feedback from these exercises will contribute to the development of future plans and strategies. Details of these exercises are contained overleaf.

CORPORATE STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

During 2023 we ran our first in an ongoing series of 'Stakeholder Surveys' to support self-assessment and the council's ongoing performance journey.

It allowed us to check in with residents, businesses and other stakeholders such as community groups, on a variety of issues such as progress against our corporate well-being objectives, the priorities moving forward and the way in which we monitor and measure performance.

The first of these was run during the summer of 2023 and the results will be used to inform the next round of self-assessment.

Your views are important to us. We welcome your views on this report, our performance and the actions we are delivering at any time. Please use the contact details on the back cover of this report to get in touch or look out for the annual stakeholder surveys.



Have your say on Ceredigion's Wellbeing Objectives

Closing date: 31 August 2023

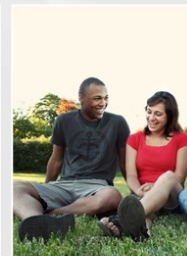


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ENGAGEMENT EXERCISES IN 2022/23

Title of Activity	Description	Response	What next
Development of Regional Investment Plan to deliver UK Shared Prosperity fund (May/June 2022)	Growing Mid Wales (Ceredigion County Council and Powys County Council) ran an internal and external engagement exercise to invite views on how the UK Shared Prosperity Fund should be used over the next 3 years.	176 responses to an online survey plus over 150 stakeholders who attended a webinar and 20 member organisations of the Growing Mid Wales Partnership.	Responses were used to help shape the high-level priorities of the Mid Wales Regional Investment Plan 2022-25. The Plan provides guidance to local businesses and organisations who wish to apply for funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
Flooding at Llanybydder, Llandysul and Pont-Tyweli (June - August 2022)	Highways and Environmental Services ran a 12-week engagement run in partnership with National Resources Wales and Carmarthenshire County Council to seek views of the public to get a better understanding of the impact that flooding has on the communities.	124 (58: Llanybydder and 66: Llandysul/Pont-Tyweli).	Responses will feed into the next stage of the work and form part of decision making that Natural Resources Wales and Welsh Government will undertake to design and implement any flood risk reduction scheme.
Mid Wales Employment and Skills survey (July - September 2022)	A 7-week engagement run by the Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership (Ceredigion County Council and Powys County Council) to inform the Mid Wales Employment and Skills Plan 2022-25.	69 (73% from Powys / 27% from Ceredigion)	The Mid Wales Employment and Skills Plan 2022-25 was launched in March 2023. The Plan identifies key sectors and skills and priorities for regional investment to support jobs and growth in the Mid Wales region.
Post-16 education (October 2022)	Schools and Culture ran a 4-week engagement with businesses, parents, primary and secondary school pupils and university students. Respondents were asked for their views about the range of courses and type of provision needed for post-16 learners.	1,307 to the online survey.	Responses will feed into the review of post-16 provision in Ceredigion.
Future uses in Council Buildings (December 2022/ January 2023)	Economy and Regeneration ran an 8-week engagement with the public to ask for their views on how best to use the main Council offices in the future.	533 (508 to the online survey and 25 to a paper version). Additional responses also received via Clic	Feedback will be considered, alongside feedback from Council staff and data on the use of desks and meeting rooms in pilot hybrid office areas.
Crime and Disorder Strategic Assessment (January – March 2023)	Ceredigion Community Safety Partnership ran an 8-week engagement to gather views about crime and disorder in the county	89 responses to the online survey, 3 responses on a paper survey and 9 responses from a Ceredigion Youth Council event.	Responses will inform the Ceredigion Community Safety Delivery Plan which aims to protect local communities from crime and to help people feel safer.
Ceredigion Dementia Action Plan (Feb/March 2023)	Our Through Age Well-being programme ran a 6-week engagement with the public, with particular emphasis on older people, to establish how we are doing and what we can do to improve the lives of people living with dementia and those who care for them.	35 from the online survey plus 10 from drop-in sessions at 6 locations across the county. Additional responses were collected from face-to-face visits to 5 groups/care homes, focus sessions with service providers and 55 x one to one video calls.	Responses will feed into the development of a Ceredigion Dementia Action Plan.

CONSULTATION EXERCISES IN 2022/23

Five consultation exercises were undertaken to obtain public feedback on specific plans or proposals. Results of the consultation exercises were presented to Cabinet alongside the final plan or policy. All approved plans and policies are now

published on the Council website (apart from the Maternity and Early Years Strategy for Mid Wales which will be presented to Cabinet on 06/06/23).

Title of Activity	Description	Response	Impact of the Consultation
Childcare Sufficiency Assessment report (May/June 2022)	Schools and Culture ran a 4-week consultation to seek the views of interested parties on the draft Childcare Sufficiency Assessment report. The draft document was based on the results of an extensive assessment of the availability of childcare in Ceredigion.	17	People generally agreed with the content of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment. This is probably due to the extensive consultation undertaken in 2021-22 to inform the assessment report. The action plan was developed in line with the original document.
Engagement and Participation policy (July-Sept 2022)	Policy, Performance and Public Protection ran an 8-week consultation to seek the views of interested parties on how the council should engage with the public and to ask for feedback on the draft Engagement and Participation policy.	112	The final policy was amended in response to the feedback received.
Maternity and Early Years Strategy for Mid Wales (July/August 2022)	A 13-week regional consultation was run by Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire Local Authorities and Hywel Dda University Health Board to seek the views of interested parties on this strategy which focusses on integrated support in the first 7 years of a child's life.	137	Amendments were made to the strategy based on feedback received.
Ceredigion Corporate Strategy 2022-27 (August/September 2022)	Policy, Performance and Public Protection ran a 5-week consultation to seek the views of Ceredigion residents on Ceredigion Council's draft Corporate Strategy and steps we'll take to achieve our proposed Corporate Well-being Objectives over the next 5 years.	51	Amendments made as a result of the consultation were incorporated into the final document.
Ceredigion Public Services Board Local Well-being Plan 2023-28 (October 2022-January 2023)	Ceredigion Public Services Board ran a 14-week consultation to seek feedback from the public on the content of the draft Local Well-being Plan for Ceredigion. The draft Plan was based on the results of an extensive assessment, including consultation, carried out in 2021-22 on the state of well-being in Ceredigion.	34 completed surveys, plus feedback from focus sessions with 16 schools and Ceredigion Youth Council. 7 detailed responses from local and national organisations and 15 responses on the ideas wall on 'Have your Say'.	Comments and feedback were incorporated into the final document and will also enhance the development of the detailed delivery plan.

INFORM EXERCISES IN 2022/23

In some instances, the Council has a duty to inform the public about a proposal and provide a way for interested parties to respond. Four 'inform' exercises took place during the period.

Title of Activity	Description	Response
Application for the Registration of Erw Goch Field	All correspondence, including minutes of Cabinet meetings relating to this matter, are listed on the Council website	2
Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders (ETRO)	Two ETRO's were made to retain and amend a number of traffic management measures that were previously introduced during the Covid -19 pandemic in Aberaeron, Aberystwyth, Cardigan & New Quay via Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders.	34, plus discussions with the Disability Forum
Architect Plans for Aeron Valley Community Area School	An open evening was held at Theatr Felinfach campus for people to view the architect plans which were also available on the Council website.	48
Aberaeron Secondary School Footpath closure	A copy of the Traffic Regulation Order, responses, and comments on responses from the Council are listed on the Council website. All respondents also receive a written response from the Council.	8

CORPORATE STRATEGY CONSULTATION

One example of consultation undertaken was on the Council's new Corporate Strategy covering the period 2022 to 2027. This document is important because it sets out the Council's new Corporate Well-being Objectives (corporate priorities) in moving forward. Stakeholders were asked a series of questions about the Strategy between September and October 2022. Although we recognise that the consultation produced a low number of responses, the responses are crucial to understand what is and remains a priority for Ceredigion.

Overall, there was a high degree of support for the Corporate Well-being Objectives and the written comments where respondents highlighted themes relevant to them, align closely to the ambitions and the steps in the Strategy. The diagram opposite demonstrates this.

WHAT YOU TOLD US



78%

Agree or strongly agree with the Boosting the Economy Objective (6% disagree or strongly disagree)



75%

Agree or strongly agree with the Creating Caring and Healthy Communities objective (8% disagree or strongly disagree)



71%

Agree or strongly agree with the Providing the Best Start in Life objective (4% disagree or strongly disagree)



73%

Agree or strongly agree with the Creating Sustainable, Greener and Well-connected Communities objective (2% disagree or strongly disagree)

CORPORATE STRATEGY CONSULTATION

WHAT YOU TOLD US	HOW OUR CORPORATE STRATEGY ALIGNS
Support for businesses, SME's and new start-ups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to develop the £110m Mid Wales Growth Deal Supporting Ceredigion's UK Shared Prosperity Fund bid Support the development of the Smart Towns project in Cardigan in our other Ceredigion towns
Digital connectivity for all, not just a percentage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the roll-out of 4G Broadband
Environmental impact from development and economic growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enable initiatives and mitigation measures to help with the resolution to the phosphates and nutrient ecological issue in the Teifi Valley and other catchments Pursue the Ceredigion Local Development Plan Prioritise locally-sourced produce and supply chains in council business
Leisure facilities and opportunities for young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All children and young people have opportunities to access after-school, evening and weekend activities, including opportunities for freely chosen self-directed Play and that these services are registered to enable parents to access financial support Support pupils and families to access local youth clubs, social groups and organised activities
Active travel opportunities particularly walking and cycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide modern, accessible and inspiring leisure facilities across all three areas of Ceredigion (north, mid and south) Encouraging people to Get Physically Active so they can benefit from positive health and wellbeing Introducing an improved membership package for use of council operated leisure facilities Providing outreach physical activity opportunities outside of the county's towns
Challenges facing provision of social care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue the building of a new nursing home in the Aberystwyth area and fully provide for the nursing care needs of our population Support the aspiration of creating a National Care Service for Wales Progress the Through Age Delivery Model providing 70% of services within universal and early help services, 20% in Assessment and short-term services and 10% in Specialist services

WHAT YOU TOLD US	HOW OUR CORPORATE STRATEGY ALIGNS
Learning opportunities for adults and older people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop through the Regional Skills Partnership, Economy and Regeneration, and LL&S a robust employer forum Develop online/ social connectivity and pop-up events to market roles/ sectors within Ceredigion Undertake a review of post-16 education and implement the approved recommendations Continue to develop the E-sgol provision Ensure that the UK Shared prosperity fund is utilised on identified projects to develop appropriate skills to support the local economy
Connecting communities via active travel routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Securing increased funding for the delivery of a wide range of active travel improvements Campaigning for active travel routes alongside the whole length of our trunk roads Pushing for our smaller towns and rural areas to be included in Welsh Government's criteria for funding active travel routes.
Public transport improvements and high costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the Bwcabus on-demand service in our rural communities subject to continued and increased Welsh Government funding opportunities Make the case strongly for any Welsh Government ambitions to franchise public transport routes to include small locally-based bus companies Working with stakeholders to support and sustain the public transport network, and identify funding/improvement where appropriate
Provision of childcare and recruitment of Welsh speakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting the Childcare Offer to working parents of 3 to 4 year-olds Parents/guardians who are in education or training and meet the eligibility criteria will be able to access the Childcare Offer Supporting childcare availability for 2-year-olds Raising awareness/promote Tax Free Childcare for working parents Supporting the development and sustainability of registered childcare provision
Rural deprivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing a resource centre to support vulnerable / low-income families Household income above national average

REVIEW OF OUR WELL-BEING OBJECTIVES

The Council's new Corporate Strategy 2022-27 was published in November 2022 and the new Corporate Well-being Objectives agreed:

- Boosting the Economy, Supporting Businesses and Enabling Employment
- Creating Caring and Healthy Communities
- Providing the Best Start in Life and Enabling Learning at All Ages
- Creating Sustainable, Green and Well-connected Communities

The Council's Corporate Well-being Objectives enable the delivery of services that will enhance the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being for the citizens and communities of Ceredigion. The Objectives were reviewed during 2022 and a new set agreed to coincide with the new Corporate Strategy. The new Objectives were identified through a wide variety of evidence, including public engagement, the Ceredigion Assessment of Local Well-being and the ambitions of the new political administration.

The process started with a desktop analysis of a variety of evidence, in order to identify the main issues affecting the well-being of Ceredigion's citizens. This included reviewing the Ceredigion Public Service's Board Assessment of Local Well-being, which provides a comprehensive picture of well-being in the county, and included extensive public engagement during 2021. This told us

about the concerns people had and the areas they would like to see improve.

A triangulation exercise was then conducted, looking at the new Administration's priorities for the next five years and comparing with the Assessment to identify any gaps. Workshops were run with Council services to provide a further check and to develop the individual steps to be taken to deliver the Objectives.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act requires the Council to set and publish Well-being Objectives that are designed to maximise our contribution to the achievement of the seven Well-being Goals for Wales specified in the Act. At the same time we must publish a statement explaining why meeting the objectives will contribute to the achievement of the well-being goals and what actions we will take to meet the objectives

We review our Corporate Well-being Objectives and steps annually to ensure they remain the right Objectives for Ceredigion and ensure we are delivering them.

The following pages provide a summary of how our 2022/23 Well-being Objectives contribute to the national Well-being Goals, a review of progress against delivering the Objectives and how we have applied the Sustainable Development Principle.

Our Vision:

Ceredigion County Council delivers value for money, sustainable bilingual public services, that support a strong economy and healthy environment, while promoting well-being in our people and our communities

Our Corporate Well-being Objectives:



ASSESSING PROGRESS

Local authorities are required by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to review progress in delivering their well-being objectives. Although we keep progress under continuous review, we publish our latest performance every year in our Self-Assessment Report.

This report combines the statutory reporting requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

In assessing our overall progress, we use the Future Generations Journey Checker to assist in providing a standardised assessment of progress against each Corporate Well-being Objective.

The Journey Checker is a useful tool that categorises progress according to five criteria, ranging from 'No Change' where no progress has been made to 'Leading the Way', where not only good progress has been made and our level of understanding of the issues affecting

well-being is comprehensive but where the needs of future generations are understood and considered by everyone. These categories are highlighted in the scoring system in the table below.

The Journey Checker provides a useful way of assessing not only the delivery of individual actions taken, but also provides an assessment of *how* we're delivering the objectives.

