

2023/24

SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT

ANNUAL REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE
AND WELL-BEING OBJECTIVES



Cyngor Sir
CEREDIGION
County Council

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

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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 2023/24.

In the last year we have pushed ahead with delivering our commitments in our Corporate Strategy and I am pleased to report that excellent progress has been made.

For example, the first part of the Mid Wales Growth funding, worth £4million, was released to help unlock the potential of the local economy, improve regional prosperity and create opportunities for local people.

Lampeter's Wellbeing Centre was opened in October 2023, which provides services to improve the mental, social and physical health of individuals, all under one roof.

The innovative Community Housing Scheme, which supports people with affordable housing in their local communities by creating pathways to home ownership, is now operational.

The transfer of Hafan y Waun Care Home to the Council's ownership in November 2023 ensures that this

valuable resource remains in the County for our older population.

Work on Aberaeron's £32m coastal defence scheme is now underway, which will protect the town and the surrounding coastline from rising sea levels, preventing flooding and coastal erosion.

Construction of the new £16.3million Dyffryn Aeron School has commenced and will provide Welsh medium education for 240 pupils while enriching the learning and teaching experience in the local area.

We are also proud to report that we provide free school meals to all pupils in Year 6 and under. As we go to print, the results of our Estyn inspection of Education Services have been received. The inspection was highly complimentary of the service and highlighted many areas of good practice including leadership, collaborative working and promotion of the Welsh language.

We are also continuing to invest 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.

For example, work is continuing in the rollout of the Through Age Well-being Programme that is transforming the delivery of social care in Ceredigion. The Programme 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.

We also launched two new services to improve communication and interaction with you. The 'MyAccount' service means residents now have a convenient and user-friendly way to interact with the Council whenever they choose.

Subscribers to 'MyAccount' can also choose to receive a new Newsletter promoting the range of services we offer, provide useful information, and share news stories with you.

However, like all local authorities, there are challenges as well as opportunities ahead. The financial picture is extremely challenging, and while we continue to explore



Councillor Bryan Davies
Leader of Ceredigion
County Council

innovative ways to deliver services, there will nevertheless be some very difficult decisions to be taken in future years.

Self-assessment is not new to Ceredigion. We have long been using it as a learning tool to reflect on how we are doing things now, and how we can deliver improvements or provide greater efficiency.

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

Our County in Numbers

73,050
people

47 years
average age

22%
with a disability

4%
from ethnic minority

7,845
university students

43
schools and 9,460 pupils

4
Council run leisure centres

30,893
households

2,265km
of roads

2,500km
of bridleways and footpaths

2,810
active enterprises

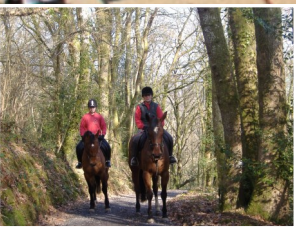
45.3%
of residents are Welsh speakers

18.4%
in material deprivation

9,300
people are self-employed

2.95m
visitors to Ceredigion each year

90km
of coastline



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 include the Rheidol, Ystwyth, 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 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 also many beaches, including four with a Blue Flag Award, which draw many tourists to the area throughout the year.



THE COUNCIL

At the local elections in May 2022, Ceredigion residents returned 38 councillors in 34 wards across the County. The current administration is a Plaid Cymru majority with 21 councillors, along with 9 independents, 7 Welsh Liberal Democrats and 1 GWLAD.

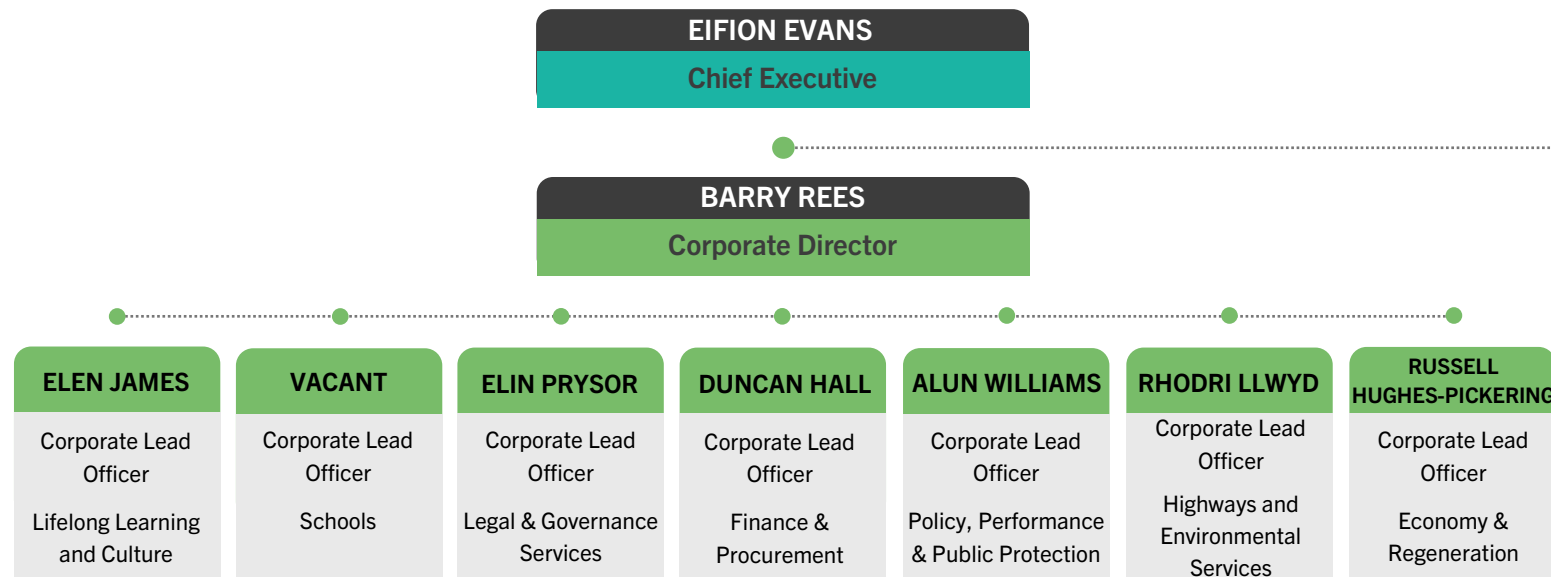
The Leader of the Council is Councillor Bryan Davies and Councillor Keith Evans is the current Chairman of the Council.

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.

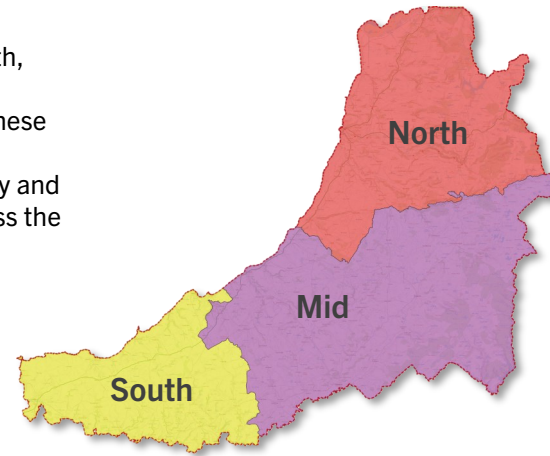
CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE:



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

The Council employs a total of 3,462 staff including schools staff. 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.

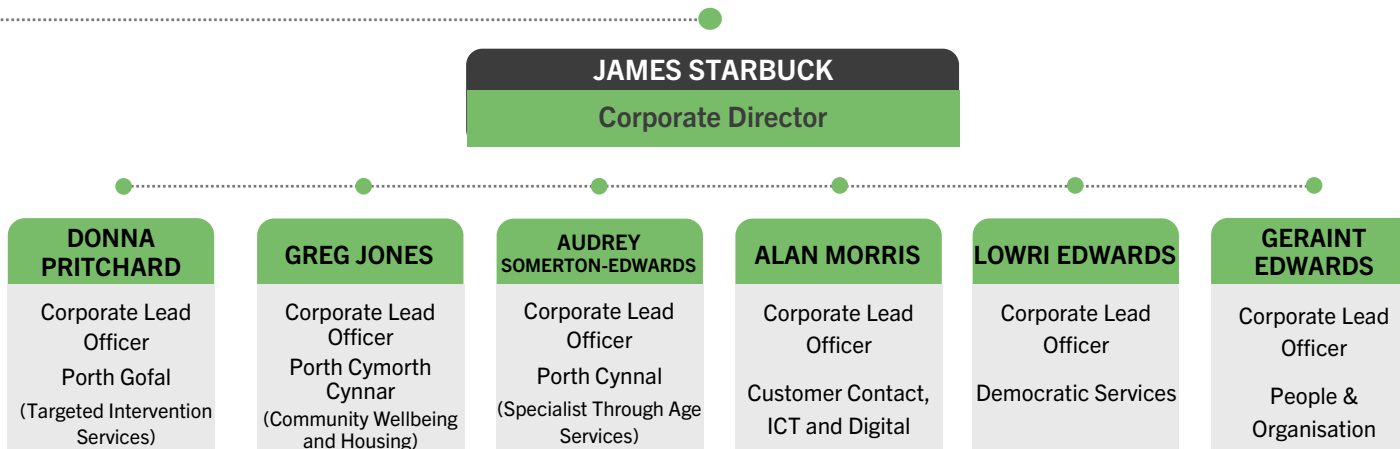
The County is made up of three geographical areas covering the north, mid and south of the County. The Council's services are aligned with these three areas to assist in workforce development and ensure consistency and equity in the delivery of service across the County. ►



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 2023-24 SELF-ASSESSMENT

This is Ceredigion County Council's third Self-Assessment Report, which reviews the 2023/24 year. 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.

We reviewed our approach to Self-Assessment during the autumn of 2023 and made some minor adjustments to the process. This included producing a more detailed data pack from the desktop review of evidence, retaining the additional Leadership Group workshop to review the scores prior to publication and provide further detail on the consultation conducted to support Self-Assessment and how that consultation is used in informing Council decisions.

The aim of the review was to fine tune the process based on our experiences in previous years. We will continue to review the way we conduct self-assessment annually.

The review recognised that the Self-Assessment process is becoming increasingly embedded in the organisation, the Council's confidence in using the process was growing and crucially that the Council is learning more about its strengths, challenges and opportunities.

In producing this year's Self-Assessment Report, we have learnt a great deal. The exercise has brought together a wide variety of evidence to assess our overall 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 two Self-Assessment Reports by including further information on the consultation and engagement undertaken during the year, included further information on how the money we receive is spent and strengthened the benchmarking section at the end of the report by including further detail of the Council's overall performance and links to other sources to find out more.






The Self-Assessment 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 below.

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 2023-24 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 long-term vision and Corporate Well-being Objectives. The Council has a suite of key strategies in place to support and deliver the Objectives. These include the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, the Through Age Well-being Strategy, and the Economic Strategy.

During 2023/24 we published an updated Local Housing Strategy, Strategic Equality Plan and Workforce Plan. We are also currently reviewing and updating our Joint Procurement and Commissioning Strategy, Asset Management Plan and Welsh Language Strategy which will go through the democratic process for approval shortly.

Progress in delivering key strategies continues to be good. During 2023/24 another significant milestone was reached when the first tranche of the Mid Wales Growth Deal, worth £4million, was received and enabled the Growth Deal to progress to the delivery phase. The Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership Employment and Skills Plan was launched at the 'Grow, Define, Deliver Together' event to identify priorities for regional investment to support jobs and growth in the Mid Wales region.

Internally, the new Workforce Plan was published in September 2023, outlining the Council's approach to managing its workforce to meet its current and future service delivery needs. This is an important document as it supports the implementation of the Council's new agile and hybrid working arrangements, along with addressing succession planning and recruitment issues experienced across some sectors.

Priority setting is also considered to be strong in Ceredigion, and this is evidenced through

the positive work with the Council's administration to develop the Corporate Strategy and agree its Corporate Well-being Objectives. The 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.

In October 2023, we also published our new Performance Management Framework which allows us to regularly review and track our progress, check how we are performing and ensure we deliver the Corporate Well-being Objectives to improve outcomes for the people and communities of Ceredigion.

Part of this includes the development of new dashboards to provide quicker and easier access to performance and benchmarking data to help us assess our progress, and communicate our performance journey to the public and stakeholders. This is part of our vision of becoming increasingly data-driven and using insights gained from data to help identify opportunities for improvement or efficiencies.

The 'MyAccount' service means residents now have a convenient and user-friendly way to interact with the Council whenever they choose, and the option to receive news on the range of services the Council offers.

There is a recognition that the Council's Strategies are constructed in-line with the 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

SUMMARY OF SCORING BY THEME

Does the Council have a set of corporate and service strategies in place which set out the Council's vision and priorities?

Are these strategies delivering their aims and objectives?



Are Service Business Plans delivering their objectives and performance targets?

Are these strategies sustainable in adapting to the future needs of the organisation?

Does the Council have an effective performance management framework and democratic scrutiny in place to support delivery of the Council's vision and priorities?

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.

While progress on our performance journey has been very positive during the year, we recognise there is still a lot of work to do, in particular completing the refresh of key strategies.

The Joint Procurement and Commissioning Strategy, Asset Management Strategy, and Digital Strategy are all in the process of review. 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.

There are a number of 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

SUMMARY OF 2023-24 PERFORMANCE

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 the management of the Council's finances.

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 2024 which highlighted strong strategic leadership, financial planning and elected members' engagement during the budget setting process as strengths.

During the budget setting process for 2023/24 there was unanimous approval from Members for the budget. Furthermore, tremendous efforts have been made during the 2023/24 year to deliver the budget savings identified at the outset.

This places the Council in a strong position to deliver the new Corporate Strategy and Corporate Well-being Objectives.

Regulatory reports are also positive, the Care Inspectorate Wales inspection reflected positively on the Through Age Well-being Programme, and none of the County's schools are in follow-up measures as assessed by Estyn.

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 efficiency savings have been made since

2012, as a result of restructuring, service-redesign and transformation projects.

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 they 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.

Work is also continuing to respond to Audit Wales' Planning Service Review, although their follow-up report in August 2023 state that good progress had been made in addressing the issues raised during the original review.

ENSURING OUR GOVERNANCE IS EFFECTIVE

Overall, the evidence shows that the Council's governance arrangements are robust and support 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 Framework Review conducted in March 2024 provides substantial assurance that there is a sound system of scrutiny and robustness in place.

The new Governance Framework was also approved by Council in March 2024 and replaces the Local Code of Corporate Governance. The Framework acts as an

SUMMARY OF SCORING BY THEME

Are these strategies sustainable in adapting to the future needs of the organisation?



Does the Council have comprehensive strategies in place for Workforce Planning, Financial Management, Procurement and Asset Management?

Are these strategies delivering their stated aims and objectives for Workforce Planning, Financial Management, Procurement and Asset Management?

overarching document encompassing the Council's governance arrangements, and demonstrates the arrangements in place to ensure that the intended outcomes for all stakeholders are defined and achieved, whilst ensuring that the Council always acts in the public interest.

The latest Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23 was approved by Council in February 2024. The Statement confirmed that the Council's governance arrangements are effective and fit for purpose with good progress being made during the year with recorded achievements against each of the seven core principles of governance. A number of minor issues were identified for resolution during the following year.

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.

Recent years have 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 in a way that benefits the

customer, the workforce, and significantly reduces the 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 continuing to transform 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. We will continue to push forward with transforming how people's health, wellbeing and safety are supported in Ceredigion.

For example, the Lampeter Well-being Centre formally opened in October 2023 to provide a range of services to enhance the physical and mental well-being of local communities. Further centres will open in the north and south of the county.

During 2023/24 we also moved forward with helping younger people and first-time buyers get on the "housing ladder" through the innovative Community Housing Scheme. The scheme seeks to support local people by creating a pathway to home ownership through a shared equity scheme. Ceredigion has long been an exporter of its younger

population to other parts of the country, and this project will help to create opportunities for people to remain in their local communities.