The following pages provide a review of our progress during the last year, including some recent highlights and key successes, along with some of the longer term achievements in the delivery of our Corporate Well-being Objectives.

Future Generations Journey Checker

NO CHANGE	SIMPLE CHANGE	MORE ADVENTUROUS	OWNING AMBITION	LEADING THE WAY
				



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

During 2022/23 our customer contact centre (CLIC) handled the following enquiries:

130,908

Telephone calls received during the 2022/23 year

35,852

Emails responded to during the 2022/23 year

95,421

Enquiries logged during the 2022/23 year (an increase of 17,500 on the previous year)

16%

Of telephone calls (or 20,970) were in Welsh

Progress Made

- The Mid Wales Growth Deal is making real progress since the signing of the Final Deal Agreement by the Welsh and UK Governments and regional delivery partners in January 2022.
- The Growth Deal, developed from the Vision for Growing Mid Wales, reached a significant milestone in 2022 when the Final Deal Agreement was signed by the Welsh Government, UK Government and Ceredigion and Powys Councils, based on the development and submission of the Portfolio Business Case. Both governments agreed to provide £55m totalling £110m over a period of up to 15 years. The updated Strategic Portfolio Business Case was formally submitted in March 2023 to the Welsh Government and the UK Government and release of the first tranche of Growth Deal funding is now expected during 2023/24 via a formal Grant Award.
- The Council has been successful in applying for £10.9m of Levelling Up funding for Aberystwyth from the UK Government. This is being used to deliver three regeneration projects that will help transform 'The Old College' in Aberystwyth, revitalise the promenade and create a 'Living harbour'.
- The Council has worked in partnership with Powys County Council and a range of local businesses to launch the Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership Employment and Skill Plan 2022-25. The plan addresses the barriers and issues affecting businesses in Mid Wales. It identifies key sectors and skills, priorities for regional investment to support jobs and growth, and sets out the mechanism to create a more prosperous skills infrastructure for the region for the next 3 years and beyond.
- Ceredigion Workways+ has continued to help people that are not in employment to access funded face-to-face and online training, work experience, volunteering opportunities and jobs. The scheme is staffed by officers from Ceredigion County Council and is part funded through the Welsh Government. Support is available to help people affected by work-limiting health conditions or disabilities; carers; those with low or no qualifications; people with childcare responsibilities; the over 54's; people in a single adult or jobless household or anyone from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic group.
- Investments have led to Ceredigion being the first county to have a county-wide LoRaWAN network that is available to private and public sector partners to improve the use of technology as a business efficiency aid. Ceredigion County Council has completed the installation of 40 LoRaWAN Gateways on several Council assets in order to create the network. Ceredigion's is the most extensive network across any other local authority in Wales and the first to have coverage across much of the county. Crucially, as well as the Council having access, the network will also be available and accessible to all businesses, organisations and residents, with the freedom for the network to be used in the manner in which they feel most effective.
- £2.8m worth of investment has been secured from the UK Government's Community Renewal Fund, and is currently being delivered via 12 projects involving stakeholders supporting individuals and businesses directly linked to actions identified in the Economic Strategy.
- One project, led by Antur Cymru addresses increased numbers of people considering necessity-based entrepreneurship who face barriers to engaging with established business support services. The project is empowering individuals to acquire transferrable skills through participation in a project delivering basic business skills
- £379k of funding from Welsh Government has been secured to support a range of projects to bring town centre assets into economic use and to enhance green infrastructure in town centres. Investment includes the purchase of 10/11 Harford Square in Lampeter, and the development of a Green Infrastructure project in Market Street, Lampeter.
- The Council is the lead authority for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) in the Mid Wales Region. The indicative funding for Ceredigion is £12.4m for the years 2022/23 to 2024/25. £2.9m is funding for capital projects with £9.5m for revenue projects. The UKSPF is part of a suite of funding from the UK Government as part of its Levelling Up Policy and is intended to build pride in local areas and empower local communities.
- Four projects in Ceredigion, along with five in Powys, have received funding totalling just over £1.3m from the Welsh Government Transforming Towns programme, which is anticipated will trigger potential investment worth just over £3m. These projects are part of the overarching Placemaking Grant scheme which sits under the Transforming Towns programme. The town centres in Ceredigion where the projects are taking place are in Aberystwyth, Cardigan and Llandysul. Transforming Towns is a Welsh Government programme providing a further £7million to town centre regeneration in mid Wales over three years.
- With the support of Leader funding through the Cynnal y Cardi programme, a Towns Development Officer is in place to engage with town representatives to help facilitate and support ideas to reinvigorate Ceredigion's rural towns.

BOOSTING THE
ECONOMY, SUPPORTING
BUSINESS AND ENABLING
EMPLOYMENT



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- Over £250,000 has been secured to improve access to Ceredigion’s natural assets through Access Improvement Grants and the Local Places for Nature programme.
- In March 2023, Ceredigion County Council approved the adoption of the continuation of the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rates Relief Scheme for 2023/24, which allows an estimated 800 businesses in Ceredigion to take advantage of a 75% discount on non-domestic rates, with a total of £3.6m available to businesses under the scheme.
- Ceredigion County Council and its partners on the Ceredigion Public Services Board continue to work proactively in mitigating the causes and impacts of poverty in Ceredigion.
- Ceredigion County Council has provided food banks across the county with a share of £30,000 from the discretionary homeless prevention fund which is provided to local authorities by the Welsh Government. The boost comes as food banks have seen a large increase in demand due to the cost-of-living crisis.
- The ECO4 scheme, aimed at low income, vulnerable and fuel poor households living in energy inefficient properties, was launched in October 2022.
- Significant work has been undertaken to raise the profile of the Direct Payment Personal Assistant workforce through active recruitment with team members attending job fairs and drop-in events at job centres. 56 Personal Assistants have been recruited so far, which is a significant increase.
- Porth Cymorth Cynnar are leading on a project to work with regional partners in the development of social and micro enterprise opportunities. Shared Prosperity Funding has been secured and the Council has supported the planning for a specification for micro enterprises to go out to tender in the

second quarter of 2023/24. The Council is actively involved in establishing how Direct Payments can be one of the payment mechanisms when micro enterprises are established.

- To support a sustainable and resilient independent care sector, the new Domiciliary Care specification and tender programme has been completed with new contracts to be awarded in the second quarter of 2023/24.
- The Council supports the independent sector through collaborative working providing mutual aid, funding and resources, equipment as well as health and safety advice.
- Ceredigion County Council have been successful in receiving funding to progress a project to enable ‘SMART Towns’ in Ceredigion. The project will initially involve the installation of wi-fi access points in Aberaeron, Llandysul, Lampeter, New Quay and Tregaron, with Aberystwyth and Cardigan already having systems in place. As well as providing ‘Town wi-fi’ across each of the Towns, the equipment will provide the ability to collect anonymised data upon footfall, space usage and dwell time, and will enable Town Councils and the County Council to conduct analysis to assist towns and businesses to identify which approaches are best to improve efficiencies and the effectiveness of their business.
- The Planning Service follow-up review found that the Council has taken swift action to begin responding to the recommendations made by Audit Wales and good progress is being made, including changes to the governance arrangements to support new Development Management Committee. We are continuing to work through the remaining recommendations as well as any additional recommendations made.

£10.9m

of capital funding secured through the Levelling Up Fund 2022-25

£760,000

of external capital funding attracted

37

Businesses supported across Ceredigion

7,547

Winter Fuel Grant Recipients paid during the cost of living crisis, with a total value of £3.2m

21,363

£150 Cost of Living Support payments made to recipients with a total value of £1.51m

41

New jobs created during the year

703

Carers Grant Scheme recipients paid with a total value of £352,000

£42.4m

Mid Wales region’s application for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund approved

IMPROVING OUTCOMES



CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

The Mid Wales Growth deal has continued to progress during 2022/23 with some significant developments that bring the £110m investment into the region a step closer. The Final Deal Agreement was signed by the Welsh Government, UK Government and Ceredigion and Powys Councils in 2022. At the end of the year, in March 2023, the updated Strategic Portfolio Business case was formally submitted to Welsh and UK Governments and the first tranche of the funding is expected during the 2023/24 year.

The Growth Deal is a ground-breaking partnership to bring a combined investment of £110m from UK and Welsh Government, which is expected to lever in significant additional investment from other public and private sources. The programmes and projects supported by the Growth Deal are expected to produce wider social and economic benefits, such as **enhanced quality of life, creating business opportunities** following the impact of COVID-19, **decarbonisation** in industry and consideration of climate change impacts.

The outcomes that are achievable in Mid Wales through Growth Deal investment are:

- To create between 1,100 and 1,400 new jobs in Mid Wales by 2032.
- To support a net additional Gross Value Added (GVA) uplift of between £570m and £700 million for the Mid Wales Economy by 2032.
- To deliver a total investment of up to £400 million in the Mid Wales economy by 2032.



DEVELOPING SKILLS

Over the last year, the Council has worked in partnership with Powys County Council and a range of local businesses to launch the Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership Employment and Skills Plan 2022-25.

The plan addresses the barriers and issues affecting businesses in Mid Wales. It identifies key sectors and skills, priorities for regional investment to support jobs and growth, and sets out the mechanism to create a more prosperous skills infrastructure for the region for the next 3 years and beyond.

Through engaging closely with businesses and **giving them a voice to influence priorities** for the region, the Plan addresses the importance of making **strong connections between the local learning system and the skills needed across the region**, so that we are **creating the right conditions for a thriving workforce**.

Launched at the Grow - Define - Deliver Together event, the Plan identifies key sectors and skills, priorities for **regional investment to support jobs and growth** in the Mid Wales region and sets out the mechanism to create **a more prosperous skills infrastructure** for the region for the next 3 years and beyond.

During 2023, the Partnership will be consulting with businesses and stakeholders about the challenges faced by businesses and, in particular, the recruitment of skills now and in the future, to help us inform the skills provision needed for the economy and the people across the region to thrive.



SHARING PROSPERITY

Ceredigion's fifteen year Economic Strategy sets out how we will work together towards achieving strong, sustainable and more resilient economic growth for Ceredigion, created and shared by all. The Strategy is focused on the areas of influence where the Council can make a difference to the economy, i.e. how it uses its capital, human and revenue assets to positively impact the economy in Ceredigion.

The strategy document sets out the actions that will address the challenges and opportunities that exist in the local economy. It focuses on four main priority areas – People, Enterprise, Place and Connectivity, with each section outlining some of the early interventions considered.

Many initiatives have already been developed and implemented under the strategic direction set by the Economic Strategy. A significant amount of external funding has been secured from a range of key stakeholder organisations, which will enable the building blocks for further economic growth to be put in place.

For example, a Welsh Government funded Small Capital Grant Scheme led to almost £500,000 of grant investment in local businesses, attracting a further £631,000 of private sector funding, which led to the creation of 146 new jobs and a further 408 jobs safeguarded in 81 businesses. A further funding package worth £173,000 was secured in 2022 leading to the level of £250,000 worth of private sector funding match funding across 10 businesses in

Ceredigion, creating 35 new jobs and safeguarding 86.

The investment and the delivery of these projects to date has supported the strategy's aims to **support businesses to get started and grow, promoting Ceredigion as a place to live, work and visit, leading to developing skills in the workforce**.

The Strategy will continue to guide the development of further projects to deliver the aims of the Strategy over the next fifteen years.



STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

In December 2022 the Mid Wales region's application for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund was approved, enabling access to £42.4 million which has been allocated to invest in the Mid Wales region up to March 2025, with Ceredigion entitled to nearly £15m worth of funding.

The Council is working hard to put the arrangements in place to enable local organisations to bring their ideas forward which require funding.

The funding will support Levelling Up objectives that seek to **boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards** by growing the private sector, **improving public services, restoring a sense of community, local pride and belonging, empowering local leaders and communities and increasing levels of numeracy in the adult population**.

Overall assessment of the journey so far

Progress in delivering this objective is **good** and prospects for improvement are also **good**. The steps to *boost the economy, support businesses and enable employment* are progressing well. Of particular note is the move closer to drawing down the £110m growth deal for the region to unlock the local economy's potential and create a variety of opportunities for local businesses employment and skills development.

The Growing Mid Wales Partnership is an example of collaborative working to ensure that we strengthen the local and regional economy as part of a prosperous and resilient Wales post COVID-19.

OWNING OUR AMBITION

MAXIMISING OUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE NATIONAL WELL-BEING GOALS

The **Boosting the economy, supporting businesses and enabling employment** corporate well-being objective supports the following national well-being goals. ►

Prosperous
Resilient
Healthier
More Equal
Cohesive
Culture
Global

DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



Long-Term

- The Economic Strategy plans for the long-term development of the economy up to 2035
- The Mid Wales Growth Deal and the Economic Strategy addresses structural weaknesses for long-term benefit
- The Growing Mid Wales Partnership sets the vision for 15+ year timeframe
- Future trend analysis has been used to develop the Growing Mid Wales vision



Prevention

- Increased economic opportunities will prevent further out-migration of skilled young people
- Economic growth will prevent the future negative impact of migration patterns on Welsh language and culture
- Interventions in the Economic Strategy will prevent further growth in the productivity gap
- Attracting and creating high paid job opportunities will help prevent households falling into poverty and hardship



Collaboration

- The Growing Mid Wales Partnership brings together public, private and academic sectors to achieve shared goals
- Working with Powys County Council and Welsh and UK Government to maximise use of resources and capitalise on opportunities through Growing Mid Wales
- The Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership brings together business leaders and stakeholders across the region to understand skills provision and labour market needs, in order to drive investment that meets the requirements of both employers and the workforce



Involvement

- Private sector businesses, drivers of future economic growth are involved in identifying key priorities and strategies
- Private, public and third sectors involved in shaping the emerging Growth Deal programme
- Extensive engagement was undertaken in the development of the Economic Strategy
- The Regional Well-being Survey that is instrumental in driving all local strategies was based on extensive public and stakeholder engagement



Integration

- The Economic Strategy provides a shared vision and action for development of the local economy and the interventions contained within it will be delivered by a variety of partners and stakeholders over the next 15 years
- Economic growth strategies are integrated with other service provision, including education, skills, planning and infrastructure

CYNNAL Y CARDI

Cynnal y Cardi continues to support rural community regeneration through pilot projects, feasibility studies, facilitation, networking activities and training and mentoring.