There are a variety of other significant projects delivered during the year including the taking over of Hafan y Waun Care Home to ensure continuity of this vital service, the review of post-16 learning to identify sustainable options for the future, the development of in-county children's centres, the £16m Dyffryn Aeron School development, the increased provision of Additional Learning Needs facilities across the County and the commencement of the £32m flood defence scheme in Aberaeron.

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

Some other examples include the Regional Safeguarding Board's overarching work on safeguarding in our communities, the partnership with Sport Wales to bring in funding to support major developments and the Regional Strategic Oversight Group with

SUMMARY OF SCORING BY THEME

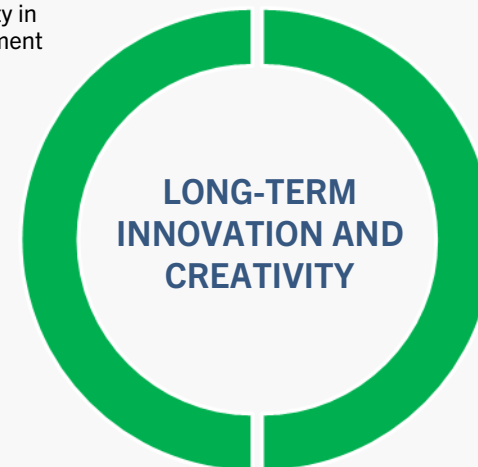
Does the Council work productively with its external regulators and demonstrate good compliance?



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 2023-24 PERFORMANCE

Hywel Dda University Health Board, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire County Councils in delivering an all hazards approach to health protection in our region.

Nationally, the Council also led on 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 Framework helps people, businesses and public services reduce the risks of cyber-attacks and build a thriving cyber economy

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 positive, and 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 which is now recognised as an example of effective partnership working. 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.

This is important because we recognise the scale of the budgetary challenges that exist in local government and that opportunities for partnerships and co-working will be essential in helping to fulfil our ambitions and plans in the future.

INVOLVEMENT

The Council's Engagement and Participation 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 Strategy helps 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 during the last year. Some of this work includes the introduction of a new engagement and consultation register to more effectively plan events and avoid consultation overload, along with an annual report on progress outlining what events have taken place and how the results have been used. During the year, there were 23 engagement and consultation exercises, which is 7 higher than in the previous year.

A new Engagement and Consultation Toolkit was also developed in January 2024 and is available for all staff to use. An updated stakeholder list is available to help maximise response rates. The Petitions Scheme, including electronic petitions, which is a requirement under the Local Government Elections (Wales) Act 2021, was also approved by Council in December 2023.

The Council regularly reviews its collaboration projects in order to assess their effectiveness. The review provides the opportunity to take stock, to see whether the projects are delivering what they should, whether they are statutory/mandatory, whether they remain fit for purpose and whether they pose any risks for the Council. A decision is made whether each project should continue, cease or be amended. The latest of these reviews were

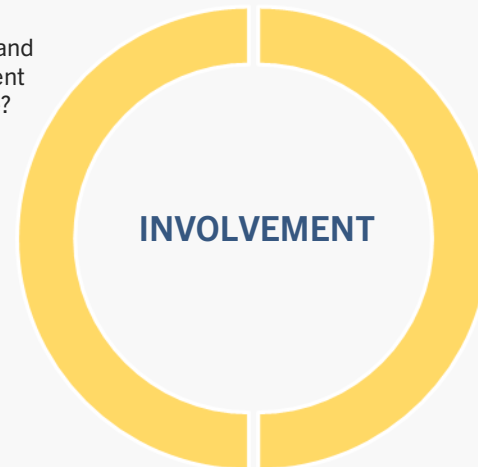
SUMMARY OF SCORING BY THEME

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?

completed in July 2024.

However, 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.

The Integrated Impact Assessments process was relaunched in December 2023, making them more effective and easier to complete. The quality of completing the Assessments is improving as a result of a robust monitoring and quality assurance system.

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. It is recognised that consultations and engagements on more emotive subjects will always attract a significantly larger number of responses, compared to others. The introduction of the new E-Newsletter as part of the 'MyAccount' service is expected to help encourage a greater level of involvement and larger number of responses.

There are some good examples of engagement during 2023/24 where the results are being used to drive improvements and shape services. These include consultation on the Local Housing Strategy, Flood Reduction and the Strategic Equality Plan.

Further plans are in place for the year ahead which include consulting on the new Welsh Language Strategy, new Digital Strategy and running the first of an ongoing series of National Residents' Surveys developed by Data Cymru. A new Insights Board will be set up to help drive greater understanding from the variety of consultation and engagement sources available to us. 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 in recent years. During 2023/24, a full review of the Council's Risk Management Policy, Strategy and Framework was completed to ensure our arrangements remain up to date and fit for purpose and based on best practice.

Although the process was found to be working well overall, the review identified a number of specific improvements needed. In particular, was 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.

After consulting with key stakeholders on the Governance and Audit Committee and with the Council's insurers, these improvements were put in place and a new suite of risk management documents published in January 2024.

The updated Risk Management Framework also clarified the role of Internal Audit and introduced the use of 'target' risk scores to help assess the effectiveness of mitigating risks.

The Council's 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

SUMMARY OF SCORING BY THEME



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.

As part of our drive to continually improve, during 2023/24 we worked with the Council's insurers, Zurich, to deliver a programme of workshops to support services in strengthening the identification, mitigation and management of risks.

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

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: Complete ●</p> <p>Ceredigion County Council is committed to engaging with its residents, service users and other key stakeholders. The new Engagement and Participation Strategy has been developed and was approved by Cabinet in October 2022. The new Strategy 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. An annual progress report on the Strategy is presented to Cabinet and published on our website. The Engagement toolkit was also published on our internal website in January 2024 and is available for all staff to use. The Petitions Scheme, including electronic petitions, which is a requirement under the Local Government Elections (Wales) Act 2021, was approved by Council in December 2023. Further developments will be made over the next twelve months.</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>The updated Workforce Plan has been published following approval by Cabinet in September 2023. The new Plan sets out the Council's approach to managing its workforce to meet its current and future service delivery needs, and specifically 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 four themed priorities set out in the plan are: Realising Potential, Candidate Experience and Talent Attraction, New Ways of Working and Our Culture. The new Plan will allow the Council to anticipate future workforce needs and skills requirements to proactively address emerging challenges and capitalise on new opportunities. The delivery of the actions in the Plan are in progress.</p>			

KEY: COMPLETE (1) ● IN PROGRESS (8) ● NEW ACTIONS (0) ●

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	Audrey Somerton-Edwards (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 progressing.</p>			
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 - March 2025	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: In progress ●</p> <p>The new Digital Strategy has been drafted and was considered by Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee in March 2024 who recommended to commence the public consultation and recommend it for approval by Cabinet. The public consultation took place between May and June 2024, with the draft Strategy due to go to Cabinet later in the year for approval. The process of preparing the Digital Strategy included discussions across the authority, a Digital Maturity Assessment and workshop supported by WLGA, and Wales Audit carried out an audit into our Digital Strategy thinking which helped shape requirements. Core strategies across Wales were also considered.</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 2025	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 Outturn Report for 2023/24 reported that the actual expenditure for the year was £8.7m higher than the level incurred during 2022/23. 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 - January 2025	Duncan Hall (Corporate Lead Officer Finance & Procurement and Section 151 Officer)	<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 is complete and scheduled to go to Cabinet for approval in October 2024. 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 AND INSIGHTS INTO CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE			
Develop the use of surveys and other insights into customer experience	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>STATUS: In progress ●</p> <p>A new Corporate Stakeholder Survey was run 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 Council has also been working with Data Cymru in the development of the new National Citizen's Survey to provide a robust and comparable citizens survey in future years. The first of these surveys will be run between August and October 2024. The new Insights Board has also been developed and is scheduled to hold its first meeting in September 2024, to maximise the insights from consultation and engagement, along with other data available to the Council to develop a greater understanding of customer views to shape future services. There are a variety of other activities being investigated such as the possibility of including satisfaction surveys as part of customer contacts via the contact centre (CLIC), making greater use of the new MyAccount service as it becomes embedded and rolling out best practice across the Council.</p>			

SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTION PLAN: OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

DESCRIPTION	TIMESCALES	LEAD OFFICER	OUTCOMES
DELIVER THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE CIW INSPECTION OF SOCIAL SERVICES			
<p>Implement the ten recommendations made in the CIW inspection report to help the Council deliver its vision for the delivery of social services across Ceredigion according to the Through Age Well-being model</p>	<p>May 2023 - March 2025</p>	<p>Audrey Somerton-Edwards (Corporate Lead Officer Porth Cynnal and Statutory Director of Social Services)</p>	<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
<p>STATUS: In progress ●</p> <p>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 is being monitored every six months through the Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee to maintain progress and track through to completion. The next review is scheduled to go to the Committee in September 2024. Most improvement areas have now been addressed. In addition, the launch of a formalised Quality Assurance framework in Spring 2024 and the deployment of regular Thematic Reviews and Practice Assessments within this has strengthened the Division’s oversight. Some continuing activity is underway across the four domains, People (voice and control), Prevention, Wellbeing and Partnerships. Development activity across the four domains of Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 remains a key focus for the Social Care Teams as they are central to the overall long-term Through Age Wellbeing strategy.</p>			

DESCRIPTION	TIMESCALES	LEAD OFFICER	OUTCOMES
DELIVER STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN THAT IMPLEMENTS NEW WAYS OF WORKING FOR THE STAFF OF CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL AND IMPROVES THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE			
Deliver the new Strategic Asset Management Plan 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
STATUS: In Progress ●			
<p>The new Strategic Asset Management Plan is being drafted and is anticipated to be complete in autumn 2024, before going through the democratic process for approval. The Strategic Asset Management Plan will be produced by the Assets Team and will have a broader strategic approach, encapsulating the new Hybrid Working Strategy that is driving a change to our approach, the budgetary pressures to rationalise the Council's estate, and the major improvement programmes being undertaken such as those for schools improvement and care home investment.</p>			
<p>The Council has various workstreams that manage assets, plan improvements, consider building rationalisation and redevelopment options. This is captured in an overall Development Plan being prepared through the Council's development Group and is financed through the Capital programme. Sitting beneath this plan, there is an Asset Development Programme, School Improvement Programme, Care Improvement Programme, a Hybrid Strategy and the Carbon Management Plan. These are at various stages of development. An Asset Development Programme that considers options for vacant land and buildings was considered by Development Group in October 2023. The Council has established a 'New Ways of Working' project, which is tasked with realising the vision of our Hybrid Working Strategy and as a result the main office buildings are being repurposed. Space in Canolfan Rheidol is being used by Hywel Dda for the delivery of physiotherapy services and to relocate office desk space from Bronglais. Space in Penmorfa has been re-purposed to provide a Centre for Independent Living. The School Improvement Programme is well established and been recently reviewed to look forward to the next 3, 6 and 9 years. The Care Improvement Programme is being developed using a similar model to school improvement and will reflect changing needs and the Through Age and Wellbeing strategy. A Re:Fit programme is being progressed to deliver a range of energy efficient measures to operational buildings.</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.

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.

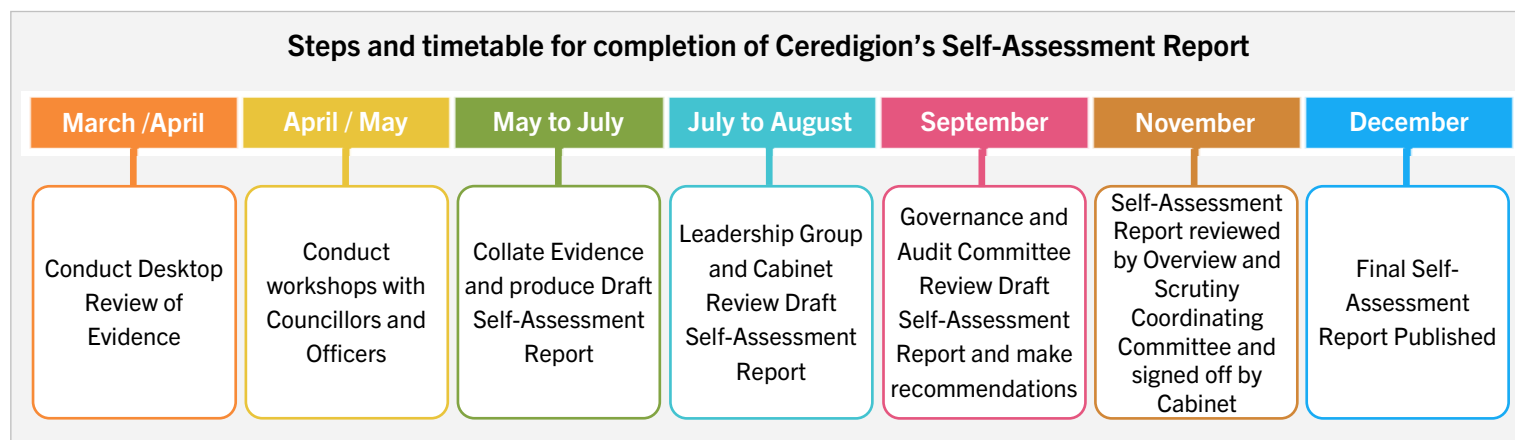
The findings workshops are collated by the Performance and Research Team. They produce the draft Self-Assessment Report by drawing on the evidence matrix, scores and the improvement actions identified in the workshop, along with other key sources such as key strategies and inspection reports.

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 presented to Cabinet for approval in November. Following approval, the Report is published and submitted to the statutory recipients, including a final copy presented to the Governance and Audit Committee.



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.

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.

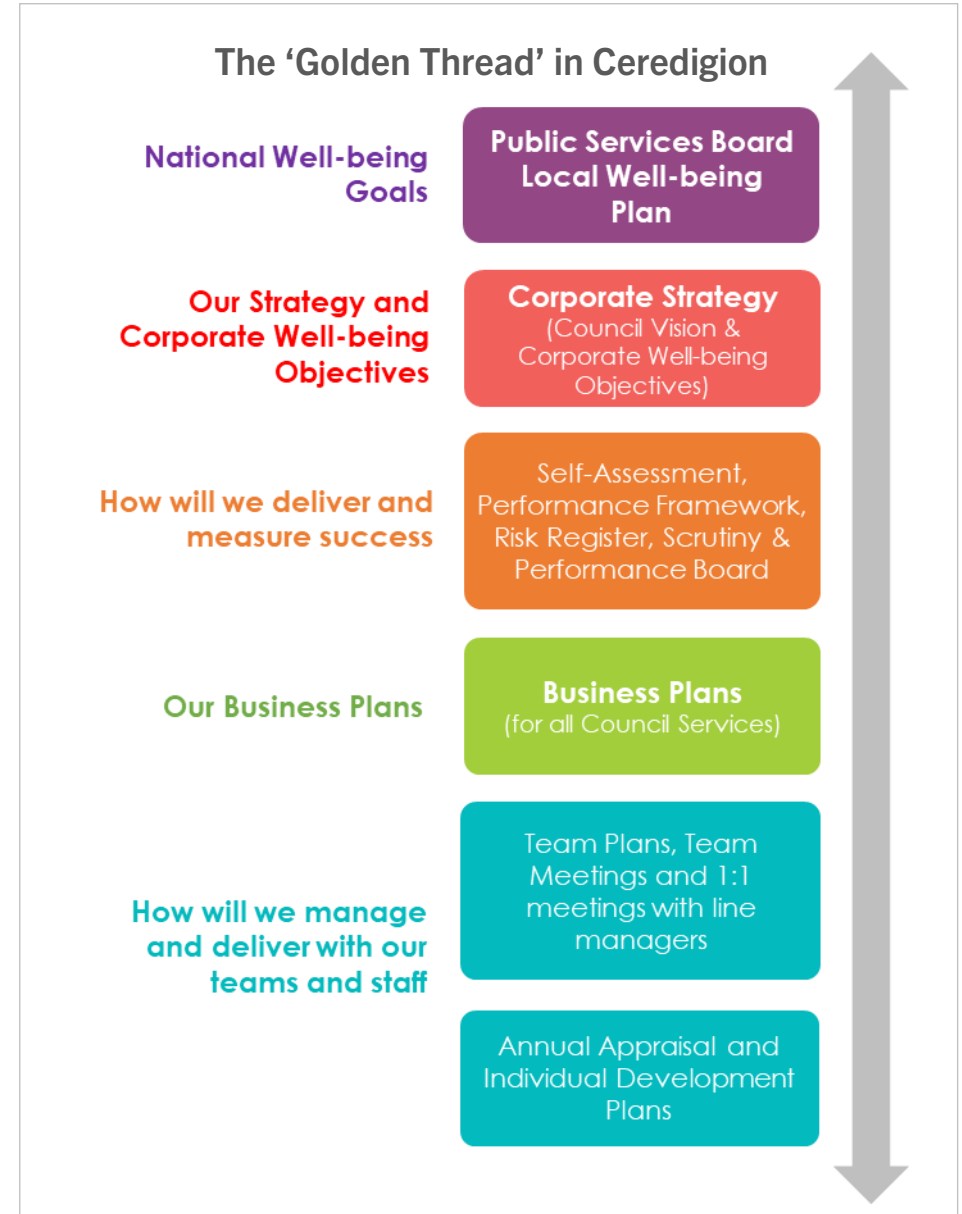
It is also an integral part of operational performance and used in the setting of annual business plans for each service. We all recognise that capacity is at a premium and demand is high, and as a result effective business planning has never been so important to ensure we are delivering 'the right services 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.

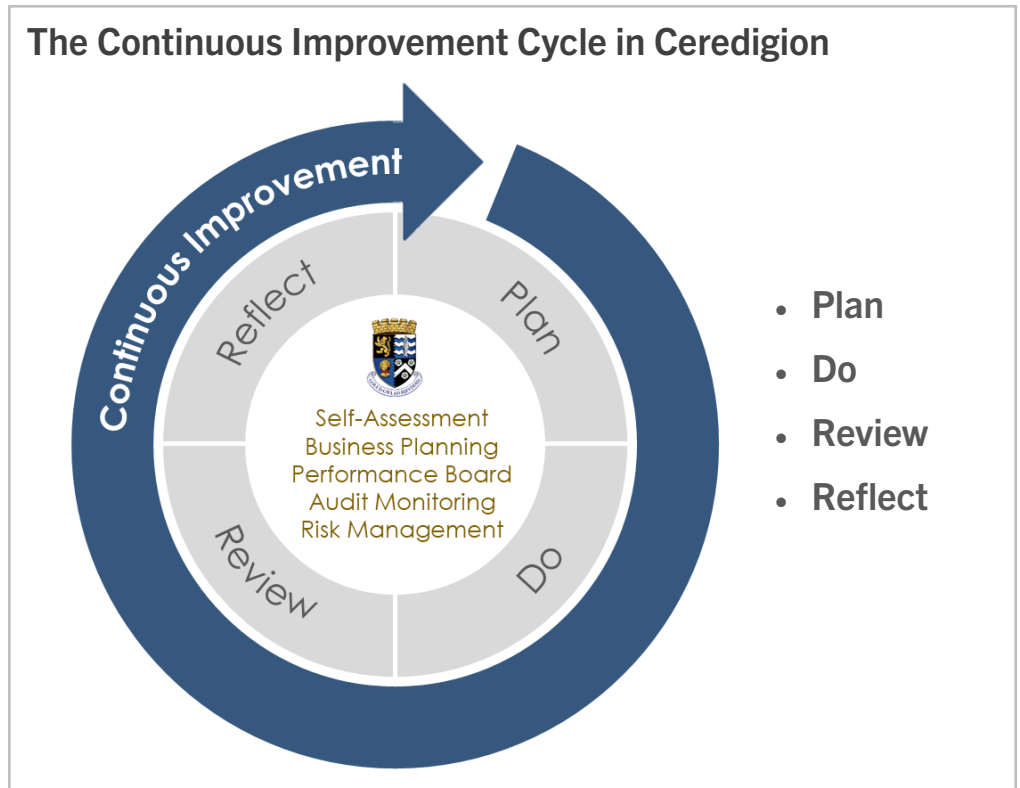
The Continuous Improvement Cycle

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
- Scrutiny Committee Feedback and reports
- Governance and Audit 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 and Council Tax Collection Rate
- Digital Skills Audit
- Review of Hybrid Working Arrangements
- Service's data

REGULATORY & EXTERNAL EVIDENCE



- Audit Wales Annual Improvement Report
- Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) 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
- Children's, Older Persons and Welsh Language Commissioner's Annual Reports
- Food Standards Agency, Regulatory of Investigatory Powers Act and other regulatory reports
- Ceredigion Public Services Board Annual Report
- Ceredigion Public Services Board Assessment of Local Well-being
- West Wales Population Assessment
- Data Cymru
- StatsWales

CONSULTATION & ENGAGEMENT



- Consultation Feedback reports incl.
 - Stakeholder Survey
 - Engagement and Participation Policy
 - Local Housing Strategy
 - Council Tx Premiums on Second Homes and Long-Term Empty Properties
 - Strategic Equality Plan
- Engagement exercises including:
 - Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership - Employment and Skills survey
 - Ceredigion Local Nature Partnership - Nature Recovery Action Plan
 - Well-being Centre, Cardigan
 - Growing Mid Wales - Local Area Energy Planning
 - Respite and Day Services Provision
- Engagement with stakeholder groups including Disability Forum and Older Persons Forum
- 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 [Engagement and Participation Policy](#), 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.

In 2023/24 we have benefitted from some important engagement events that provide a unique insight into the views of citizens and stakeholders.

These include the new Housing Strategy between May and June 2023, in which residents gave their views on the

proposed vision, priorities and objectives for housing in Ceredigion over the next five years. This was followed by the consultation on Council Tax Premiums on 2nd Homes and Long-Term Empty Properties between September and November 2023 in which respondents provided their opinions on the level of premium that should be charge for both types of properties. Both of these have been used in the production of this report.

Public Engagements in 2023/24

There were 23 engagement and consultation campaigns during 2023/24, which is 7 more than in the previous year. There were 11 engagement campaigns and 12 consultation campaigns.



The results of campaigns are used to inform decisions taken by Elected Members. In 2023-24 Cabinet and Council made eleven decisions which resulted in changes to a service, policy or strategy that would significantly impact on the

public. Council officers prepare a report for Elected Members to help inform their decisions. 100% of the reports requiring this type of decision included a synopsis of the consultation carried out to help develop the proposed change. Details can be seen in the relevant report to Cabinet or Council, and these are all published on our [website](#).

We take a 'continuous engagement' approach to developing our services. This involves regular meetings with specific stakeholders. For example, Ceredigion Youth Council, Disability Forum, Local Nature Partnership and the Carers forum. It gives us a head start when we develop new services and strategies because we have been talking regularly with the people who have lived experience of the topic.

Our new Engagement Toolkit lists the mandatory stakeholders that must receive information about public consultations. The list includes Elected Members, the Council's Leadership Group, Town and Community Councils, Ceredigion County Council staff and members of Ceredigion Public Services Board. The toolkit also lists contact details of people who can help us to promote our consultations. For example, Ceredigion Family Centre Network, Young Farmers clubs and the Armed Forces Veterans Forum.

The number of responses depends on the topic of the campaign. There was a very

high number of responses to our consultation on the level of council tax premiums payable on 2nd homes and long-term empty properties. Conversely, the campaign to identify barriers faced by people who are not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) received only 6 responses.

The new My Account platform launched in March 2024 will help us to develop our online relationship with people who have expressed a specific interest in our consultations. We are also working on improvements to the Engagement and Consultation webpage so that people can see the results of their feedback more clearly.

The Engagement and Participation policy will be reviewed in 2025 and it is likely that the action plan will include a new set of actions. This will ensure that we continue to improve our practice.

Details of the engagement and consultation exercises conducted during 2023/24 can be found overleaf.

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. Details of how to get in touch are printed on the back of this report.

ANALYSIS OF ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION CAMPAIGNS IN 2023/24

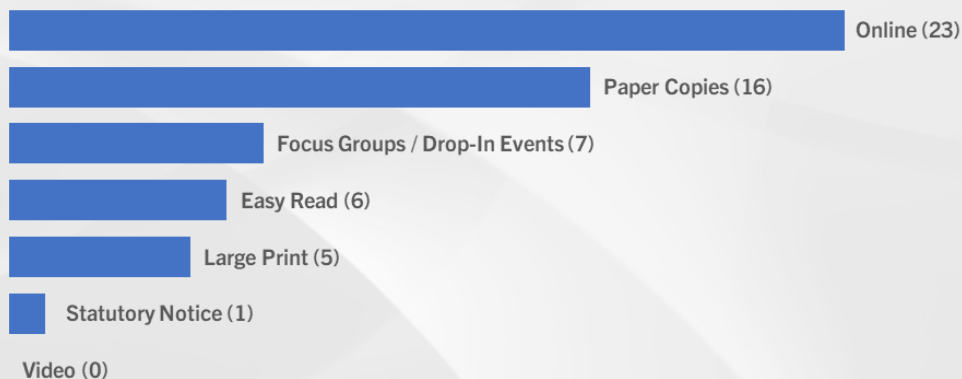
PERCENTAGE OF CAMPAIGNS THAT WERE STATUTORY



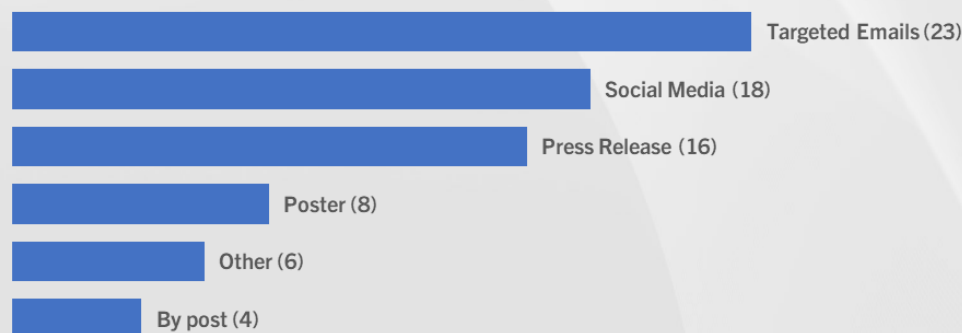
CAMPAIGNS THAT WERE FED BACK TO STAKEHOLDERS



METHODS USED TO ENGAGE AND PRESENT THE INFORMATION



METHODS USED TO PUBLICISE CAMPAIGNS



ENGAGEMENT CAMPAIGNS IN 2023/24

Title of Activity	Description	Response	What next
Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans (March 2023 – March 2024)	Conservation areas are areas of special architectural or historic merit. This was a campaign to collect views and knowledge from local residents and interested parties, such as Historical Societies, to inform the appraisals and management plans.	57 responses.	The initial engagement was used to inform the preparation of draft conservation area appraisals and plans. Further consultation will be required before they are adopted.
Respite and Day Services provision (March – June 2023)	A review of these services was undertaken as part of the work to deliver the Council's Through Age Wellbeing Strategy. People were asked for their opinion on current respite and day services and asked what they would like to see in the future	411	The results of the campaign and a proposed action plan were approved by Cabinet in December 2023. The report and the minutes of the meeting are published on the Council website. The Through Age Wellbeing programme board and Healthier Ceredigion Strategic Group will ensure that the action plan is delivered.
Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28 (May – July 2023)	A regional fact-finding exercise asking for public opinion on the state of equality in Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Powys. A report on the engagement campaign was presented to Cabinet in October 2023.	224	The responses were used to write the first draft of Ceredigion Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28. The report and the minutes of the meeting are published on the Council website.
Growing Mid Wales - Net Zero survey (August – September 2023)	A regional survey to identify opportunities and challenges that businesses in Mid Wales are facing to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. Feedback was provided to the public, businesses and key stakeholders via the Growing Mid Wales newsletter January 2024.	78	A business event was held in March 2024 to disseminate the findings. Insights are being used to shape future funding initiatives, inform electricity grid investments and ensure tailored support is available to local enterprises.
Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership - Employment and Skills survey (October – December 2023)	A regional survey to identify recruitment and skills challenges faced by employers and businesses in Ceredigion and Powys. The campaign was promoted via local business networks and the Regional Skills Partnership website. Results were fed back via the same channels	111 (32 from Ceredigion, 70 from Powys, 9 from the rest of Wales or outside Wales).	Responses will assist in shaping the delivery of employability and skills support in Mid Wales. Responses will also be discussed at the Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership cluster group meetings
Ceredigion Local Nature Partnership - Nature Recovery Action plan (November 2023 – March 2024)	People were asked to complete an online survey or attend a workshop and share their thoughts and feedback on the first draft of the Nature Recovery Action plan. The campaign was targeted at organisations, landowners, academics, businesses and the public sector.	48	Responses were used to help develop the second draft of the Partnership's Nature Recovery Action Plan. There will be a consultation on this in 2024-25.

Title of Activity	Description	Response	What next
Ceredigion Local Nature Partnership - Support for Meadow Management (December 2023 – January 2024)	The Local Nature Partnership wanted to learn more about what additional support may be needed to restore and enhance our special grassland habitats. People were asked to complete an online survey, take part in a structured interview or join a discussion at one of the Local Nature Partnership meetings.	71	Ceredigion Biodiversity team will arrange a meeting with stakeholders in April 2024 to discuss the next steps
Wellbeing Centre, Cardigan (December 2023 – February 2024)	People were asked to say what they would like to see as part of a potential Wellbeing Centre development in Cardigan to serve the south of the county. People were invited to respond via an online survey or by attending a focus group.	417	The information will inform a report to Cabinet on a proposed location for a Wellbeing Centre in Cardigan and a draft proposal of the facilities and service that could be offered.
16+ and NEET survey (January – March 2024)	This campaign was aimed at people in Ceredigion that are not in employment, education or training. We wanted to know more about their barriers to employment. This will help the Employment Support team to tailor the support they offer.	6	The engagement method will be reviewed. The campaign may be run again to try and get more responses.
Emotional Wellbeing of Unpaid Carers (January – March 2024)	This campaign was aimed specifically at unpaid Carers. We wanted to learn more about their use of our Leisure and Wellbeing Centres. This will help us to offer services that meet their needs.	29	The responses have been shared with the Carers and Community Support Team. The data has not yet been analysed. We will create a summary report and an infographic of the results and share this with the public.
Growing Mid Wales - Local Area Energy Planning (January – March 2024)	People were asked to share their opinion on current energy and transport use, low-carbon energy technologies and heating systems and sustainable travel options. The aim is to identify an effective route towards meeting the national net zero target.	542	Our Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) was finalised in March 2024. It will be presented to Cabinet in May 2024. The report provides the evidence required to help develop a pipeline of projects to transform the energy system to zero carbon over time. Insights from the survey will be incorporated into the development of these projects. In addition, the LAEP will be used to make sure that the National Energy Plan for Wales considers local needs and priorities whilst mapping out future energy demand and supply for all parts of the country.