Approximately 70 activities have been supported including:

- “**Ceredigion360**”, a feasibility to discover whether there is desire to create and maintain lively, sustainable local area websites across areas of Ceredigion.
- Feasibility work into the opportunities for developing “**Canolfan Tir Glas Centre**” on the Lampeter UWTSO campus.
- Piloting a **Community Fridge** scheme in Aberporth.
- Piloting **bilingual, digitised learning** in the outdoor environment through developing woodland-based courses.
- Supporting with engagement activities and exploring the feasibility of the Vale of Aeron Community Pub community venture

Cynnal y Cardi is a LEADER project, which has received funding through the Wales Rural Development Programme. The project aims to stimulate innovations that increase the value and variety of sustainable economic opportunity for the people of Ceredigion.

Progress Made

- Ceredigion has responded to the challenges in the provision of social care by moving towards combining the previously separate children and adults' service into a single Through-Age Well-Being Service. This eliminates departmental barriers, provides a more consistent, lifelong service for users and maintains the generic skills and flexibility of staff.
- The transformed social care service focusses on prevention, intervening at an early stage to help connect people to the communities and facilities around them, building individual and family resilience and preventing problems from escalating into a need for higher end services.
- The Council now operates a Through Age Wellbeing model (TAW) for the delivery of what would traditionally be considered Social Care services.
- Implementation and delivery of the Through Age Wellbeing Programme (TAW) continues as the transformation of services progresses well with the integration of Social Care and Lifelong Learning into 3 Services - Porth Cymorth Cynnar, Porth Gofal and Porth Cynnal who, along with Customer Contact, make up the 4 main areas that fall within the Through Age Wellbeing Programme of change.
- Social Care however continues to see increased demands on services driving significant cost pressures across the TAW model. These are particularly prevalent in areas such as Looked after Children (in county), Children's Out of County Placements, older persons' placements and Learning Disability placements. The Council is also seeing an increased complexity of cases across these services adding a further dynamic to the increased demand.
- Capital investment is being made into key areas such as In county Children's facilities, the establishment of Wellbeing Centres, Local Authority Care Homes and piloting for Technology-enabled Care.
- As part of its prevention work, the Council has invested in giving full recognition and support to the role of carers, in particular by providing opportunities for respite, allowing carers to take a rest from what can be a demanding 24/7 role.
- The Disabled Facility Grant and associated Welsh Government funding has been maximised to provide adaptations to homes, in order to enable people to remain within their communities.
- As the first Welsh local authority to volunteer to welcome refugees from Syria, Ceredigion has welcomed and integrated 74 Syrian refugees to the county and 90 Ukrainian families during 2022/23. The displaced people resettlement programmes are progressing well.
- Community Connectors assist residents of all ages in Ceredigion, by helping them access support opportunities in their area that could maintain and improve their wellbeing.
- Throughout winter 2022/23, Ceredigion's team of Community Connectors worked with the Ceredigion Association of Voluntary Organisations and many community groups to set up Warm Welcome Spaces. Warm Welcome Spaces are safe warm places that are free and welcoming to all ages, some of them also provide hot drinks, snacks and activities. Cafes, churches, community centres, village halls, libraries and book shops across the county opened their doors and welcomed people of all ages. The Warm Welcome Spaces provided a social meeting place for people to come together and build friendships. There were 42 Warm Welcome Spaces across Ceredigion.
- The "On your Bike" project funded by Cynnal y Cardi and managed by Rural Health and Care Wales installed 9 exercise bikes in three towns to encourage young people to take part in more outdoor physical activity, which is proven to improve both physical health and mental well-being. The towns covered by the project are Cardigan, Aberaeron and Lampeter.
- Ceredigion County Council approved the transfer of Hafan y Waun Care Home to Council ownership in September 2023 with a focus on ensuring continuity of home operations for residents and staff alike. The decision is an important step towards maintaining the future of this vital resource and providing certainty to residents and their families. Hafan y Waun is the County's main residential facility with capacity for 90 beds.
- Plans are progressing to create a Well-being Centre in Lampeter, and additional projects are developing to create Well-being Centres in the north and south of the county as well.
- The National Exercise Referral Service (NERS) is now very busy - 1,011 referrals were received in 2022-23 with 343 clients completing the 16-week programme during the year. The Service is one of a range of health intervention classes and activities, including Fit4Life and Wellbeing Walks. 424 classes and activities were offered each month in North, Mid and South of the County. The programmes are proving very popular amongst clients across Ceredigion.
- The Cylch Caron Integrated Health and Social Care project in partnership with Hywel Dda University Health Board continues to progress. The Project Board are developing the tender specification and working with Welsh Government in relation to develop the proposal.
- Ceredigion County Council is supporting the aspiration of creating a National Care Service for children, families and adults in Wales and how care could be made free at the point of need. This is a national programme following the cooperation agreement between the Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru.



CREATING CARING AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



- Work has commenced in relation to identifying the Council vision for Technology Enabled Care (TEC) services. This will inform the Development of our Technology enabled care strategy including digital improvements to the Local Authority estate.
- Our Through-Age approach to triage and assessment has now been embedded.
- The Review of Direct Services is continuing and is due to be complete at the end June 2023. An implementation plan will then be developed.
- The Family Group Meeting Coordination Service is now up to capacity and work is progressing to develop and maximise opportunities in relation to supporting prevention and early help.
- The Through Age respite model review is continuing and due to complete at the end June 2023. An Implementation plan will then be developed.
- A new Domiciliary Care specification and tender programme has been completed with new contracts to be awarded during the second quarter of 2023/24
- During 2022/23, the expansion of Flying Start in Ceredigion included Llechryd, joining Cardigan, Penparcau, Llanarth, Llandysul and Aberporth. Flying Start is a Welsh Government initiative that helps families with young children in the most disadvantaged areas of Wales. Ceredigion Flying Start includes early years health service, funded sessional childcare for children aged 2-3, parenting support to develop children's talking, language and communication skills.
- Following the implementation of Ceredigion County Council's Hybrid Working Strategy and Interim Hybrid Policy, there are significant opportunities to reconfigure and make better use of the Council's office space to provide other public services by working with partner organisations. Part of Canolfan

Rheidol in Aberystwyth is now being used by Hywel Dda to provide outpatient physiotherapy services. This move provides the opportunity to enable the health board to bring clinical services closer to home for residents in the north of Ceredigion to help them live active and healthy lives.

- During the 2022/23 year, £116,197 was awarded from the Ceredigion Carers Fund to 776 carers to help improve their health and well-being. The majority of the awards were spent on short breaks and holidays, therapies and spa sessions and sports, fitness and outdoor activities to help carers in Ceredigion look after their physical and mental health.
- Supported Gofalwyr Ceredigion Carers to deliver information advice and guidance to 805 adult carers across Ceredigion and provide 2,016 hours of replacement care to give carers a break from their caring role.
- The Carers Information Service membership has increased by 14% to 1,888 carers. The service provides support, useful information relating to services, and support in relation to legislation which is tailored to individual needs. Membership provides information relating to the Carers Forum which meets regularly to share support, information and friendship, information about events for carers, relevant training courses, and notification about consultations taking place on local and national issues. The service ensures that carers have a voice on issues affecting them.
- Between May and September 2022, a total of £351,500 was paid to 703 eligible applicants for the Welsh Government's £500 support payments for unpaid carers.
- The Regional Community Cohesion Team lead on supporting this work in Ceredigion. Weekly Tension Monitoring meetings are held to horizon scan and consider operational matters in a timely manner.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

607

Referrals to the Community Connectors for support received

99,457

Views of Ceredigion resources on the Dewis Cymru website that aims to support people's well-being

4,250

Carers magazines printed and distributed across Ceredigion

146

Refugees resettled across Ceredigion

42

Warm Spaces available across Ceredigion during winter 2022/23

531

People in receipt of a direct payment to support their own social care

1,150

Public protection enforcement actions taken to improve the well-being and public health of people and communities

1,567

People experiencing mental health issues receiving support in the community

453,000

People engaging in physical activity programmes supported / delivered by the Well-being Centre

15

Engagement exercises completed by the Council in 2022/23

IMPROVING OUTCOMES



SUPPORTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE

A new Refugee Resettlement team was established in response to the increase of refugees due to the Ukrainian conflict.

The Council has continued to provide ongoing support to 7 families that have fled the dangerous situations in Afghanistan and Syria, welcomed 1 new Afghan family and welcomed 114 new Ukrainian families to Ceredigion during the 2022-23 year.

Many of the Ukrainian families, particularly those who arrived to the Welcome Centre, have now moved out of Ceredigion to other locations in the UK and across the world. Preparations are being made to make sure that we're ready to welcome asylum seekers to Ceredigion as part of our contribution to the National Asylum Seeker Dispersal Plan.

Ceredigion has a history of supporting families fleeing from war, hunger and homelessness. Over the past few years the Council has successfully supported refugees from Syria to be welcomed into the community, and we will continue to play a leading role in helping refugees and resettling them into our communities. In doing so, we can **provide a safe place for them and their families**, a chance to have a **safe home**, to **rebuild their life** and to **contribute to society**. Not only does this support our ambition of creating caring communities, it also supports the national well-being goal of a Globally Responsible Wales.



ENHANCING WELL-BEING FOR ALL

Providing support for all ages and needs is a significant challenge for the Council with limited resources. The profile of society and demographics have changed considerably over the last decade with a significant increase in the prevalence and impact of substance misuse, poor mental health and domestic abuse and older age groups living in Ceredigion.

As a consequence, demand for certain services has increased placing a greater financial pressure on those service areas.

The Through Age Wellbeing strategy sets out the vision and approach that will be taken to transform how the wellbeing and safety of the people of Ceredigion is supported.

To achieve our vision we have developed a Through Age Wellbeing operating model that is designed to **ensure people get the right level and type of support**, at the right time, **to prevent, reduce or delay the need for ongoing support**, and to **maximise people's independence** and to be able to **remain in their own home in their own community wherever possible**.

We are in the third year of the Programme and progress is continuing in delivering the programme to enhance the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being for the people of Ceredigion.

In February/March 2023 we underwent a Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) inspection of our social services. The inspection reflected positively on our Through Age Well-being Model, highlighting several areas of good practice, and also providing us with

constructive recommendations to help us in delivering the programme and transforming the delivery of social care in the County.

In particular, the strong corporate and political support for social services in Ceredigion was noted, along with strong senior leadership within social services.

Feedback gathered by the inspectors demonstrated a culture which was focused on **well-being, building and maintaining relationships** and achieving **safe outcomes for people**.



INDEPENDENT AND FULFILLING LIVES

The first residents at Aberystwyth's new extra care scheme have spoken about how it has transformed their lives, from sparking new friendships to providing the platform for a fresh start in life.

Maes y Môr, provided by Wales & West Housing in partnership with Ceredigion County Council, is located at Pen yr Angor in Aberystwyth, overlooking the town and harbour. For many of its new residents, it has offered much more than just spectacular sea views.

Their new homes provide easy access to a range of facilities, 24-hour on-site care and support as well as a Wellbeing Officer, ensuring that residents **lead an independent, healthy, and fulfilling life**.



CONNECTING PEOPLE

Community Connectors support residents of all ages and their families to make connections, access advice and assistance opportunities as well as identify appropriate services and groups within their own communities, such as social groups that can have a **positive impact and improve their well-being**.

Community Connectors also look more widely at the opportunities that are available that can help **contribute to a fulfilled life**. This includes increasing the awareness of services and help to access them, such as provision of small home adaptations or assistance with shopping, an in doing so **building confidence**, improving **mental health**, creating **opportunities** and in doing so **building resilient communities**.

During the year 971 enquiries for support were logged through the Council's customer contact centre (CLIC), 845 referrals were received and 468 individuals and community groups were referred and signed posted to other council services, health services and third sector organisations.

Overall assessment of the journey so far

Progress in delivering this priority is **good** and prospects for improvement are also **good**.

Progress in supporting people to be healthy and in creating communities that are caring is good and improved outcomes are already visible such as the creation of well-being centres across the county, the ongoing delivery of the Through Age Well-being programme and the support to Ukrainian refugees to resettle in the County.

Despite the challenges that exist, such as the increasing demands and recruitment in social care, plans are in place to realise further benefits in the year ahead.

OWNING OUR AMBITION

MAXIMISING OUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE NATIONAL WELL-BEING GOALS

The **Creating Caring and Healthy** corporate well-being objective supports the following national well-being goals. ►

Prosperous
Resilient
Healthier
More Equal
Cohesive
Culture
Global

DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



Long-Term

- The Through Age Model involves long-term planning to ensure sustainable services for the next 15 years +
- Future Trends, such as demographic change have been utilised in the Model
- The Through Age Well-being Strategy covers a six year period from 2021 to 2027
- The recovery from the pandemic is projected to last for a number of years and our plans to improve physical and mental well-being take a long-term approach to support in response



Prevention

- The Through Age Model provides a coordinated approach to social care in order to prevent, reduce or delay the need for ongoing support, and allow people to remain in their own home in their own community wherever possible
- Preventing homelessness and promoting independence remains a priority for the Council and is the most effective way of tackling homelessness
- Developing the Well-being Centres across the County supports the ambition to create healthy and resilient communities
- As part of its prevention work, the Council has invested in giving full recognition and support to carers by providing opportunities for respite from their demanding 24/7 role



Collaboration

- Hywel Dda University Health Board, the Council and Third Sector partners work collaboratively to implement integrated health and social care programmes across West Wales
- Multi agency weekly tension monitoring meetings address early signs of community tensions through early intervention and prevention.
- The Council works proactively with partners through the Ceredigion Public Services Board Poverty Sub Group to tackle the causes and impacts of poverty across the County



Involvement

- Supporting people's physical and emotional well-being impacts on all of the national Well-being Goals and helps to build stronger and more resilient communities
- The Objective of creating caring and healthy communities included the findings of the Ceredigion Assessment of Local Well-being and extensive consultation



Integration

- Public and private sectors working together to maximise contribution to healthier Wales and other goals
- Supporting people's physical and emotional well-being impacts on all of the national Well-being Goals and helps to build stronger and more resilient communities

FURTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

100%

Of Carers Information Service members received the Welsh Government's Charter for unpaid carers

158

Young carers supported through working with Gofalwyr Ceredigion Carers to have a life outside of their caring role

3,000


Information for Young Carers booklets distributed to schools across the County

144%

Increase in Young Carers Information Service members

Progress Made

- The Council is continuing to modernise education establishments, for example, using Band B of 21st Century Schools programme funding to build an area school for the Aeron Valley as well as improvements to Cardigan Secondary School, Cardigan Primary School and Canolfan y Mor at Aberaeron Secondary School.
- The Council was awarded funding of £5.7m in 2022 towards a Language Immersion Centre which will be based at Ysgol Cymraeg and new classroom buildings at the school.
- Plans to build the new the new Aeron Valley Primary School at Felinfach are progressing. The £13m design and build scheme will provide 30 places in the nursery and 210 places in the primary school, (see overleaf).
- Schools developments already underway include the £100k of construction work at Penglais secondary school, providing the school with new and improved facilities, £160k of construction work at Ysgol Henry Richard School and £5.4m of work on the Cardigan Secondary School as part of the 21st Century Schools Programme.
- Professional consultants and contractors are being appointed to deliver the new £5.4m extension at Ysgol Gymraeg, Aberystwyth, which was the first Welsh-medium school in Wales.
- Consultants are also being appointed to scope works to Aberystwyth Museum totalling approximately £1m.
- Ceredigion Nursery, Plas Gogerddan Nursery, won Nursery of the Year Award in Wales in the National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA) Awards in June 2022. Plas Gogerddan is one of many nurseries in Ceredigion that delivers the Foundation Phase education funded by Ceredigion County Council within their Cylch Meithrin sessions.
- Porth Cymorth Cynnar delivered 88 workshops to young people aged 16+ providing support and prevention. The workshops included volunteering in the community, indoor bowling, gardening and Welsh culture and heritage discovery.
- 125 young people who worked with a youth worker demonstrated an improvement to their wellbeing and confidence. For example, one young person who was unwilling to leave their home went on a well-being walk with a youth worker.
- The mobile youth provision engaged with 10 communities and 176 young people. Free weekly football sessions were delivered with Dyfed-Powys Police and Swansea Football Foundation, and one young person has been nominated as a young ambassador due to his commitment.
- Jobs Growth Wales + (new traineeships) Hyfforddiant Ceredigion Training engaged with 51 learners of which 75% progressed onto either employment or further learning. Jobs Growth Wales+ is a training and development programme for 16–19 year olds who need the skills, qualifications, and experience to progress onto an apprenticeship, set up a business or gain a new job.
- Sgiliau Gwaith / Work Skills received 126 referrals last year with 69 learners gaining qualifications.
- Hyfforddiant Ceredigion Training is in the process of including Health and Social Care and Electrical apprenticeships that will be delivered in Ceredigion. The apprenticeship contract continues to grow every year as part of the ACT network, strengthening the pool of highly skilled and qualified candidates in the County by developing new apprenticeships, micro-enterprises and social enterprises.
- Ceredigion's Lifelong Learning and Skills service constantly reviews its curriculum offer. Dysgu Bro continues to offer courses in blended learning with the majority of courses returning to face to face. Employment Support Team are delivering C4W+ which offers volunteering and work experience opportunities.
- Dysgu Bro are delivering a number of courses through Ceredigion in community venues. The Welsh Government have funded an engagement grant which is being used to promote courses via videos on our social media pages as well as being able to offer free courses. The Council is currently advertising for Numeracy Training Advisors as part of the Multiply programme (Shared Prosperity Fund).
- Hyfforddiant Ceredigion Training JGW+ offers paid work experience through its Engagement strand.
- Ceredigion's Education system continues to be considered amongst the most successful in Wales. The percentage of working age adults qualified at level 2 is 91.7% in Ceredigion, higher than average (86.6%) and one of the highest nationally. Level 2 qualifications are GCSE grades A*-C or equivalent.
- The Council has worked with the third sector and private businesses to provide



PROVIDING THE BEST
START IN LIFE AND
ENABLING LEARNING AT
ALL AGES



work experience opportunities for individuals/vulnerable groups.

- Work has begun on developing an employer working group which will include key partners such as Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Careers Wales, Business Wales and the Regional Skills Partnership.
- Lifelong Learning and Skills attend a number of agricultural shows to raise the profile of courses delivered. For example, the service has attended Aberystwyth show offering a number of tasters to the general public.
- Lifelong Learning and Skills have also attended Ysgol Bro Pedr and Ysgol Henry Richards promoting Jobs Growth Wales+ and apprenticeships.
- The Welsh language is integrated into Ceredigion County Council's new Corporate Strategy covering the period 2022 to 2027.
- The Council approved its new Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2022-32 Action Plan. The plan sets out the steps to deliver the actions within the WESP with the overall aim of increasing the number of Welsh speakers in the County by 2032.
- Cered, the Welsh language initiative, continues to support, influence and develop the use of the Welsh language in Ceredigion. They provide information, advice and leadership to ensure that the language thrives and continues to be a core language and has a central role in the communities of Ceredigion. Recent successes include the 'Start every conversation in Welsh' campaign, the 'Powerhouse Project' to improve the opportunities for communities to socialise

and contribute, and the Language Charter where over 26 organisations businesses and clubs have been awarded a gold, silver or bronze charter for their commitment to the Welsh language.

- The Council published a campaign, 'how to contact the Council by phone, online, face-to-face, and in your preferred language' to ensure customers are aware of their right to use their preferred language and the channels available to do that.
- The Council has provided a Welsh Language Awareness Session along with an overview of the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards for Councillors.
- We have also been working with the National Centre for Learning Welsh to pilot a Raising Confidence to Use Welsh residential course.
- The Council is committed to increasing recruitment of in-house Welsh speaking foster carers, and in response, recent recruitment campaigns have been supported and opportunities explored to achieve this.
- Following a £20,000 grant from Welsh Government's Transforming Towns programme, the former doctor's surgery in Aberaeron has been reopened as a gallery - Gallery Gwyn. The project was led by Ceredigion County Council and officially opened in April 2022, showcasing work from established artists as well as early career creative practitioners.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

907

Learners enrolled on all Lifelong Learning and Skills courses

189

People engaged with the Employment Support Team

53

People who engaged with the Employment Support Team were successful in acquiring a job

126

Referrals to Sgiliau Bwyd Sgiliau Gwaith

117

Apprentices attended Hyfforddiant Ceredigion Training in the last year

82%

Of apprentices attending Hyfforddiant Ceredigion Training completed their apprenticeships

87.5%

Of learners at the Pupil Referral Unit gained appropriate qualifications

98.65%

Children/young people reporting a positive benefit from extra curricular and holiday activities

8,620

Public access computer sessions used across all libraries

268,572

Loans by the Library Service (both physical and e-resource)

IMPROVING OUTCOMES



MODERN FACILITIES

Plans to build the new the new Aeron Valley Primary School at Felinfach are progressing. The £13m design and build scheme is for a single storey primary school with an Additional Learning Needs Unit, Canolfan Iaith, Meithrin, and infrastructure including new road access, parking and multiuse games area.

The project will bring together three primary schools - Ciliau Parc Primary, Dihewyd Primary and Felinfach Primary as well as Ysgol Feithrin and the language Immersion Centre at Felinfach.

The new 3-11 area school will cater for 30 nursery/wrap around places and 210 places in the primary school and approximately 56 teaching staff will be employed at the facilities.

The new facility will bring the learning accommodation within the Aeron Valley up to the Sustainable Communities Learning Programme standards (previously known as 21st Century Schools).

Apart from delivering **modern and improved teaching facilities**, the project will also deliver a **net zero carbon school with reduced running costs**, which supports the Council's carbon net zero ambition as well as provide more **opportunities for learning and physical activity** through the new sports pitch.



REDUCING INEQUALITY

A new Mid Wales Partnership Equity and Deprivation Strategy was approved by Cabinet in February 2023. The new strategy offers guidance for schools supporting disadvantaged young people.

The key message at the core of the strategy is that disadvantaged learners need more support, more often, in order to have the same opportunities as their peers.

The threshold for support to engage with the Educational Inclusion Officers has decreased for disadvantaged young people, meaning that they get support sooner than non-disadvantaged young people.

The life chances of children and young people are strongly influenced by their home and community. The strategy provides teachers with more support in addressing the issues some children and young people face.

Delivering the strategy ensures that the challenges faced by some of Ceredigion's children and young people are tackled and **fair and equal access to education and opportunities is provided**.

It also supports the Council's ongoing work to **tackle the impact of poverty**, including the **impact on educational attainment**, which **will help to achieve high standards and aspirations for all in the County**.



CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

Lifelong Learning and Skills, the Youth Service, Careers Wales and Job Centre Plus are all members of the NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) Panel. Taster sessions have been offered in placements such as carpentry, mechanics, hairdressing, beauty and plumbing. Apprenticeships have been promoted at Careers festivals, schools and events throughout the county. 64% of learners supported by Porth Cymorth Cynnar gained qualifications in traineeships and 70% of learners gained qualifications in apprenticeships. **Creating opportunities** supports the Council's ambition to **enhance the provision of skills and learning opportunities for people aged 16+**.



STRONG COMMUNITIES

Ceredigion Museum is delighted to have been awarded £115,894 development funding by the National Lottery Heritage Fund for the following project: Perthyn 'belonging to/ possessing': An exploration of how collections can **create community in Ceredigion**.

Perthyn is an ambitious project that aims to ensure that every Ceredigion resident can find something in the museum collection that resonates with their **sense of identity and values**, regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, beliefs, sexuality, ability or other characteristics that they identify with.



SUPPORTING EMPLOYMENT

Gwaith has seen an increase in numbers and has received 126 referrals over the last year. These are year 10 and 11 learners who are disengaged and at risk of exclusion.

The service ensures vulnerable learners have **access to a tailored vocational curriculum** to meet their needs with a range of different courses being offered giving them the **best opportunity to achieve and reach their full potential**.

A total of 69 learners achieved qualifications this academic year.

This is part of the Council's ambition to support those furthest from the labour market, including disengaged learners, and **ensuring every pupil in Ceredigion has a destination**.

Overall assessment of the journey so far

Progress in meeting this objective is **good** and prospects for improvement are **good**.

Capital investments in schools are progressing such as the refurbishment and extension to create a 3-16 school at Henry Richard. The educational attainment of Ceredigion's pupils remains amongst the highest nationally, and post-16 learning is continuing to provide training and support to open new opportunities for all of Ceredigion's learners.

Key strategies have been delivered in the last year to create the foundations for further improvements such as Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-32 to increase the number of Welsh speakers in the County and the Equity and Deprivation Strategy for schools which will support pupils who are disproportionately affected.

OWNING OUR AMBITION

MAXIMISING OUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE NATIONAL WELL-BEING GOALS

The **Providing the best start in life and enabling learning at all ages** corporate well-being objective supports the following national well-being goals. ►

Prosperous
Resilient
Healthier
More Equal
Cohesive
Culture
Global

DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Long-Term

- Ceredigion's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) is a 10-year strategy to strengthen Welsh language provision and work towards a million Welsh speakers Wales wide by 2050
- School improvements provide improved facilities for future generations of learners
- Developing leadership skills within our children and young people takes a long-term view of their learning and future careers

Prevention

- Supporting learners at all ages helps to provide them with better learning and career opportunities
- Working to raise income levels across the County will help in the prevention of in-work poverty
- Developing children's and young people's skills and confidence to be physically active will help to improve the health and well-being of the County's population

Collaboration

- Working with the Third Sector to provide mental health support to young people following the COVID-19 pandemic
- Working with partners to deliver the Maternity and Early Years Strategy for West Wales will help to deliver the best start in life for Ceredigion's young people
- Supporting the provision of Free School Meals for primary school pupils and the funded childcare for all two year olds

Involvement

- Supporting the Ceredigion Youth Council as a forum for children and young people ensures the voices of young people across Ceredigion are heard

Integration

- Providing the best start in life will have a positive effect on all of the Corporate Well-being Objectives and the National Well-being Goals
- Better skills and jobs increase income levels and therefore allow the local economy to grow
- The Arfor Programme to support and strengthen the links between economic growth and the Welsh language also strengthen each of the four pillars of well-being (economic, social, environmental and cultural)

FURTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

51

Jobs Growth Wales + Learners engaged with Hyfforddiant Ceredigion Training

75%

of people engaged with Hyfforddiant Ceredigion Training progressed onto either employment or further learning

91.7%

of Ceredigion's working age population qualified to Level 2 or higher, above average nationally

75.7%

Of Ceredigion's working age population qualified to Level 3 or higher, above average nationally