CONSULTATION CAMPAIGNS IN 2023/24

Title of Activity	Description	Response	Impact of the Consultation
Reuse of former New Quay library building (February – May 2023)	The Council's Charity Trustee Committee asked people, mainly in New Quay, if they agreed with a proposal to change the purpose of this Trust to "to advance the education of the inhabitants of New Quay." People were also asked how the trust site could be used in the future within the new proposed purpose.	32	The results were presented to the Charity Trustee Committee in June 2023. It was agreed to change the purpose as proposed and to ask if any group or organisation are interested in taking on the site. 3 expressions of interest are being considered. The report and the minutes of the meeting are published on the Council website.
Future use of trust monies of charity 'Old County School, Tregaron' (March – May 2023)	The Council's Charity Trustee Committee asked people, mainly in Tregaron, for their opinion on how the money held in trust from the sale of the school should be spent to advance the education of pre-school and school-age children in Tregaron.	25	The results were presented to the Charity Trustee Committee in June 2023. Most of the responses related to sporting facilities. Discussions are taking place with officers from Porth Cymorth Cynnar and Schools services to explore relevant options. The report and the minutes of the meeting are published on the Council website.
20mph limits on county roads (4th to 28th April 2023)	The proposals to amend the speed limit on certain county roads were advertised to the public. This consultation was associated with Welsh Government's scheme to reduce speed limit on street lit/residential roads in September 2023.	76	The results were presented to Cabinet in June 2023. Cabinet noted officers' response to the objections and approved the making and publication of the Traffic Regulation Order. It was felt that this decision is justified on the broad grounds provided by the Welsh Government for this national scheme. The report and the minutes of the meeting are published on the Council website.
Local Housing Strategy – 'Housing for All' (May – June 2023)	People were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the vision, priorities, objectives and actions proposed in the Strategy. The consultation resulted in some changes being made to the final version of the Strategy.	40	Cabinet accepted the changes to the Strategy on 3rd October. It was approved by full Council on 26th October 2023. The report and the minutes of the meeting are published on the Council website.
Ceredigion Stakeholder survey (June – August 2023)	People were asked for feedback about how well we run council services for the people of Ceredigion. This consultation was part of our annual self-assessment process, and the responses informed our self-assessment report 2022-23.	148	The Self-Assessment report 2022-23 was approved by full Council in December 2023. It was also submitted to Welsh Ministers, Estyn and the Auditor General for Wales. The report is now published on our website and includes a list of opportunities for improvement for us to address.
Council Tax Premiums on 2nd Homes and Long Term Empty Properties (September – November 2023)	People were asked for their opinion on the level of council tax premiums that should be charged on long-term empty properties and second homes in Ceredigion. The survey was promoted to the general public in Ceredigion and also to people who own 2nd homes.	1,403	The report was presented to full Council in December 2023. Council agreed to increase the Council tax premium on long term empty properties from 1st April 2024, the increase being dependent on the length of time the property has been empty. Council agreed to increase the Council tax premium on 2nd homes to 100% from 1st April 2024 and to 150% from 1st April 2025. The report and the minutes of the meeting are published on the Council website.
Harbours Management Policy (September – October 2023)	This campaign was open to the public and targeted at people with an interest in the harbours in Aberaeron, Aberystwyth and New Quay. People were asked for feedback on the revised policy. Stakeholders were kept updated via Harbour Users Consultative Committee meetings and Calm Waters publications. Amendments were made to the policy as a result of the consultation.	108	The responses and the revised policy were presented to Cabinet in February 2024. Cabinet approved the revisions made as a result of the consultation and agreed to adopt the new Harbours Management policy. The report and the minutes of the meeting are published on the Council website.

Title of Activity	Description	Response	Impact of the Consultation
School Reorganisation (September – October 2023)	People were asked for their opinion on the proposal to change the language medium in the Foundation Phase at Comins Coch, Llwyn yr Eos, St Padarn, Plascrug and New Quay primary schools and to admit 3-year-old pupils on a part time basis at Comins Coch, St Padarn and New Quay primary schools.	74 (New Quay:10 responses; Comins Coch:14 responses; Plascrug:27 responses; Llwyn yr Eos:6 responses; St Padarn:11 responses). The School Council at each of the five schools and Estyn also responded.	Cabinet decided to amend the language provision in the Foundation Phase at Comins Coch, Llwyn yr Eos, St Padarn, Plascrug and New Quay primary schools. Cabinet also decided to admit 3-year old pupils on a part time basis at Comins Coch and St Padarn primary schools, but not at New Quay primary school. The reports and the minutes of the meetings, in February and March 2024 are published on the Council website.
Review of Polling Stations (October – November 2023)	As part of this review, people were invited to provide feedback about their local polling station, including parking facilities, accessibility and overall suitability. People were also asked for feedback on changes to polling stations as suggested by the Returning Officer.	16	A report on the consultation process and the proposed changes to polling stations were discussed at full Council meeting in January 2024. The report and the minutes of the meeting are published on the Council website.
Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28 (October – December 2023)	People were asked if they felt that the draft Equality Objectives were the right ones for Ceredigion and if the draft action plan would help the Council to achieve the objectives.	59	A report was presented to Cabinet in March 2024. Cabinet approved the Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28. The report and the minutes of the meeting are published on the Council website. The Plan itself is also published on the website and a report on progress of the plan will be published each year
Local Housing Market Assessment (December 2023 – January 2024)	This was not a public consultation. The Welsh Government assessment tool was completed following a period of desk top research and engagement with a range of stakeholders. Specific stakeholders, including Registered Social Landlords, a private developer representative, Care Society, West Wales Domestic Abuse Service, Elected Members and relevant council teams were invited to comment on the findings of the Assessment. Their feedback resulted in some changes to the draft Assessment.	18	Cabinet approved the Assessment at their meeting in March 2024. Any necessary actions which may follow will form part of the Housing Strategy or the Local Development Plan. The report and the minutes of the meeting are published on the Council website.
Additional Licensing scheme for HMOs (January – February 2024)	People were asked for feedback on the quality of service provided by their landlord and by Rent Smart Wales. They were also asked for feedback about the HMO licensing scheme. Responses were fed into the review of the existing licensing scheme, due to end in April 2024.	17	The review of the existing Additional Licensing scheme was discussed by Cabinet in March 2024. The report and the minutes of the meeting are published on the Council website. The Public Notice with details of the scheme are also published on the website.

SUPPORTING SELF-ASSESSMENT

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 have continued to meet with 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 our Workforce Plan, and feedback on the Council's performance can be provided at any time.

Staff Consultation

Ceredigion has a strong history of measuring staff sentiment, even before the COVID-19 pandemic and the adoption of the New Ways of Working initiative. This has continued into 2023/24 with two main pieces of work.

A review of the Council's Hybrid Working Arrangements was conducted in June 2023 to record feedback on the effectiveness of the interim hybrid working arrangements. Employees and their line managers were

asked to provide feedback on their experiences. The survey comprised of two parts, the first for all employees and the second for those with line management responsibility. A total of 870 responses were received resulting in a response rate of 75% and all service areas were well represented.

In October 2023, this feedback was used to help inform the Council's decision to adopt hybrid working as a permanent option and to develop a Hybrid Working Policy to replace the Interim Hybrid Working Policy.

Later in the year in December 2023, the Council conducted its latest annual Health and Well-being Survey to record staff sentiment across a range of issues from their personal well-being to working arrangements. There was a significant increase in the number of responses to the latest survey with 1,293 responses received. The feedback received from staff is invaluable in helping to create a healthier and happier workplace for everyone and is used to inform the training and support provided to staff.

STAKEHOLDER SURVEY 2023

Stakeholder Survey 2023

One example of the consultation undertaken was the Stakeholder Survey between June and August 2023. This consultation sought residents', businesses' and stakeholders' views on the Council's overall performance and progress in delivering its Corporate Well-being Objectives.

There were a total of 148 responses, the majority of whom were residents (139), with a further 5 from local businesses and 4 from other stakeholders. The consultation was designed to inform the Council's Self-Assessment process and ongoing monitoring of its performance.

Overall, there was a high degree of support for creating job opportunities and providing training opportunities for local people, as there was for listening to young people's views and prioritising local produce and services. Respondents also supported activities to encourage young people to be physically active, further develop participation events to ensure local communities have a voice and that local people need to be able to buy homes or live locally.

The table overleaf shows how the actions we are taking in our Corporate Strategy align with the priority areas identified by respondents in the survey.

You can find out more about our recent consultations along with the results on our consultation [website](#).

HEADLINES

59% satisfied or very satisfied with Ceredigion as a place to live
(26% dissatisfied or very dissatisfied)

30% found the Self-Assessment Report useful or very useful
(31% found it not useful or not at all useful, 35% said neither)

28% agreed or strongly agreed with the performance measures being monitored
(18% disagreed or strongly disagreed, 48% neither agreed nor disagreed)



Have your say on Ceredigion's Wellbeing Objectives

Closing date: 31 August 2023



WHAT YOU TOLD US

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

WHAT YOU TOLD US	HOW OUR CORPORATE WELL-BEING OBJECTIVES ALIGN
<p>90% agreed or strongly agreed that creating job opportunities and apprenticeships for young people is important</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress the £110m Mid Wales Growth Deal Support new and growing businesses in the County Create new job opportunities for skilled young people Promote equal opportunities in employment Further develop apprenticeships in the County
<p>82% agreed or strongly agreed that it is important to prioritise locally sourced produce and supply chains</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritise locally sourced produce and supply chains Support local businesses in the recovery from COVID-19 Achieve sustainable economic growth Equitable funding within the Arfor programme
<p>78% Agreed or strongly agreed that poverty is a problem in Ceredigion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tackle poverty in Ceredigion Support working parents in Ceredigion
<p>80% agreed or strongly agreed further development of participation events is needed to ensure local communities have a voice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further develop participation events to ensure communities have a voice Enhance the role of Community Connectors to support the development of resilient communities
<p>62% agreed or strongly agreed that it is important that the Welsh language is promoted and protected in Ceredigion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the Welsh Language in Ceredigion Deliver the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2022 to 2032 Ensure that pupils are confident communicators in both Welsh and English by the end of Key Stage 2 (year 6) Encourage the retention of Welsh-language place names
<p>49% agreed or strongly agreed that there are many opportunities for people to contribute to their local community through volunteering</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and increase the number of support groups and programmes Ceredigion Workways+ to help people who are not in employment to access training, work experience, volunteering and job opportunities Further develop relationships with third sector organisations, promoting volunteering opportunities and 'community champion' pathway

WHAT YOU TOLD US	HOW OUR CORPORATE WELL-BING OBJECTIVES ALIGN
<p>93% agreed or strongly agreed that opportunities for local people to upskill through education and training is important</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance the provision of skills and learning opportunities for people aged 16+ Develop Leadership skills within our Children and Young People at the earliest opportunity Ensure that all learners' identified Additional Learning Needs are supported appropriately to become independent and fulfilled individuals
<p>83% agreed or strongly agreed that it is important that the voices of children and young people are heard</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the Ceredigion Youth Council as a forum for children and young people
<p>83% agreed or strongly agreed that developing confidence in children to be physically active is important to providing the best start in life</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage and enable people to get physically active so they can benefit from positive health and wellbeing Develop an improvement plan for the strategic provision of facilities to increase physical activity levels in the county Developing Children and Young People's skills, knowledge and confidence to be physically active Launch Well-being Centres across the County
<p>86% agreed or strongly agreed It is important that local people are able to buy homes, or live locally</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will continue to address the issues of second homes, holiday homes ownership or the conversion of residential properties to holiday let by seeking the support of the Welsh Government to bring forward legislation under the Planning Act and Taxation Service Enable more young people to build their lifetime home
<p>65% agreed or strongly agreed that more social housing is needed in Ceredigion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with local Housing Associations to increase our stock of social housing
<p>64% agreed or strongly agreed that further provision for active travel (e.g. walking and cycling) is needed in Ceredigion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significantly increase the active travel provision including walking and cycling throughout the County in order to improve the health of our population. 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

SETTING AND REVIEWING OUR WELL-BEING OBJECTIVES

The Council's Corporate Strategy 2022-27 was published in November 2022 and the 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 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 developed during 2022 to coincide with the new Corporate Strategy. They were identified through a wide variety of evidence, including public engagement, the Ceredigion Assessment of Local Well-being and the ambitions of the 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 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.

The Act also requires us to review the Objectives annually to ensure they remain the right Objectives for Ceredigion that we are delivering them. In autumn 2023 they were reviewed and it was agreed by Council that they remain the priority areas for the County and will remain in place for 2024/25.

The following pages provide a summary of how our 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 2023/24

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. See pages 38, 42, 46 and 50 for the score against each Objective.

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 2023/24 our customer contact centre (CLIC) handled the following enquiries:

106,079

Telephone calls received during the 2023/24 year

22,555

Emails responded to during the 2023/24 year

90,419

Enquiries logged during the 2023/24 year

15.5%

Of telephone calls were in Welsh during 2023/24



**BOOSTING THE
ECONOMY, SUPPORTING
BUSINESS AND ENABLING
EMPLOYMENT**

Progress Made

- Over the last year, good progress has been made on the Mid-Wales Growth Deal, which is now nearing the delivery phase. During the year the updated Strategic Portfolio Business Case was formally submitted to the Welsh and UK Governments and the first tranche of the Growth Deal funding was received, with a value of £4m. Both governments agreed to provide £55m totalling £110m over a period of up to 15 years. The delivery phase will mean that some of the projects and programmes may be in a position to begin delivery in 2024 resulting in the creation of jobs, boosting economic activity and attracting further investment.
- The Council has also been successful in applying for £10.9m of Levelling Up funding for Aberystwyth from the UK Government, and a further £2.8m worth of investment has been secured from the UK Government's Community Renewal Fund.
- 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. 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.
- The Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership Employment and Skills Plan 2022-25 addresses the barriers and issues affecting businesses in Mid Wales. 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. The event was attended by 61 people representing 17 organisations who all contributed to the interactive round table discussions to understand the barriers to skills and recruitment. Businesses were invited to register their interest in attending the first business cluster group and joining the Growing Mid Wales mailing list to become more involved in the work of the Partnership.
- 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.
- The Employability Support Team, who are funded by the Communities for Work + project from the Welsh Government, provide help to people in Ceredigion who aren't in work, education, or training, to find jobs and training opportunities.
- Funding has been allocated to 14 projects to increase adult numeracy across Mid Wales. Through the UK Government's Multiply programme which forms part of the Shared Prosperity Fund, an allocation of just under £2 million of funding is being given to deliver a variety of projects. The types of projects that have secured funding, include supporting people to be more confident with numbers, running courses to help people use numeracy to manage their money, working with employers to provide courses covering specific numeracy skills that are needed in the workplace and supporting the hardest to reach learners.
- In collaboration with Powys County Council, Ceredigion County Council were successful in receiving funding to progress a project to enable 'SMART Towns' in Ceredigion. The project has involved the installation of wi-fi access points in Aberaeron, Llandysul, Lampeter, New Quay and Tregaron, with Aberystwyth and Cardigan already having systems in place. The increased use of technology will enable Town Councils and the County Council to access data and analytics which will support future planning and more efficient business operating and growth, as well as the possibility of providing a greater visitor experience. It is anticipated that this technology will support businesses and positively benefit regeneration. This will enable businesses to plan projects which lead to economic growth as well as helping them make the best use of digital technology.
- 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 of any local authority in Wales and the first to have coverage across much of the county. As well as the Council having access, the network will also be available and accessible to all businesses, organisations and residents.
- 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, empower local communities and increase life chances for local people. Both Powys and Ceredigion Councils manage the local delivery of projects in their areas. So far, a total of 162 projects have been awarded funding in the region worth a total of £37 million.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- 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.
- In March 2024, Ceredigion County Council approved the adoption of the Welsh Government's Non-Domestic Rates - Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rates Relief Scheme for 2024-25. The scheme aims to provide support by offering a discount of 40% on non-domestic rates bills to eligible businesses occupying premises and operating in the retail, leisure and hospitality sectors, such as shops, pubs and restaurants, gyms, performance venues and hotels. The scheme, which is fully funded by Welsh Government, will support approximately 600 businesses in Ceredigion with an estimated total value of £2.3m.
- 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 Planning Service Follow-up Review found that the Council has taken "swift action" to respond to the recommendations made by Audit Wales and good progress is being made. Auditors worked closely with the Council to identify areas for attention and improvement which has enabled it to move quickly to respond to and implement many of the Auditor General's recommendations. The Follow-up Report recognises the good progress made, notably by introducing several changes to the governance arrangements supporting the Development Management Committee. It also provides further recommendations which include refinements to site inspection processes and arrangements to ensure that the Committee is focused on strategically important applications.
- The Cardigan Market Hall Project will facilitate the restoration, repair and provision of updated facilities for the historic Grade 2* Market Hall, securing its long-term future and sustainability for market traders and opportunities for new enterprises. The project will address some structural improvements required to the building and that also improves the overall appeal and contribution the building makes to the vitality of the town.
- The estimated cost of the project for Phase 1 and 2 is £2.95 million with funding being secured from a variety of sources, including from the Welsh Government's Transforming Towns Strategic Fund which has been partially match funded by Ceredigion County Council. As well as being a space for small businesses to develop and grow, thus ensuring long-term sustainable employment, it also has significant heritage value to the town and attract visitors from the wider area.