PROGRESS MADE

- The Council has continued to pursue funding and delivery of the coastal defence works at Aberaeron, Aberystwyth, Borth and Llangrannog, and the flood risk management works at Llandre, Aberaeron, Borth, Talybont and Capel Bangor.
- The Aberaeron Coastal Defence Scheme construction contract award is imminent. The Aberystwyth Outline Business Case will be completed during the 2023/24 year, while the business case for Llangrannog will be consulted upon during the autumn of 2023. In Talybont and Capel Bangor, the outline business cases are nearing completion, and discussions are ongoing with Natural Resources Wales. Llandre, Aberaeron and Borth are in development.
- Funding has been secured to develop the business case for solutions to flooding at both Llanybydder and Llandysul, with Natural Resources Wales anticipated to lead on construction delivery once the business case has been completed and agreed.
- The amenity grass cutting service has been reviewed and now incorporates 'No Mow May' to support wildlife and biodiversity in the County. The long-standing management of road verges to enable biodiversity and wildflowers to thrive is being reviewed to further enhance this provision.
- The Council is working with the local bus operators and other key stakeholders. The Highways and Environmental Service has been able to secure the best level of service that operators were able to provide.
- The highway network continues to be inspected, maintained and repaired subject to available funding and additional funding is being sought through the Welsh Local Government Association for highway refurbishment.
- Climate change and carbon reduction has been prioritised. Since 2007 the Council has implemented a series of three 5-year Carbon Management Plans.
- In 2019, the Council declared a Climate Emergency and committed the Council to achieving Net Zero Carbon by 2030.
- Our programme of installing energy-saving LED bulbs in street lights has been completed. This involved replacing hundreds of bulbs around the county, resulting in a saving of over £2 million.
- In the last five years Ceredigion has consistently achieved one of the highest recycling rates in both Wales and the UK and is currently at 70.3% for the twelve months to June 2022, which is above the national average of 65.5% and third highest nationally. The high levels of recycling in the County divert waste away from landfill.
- The Council has delivered energy efficiency initiatives providing efficiency measures and advice in people's homes.
- Public transport infrastructure improvements have been delivered along the TrawsCymru corridor through Local Transport Funding.
- A new Net Carbon Zero Action Plan for Ceredigion Council has been published setting out its response to the county-wide climate emergency, explaining why we need to take this action and why the 2030 target is so important to tackling climate change.
- The Council has had a longstanding recognition of the importance of climate change and its long-term impact on communities and on the environment. It has an ongoing commitment to reduce its carbon footprint, which will benefit both the Authority and the wider community through reduced carbon emissions and also energy cost savings.
- As part of this commitment the Council is currently developing a three-phase roadmap to move towards its goal of achieving net zero carbon emissions status by 2030. This is a key priority for the Council and is consistent with Welsh Government's stated goal of decarbonisation of the Welsh public sector by 2030.
- The Waste Service has faced operational challenges during last winter, but new approaches have already been trialled to overcome some of these (e.g. bringing forward Bank Holiday collections) and recycling performance remains strong. 89.33% of waste collection routes collected on the scheduled day of collection, and 96.56% of waste collection routes collected on the scheduled week of collection.
- A new Waste Management Strategy will be forthcoming which will be used to review the service and prioritise where best to allocate resources. The Highways and Environmental Service is in the process of commissioning consultants to assist with the holistic review of the waste service.
- Following the successful application for funding in 2021, a sum of £420,000 has been awarded from the "Ultra Low Emissions Vehicle Transformation Fund" (ULEVTF) which has been used for the development of a Ceredigion ULEV Strategy in alignment with the Growing Mid Wales Energy Strategy for the development of ULEV work programmes.
- Ceredigion County Council has partnered with Silverstone Green Energy Limited as its charge-point operator and have begun to install EV charge-points in 11 public Pay and Display off-street car parks in the county. A significant growth in demand for public and private Electric Vehicle (EV) charge-points is forecast during the next 10 years as the sales of EVs increase.
- To date Ceredigion County Council have installed almost 450kW of solar panels



CREATING SUSTAINABLE,
GREEN AND
WELL-CONNECTED
COMMUNITIES



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

across a number of buildings, generating in excess of 400,000kWh of electricity. This has the potential to provide up to £113,000 of revenue savings per annum (at current prices).

- This Investment in carbon reduction equates to a cumulative 20.48% reduction in carbon emissions against a 15% target (2017/18 to 2021/22).
- Five of Ceredigion’s most popular beaches will be flying Blue Flags once again in 2023 after receiving the award from Keep Wales Tidy. The Blue Flag beaches are Borth, Aberystwyth South, Llangrannog, Tresaith and Aberporth.
- A further four beaches have achieved Seaside Award status which are Aberystwyth North, New Quay Harbour, Traeth y Dolau, New Quay and Clarach. Beaches achieving Blue Flag and Green Coast award status must meet the highest “excellent” water quality standard and are judged for the provision of facilities for beach users and for demonstrating good management and safety provision.
- New Quay Traeth Gwyn, Cilborth, Llanrhystud, Mwnt and Penbryn have all won the Green Coast Award. The Seaside Award recognises beaches that have an overall “Good” standard of water quality, public facilities, safety provision and management.
- As a local authority , we have worked closely with developers and landlords to provide a range of affordable housing within the county. 657 net affordable homes have been completed since 2017.
- Significant lobbying by Ceredigion County Council and others has resulted in 40.9% coverage of full fibre broadband giving over 100 Mbps capability. Over the last two years, the provision of Fibre to the premises (FTTP) has increased from 28.3% to 40.9%.
- Following the completion of the Superfast

Cymru Programme it is expected that 90% of Ceredigion will be able to receive +30Mbps. Investment is taking place within the County with 4 differing alternative network providers proposing fibre projects across the County, with currently over 20 project areas being proposed and to be initiated in 2022 and 2023.

- The Council is currently developing a new Digital Strategy that will outline the high-level strategic direction and plans for its Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and digital delivery to customers.
- The Civil Contingencies Team prepare for and respond to civil contingency emergencies across the County. In order to achieve this, local exercising has been prioritised alongside regional exercising and training events. In addition, preparedness plans have been updated and reviewed over the past year along with updates to Business Continuity Plans.
- Air quality remained well within the legal limit for NO2 at all monitoring sites within the county. Monthly air quality monitoring is continuing along with annual reporting on trends.
- The Council is proactively working with Cadw (Welsh Government’s historic environment service) and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales “Historic Place Names Task and Finish Group”.
- 67% of households supported by the Homelessness Team were successfully prevented from becoming homeless.
- Following extensive public engagement, Ceredigion County Council developed Active Travel Network Maps (ATNMs) which were approved by the Minister for Climate Change in August 2022. The maps

70.3%

of waste recycled composted or reused for the twelve months to June 2022

1.8m

Total kilowatt hours of renewable energy generated by council assets

1.67

Days on average to clear fly-tips across the county

20.5%

Cumulative reduction in carbon emissions since 2017/18, above the target of 15%

14

Of Ceredigion’s beaches recognised in this year’s Wales Coast Awards

93.6%

Of category 1 highway defects repaired or made self by the end of the next working day

2

Regional Energy Efficiency awards to recognise the work in helping homeowners reduce their energy bills, tackle fuel poverty and reduce carbon emissions

40.9%

Provision of Fibre to the premises (FTTP) broadband, increased from 28.3%, due to investment in digital connectivity over the last two years

IMPROVING OUTCOMES



LOCAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING

A range of measures are used by the Housing service to maximise the availability of affordable housing in the county. This now includes a newly launched Community Housing Scheme using existing Council Tax Second Homes Premium monies.

In March 2022 the Council made a commitment to support the scheme which helps people meet their affordable housing needs in their local communities by creating a pathway to home ownership.

This is due to the increasing demand for rural properties and availability of affordable units in rural settlements. The scheme is designed to **prevent those eligible households from being priced out of the market, prevent further rural decline and depopulation, and provide new options for people to remain in their local community.** Schemes like this can lead to a greater sense of connection, leading to **long-term sustainability of a community.**

Funds raised from the Council Tax Second Homes Premium are ringfenced to fund the Community Housing scheme, to assist local residents purchase homes in the County by providing interest free shared equity loans. The scheme is due to be launched in September 2023.



RESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT

The new extension at Llwyn yr Eos School in Penparcau Aerystwyth, has become the Council's first net-zero building in operation.

Ground source heating and solar panels were installed as part of the scheme, and it is intended that this will set a benchmark for future building works undertaken by the Council in future.

Renewable energy is now also routinely being introduced as part of building refurbishment works and also as part of the 21st Century Schools programme. This demonstrates the Council's commitment to its carbon net zero target of 2030.

We know that children feel connected to their local natural environment and recognise the importance of protecting the environment for theirs and future generations. Climate change was recognised by children as the biggest challenge being faced currently in the Ceredigion Assessment of Local Well-being. Investing in renewable energy, reducing carbon emissions and proactively working with contractors to achieve the Council's net carbon zero ambitions will not only help to **protect the environment, but also reduce energy costs and lower its environment footprint.**



PROTECTING HISTORY AND CULTURE

The Street Naming and Numbering Policy has been updated to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language and to encourage homeowners to consider adopting Welsh house names, which may have linguistic origins, with reference to historical or cultural reference, within the geographical area.

This approach has received acknowledgement of good practice from Cymdeithas Enwau Lleoeedd Cymru, who has asked for permission to share this good practice with other local authorities nationwide.

When house names are registered in Ceredigion, each applicant is informed of the Welsh language and culture of the area to help encourage the use of Welsh or historic names. The majority of house name applications in Ceredigion are Welsh and / or have historic significance.

This approach encourages the **retention of historical Welsh place names for future generations** and supports the national well-being goal of a **Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language.**



INCREASING ENERGY EFFICIENCY

In June 2022 at the Wales Regional Energy Efficiency Awards, Ceredigion County Council's Energy Efficiency Schemes scooped 2 awards.

The Energy Efficiency Awards recognise the work being undertaken by the energy efficiency sector in Wales. The measures were introduced to help homeowners **reduce their energy bills, tackle fuel poverty and reduce carbon emissions.**

The Council has been delivering the ECO Local Authority Flexibility scheme along with the Warm Homes Cozy Ceredigion Scheme for a number of years. These schemes have seen a number of insulation measures and heating systems being installed in properties improving their **energy efficiency.**

To date, the Council has invested over £5 million in energy efficiency and carbon reduction projects, and this investment has saved £2.8m to date.

Overall assessment of the journey so far

Progress in meeting this objective is **good** and prospects for improvement are **very good**.

Ceredigion has taken a leading role in its ambitions to achieve net zero and protect its unique environment for future generations. Despite the challenges that exist in achieving net zero the steps to reduce our carbon footprint, improve active travel and connect communities are on track and further developments are planned in the year ahead.

The Council's Carbon Management Plan, Community Housing Scheme and continued high performance in recycling are examples of how Ceredigion is leading the way in delivering this objective.

LEADING THE WAY

MAXIMISING OUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE NATIONAL WELL-BEING GOALS

The **Creating sustainable, green and well-connected communities** corporate well-being objective supports the following national well-being goals. ▶

Prosperous
Resilient
Healthier
More Equal
Cohesive
Culture
Global

DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

LONG-TERM

- Long-term planning to reduce carbon emissions will help protect our beautiful landscape for future generations
- Future trend analysis utilised in developing the Council's 5-Year Carbon Management Plan

PREVENTION

- Creating sustainable, green and well-connected communities focuses on preventing further impact on the environment, particularly reducing carbon emissions, but also the impact on biodiversity across the County
- Active travel is a key part of Ceredigion's strategy to improve health and well-being, and thus preventing health related problems in the future
- Being connected has come to the fore since the COVID-19 pandemic, and investment in connectivity will help to create stronger and more resilient communities

COLLABORATION

- Collaborative working with partners and stakeholders will help to ensure a coordinated approach to minimising the impact of climate change and that we all focus on more sustainable forms of energy in the future
- We are working on projects in partnership with colleagues on the Ceredigion Public Services Board, for example, in the development of the Penglais District Heating Project where all public sector organisations in the locality will be able to take advantage of green solutions to energy.

INVOLVEMENT

- Everyone is involved and encouraged to make choices that will reduce costs now and protect the environment for the future

INTEGRATION

- Decarbonisation, improving the health of the County through encouraging active travel, and improving connectivity has clear benefits for maximising our contribution to all of the well-being goals

LONGER-TERM ACHIEVEMENTS

210

Units of Social Housing developed

£3.5m

Warm Homes Fund for heating and insulations / upgrades

£510,853

Spent on 35 Home Improvement Loans

56

Units of Extra Care accommodation at the new Maes y Mor site

CONTRIBUTION TO THE NATIONAL WELL-BEING GOALS

The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 seeks to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by requiring public bodies to work together to create a sustainable Wales. It is intended to help to create a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future. There are 7 national well-being goals that set out a shared vision for all public bodies to work towards (shown right).

We know that we face challenges in Ceredigion - the COVID-19 pandemic has been unprecedented in its impact on all walks of life, but more recently the cost of living crisis is impacting many households in the County. Some of these issues have been exacerbated by the pandemic and have come to the fore such as housing affordability, while others remain a consistent challenge such as tackling poverty.

There is also the need to grow the local economy and create opportunities for local people to stay and thrive in their local communities. The County's changing demographics towards an ageing population and out-migration of younger people will have far-reaching impacts across the four pillars of well-being.

Ceredigion County Council has worked collaboratively with its local and regional partners to tackle these complex issues to create the Ceredigion that we want. Some examples are the Mid Wales Growth Deal leveraging significant funding for regeneration across the region, the coordinated response to the COVID-19 pandemic with a variety of partners across the County, and the Public Services Board Poverty Sub Group in tackling the impact of Poverty across the County.

The Council's 2021/22 Well-being Objectives focused on the immediate response to the

COVID-19 pandemic and supported the longer-term recovery. They were set based on evidenced local needs and on the views of local people. A variety of sources were used to determine these needs including the last Ceredigion Assessment of Local Well-being and Local Well-being Plan.

The Well-being Objectives will help us improve outcomes for local people and also maximise our contribution to the national Well-being Goals.

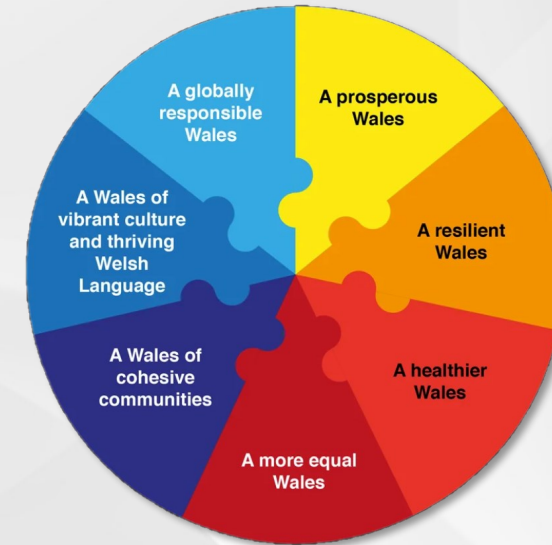
We monitor and review progress towards delivering the Objectives on a regular basis and produce an annual Self-Assessment Report in which we convey progress.

Ceredigion Public Services Board brings together the County's public service leadership and decision-makers, to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of the County by strengthening joint working across the County's services.

Like the Council, its priorities were developed using the evidence and engagement feedback from key sources such as the Assessment of Local Well-being. This ensures that both Ceredigion County Council and Ceredigion Public Services Board's Well-being Objectives are aligned to focus on the priority needs of the County, and maximise the contribution to the national Well-being Goals.

Common themes such as tackling poverty, environmental responsibility, creating opportunities and providing the best start in life are all closely aligned and together allow us to provide a coordinated and shared response to improving well-being. The table overleaf demonstrates how Ceredigion's Well-being Objectives contribute to the 7 national Well-being Goals.

THE 7 NATIONAL WELL-BEING GOALS



The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 puts in place 7 Well-Being Goals.

The Act gives us the ambition, permission and legal obligation to improve our social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being.

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

▼ Well-being Goal	How the Council's Well-being Objectives contribute to the national Well-being Goals ▼
A Prosperous Wales	All of our Well-being Objectives reflect the importance of developing the local economy in Ceredigion. Enabling employment, developing skills, providing affordable housing, protecting the environment, supporting businesses and investing in regeneration will contribute to the national goal of a prosperous Wales. Supporting businesses to respond to the impacts of Covid-19 helps both the immediate response and the longer-term future as we seek to increase economic growth, create more and better paid jobs and support the workforce through opportunities for learning.
A Resilient Wales	Delivering our carbon net zero ambition, increasing opportunities for active travel and ensuring communities are well-connected will help to protect our natural environment and create strong and resilient communities. This contributes to the national well-being goal of creating a resilient Wales by reducing our impact on the environment and enhancing our capacity to adapt to change.
A Healthier Wales	Supporting learners in education and training, and protecting people from poverty, and the promotion of healthier, more active lifestyles seeks to build a healthier Ceredigion and a healthier Wales. It also enables independent living and provides early intervention and prevention services for the most vulnerable. Supporting citizens who have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 to improve their physical and emotional wellbeing will support other initiatives to deliver a healthier Wales.
A more Equal Wales	All of our Well-being Objectives seek to establish a more Equal Wales by ensuring equal opportunities for all in employment, housing, education, healthier lifestyles and sustainable communities.
A Wales of Cohesive Communities	Building the strength of our communities is a key feature in our Well-being Objectives. Providing support for our communities to be strong and well connected so that they are able to thrive despite Covid-19 will enhance the Wales of cohesive communities.
A Wales of Vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	The Council continues to promote the distinct and vibrant bilingual culture and identity of Ceredigion. The cultural pillar of Well-being was highlighted as being particularly important to Citizens in the Ceredigion Assessment of Local Well-being, and further measures to promote bilingualism and the Welsh Language are in place.
A Globally responsible Wales	In considering our Wellbeing Objectives we have taken into account the Ceredigion Assessment of Local Well-being and engagement activity to ensure we can make a positive contribution to global well-being. Support for active travel, other modes of transport and new ways of working that build on our zero-carbon ambition continues our work in this area.






THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLE

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 introduced the Sustainable Development Principle and outlines the 5 Ways of Working that all public bodies must adopt. Sustainable development is the central organising principle that shapes what we do and how we do it.

In essence, it means we must strive to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This approach provides an opportunity for innovative thinking, reflecting the way we live our lives and what we expect of our public services

We have embedded the principle across the Council and adopt the principle in the planning and delivery of our Well-being Objectives.

Some of the ways in which we have used the Sustainable Development Principle are outlined right.












	Ways of Working	How the Council has demonstrated the Sustainable Development Principle
	<p><u>Long term</u></p> <p>Looking to the long term so that we do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Term Financial Planning ensures that decisions consider the impact on future generations. • Workforce Planning ensures the development of workforce skills for the future and ensures services are sustainable over the longer term. • The Council's Corporate Strategy seeks to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Ceredigion over the next 5 years and beyond. • The recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic is projected to last for a number of years and our plans to tackle poverty and take a long-term approach to economic development reflect this.
	<p><u>Integrated</u></p> <p>Taking an integrated approach so that public bodies look at all the well-being goals in deciding on their Wellbeing Objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Well-being Objectives are aligned with those of the Ceredigion Public Services Board which promotes a shared understanding and coordinated response to the challenges Ceredigion faces to improve the well-being of citizens.
	<p><u>Involvement</u></p> <p>Involving a diversity of the population in the decisions that affect them</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council's Corporate Strategy has taken into account the Public Services Board's Assessment of Local Well-being, which has been produced following extensive engagement with citizens, including those with protected characteristics. • The Council consults on an annual basis with citizens and its engagement groups on the review and setting of its annual Well-being Objectives. • The Council's Engagement and Participation Strategy will help to ensure the voices of all groups in Ceredigion are heard.
	<p><u>Collaborative</u></p> <p>Working with others in a collaborative way to find shared sustainable solutions</p>	<p>The Council actively supports, amongst others, the following partnerships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Growing Mid Wales Partnership • The Ceredigion Public Services Board • The Community Safety Partnership <p>The Council worked alongside Hywel Dda University Health Board and other partners in responding to COVID-19, including the setting up of two temporary hospitals, mass vaccination centres and a multi-agency panel to ensure the safe re-opening of community venues.</p>
	<p><u>Prevention</u></p> <p>Understanding the root causes of issues to prevent them from occurring</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council's Well-being Objectives have been set in order to prevent problems from occurring or getting worse. These include addressing the effects of poverty, the issues of rurality and improving the well-being of people of all ages, from early years through to older age. • The Through Age Model provides a coordinated approach to social care in order to prevent, reduce or delay the need for ongoing support, and allow people to remain in their own homes.

JOINING UP OUR PLANS - LINKS TO KEY RESOURCES

KEY RESOURCES

Our Self-Assessment Report discharges our duties under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) 2015 in respect of the Council's performance and the setting and review of well-being objectives.

The requirements of Self-Assessment align with, and support, the duties outlined in other Acts. The following pages provide a summary of these duties and the Council's appropriate policy or strategy in place to respond to the duty.

-  Equalities
-  Welsh Language
-  Finance
-  Procurement
-  Governance
-  Asset Management
-  Human Resources
-  Through-Age Well-being
-  Economy
-  Tackling Hardship
-  Hybrid Working Strategy
-  Housing

EQUALITIES

The Council's [Strategic Equality Plan](#) (SEP), sets out how we, as Ceredigion County Council, will ensure that our actions are fair to all. Being treated fairly and with respect is relevant to all of us and to our families and friends. The five Equality Objectives of the Strategy are:

- An exemplar equal opportunities employer
- Fostering good relations and tackling prejudice
- Engagement and participation
- Dignity, respect and access to services
- Fair and inclusive education

The Equality Act 2010 brings together and replaces previous anti-discrimination laws within a single act. It simplifies and strengthens the law and makes it easier for people to understand and comply with it. The Act protects the rights of individuals and advances equality of opportunity for all. It includes a general duty on public sector organisations to have 'due regard' to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

Public sector bodies are required to review their Strategic Equality Objectives and action plan every four years. To do this, we carry out consultation and engagement with our local communities to inform the plan and the objectives. The Mid and West Wales Regional Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group, of

which Ceredigion Council is a member, agreed to take a regional approach to this piece of work. The regional engagement and consultation plan was developed in Q4 of 2022-23 and will be implemented during 2023-24 in order that our updated Strategic Equality Plans are ready for publishing by 31st March 2024.

WELSH LANGUAGE

To sustain viable Welsh communities where Welsh is a natural language of communication in Ceredigion, the Council's [Language Strategy](#) recognises three key areas of priority; they are to:

- Increase the Welsh Language skills of the people of Ceredigion,
- To increase opportunities to use the Welsh Language, and
- To create favourable conditions that will enable the Welsh Language to thrive in Ceredigion.

It is acknowledged that the sustainability of the Welsh language depends on the process of strengthening Welsh communities through providing educational, cultural and social opportunities to use the language daily.

In accordance with the Welsh Language Standards, the strategy sets out how the Council will encourage the Welsh language and facilitate its use more broadly within the local area, through cooperating with organisations that are members of Ceredigion's Bilingual Futures Language Forum. The Strategy supports the Council's overall vision to deliver value for money, sustainable bilingual public services, and also the Welsh Government's vision to achieve a million of Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050.

The Council believes that the publication of the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 strategy, alongside the implementation of the Welsh Language Strategy in Ceredigion, has

instigated some change in attitudes towards the Welsh language, and as a result, the number of people wishing to learn and speak the language in Ceredigion has increased. A summary of the main achievements of implementing the Language Strategy are:

- The Ceredigion Association of Voluntary Organisations (CAVO) was one of the first county voluntary councils in Wales to earn recognition via the Welsh Language Commissioner's Welsh Offer scheme
- Natural Resources Wales won the Work Welsh Employer of the Year Award in 2022
- Hywel Dda Health Board has signed up to the Work Welsh scheme to provide confidence building courses for 100 of their staff
- Coleg Ceredigion has put a policy in place, requiring all staff to follow an internal training programme to create bilingual classes, 'Basic, Better, Best'
- The Council analysed the 2021 Census data as regards its implications on language use in Ceredigion and the full report was published on the Council's website, and results shared widely with partners
- Aberystwyth University has been investing in large-scale developments that support the use of the Welsh language including the welcoming of its first nursing students who will receive training to become Adult and Mental Health Nurses and will be able to study through the medium of Welsh.

The Language Strategy and [Action Plan](#) will be reviewed during 2023 and an updated Strategy published in early 2024 covering the next five years.

FINANCE

The [Medium Term Financial Strategy](#) provides a financial governance framework to operate within by setting out the issues that are considered and taken into account for financial planning for the medium term.

JOINING UP OUR PLANS - LINKS TO KEY RESOURCES

By bringing together financial assumptions; standards of service delivery; demographic needs; and workforce planning issues into this document it is expected that the Council will be better able to consider overall management of its resources to meet its objectives.

The Council's financial objective is for the careful and responsible use of resources and to ensure that the financial resilience of the Council is maintained and strengthened.

Understanding the overall financial context is important in order to deliver a robust and balanced budget during the next few years as it is recognised that funding for the Public Sector will be limited. The financial forecast includes a three year budget forecast. Despite the challenges that exist, from this challenge there are opportunities arising by considering how services can be delivered differently and better, and ensuring greater value for money for the taxpayer. A transformation savings plan has also been prepared and is being implemented, although Covid-19 has impacted on the timescales envisaged.

PROCUREMENT

The Council's vision for procurement, as published in its [Procurement Strategy](#), is to achieve value for money through the effective procurement of its service requirements, and to demonstrate continuous improvement in its procurement activity.

The Council incurs annual third party expenditure of more than £60m while delivering wide-ranging public services. Through careful strategic procurement planning, this expenditure is targeted to support the delivery of the Council's overall vision and Corporate Well-being Objectives. The Council's Procurement Strategy aims to:

- Provide value for money by basing procurement decisions on an appropriate combination of quality and price.

- Deliver outcome focused public services procured with the needs of service users in mind and in the language of their choice, through consultation and incorporating the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure (2011) into contracts.
- Support a healthy environment through procuring sustainable solutions and by pre-qualifying prospective suppliers on their sustainability records and values.
- Maximise the contribution towards sustainable development through embedding the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Sustainable Development Principles in Procurement processes.

During 2023/24, we will be reviewing and updating the Procurement Strategy as part of its standard five-year review to ensure it is up to date and fit for purpose. The aim of the review will be to ensure that the strategy continues to support local businesses and the wider local economy, and ensure the Council provides value for money in the use of its financial resources.

GOVERNANCE

In discharging its overall responsibility, the Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs and facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which includes the arrangements for the management of risk.

This means ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. Its governance arrangements support the delivery of its Corporate Well-being Objectives and its ongoing commitment to improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of the County.

The Council's [Local Code of Corporate Governance](#) ensures that the Council is doing the right things, in the right way, in line with its values. The Local Code is supported by a [Governance Assurance Framework](#) that sets out what assurances the Council seeks to obtain, and how this will be done.

The Local Code of Corporate Governance brings together in one document all the governance and accountability arrangements the Council has in place. It is based on best practice guidance set out in the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government 2016. The most recent 2022/23 Code has been reviewed to take account of ongoing changes to governance due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

An annual review of the effectiveness of its governance against the CIPFA/SOLACE Delivering Good Governance Framework document has been conducted. This is the [Annual Governance Statement](#). The review process involves a member/officer workshop in which the Council's Governance Framework Document is analysed and reviewed. The review of the 2021/22 Framework was approved by Council in July 2022 and provided 'high' assurance that there was a sound system of scrutiny and robustness in place. All Councils Officers must comply with the [Code of Conduct for local Government Employees](#), while the Council's Councillors must comply with the [Code of Conduct for Members](#).

ASSET MANAGEMENT

The purpose of the Council's [Asset Development Policy](#) is to set out Ceredigion County Council's approach to optimising its assets through leasing, disposals and acquisition in pursuit of its priorities and objectives. The key objectives of the Policy are:

- To set out key steps in the Asset Development review process.

- To set a strategic context to the management of vacant or underused land and buildings.
- To ensure that Ceredigion County Council has the most appropriate and effective asset portfolio in relation to its aims.
- To maximise revenue from assets owned by the Council.
- To identify assets that are surplus to requirements for original use and to maximise income through their development and / or disposal.
- To add to the asset portfolio where appropriate to achieve corporate aims.

The Council uses a range of different actions to deliver these objectives, including the disposal of land and buildings that are vacant or deemed to be surplus to requirements, investing in land and buildings to increase income through lease agreements and investing to develop land and buildings for alternative commercial or other uses in-line with the Council's Corporate Well-being Objectives.

Crucially, it also considers the Council's use of space. This is important because during 2023/24 we will be reviewing the Policy and publishing a new Asset Management Plan to reflect current issues. In particular, this will involve supporting the Council's new ways of working, investing in new technology and repurposing our assets to transform the way services are provided to our customers to ensure sustainable and high quality services for the long term.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Underpinning the success of the Council's Corporate Strategy is a high performing workforce, operating in a way that is innovative, digitally mature and sustainable. To achieve this, a [Workforce Plan](#) is in place, that outlines the Council's approach to managing its workforce to meet its current and future service delivery needs. It involves analysing the organisation's

workforce requirements, identifying any gaps, and focussing on the development plans to address them.

During 2023, the Workforce Plan is being updated to address key issues including recruitment, retention and succession planning to ensure stable staffing levels, a sustainable workforce and that vacant posts are filled with appropriately qualified staff. Following the publication of the new Corporate Strategy 2022-27, the updated Workforce Plan will be aligned to the new Corporate Well-being Objectives. It will also support the Council's new ways of working and the realisation of the benefits including increased productivity, reduced travelling and improved work life balance.

The updated [Workforce Plan 2023-2028](#) recognises the achievements over the course of the previous plan, the link with other corporate strategies, our workforce profile and sets out four key themed priorities to meet the identified challenges.