£10.9m

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

£2.5m

of external capital funding attracted

111

Businesses supported across Ceredigion and 38 new businesses supported

35

Regeneration projects supported across the County

312

Energy Bill Support Scheme recipients paid with a total value of £124,800

387

Energy Bill Support Scheme Alternative Fuel Payments recipients paid with a total value of £77,400

46

New jobs created during the year through the work of the Council

£42.4m

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

IMPROVING OUTCOMES



SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESSES

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

Its aim to stimulate innovation that increases the value and variety of sustainable economic opportunity for the people of Ceredigion. Approximately 70 projects have been supported to date.

Two schemes that provide funding aimed at supporting communities and businesses in Ceredigion re-opened for a second round of applications in February 2024.

The Cynnal y Cardi Community Development and Support Fund, has small grants of £1,000 to £10,000 and larger grants of £10,001 to £50,000.

Meanwhile, the Cynnal y Cardi Supporting Local Business Fund also offers a small business grant of £1,000 to £10,000 and business development grants of £10,000 to £50,000.

The aim of these funds is to **strengthen local entrepreneurship and support businesses at all stages of their development** to start, sustain, grow and innovate, including through local networks.

Building **resilience, growing the local economy and creating the opportunities for local people** ultimately supports community regeneration Ceredigion by building **stronger, more vibrant communities and promoting social and economic development**.



SHARING PROSPERITY

Ceredigion's 15-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 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 stakeholder organisations, which will enable the building blocks for further economic growth to be put in place.

The investment and the delivery of 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.



GROWING THE ECONOMY

The Mid Wales Growth deal has continued to progress during 2023/24 and is now nearing the delivery phase which will mean that some of the projects and programmes may be in a position to begin delivery in 2024/25 resulting in the creation of jobs, boosting economic activity and attracting further investment.

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.

During the year the updated Strategic Portfolio Business case was formally submitted to Welsh and UK Governments and the first tranche of the funding, worth £4million, has been received, enabling the Growth Deal to progress to the next stage of delivery.

This is a key milestone for the Ceredigion and the Mid-Wales region and reinforces the Welsh and UK Government's trust in the Growth Deal to deliver on its objectives.

Since then, the Programmes and Projects that form the Mid Wales Growth Deal Portfolio have been progressing their business cases. They will contribute towards the delivery of one of the following Strategic Growth Priority areas:

- Applied Research & Innovation
- Agriculture, Food & Drink
- Strengthened Tourism Offer

- Digital
- Supporting Enterprise

The Growth Deal is expected to bring direct and indirect benefits, including growth in regional prosperity and creation of better-quality jobs for the local labour market. The first allocation of funding to the region will enable Growing Mid Wales to deliver financial support to the projects, programmes when they are ready to receive it.

The outputs 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.

The outcomes that the Growth Deal is expected to deliver are:

- **Growth in regional prosperity**
- **Creation of better-quality jobs for the local labour market**
- **A more skilled workforce within the region**
- **Improvements in standards of living across the region.**

The programmes and projects supported by the Growth Deal are also 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.

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 address 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

FURTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

5

Procurement and commissioning training, awareness sessions, and events delivered during year

7

Contracts tendered that incorporate either new/innovative approaches, carbon reduction measures, community benefit measures or the opportunity for greater development of social enterprises

100%

Of planning applications registered in 7 working days, a significant improvement on the 50% in the previous year

86.6%

Of planning applications dealt with on time, a significant improvement on the 36.7% in the previous year



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.
- During the year, the Council worked with the Ceredigion Association of Voluntary Organisations (CAVO) to establish a network of 48 Warm Welcome Spaces across the County, benefitting approximately 1,760 people and supported by approximately 260 volunteers. The aim is to encourage communities to get together for a 'chat and a cuppa' with some offering a hot meal and activities.
- The Council co-ordinated the Ceredigion Food (Poverty) Network and distributed £121,500 to sixteen community food distribution groups, benefitting over 13,000 people and helping them to provide approximately 59,577 meals and food parcels.
- Ysgol Bro Teifi in Llandysul has been given the "Investors in Carers" Bronze Level Award for its commitment to supporting students who are young carers and staff members who also care. The school was assessed against six themes for the Investors in Carers scheme: carer lead, staff training, identification, information and support for carers, and evaluation. Following training through the medium of Welsh the quality mark indicates that the school is able to effectively identify and support carers.
- Around 1,000 booklets to help people eat well for less have been distributed across Ceredigion. The bilingual booklets were designed by environmental charity UKHarvest to reduce food waste and involve handy tips and information on food waste, meal planning, making the most of each shop, food storage, food safety and basic recipes. The booklets have been distributed to community food groups across the county by Ceredigion County Council and encourage residents to take advantage of the tips and advice during the cost-of-living crisis.
- The County's Food Hygiene Rating Scheme administered by the Council has delivered lasting benefits to consumers and businesses by driving up standards in food businesses. 69% of businesses are displaying a rating of 5, the top rating for food hygiene. The scheme gives customers the confidence that food is being prepared and served in a clean and hygienic way.
- Following the opening of the first Well-being Centre in Lampeter in October 2023, Cabinet approval has been given for the second centre in Cardigan with feasibility study on the location and facilities to be concluded in the summer of 2024. Options for the Wellbeing Centre in the north of the county are also currently being explored.
- We opened our Lampeter Wellbeing Centre in October 2024, resurfaced the Tennis Court / Multi Sport Area in Lampeter and created a new All-Weather Pitch at Plascrug Leisure Centre.
- The Council has been working in collaboration with Hywel Dda University Health Board to make best use of Council assets to deliver efficient and sustainable services for both organisations. Outpatient physiotherapy clinics delivered by Hywel Dda are now delivered from the ground floor and first floor of the Council's offices in Canolfan Rheidol in Aberystwyth.
- More than 200 refugees who settled in West Wales were invited to a special event to mark Refugee Week in June 2023 at Gwesyll yr Urdd Llangrannog. Refugees who settled in Ceredigion from Ukraine, Afghanistan and Syria attended the event which included a range of fun activities and refreshments. The event was organised by Ceredigion County Council in partnership with Urdd Gobaith Cymru to celebrate the contribution refugees have had in the UK and to promote a better understanding of why people seek sanctuary in other countries.
- Four refugees from Ceredigion were a central part of the St. David's Day celebrations at the Senedd on 1 March 2024. Ceredigion was praised for providing a safe haven for those escaping war, many of whom contribute greatly to our society and enrich our lives.
- Food banks receive donations of long-lasting items to be used in food parcels, but financial donations can help to top up supplies such as fresh produce and to cover the costs of fuel for heating the building and for the vehicles for collecting and delivering food parcels.
- Good progress has been in relation to increased recruitment of Personal Assistants. The Direct Payments Service have used innovative approaches to engaging with local communities in raising the profile of Direct Payments including farming communities as well as Job Centres. 254 Personal Assistants have been recruited during 2023/24, significantly higher than 133 in the previous year.

CREATING CARING AND
HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



- The Business Case has now been completed on the ground-breaking Cylch Caron integrated health and social care project in partnership with Hywel Dda University Health Board.
- During 2023/24 there has been a significant growth in people accessing health intervention sessions with over 100 new referrals a month to the National Exercise Referral Scheme. The scheme is an evidence-based health intervention that incorporates physical activity and behavioural change, and helps clients make and maintain healthier lifestyle choices to improve their wellbeing.
- There has also been a significant increase in physical activity sessions across all ages - in 2022/23 there were 362,611 participations and in 2023/24 this has increased to 510,711.
- Ceredigion's support to unpaid careers continues to strengthen and there are now 2,219 carers registered with the Carers' Information Service, an increase from the 1,888 in the previous year. Three carers' magazines were published during the year which provided a wealth of information on services and support for our carers. The Carers' Breaks service was also developed further along with our Carers' Card which included discounts to local attractions and shopping, and we also provided free leisure facility membership to our unpaid carers.
- The Community Youth Work and Prevention Team are maintaining open access delivery including 3 youth centres, Y Fan mobile provision and supporting community events.
- Community Connectors remain very active within communities, and they have started to work closer with communities to develop their resilience. For example, in the Llandysul area, the Community Connector has been supporting the creation of a local Memory Cafe. These monthly events provide a relaxed space for people with memory problems or dementia and their carers, and for people

- who have previously been caring for a loved one with dementia.
- The 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.
- Council officers supported community organisations to access over £125k of grant aid in 2023/24 to develop their services.
- Funding has been secured from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Cynnal y Cardi to support the continued development of the 'Walking for Wellbeing' programme across the county which enable the Council to continue promoting and facilitate social prescribing, such as gardening, walking and swimming activities.
- A new "Fit 4 Life" programme has been introduced that encourages those who have successfully completed the NERS programme to become full members of the Well-being/Leisure Centre. The programme offers supervised enjoyable exercise programme to improve health and wellbeing.
- The Play Action plan which was developed in response to the Play Sufficiency Assessment in 2022 is currently being implemented. The Council continues to work with Ray Ceredigion to develop play provision in the county.
- During 2023/24 work on the new Penmorfa Centre for Independent Living has been progressing and opened in April 2024. The centre is here to support both carers and those they support, with the tools and resources you need to navigate the caregiving journey. The Centre is not just about equipment. It's a community hub where you can connect with experts through regular drop-in sessions, workshops and demonstrations, covering a wide range of support services throughout the year.
- New data dashboards have been developed to support the ongoing reporting requirements for social care.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

607

Referrals to the Community Connectors for support received

703

Eligible unpaid carers received £500 carers support payments

4,250

Carers magazines printed and distributed across Ceredigion

13,188

Attendees at health intervention programmes

48

Warm Spaces available across Ceredigion

521

Referrals for support from the Ceredigion Youth Service

1,150

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

144%

Increase in Young Carers Information Service membership

510,711

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

12

Consultation exercises and 11 engagement exercises completed by the Council in 2023/24

IMPROVING OUTCOMES



SUPPORTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE

The commitment to creating Caring and Healthy communities by supporting some of Ceredigion's most vulnerable residents was demonstrated through the decision to transfer Hafan y Waun Care Home to Council ownership.

The home is the County's main dementia residential facility providing 90 beds, but the previous management withdrew from running the home in early 2023, which resulted in the Council stepping in to ensure continuity of this important local service.

Hafan y Waun is a modern, fully functional building, that meets Care Inspectorate Wales requirements in relation to the facilities available. It also has a large dementia friendly garden.

The transfer of ownership **ensures the continuity of this vital resource for the future and provides certainty to residents and their families** in the County who rely on the services provided by the home. Maintaining this important facility will **support residents and families well-being**.

The move also aligns with the Council's Through Age Well-being Programme by **providing specialist full-time care, raising the quality of the facilities** through the adoption of a purpose-built facility, and providing the **opportunity for further development of services** from the facility in the future.



CREATING HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES

Ceredigion's new Housing Strategy for the period 2023-28 was launched in October 2023, setting out a clear vision for housing within the County along with the key priorities and response to the challenges ahead.

The Strategy's vision is to work towards sufficient, suitable and sustainable accommodation to meet residents' needs now and in the future. The priorities for achieving this are increasing the supply of housing, improving housing conditions and supporting people in their own homes and communities.

The Strategy recognises the important role that housing plays, together with the influence it has on the **health and wellbeing of individuals, families, and the wider community** and remains considerate to the Welsh language and culture.

Ceredigion needs houses that can be adapted and which can sustain people at different stages of their lifetime. This will go a long way to ensure a **healthier population**, alongside **better use of existing housing stock, and improved standards and living conditions**. Housing is also needed which is suitably located which will **enable people to live at home for longer**, which has the potential to create more **resilient and connected communities**.



ENHANCING THE PHYSICAL, MENTAL AND SOCIAL WELL-BEING OF CEREDIGION'S RESIDENTS

Ceredigion's first Wellbeing Centre in Lampeter opened during 2023/24 and is at the forefront of the Council's work to promote healthy communities across the County.

The Well-being Centre is the first of its kind in the County and is funded by a Welsh Government Communities for Learning Grant and Ceredigion County Council.

The centre provides a range of services and support to **enhance the physical, mental and social wellbeing of the communities** in the area, **empowering individuals to develop skills and resilience that will enable them to cope with life's challenges**.

The Wellbeing Centre is a major milestone towards realising the vision of the Council's Through Age Wellbeing Strategy and delivering its Corporate Wellbeing Objective of **Creating Caring and Healthy Communities**. Other centres are planned in the north and south of the County over the next couple of years.

The redesigned interior of the Lampeter Well-being Centre provides extra capacity to deliver the exercise referral scheme and brand new weights and cardio equipment has also led to enhancements in this programme.

Notable upgrades have been made to the Centre's infrastructure, including an array of facilities with multi-purpose rooms, meeting rooms, a practical skills room equipped with a kitchen and a changing places.

The addition of multi-functional spaces has

allowed for community groups to access the facility and several training events, such as Menopause Awareness, have been delivered. The Centre also hosted the International Older People's Day in October 2023 which was a great success and saw over 100 people attending the day with 40 provider stalls to view.

The Centre also provides **increased access to information, advice and assistance** for residents on all council services, including skills and employment advice, hardship and housing support, services for young people, support for carers, Community Connectors and early support for Mental Health.

Since its formal opening in October 2023, a positive response has been received from the community as more and more residents come to use the different resources available.

For example, there has been a significant increase of 135% in Fitness Suite usage, a 10% increase in Exercise Class participants and a massive 765% increase in Membership of the Centre.

The Health Intervention Programmes delivered from the Centre have seen 78 Referrals to National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS), 67 clients have received their first consultation and 16 are on the waiting list.

Looking ahead, the Council is working closely with Therapy Teams in Hywel Dda University Health Board to see what other services can be delivered from the Centre.