The four themed priorities set out in the plan are:

1. Realising Potential
2. Candidate Experience and Talent Attraction
3. New Ways of Working
4. Our Culture

The Workforce Plan 2023-2028 sets out an overview of each theme before detailing the actions which will be taken to meet the requirements of the Plan. A set of proposed measures are included at end of the document to allow effective monitoring of progress over the course of the three-year plan. The updated Workforce Plan is scheduled to go through the democratic process for approval during the summer of 2023.

THROUGH AGE WELL-BEING

Providing support for all ages and needs is a

significant challenge for the Council with limited resources. The profile of society and demographics have changed considerably over the last decade with a significant increase in the prevalence and impact of substance misuse, poor mental health and domestic abuse and older age groups living in Ceredigion. As a consequence, demand for certain services has increased placing a greater financial pressure on those service areas.

The [Through Age Well-being Strategy](#) sets out the vision and approach that will be taken to transform how the well-being and safety of the people of Ceredigion is supported.

To achieve our vision we have developed a Through Age Well-being operating model that is designed to ensure people get the right level and type of support, at the right time, to prevent, reduce or delay the need for ongoing support, to maximise people's independence and to be able to remain in their own home in their own community wherever possible.

ECONOMY

Ceredigion's [Economic Strategy](#) was published in March 2021. It sets out a framework for action covering the fifteen year period to 2035, outlining out how we will work together towards achieving strong, sustainable and more resilient economic growth for Ceredigion, created and shared by all.

It highlights the actions that will address the challenges and opportunities that exist in the local economy, and focuses on four main priority areas of People, Enterprise, Place and Connectivity, with each section outlining some of the early interventions considered.

Work will continue on developing the detailed implementation plans during 2023/24. Many initiatives have already been developed and implemented under the strategic direction set by the Economic Strategy. A significant

amount of external funding has been secured from a range of key stakeholder organisations, which will enable the building blocks for further economic growth to be put in place. The Strategy provides an exciting opportunity to build on Ceredigion's solid foundations and support an ambitious thriving economy for the future.

TACKLING HARDSHIP & POVERTY

The Ceredigion [Local Well-being Plan 2023-28](#) contains four well-being objectives plus a cross-cutting theme on tackling hardship and poverty because it links to each of the objectives covering economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being.

The Ceredigion Public Services Board (PSB) will prioritise tackling hardship and poverty in response to the cost of living crisis, cross referencing with economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being pillars. The mechanism for implementing the tackling hardship and poverty theme is through the PSB's Poverty Sub-Group which consists of a network of partner organisations who scrutinise the work of the PSB to enhance the work undertaken to combat poverty across each of the four objectives.

HYBRID WORKING

The [Interim Hybrid Working Strategy](#) sets out the vision and approach that will be taken to ensure the Council has a workforce with the skills and ability to work in a way that is fit for the organisation's future.

Having responded well to the initial challenges posed by the pandemic, focus shifted to how the Council could learn and build from the experience. Using research findings and staff engagement, the Hybrid Working Strategy was developed setting out the principles and implementation process of a hybrid working

model that maintains the required high level of service delivery whilst also providing employees with greater flexibility in balancing their work and home lives.

The interim policy will be in place for 12 months to allow for hybrid working to be trialled as the managers and our workforce identify an effective new way of working post-pandemic. As the interim period comes to an end during 2023, a review of the working arrangements will be conducted with a view to developing a permanent Hybrid Working Policy.

HOUSING

An updated [Housing Strategy 2023-28](#) has been developed during 2023 which sets out the Council's housing vision and ambitions for the period 2023 to 2028. We are currently consulting on the new strategy and will take it forward for adoption in October 2023.

The vision of the new strategy is: *there will be sufficient suitable and sustainable accommodation to meet residents' needs now and in the future.* We recognise the important role that housing plays together with the influence it has on the health and well-being of individuals, families and the wider community.

It responds to key challenges including the national picture of the economic recession, legislative changes, the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the phosphates issues affecting development in the County, that all play their part in affecting housing Ceredigion.

The two main priorities of the new Strategy are:

- Increasing supply and improving housing conditions
- Supporting residents in their own homes and communities.

The existing [Housing Strategy](#), which ends in 2023 is available on the Council's website.

OUR PERFORMANCE

How We Benchmark Performance

The Council routinely monitors and benchmarks its performance as part of its ongoing performance management arrangements. Performance benchmarking contributes to our overall effectiveness and efficiency by allowing us to identify best practice and opportunities for improvement.

With the change in legislation concerning the performance regime for principal councils in 2021, the national set of Performance Accountability Measures (PAMs) used across all twenty-two councils in Wales were removed. Historically, Ceredigion had performed well against these measures. In the final full year of recording the PAMs in 2019/20, twenty-one measures were collected, with Ceredigion achieving 14 or

72% on target, with a further 3 or 14% slightly off target and 4 or 13% were significantly off-target.

Following the change in legislation, we now use four main forms of routine benchmarking; our Level 1 Business Plan measures, a set of key benchmarking measures, a set of community benchmarking measures and a periodic assessment of our individual performance against the national well-being indicators. The following pages provide a summary of these results.

Business Plan Performance

Our business plan performance is monitored through the Performance Board, and on an ongoing basis, by Leadership Group. At the end of 2022/23 our performance shows that 72% of our measures were on target and

71% of our objectives were either complete or on schedule (see charts below left). The measures and objectives off-target are scrutinised in more detail by the Performance Board and Leadership Group.

Value for Money

Value for Money can be defined as the relationship between Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness. It is a term used to

assess whether the Council has obtained the maximum benefit from the goods and services it procures and provides within the constraint of the limited resources facing the Council.

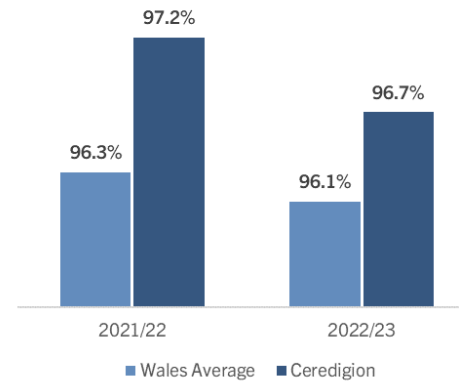
For example, two key measures of efficiency, the collection of Council Tax and Non-domestic (business) rates, both remain above average, although collection rates nationally were affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic.



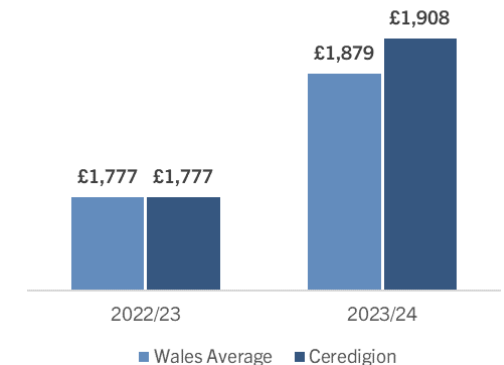
- On target: 117 (72%)
- Off target by less than 15%: 26 (16%)
- Off target by more than 15%: 20 (12%)

- On schedule / complete: 206 (71%)
- In progress but behind schedule: 75 (26%)
- Not started / not complete: 9 (3%)

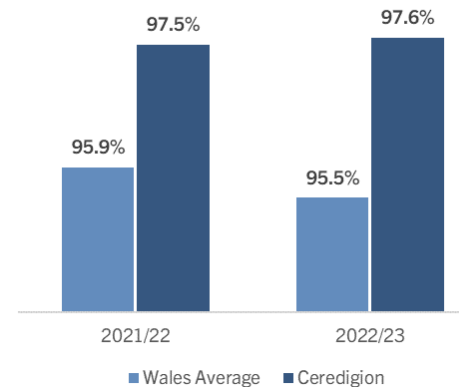
Council Tax Collection Rate



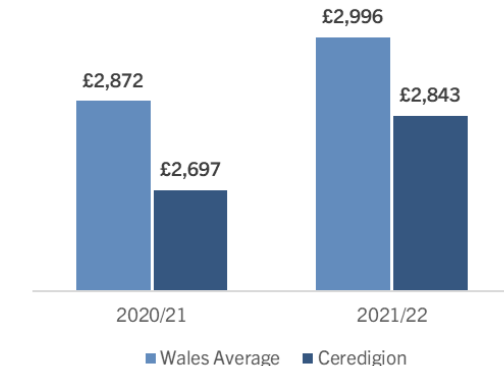
Band D Council Tax Rate



Non-Domestic Rates Collection



Revenue Outturn Expenditure Per Head

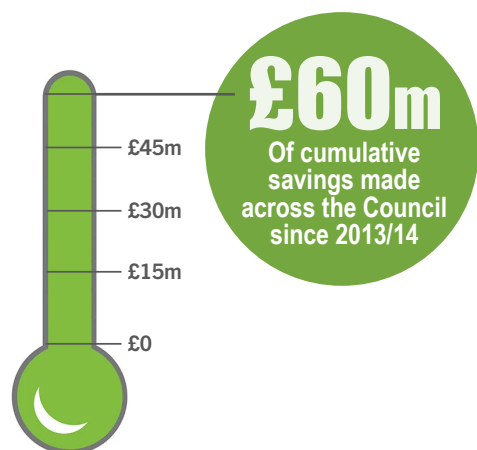


The average Band 'D' Council Tax, often used as a comparator between different counties, shows that current rates are slightly higher than the national average across Wales at £1,908, while our cumulative savings made over the last ten years total £60m through restructuring, service-redesign and transformation projects. Revenue outturn expenditure per head was £2,843 for the last full year and budgeted expenditure for the current 2023/24 year is £3,173.

Key Performance Measures

The Council uses a variety of performance indicators to monitor how well our services are performing in meeting the needs of service users and to measure their efficiency and value for money.

They measure performance across a wide range of Council services including: financial management, education, housing, leisure services, waste management and street cleansing. The following pages (49-50)



provide a selection of these measures, showing the Council's performance compared to its nearest neighbours in the mid and south west Wales regions. Data is provided for the latest full year results and the time period covered is noted on the individual chart.

Well-being of Wales National Indicators

The 46 [national well-being indicators](#) are designed to represent the outcomes for Wales and its people that will help demonstrate progress towards the 7 National Well-being Goals.

They are not performance indicators specifically for the Council, they are county-wide results, to which the Council, along with other public bodies, contribute. We, do however, periodically review Ceredigion's contribution to these indicators. The last of these exercises was conducted in 2022 as [Appendix 9](#) to the [Ceredigion Assessment of Local Well-being 2022](#).

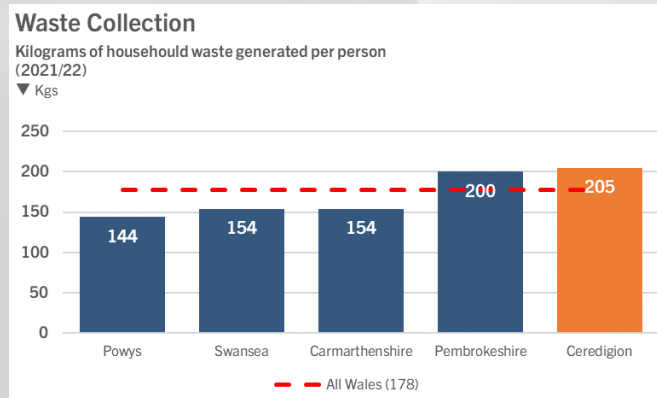
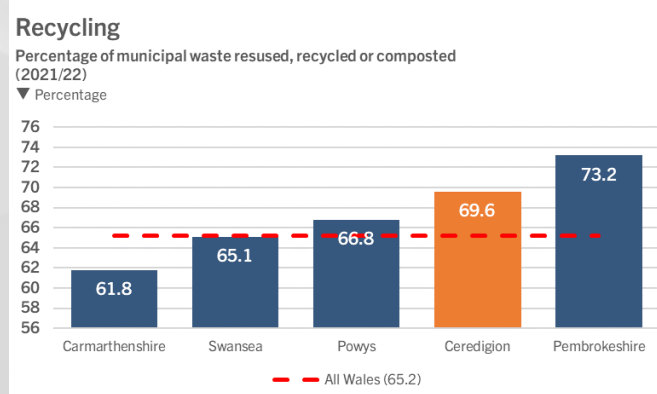
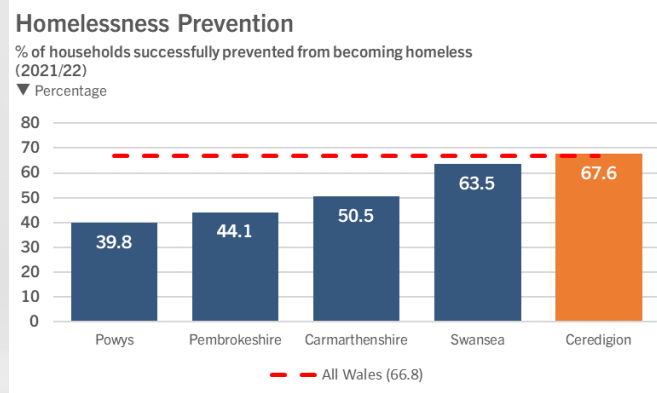
The annual 'Wellbeing of Wales' report provides an update on progress made in Wales towards the achievement of the 7 National Well-being Goals which draws on the latest national indicators results.

Future Plans

The Council is proactively working with Data Cymru and all 21 other councils nationwide to support the development of the new [Self-Assessment Data Tool](#). The Tool, developed by Data Cymru, provides access to a wide range of performance data across local government services.

Further work will take place during 2023 and 2024 to strengthen the measures and fill gaps in data such as in assessing value for money, asset management and consultation.

KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

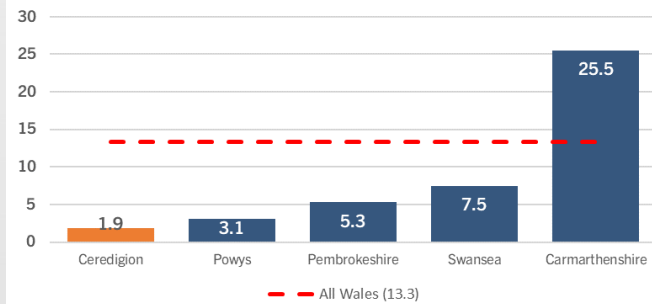


KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Fly-tipping

Number of recorded fly-tipping incidents per 1,000 population (2021/22)

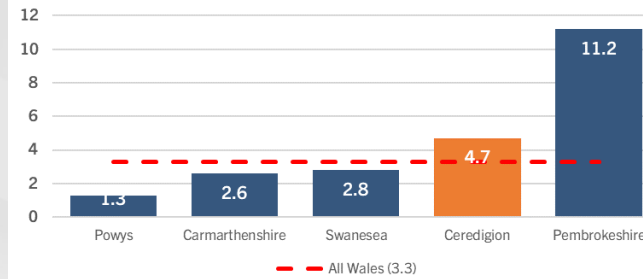
▼ Number



Community Learning

Number of learners enrolled in local authority community learning per 1,000 population (2021/22)

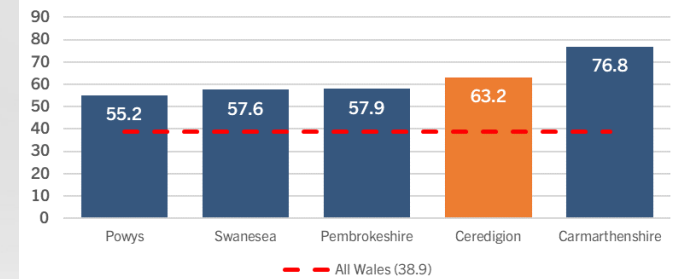
▼ Number



School Counselling

Number of children and young people who received counselling in Wales per 1,000 population aged 10-18 (2021/22)

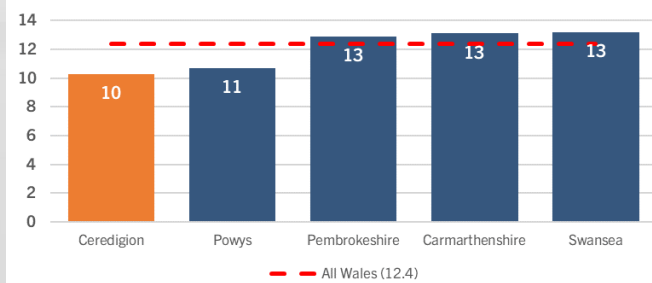
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Apprenticeships

Number of learners enrolled on apprenticeship programmes per 1,000 population (2021/22)

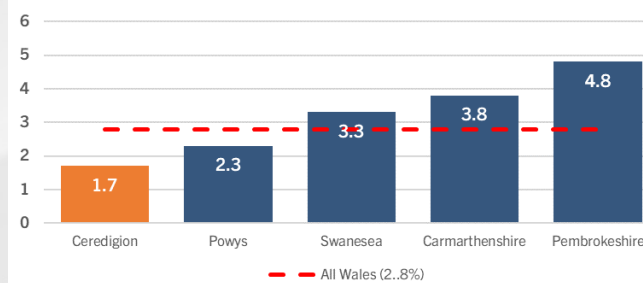
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Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET)

Year 13 school leavers known not to be in Education, Training or Employment (2022)

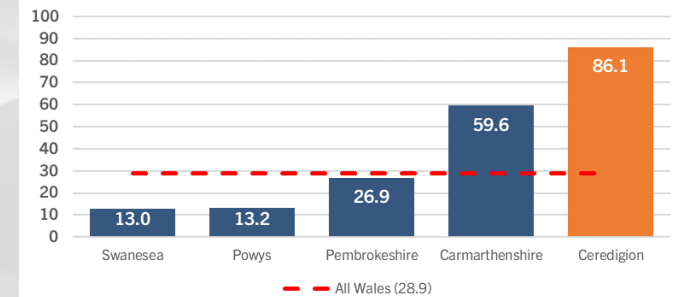
▼ Percentage



Welsh Medium Schools

Percentage of primary schools that are Welsh medium (2021-22)

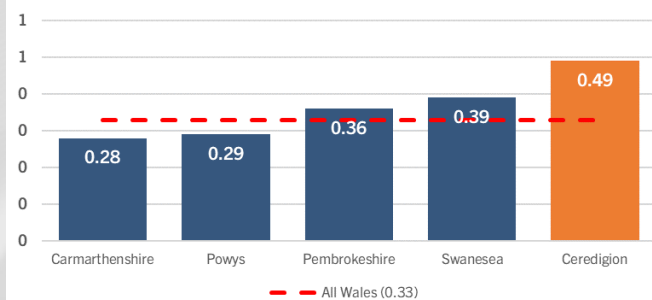
▼ Percentage



Complaints Received by the Local Authority

Number of complaints received per 1,000 residents (2022/23)

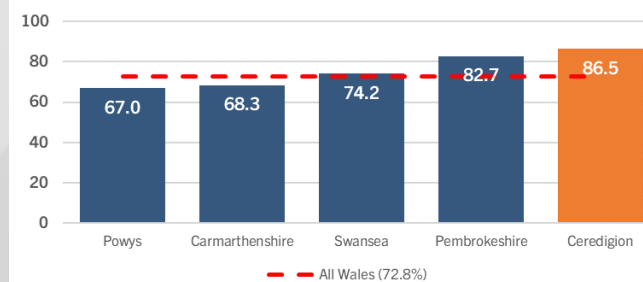
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Free School Meals

Percentage of eligible pupils who took up the offer of a free school meal (2021/22)

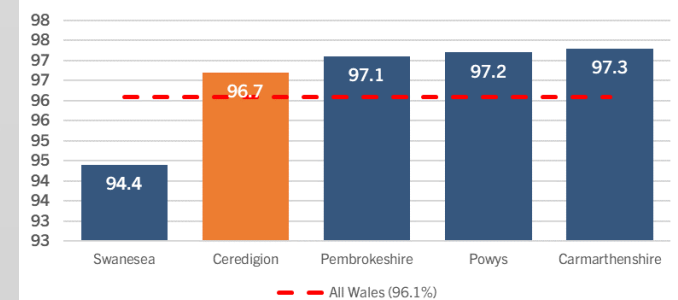
▼ Percentage



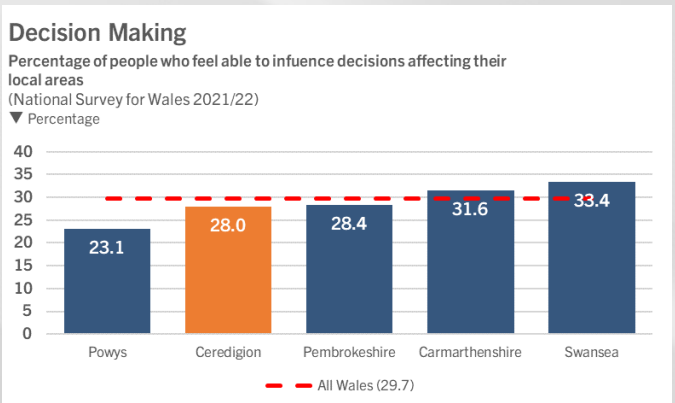
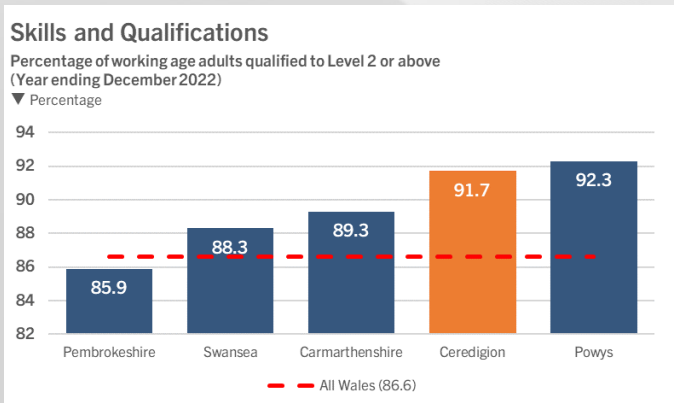
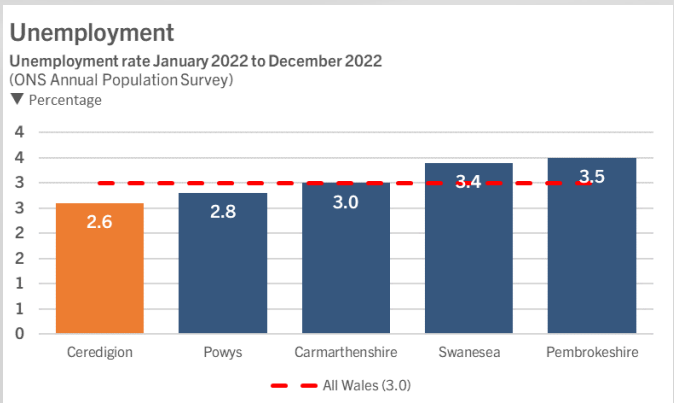
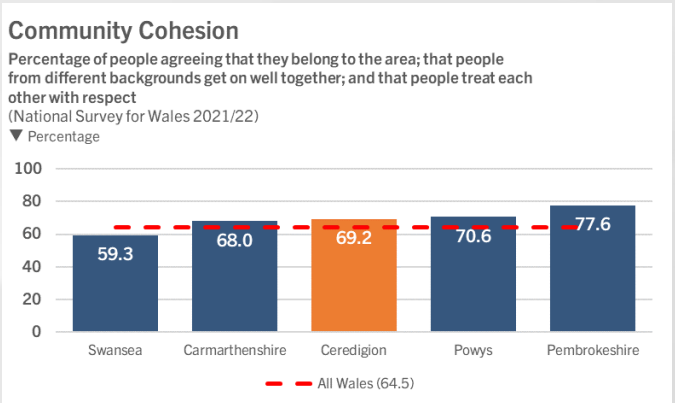
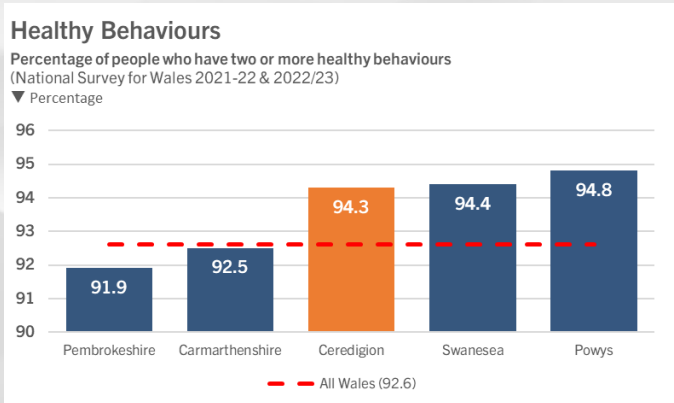
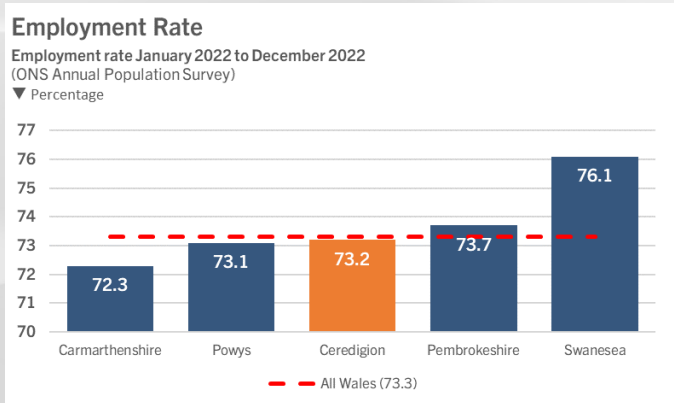
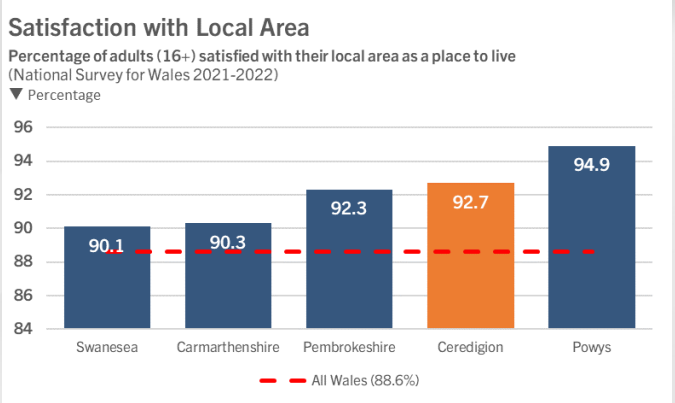
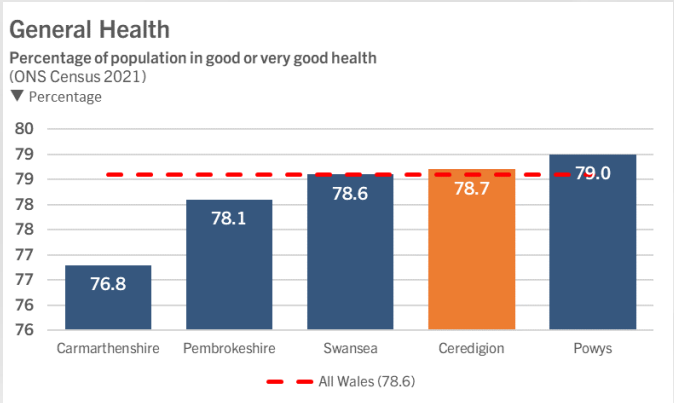
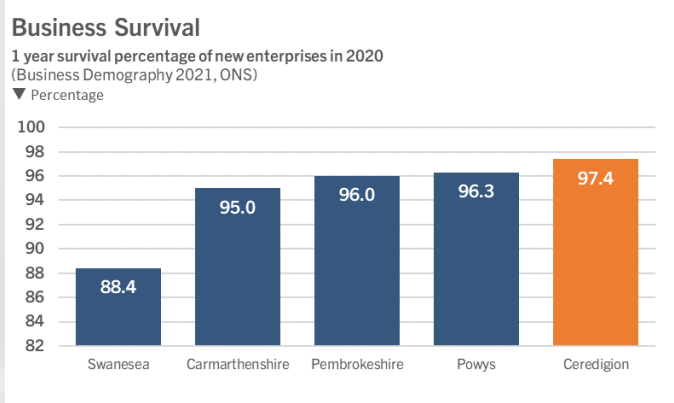
Council Tax Collection

Percentage of Council Tax collected (2022-2023)

▼ Percentage



WIDER COMMUNITY MEASURES



Have your say

We welcome your views on this report and the Council's performance. Please get in touch at any time.

Contact Us

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