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

1,722

Of Ceredigion's residents participating in the National Exercise Referral Scheme

1,148

Participants in the new "Fit 4 Life" Programme to improve health and well-being

Progress Made

- The Council is continuing to modernise education establishments. For example, the net zero carbon 3-storey extension at Ysgol Uwchradd Aberteifi was completed in June 2023, while the extension and improvements to Cardigan Primary School were completed August 2023. The new Ysgol Dyffryn Aeron at Felinfach is currently under construction and due to open in January 2025, further details overleaf.
- 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 (87.4%) and one of the highest nationally. Level 2 qualifications are GCSE grades A*- C or equivalent.
- Inspections outcomes for Ceredigion's schools have been strong during 2023/24. All nine of the inspection reports issued by Estyn reflected positively on the school being inspected, and none of Ceredigion's schools require follow-up measures.
- The e-sgol initiative has continued to provide sector leading support for education provision in Ceredigion and nationwide. E-sgol is a blended learning initiative to deliver online teaching and learning opportunities using direct, real-time and interactive learning approaches. The project is funded by Welsh Government and coordinated nationally by Ceredigion County Council.
- 42 secondary schools are currently working with the e-sgol initiative nationally with 584 learners from September 2023, while e-sgol's "Carlam Cymru" revision and well-being sessions have now been used over 74,000 times.
- Ceredigion supported the National Playday on 2 August in Aberaeron, which was attended by the Deputy Minister for Social Services, Julie Morgan MS. RAY Ceredigion hosted to the event with organisations from across Ceredigion providing various play activities for children and their families. Several Council services supported the day including the Employment Support Team, Flying Start, the Carers Unit and Ceredigion Actif. Together they provided children with the opportunity to take part in multi-skills sessions, balance bike activities, face painting, arts and crafts, and various sports.
- Over 2,000 young people in Ceredigion took part in the 'Rhoi dy Farn' (Give your Opinion) ballot organised by Ceredigion's Youth Service to vote on topics that will shape the Youth Council's priorities during the year. The main themes raised by young people during the event were the ongoing cost of living crisis, careers and education. This is one of the activities supported by the Council as part of its commitment to ensuring that the voices of young people are heard.
- In January 2024, Ceredigion Celebrated National Apprenticeship Week. The week is an opportunity to reflect on the achievements of apprentices, both past and present. The Apprenticeship Scheme has supported 29 apprentices to date, in a wide range of roles, with 100% having achieved their qualification at the end. On completion of their apprenticeships, the Council retained 14 out of 18 apprentices, and 11 new apprentices are undertaking qualifications this year.
- Ceredigion's ten Children and Young People's skills Mentors successfully completed the 'Thrive Practitioners' course. The mentors work county wide in schools supporting pupils with social, emotional and behavioural challenges providing targeted interventions. Thrive is a child centred approach in which children's social and emotional needs can be better understood and met.
- 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.
- A new Welsh Language Strategy 2024-29 was developed following workshop events with stakeholders, which will be consulted on during August 2024.
- 81 members of Council staff are currently undertaking "Welsh in the Workplace" courses to either learn or strengthen their Welsh language skills and build confidence in using the Welsh language.
- A new monthly staff E-newsletter called "Gwena" was launched to further promote awareness of the Welsh language and culture.
- A new project to promote the Welsh language and its culture to people moving to Ceredigion was launched. The "Welcome to Ceredigion" project aims to raise awareness about the Welsh language and aspects of life through the medium of Welsh to people who are moving into the area. The aim is to empower communities by showing the opportunities available to contribute to and support communities, as well as helping people to understand how the Welsh language is woven naturally into the life of Ceredigion. project is hosted by Cered (Menter Iaithe Ceredigion), Ceredigion County Council and sponsored by Cynnal y Cardi.
- In October 2023, a group of Ceredigion's fostering families gathered at Canolfan



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



Steffan Community Support Base in Lampeter to take part in a pottery painting activity with Pot-Sian. The activity was arranged by the Foster Wales Ceredigion Team as part of a programme of monthly activities organised to support Fostering Families in Ceredigion. This event provided an opportunity for the whole fostering family to take part in an activity together and to recognise the invaluable role each member of the family plays in supporting vulnerable looked after children in Ceredigion.

- 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.
- The Welsh Government's Childcare Offer, which provides help to families with childcare costs, has been promoted throughout Ceredigion with 371 children approved for the Offer between October 2023 and March 2024, compared to 195 during the same period in the previous year.
- The Council's Lifelong Learning and Skills Service of is one of six providers in Ceredigion offering the 'Multiply Project' which supports young people aged 19+ with access to the development of numeracy skills through various training opportunities and qualifications. To date over 270 learners have been engaged with the Multiply project.
- 36 Ceredigion Primary Schools in Ceredigion have an improved Rich Play environment due to the Play Project. The project gives the children attending those schools an opportunity to enhance their physical, mental, social and emotional health and wellbeing. The project is a partnership between Ceredigion's Schools

Service and Ceredigion Actif. The project involves mentoring school staff followed by Play sessions delivered by Play Specialist RAY Ceredigion.

- Young Ambassadors is a youth leadership movement aimed at developing future leaders through sport, physical activity, and play. The Young Ambassadors set up and deliver sporting opportunities, games and informal play opportunities for other young people in Ceredigion. There were 123 Bronze Young Ambassadors in 2023-24 running across 42 schools and 21 Silver Youth Ambassadors delivering in secondary schools.
- Funding has been secured from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to undertake a feasibility study on options for a new theatre building following discussions with Welsh Government and Arts Council for Wales.
- The Deprivation and Equity Strategy has been approved and successfully implemented during the year. The early impact shows more beneficial, constructive and challenging conversations between schools and Local Authority, working towards more equitable provision.
- All Estyn reports following primary, secondary and lifelong school surveys show that pupils with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) in Ceredigion make good progress against the learners' personal targets.
- During 2023/24 an average of 160 young people received weekly support via school-based youth work, 112 accessed weekly activities in the community, 596 accessed holiday activity programmes and 133 young people aged 16-25 were supported with education, training and employment.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

9,500

Learners supported across 36 Primary Schools, 3 Middle Schools, 4 Secondary Schools and 1 Pupil Referral Unit.

270

Learners have engaged with the Multiply Project to improve numeracy skills through training opportunities in Ceredigion

315

Young people receiving targeted School Based Youth Worker support or intervention

680

Community learning activities provided by the local authority

520

Referrals to the Ceredigion Youth Service for support

380

Young people engaging in after-school activities provided by the Youth Service

£61,000

Awarded in Sustainability Grants to support registered childcare providers in Ceredigion

47.4%

Increase in the number of eligible families accessing the Childcare Offer during 2023/24

8,620

Public access computer sessions used across all libraries

54,715

Visitors to the County's four town libraries

IMPROVING OUTCOMES



IMPROVING RURAL EDUCATION FACILITIES

Work on building the new Ysgol Dyffryn Aeron commenced in July 2023. The £16.3m 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 240-pupil Welsh-medium 3-11 school will provide 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.

This pioneering project is testament to the commitment of Ceredigion County Council and Welsh Government to invest in rural education. It blends traditional Welsh-medium education with cutting-edge environmental sustainability which reflects a growing awareness of the critical role educational institutions play in promoting sustainability.

The new facility will bring the learning accommodation within the Aeron Valley up to the Sustainable Communities Learning Programme standards. Apart from delivering **modern and improved teaching facilities**, the project will also deliver a **net zero carbon school** with reduced **running costs**, which aligns with the Council's ambition of becoming a **zero-carbon authority by 2030**, along with greater **opportunities for learning and physical activity** through the new sports pitch.



BUILDING SUSTAINABILITY

Since September 2021 Ceredigion and Powys County Councils have worked in a collaborative partnership on elements of the education service. The collaboration, known as the Mid Wales Education Partnership, pools resources and receives funding from the Welsh Government.

The Partnership, formed for the benefit of our schools, practitioners and learners, continues to go from strength to strength, with progress evident in the areas of learner progress, officer collaboration and headteacher and practitioner awareness.

Regulatory reports support the strong performance. No schools in Ceredigion are in follow-on measures and recent Estyn inspection reports reflect positively on the learning culture in schools, developing skills of pupils, and promoting opportunities through inclusivity.

The partnership provides a range of benefits to education across Mid Wales. It provides **greater support for Welsh and bilingual education**, it helps to **reduce the impact of rural deprivation** and **improve well-being** of pupils, and provides a development path for new teachers and those in leadership roles to **retain key staff for the benefit of the education system**. Collaborating and sharing resources in this way, ensures more **sustainable education** across the Mid Wales region.



CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

The Sgilliau Bywyd Sgilliau Gwaith (Life Skills Work Skills) project works with people in Ceredigion aged between 13 and 25 years old who are at risk of becoming NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training). It supports those at risk of disengaging with education or training by providing intensive interventions to improve their attendance and attainment at school.

The project is funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and is part of the Council's ambition to support those furthest from the labour market.

It provides vulnerable learners with access to a tailored vocational curriculum to meet their needs with a range of different courses offered to give them the **best opportunity to achieve and reach their full potential**.

The aim is to develop learners **social, emotional and behavioural skills** and **improve their attainment and attendance** ensuring that they have appropriate **progression opportunities to achieve higher levels of qualifications** or work experience opportunities in order to **gain employment**.

72 learners achieved accreditations during the last year with 36 learners being offered work experience placements.



IMPROVING HEALTH & REDUCING POVERTY

Free School Meals has been extended to include all Year 5 and 6 pupils in Ceredigion from September 2023.

The Universal Primary Free School Meals scheme is funded by Welsh Government and was introduced in response to the cost of living pressures on households.

The Council introduced the first phase of Free School Meals for pupils in Reception Class, Year 1 and 2 in September 2022, and Year 3 and 4 in April 2023. Now, All Foundation Stage Learning and KS2 pupils can take advantage of this scheme providing healthy and nutritious meals.

Supporting the rollout of the scheme was a key priority for the Council in its Corporate Strategy published in 2022. As a result, Ceredigion is far ahead of the Welsh Government's timetable to offer Free School Meals to all primary school pupils by September 2024.

In addition to helping to **tackle poverty**, Free School Meals give children the nutrients they need to **grow and develop**, **improves concentration** and **attainment**, **improves social skills** and **behaviour**, while also **introducing healthy eating habits**. These are all key parts of the Council's objective to "provide the best start in life and enable earning at all ages".

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 work on Ysgol Dyffryn Aeron in addition to various upgrades in recent years. The educational attainment of Ceredigion’s pupils also remains amongst the highest nationally, and regulatory reports are also positive with no schools in follow-on measures.

Learning opportunities also continue to develop such as Sgilliau Bywyd Sgilliau Gwaith (Life Skills Work Skills) supporting younger people, the continued e-sgol support for education provision and the Lifelong Learning and Skills Service of is one of six providers in Ceredigion offering the ‘Multiply Project’ post-16 learning is continuing to provide training and support to open new opportunities for all of Ceredigion’s learners.

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

93.2%

of Year 13 school leavers in education, training or employment, above average nationally (92.2%)

70.0%

of pupils taught Welsh as a first language in Ceredigion, above average nationally (21.6%)

91.7%

of Ceredigion’s working age population qualified to Level 2 or higher, above average nationally (87.4%)

70.5%

of Ceredigion’s working age population qualified to Level 3 or higher, above average nationally (67.4%)

PROGRESS MADE

- The coastal defence schemes in Ceredigion are making good progress. Construction works are progressing well at Aberaeron, and work continues to develop an outline business case to meet Welsh Government requirements for the Aberystwyth scheme. However, the business case for Borth/Ynyslas is currently on hold while we await completion of a related piece of flood risk management work.
- Work is also continuing alongside Carmarthenshire County Council and other stakeholders to develop an appropriate and affordable solution to flooding at both Llanybydder and Llandysul, with public engagement having been undertaken. Funding has previously been secured to develop the business case for these projects with Natural Resources Wales anticipated to lead on construction once the work has been agreed.
- Work on the Cardigan Tidal Flood Risk Management Scheme flood has also progressed with the outline design phase being completed and a public engagement event held at Cardigan Castle and subsequent online meeting with officers from the Council. This scheme, led by Natural Resources Wales, aims to protect Cardigan residents from floodwaters from the River Teifi and work is expected to start in 2025.
- In 2019, the Council declared a Climate Emergency and committed the Council to achieving Carbon Net Zero by 2030. A Net Carbon Zero Action Plan for Ceredigion County Council has been published setting out its response to the climate emergency, explaining why we need to take this action and why the 2030 target is so important to tackling climate change.
- Since 2005, Ceredigion has seen a reduction in its carbon dioxide emissions. The latest data from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero shows that emissions have dropped 41% in the County from a total of 611 ktCO₂e in 2005 to 362 ktCO₂e in 2022. (ktCO₂e = kilotonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent)
- Initiatives including LED street lighting upgrades, biomass district heating schemes, boiler replacement, fleet renewals, solar panels and building rationalisation have all contributed to the reduction in carbon emissions. The Council is in the process of developing schemes to further reduce our energy usage and emissions in order to meet the 2030 target.
- The programme of installing energy-saving LED bulbs in streetlights and illuminated road signs around the County is substantially complete resulting in a saving of over £2 million.
- A project is underway to replace the highway lighting and improve active travel connectivity between the promenade and the harbour in Aberystwyth. This comes following funding received by Ceredigion County Council from the UK Government's Levelling Up initiative. The scheme is another example of the investment that the Council is putting into Aberystwyth and further progresses the efforts to become a net zero carbon county with the use of LED lanterns.
- In the last six years Ceredigion has consistently achieved one of the highest recycling rates in both Wales and the UK and is currently at 72.0% for the twelve months to December 2023, which is above the national average of 66.1% and second highest nationally. The high levels of recycling in the County divert waste away from landfill. Ceredigion has maintained its position as one of the few local authorities to exceed the Welsh Government recycling targets in 2023/24.
- In March 2024 Growing Mid Wales held a decarbonisation event in partnership with Powys and Ceredigion County Councils. The event drew together industry leaders, experts and businesses focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and energy costs. In line with the objectives of Growing Mid Wales and the two local councils, the event furthers the mission to empower businesses in adopting sustainable practices and reducing their carbon footprint through fostering dialogue, collaboration and innovation.
- New approaches to the challenges of waste collection during the winter has resulted in improved performance. 93.8% of waste collection routes were collected on the scheduled day of collection during 2023/24, up from 89.3% in the previous year. Meanwhile, 98.8% of waste collection routes were collected on the scheduled week of collection, up from 96.6% in the previous year. The new approach includes bringing forward some Bank Holiday collections.
- The amenity grass cutting service now incorporates 'No Mow May' to support wildlife and biodiversity in the County. The long-standing management of road verges enables biodiversity and wildflowers to thrive. The initiative is being driven by the need to reduce our impact on the environment by providing a balance between protecting habitats, public safety and maintaining the beauty of the natural environment.
- Four of Ceredigion's most popular beaches will be flying Blue Flags once again in 2024 after receiving the award from Keep Wales Tidy. The Blue Flag beaches are Borth, Aberystwyth South, Llangrannog and Tresaith.
- A further six beaches have achieved Seaside Award status which are Aberporth, Aberystwyth North, New Quay Harbour, New Quay Traeth Gwyn, 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



**CREATING SUSTAINABLE,
GREEN AND
WELL-CONNECTED
COMMUNITIES**





KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

demonstrating good management and safety provision.

- Cilborth, Llanrhystud, Mwnt and Penbryn have all won the Green Coast Award. The Award recognises beaches that have an overall “Good” standard of water quality, public facilities, safety provision and management.
- A new Digital Strategy to cover the period up to 2030 has been developed and is being consulted on during the summer of 2024. The new Strategy seeks to deliver a ‘Digitally Confident Ceredigion’, in which the Council is confident to develop, innovate and deliver digital services in partnership with our communities, and where communities are connected, engaged and ready to benefit from them. It has been designed to support Welsh Government’s National Digital Missions and to support the delivery of the Council’s four Corporate Well-being Objectives.
- Significant lobbying by Ceredigion County Council and others has resulted in 50.6% coverage of full fibre broadband giving over 100 Mbps capability. Over the last year, the provision of Fibre to the premises (FTTP) has increased from 40.9% to 50.6%.
- Undertook 4.2m waste collections, collecting 127 kilograms of waste per person and managing over 700 litter bins across the County.
- Managed over 1,700 pay and display vehicle parking spaces across the County.
- In the autumn of 2023, the Council took action to address the issue of second homes and long-term empty properties in Ceredigion through increasing the Council Tax levy on second homes and long-term empty properties from April 2024. The increases were introduced following a long period of discussion, evidence gathering and public consultation that saw over 1,400 responses. The changes were introduced to help ensure that there is a good supply of

housing available on the market for local people.

- The Council also took part in the Welsh Government’s Empty Homes Grants Scheme. There are approximately 800 long term empty properties in Ceredigion during a time where there is a shortage of supply across the County. Empty properties are often expensive to remedy and contribute to the decline of an area, but they are also an underused community asset when there is a shortage of housing. Grants of up to £25,000 are available under the scheme to renovate empty properties, make them safe to live in and improve their energy efficiency.
- A new Housing Strategy for the period 2023 to 2028 was published. The Strategy sets out the vision for housing within the County along with key priorities which identify and respond to the challenges ahead for the next five years. The Strategy recognises the important role that housing plays with the influence it has on the health and well-being of individuals, families and the wider community. The two main priorities in the Strategy are to increase supply and improve housing conditions, and supporting residents in their own homes and communities. The Strategy will be delivered in partnership with key stakeholders.
- 69% of households supported by the Homelessness Team were successfully prevented from becoming homeless, slightly higher than the previous year’s 67%.
- Funding of £1.5m has been secured to build the first phase of an active travel plan that eventually aims to connect Bow Street to Aberystwyth with a foot and cycle path. The new shared use path for pedestrians and cyclists will help to further connect Aberystwyth with nearby settlements of Comins Coch and eventually with Penrhyncoch and Bow Street.

72.0%

Of waste recycled composted or reused for the twelve months to December 2023

3.8m

Total kilowatt hours of renewable energy generated by council assets, higher than the 1.8m hours last year

2.42

Days on average to clear fly-tips across the County

41%

Reduction in carbon dioxide emissions since 2005

14

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

95.0%

Of category 1 highway defects repaired or made self by the end of the next working day, higher than the 93.6% last year

93.8%

Of waste collection routes collected on the schedule day of collection, an increase from 89.3% in the previous year

50.6%

Provision of Fibre to the premises (FTTP) broadband, increased from 40.9%, due to investment in digital connectivity over the last two years

IMPROVING OUTCOMES



DECARBONISING TRANSPORT

Following the successful delivery of two phases of Electric Vehicle (EV) infrastructure installations in Ceredigion County Council car parks, the County now has the highest number of EV charging points per 100,000 population for the public to use across the whole of Wales.

According to Welsh Government data, Ceredigion has 158.5 chargers per 100,000 population compared to the Welsh average of 60.7.

This means residents, businesses and visitors can now choose from 112 charging points across the County. 76 of these are provided directly by Ceredigion County Council in 18 different locations, including Council car parks.

Since declaring a Climate Emergency in 2019, the Council has been at the forefront of **tackling climate change**.

Reducing carbon emissions and encouraging the use of **clean energy** is central to achieving net zero carbon by 2030, and will play key role in **halting and reversing the effects of climate change**.

The investment in EV charging demonstrates the Council's commitment to achieving net zero carbon by 2030, and will hopefully make the decision to transition to EV easier. Funding for a third phase of EV charger installations has also been secured and will be delivered during 2024/25.



INCREASING ENERGY EFFICIENCY

In September 2023, Ceredigion County Council was awarded Special Commendation in the "National Council or Local Authority of the Year" category at the National Energy Efficiency Awards Ceremony held in Birmingham in September 2023.

The Energy Efficiency Awards recognise the work being undertaken by the energy efficiency sector in Wales.

The Council has been delivering the Local Authority 'ECO Flexible Eligibility' scheme for several years. This scheme has helped households **reduce their energy bills, tackle fuel poverty** and reduce **carbon emissions** through the installation of heating systems and associated insulation measures, thus improving **the energy efficiency and thermal comfort** of homes.

This work has also been vital in helping households **manage the cost of living and energy crisis** of the last two years that has seen utility bills increase dramatically and place greater pressures on household finances.

The award rewards one exceptional council that has shown a true commitment to promoting energy efficiency within its region. It recognises the efforts of the Council and its service to its local community.



CREATING HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES

An exciting new Community Housing Scheme was launched in September 2023 to **support local people live and remain in their local communities** in Ceredigion.

The scheme seeks to support people with affordable housing in their local area by **creating pathways to home ownership** by providing interest free shared equity loans.

Affordable Housing in Ceredigion is a key priority of the Local Authority, and the Council deploys significant resources in creating and managing affordable housing. In March 2022 the Council made a commitment to support the scheme in its new Corporate Strategy.

There has been a significant increase in demand for rural properties and 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 de-population, and provide new options for people to remain in their local community**.

Schemes like this can also lead to a **greater sense of connection**, and improve the **long-term sustainability of a community**. Funds raised from the Council Tax Second Homes Premium are ringfenced to fund the scheme and the first applications are expected shortly.



TACKLING COASTAL EROSION & FLOODING

Works on Aberaeron's £32m coastal defence scheme is now underway. Residents and visitors to the town will have noticed in recent months the unloading of boulders for the defences at the town's South Beach.

The scheme includes the construction of a rock breakwater extending out from North Pier, the refurbishment and re-building of the pier head of South Pier, construction of flood walls, construction of a flood gate at Pwll Cam inner harbour and improvements to the existing defences on South Beach.

Rising sea levels and storms pose a serious threat to the town. Storms in recent years have led to the closure of Quay Parade and overtopping of the current defences within the harbour and South Beach.

The scheme will protect the town and the surrounding coastline from rising sea levels, preventing flooding and coastal erosion. It will **improve the level of protection** afforded to the **many businesses and homes** in the town and will **preserve the unique and historical character of the area for future generations**.

The scheme is funded through a £25.85m contribution from Welsh Government's Coastal Risk Management Programme, along with a £4.74m contribution from Ceredigion County Council.

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

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
- Significant investment in coastal defence schemes will help protect communities now and for the future.

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

KEY MEASURES

156

Dwellings improved through Disabled Facilities Grants at a total value of £960,600

68.3

Low carbon energy generation projects across the County (per 1,000 population)

123

Households who were threatened with homelessness successful prevented from actually becoming homeless

100%

Of planning applications validated within 7 days

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.

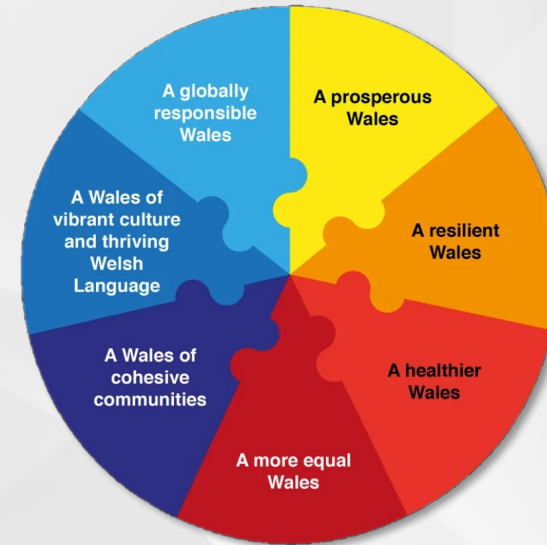
We monitor and review progress towards delivering the Objectives on a regular basis and produce an annual Self-Assessment Report in which we convey progress.

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 at the end of 2022/23 and was implemented during 2023/24 in order that our updated Strategic Equality Plans were published in 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](#) are being reviewed during 2024 and will be consulted on during the summer of 2024. An updated strategy covering the next five years will be published in late 2024.

FINANCE

The [Medium Term Financial Strategy](#) provides a financial governance framework to operate within by setting out the issues that are

JOINING UP OUR PLANS - LINKS TO KEY RESOURCES

considered and taken into account for financial planning for the medium term.

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.

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.

The Procurement Strategy is currently being reviewed 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.

Following a review of the Council's governance documents, it was agreed that a Governance Framework would be created to act as an overarching document encompassing the Council's governance arrangements and to replace the previous Local Code for Corporate Governance.

The Council is committed to demonstrating that it has the necessary corporate governance arrangements in place to perform effectively, and to ensure that these arrangements are reflected in the Council's governance arrangement documentation.

The new [Governance Framework](#) was also approved by Council in March 2024. It demonstrates the arrangements in place to ensure that the intended outcomes for all stakeholders are defined and achieved, whilst ensuring that the Council always acts in the public interest.

It sets out the way the Council meets that commitment in order to achieve the Council's vision and Corporate Well-being Objectives, brings together all governance arrangements and provides assurance that there are clear governance arrangements in place.

The latest [Annual Governance Statement](#) for 2022/23 was approved by Council in February 2024 and confirmed that the Council's governance arrangements are effective and fit for purpose with good progress being made during the year with recorded achievements against each of the seven core principles of governance. A number of minor issues for resolution during the following year.

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 the Policy is currently being reviewed and a new Asset Management Plan will be published 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 was 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 is aligned to the new Corporate Well-being Objectives. It also supports 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 was published in September 2023 and 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.

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 COVID-19 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.

During 2023 a [Review of the Hybrid Working Arrangements](#) was conducted and hybrid working adopted as a permanent option for employees. A Hybrid Working Policy to replace the Interim Hybrid Working Policy is now being developed.

HOUSING

An updated [Housing Strategy 2023-28](#) was published in October 2023, which sets out the Council's housing vision and ambitions for the five year period from 2023 to 2028.

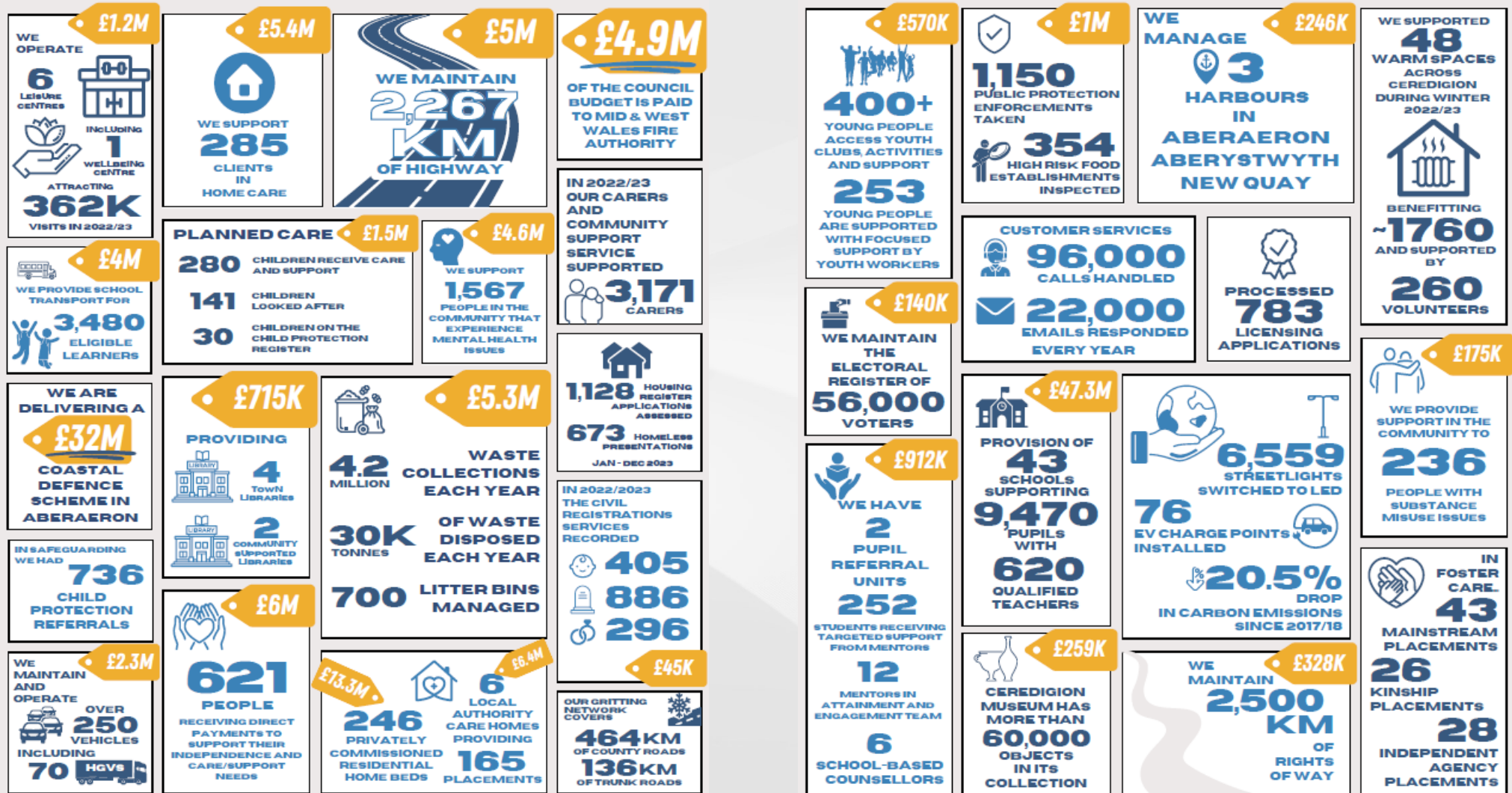
The vision of the new strategy is: *there will be sufficient suitable and sustainable accommodation to meet residents' needs now and in the future.* We recognise the important role that housing plays together with the influence it has on the health and well-being of individuals, families and the wider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

A SNAPSHOT OF CEREDIGION'S SERVICES IN 2023/24



WHERE WE PRIORITISED OUR FUNDING IN 2023/24?

The Medium-Term Financial Strategy sets out how the Council plans its budget annually and over the next 3 years. It provides the resources and financial framework to ensure that the Council's Corporate Well-being Objectives can be achieved, as well as ensuring a balanced budget is set on an annual basis and that the financial challenges and risks faced are highlighted.

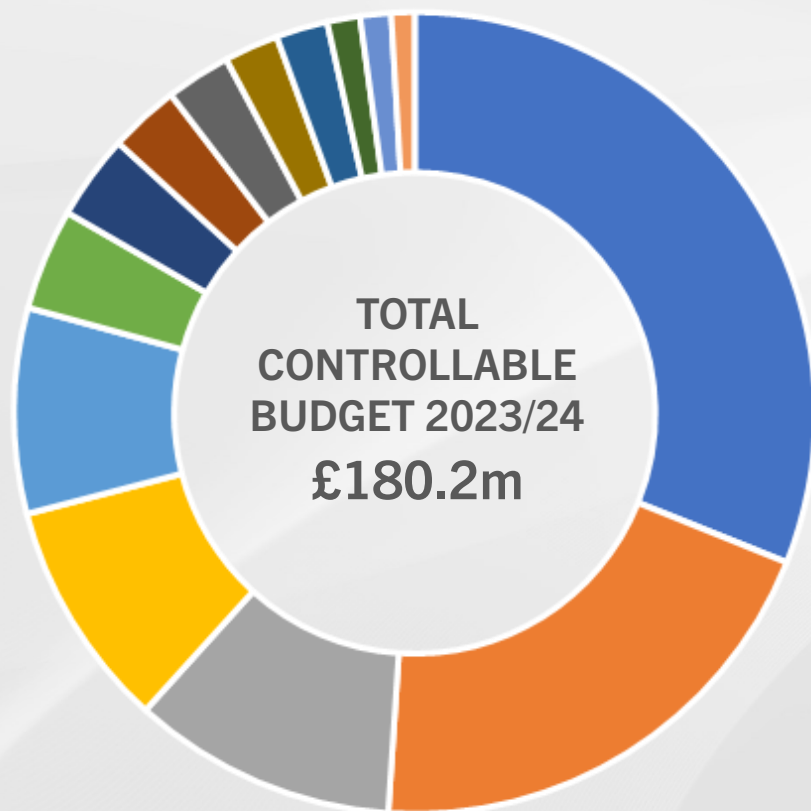
Ceredigion has a track record of setting and achieving a balanced budget as well as achieving a clean bill of health from Audit Wales. At the end of 2023/24 the Council was in a financially resilient position with a strong balance sheet and several key priorities already delivered during the year.

However, all local authorities across Wales are experiencing significant

financial challenges brought about by COVID-19, the cost-of-living crisis and more recently a return to austerity, which combined with increasing demand for services such as social care, is placing considerable strain on Councils nationwide. We received lower than expected funding from Welsh Government and have the lowest increase across Wales per head of

population, meaning that the Council will need to adapt, manage budget reductions and find new ways of delivering services in order to sustain Council services in their current form.

The following chart sets out the Council's expenditure on services in 2023/24.



Schools & Lifelong Learning*	31%	(£55.99m)
Porth Cynnal	20%	(£36.00m)
Highways and Environmental Services	11%	(£19.12m)
Finance and Procurement	9%	(£16.63m)
Porth Gofal	8%	(£14.92m)
Leadership Group	4%	(£7.38m)
Customer Contact	3%	(£6.19m)
Levies, Council Tax Premium and Reserves	3%	(£5.10m)
Democratic Services	3%	(£4.70m)
Economy and Regeneration	2%	(£3.97m)
Porth Cymorth Cynnar	2%	(£3.75m)
People and Organisation	1%	(£2.39m)
Policy, Performance & Public Protection	1%	(£2.24m)
Legal and Governance	1%	(£1.69m)

* Including delegated schools budgets

OUR PERFORMANCE 2023/24

How We Assess and 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.

Internally we monitor the delivery of our business plans for all twelve services, and the delivery of our Corporate Well-being Objectives.

Externally, we use a variety of sources for routine benchmarking. These are key Value for Money Indicators, Key Council Indicators and an independently produced Performance Profile for Local Authorities.

The Council is also one of a number of public

bodies in Ceredigion that contribute to improving well-being in our communities. In order to measure our contribution to these **wider outcomes**, we periodically review our contribution to the Thriving Places Wales Index and the National Well-being Indicators. The following pages provide a summary of the latest results from each of these source as well as links to find out more.

Business Plan Performance

Our business plan performance is monitored through a Performance Board, and on an ongoing basis, by our Leadership Group. At the end of 2023/24 our performance shows that 71% of our measures were on target and 72% of our tasks were either complete or on schedule (see charts below). The measures and objectives off-target are scrutinised in more detail by Leadership Group and relevant scrutiny committee.



- On target: 99 (71%)
- Off target by less than 15%: 18 (13%)
- Off target by more than 15%: 22 (16%)



- On schedule / complete: 163 (72%)
- In progress but behind schedule: 53 (24%)
- Not started / not complete: 8 (4%)

Delivery of Our Corporate Well-being Objectives

We also continuously monitor the delivery of our Corporate Well-being Objectives. Each objective is supported by a series of actions or “tasks” across the Council’s services which contribute to the delivery of that objective and improve outcomes.

The results from 2023/24 show that:

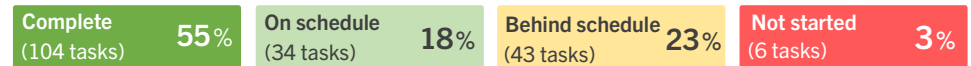
- 55% (or 104) tasks were completed that supported the delivery of the objectives, with a further 18% or 34 actions still in progress and on track at the end of the year.
- This represents 73% of tasks either complete or on track, significantly higher

than the previous years 59%.

- There were also 43 tasks that were still in progress but slightly behind schedule at the end of the year. These will transfer to the new year.
- A further 6 tasks had not been started due to challenges such as changes in priorities, legislation or withdrawal of funding to take forward. In these cases, they are reviewed and alternative tasks set or cancelled as appropriate.

The chart below outlines progress during the year. Overall progress has been good with the majority of tasks being delivered, despite the significant challenges across the local government sector.

CORPORATE WELL-BEING OBJECTIVE PROGRESS DURING 2023/24



PROGRESS BY OBJECTIVE DURING 2023/24

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



BENCHMARKING

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.

Value for Money

Value for Money can be defined as the relationship between Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness. It assesses 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 with 96.7%% of council tax collected and 98.2%% of non-domestic rates collected.

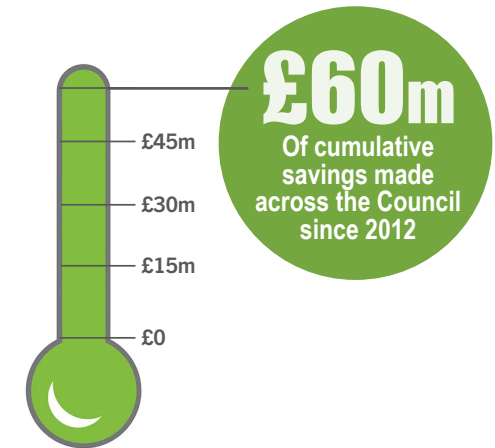
The average Band 'D' Council Tax, often used as a comparator between different counties, shows that current rates are slightly higher than the national average across Wales at £2,104 while our cumulative savings made since 2012 total £60m through a combination of restructuring, service-redesign and transformation projects, with £8.8m achieved during 2023/24.

Revenue outturn expenditure per head was £3,135 for the last full year and budgeted expenditure for the current 2024/25 year is £3,228. Revenue outturn expenditure is the day-to-day operational costs essential to the

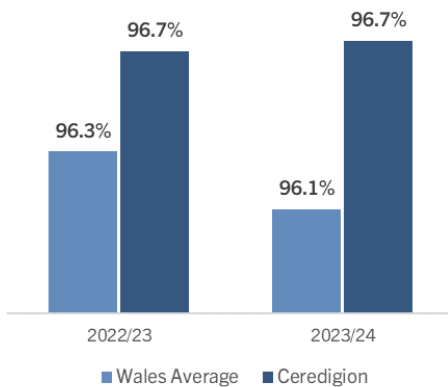
running of the organisation.

The task of setting a balanced budget in 2023/24 was extremely challenging but was a significant achievement to receive unanimous agreement.

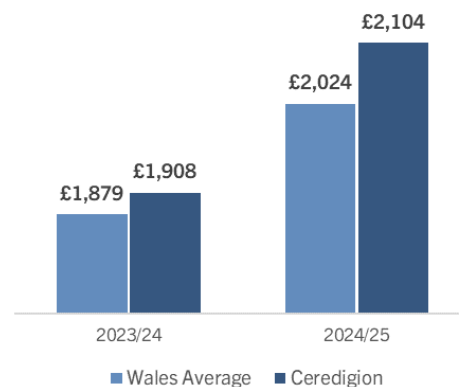
EFFICIENCY SAVINGS MADE



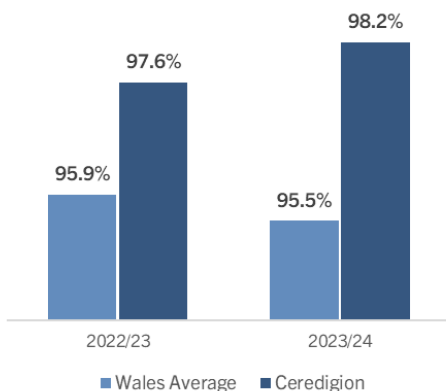
Council Tax Collection Rate



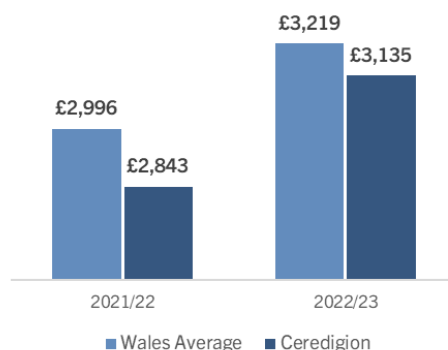
Band D Council Tax Rate



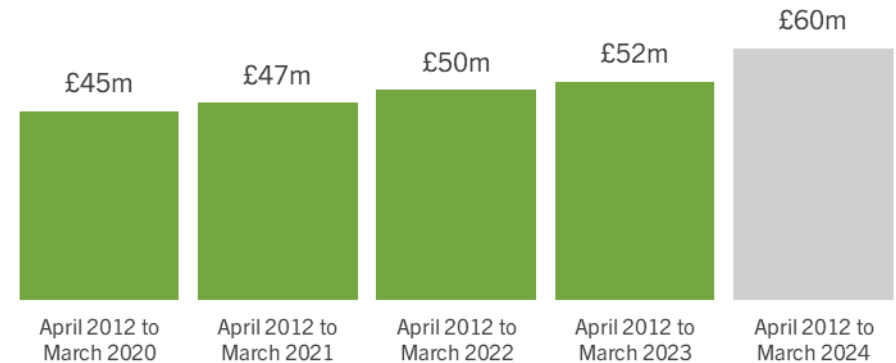
Non-Domestic Rates Collection



Revenue Outturn Expenditure Per Head



CUMULATIVE EFFICIENCY SAVINGS MADE BY CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL SINCE APRIL 2012



BENCHMARKING 2023/24

Local Authority Performance Profile

During 2023/24 Data Cymru developed a new benchmarking tool to support local authorities in better understanding their overall performance.

The new tool is called the Local Authority Performance Profile and contains a selection of 34 key performance measures across 11 themes, along with a variety of contextual data to help set the scene.

It benchmarks all local authorities' performance with the national average, quartiles and with other authorities' results to establish where it performs well and where its needs to improve. The results are updated continually so the tool provides a snapshot at any given point in time.

The results at September 2024 show that Ceredigion performs well across this set of key measures and is one of the top performing authorities nationally through the following evidence:

- Ceredigion has the joint highest number of performance measures in the upper and upper middle quartile with 25 out of 34 (see chart below).
- Ceredigion has the highest proportion of its measures in the upper and upper middle quartile nationally at 73.5%.
- Ceredigion has the joint second highest number of performance measures in the upper quartile with 13.
- Ceredigion's performance has also improved on the 21 measures (or

- 65.6%) in the upper and upper middle quartile in the previous results.
- Overall, Ceredigion has 13 measures in the upper quartile, 12 in the upper middle quartile, 2 in the lower middle quartile and 7 in the lower quartile as shown in the chart below.

Despite the significant challenges that Ceredigion faces through being one of the lowest funded authorities, along with the challenges around rurality and sparse population, these results provide useful evidence that the Council not only performs highly in comparison to authorities across Wales, but also makes effective use of the resources available to it. These are two of the main themes of the Local Government and Elections

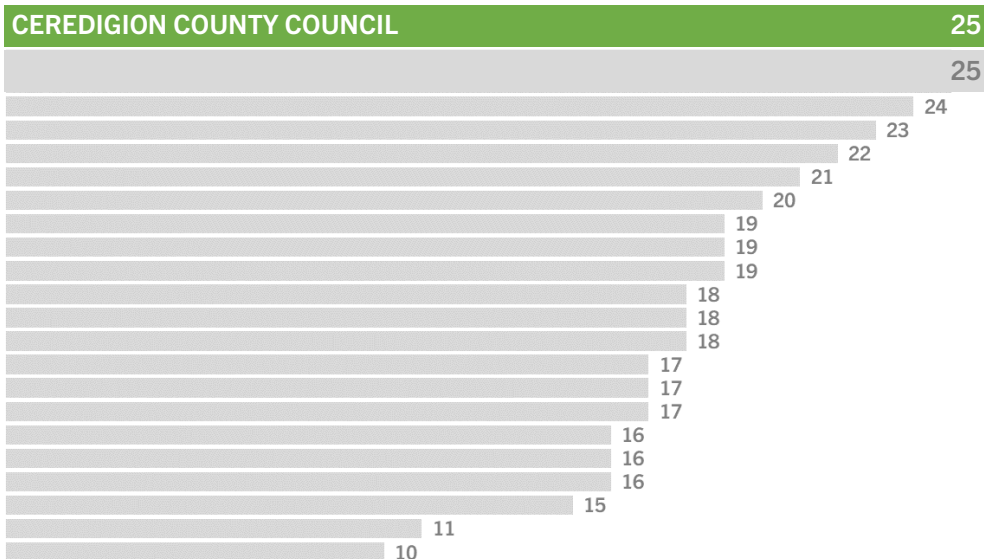
(Wales) Act that the Council is 'exercising its functions effectively' and 'using its resources economically, efficiently and effectively'.

The measures that are below average and fall within the lower middle and lower quartile are scrutinised in more detail by Leadership Group and Performance Board.

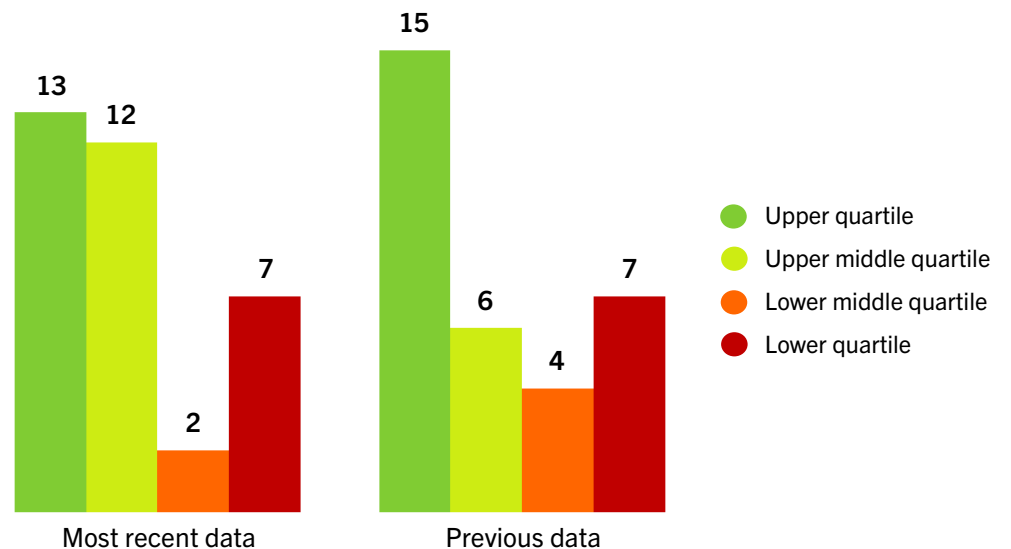
The Performance Profile tool will continue to be developed so the range of measures included and the functionality will improve further in the coming months and will form an integral part of the Council's performance management arrangements.

Please note that there are restrictions on which data can be published from the tool, hence only Ceredigion is identified in the chart below left.

NUMBER OF MEASURES IN UPPER AND UPPER MIDDLE QUARTILE



NUMBER OF MEASURES BY QUARTILE: CEREDIGION



CONTRIBUTING TO WELL-BEING AND THRIVING PLACES

Thriving Places Index Wales

The [Thriving Places Wales Index Wales](#) measures how well areas are performing at growing the conditions for equitable, sustainable wellbeing.

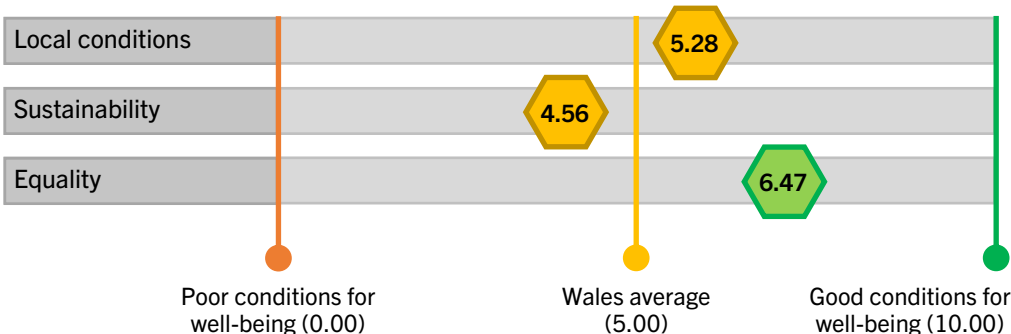
The index was developed in partnership between Data Cymru and The Centre for Thriving Places.

It is designed to support decision-makers in local areas to improve lives on the ground and to help shift the focus towards measuring what matters.

Thriving Places Wales is a place-based tool. It is primarily designed to be used by those interested in local places to explore local strengths and needs, to help guide decisions and make priorities around a shared framework of progress.

There are 51 indicators that make up the index across the three themes or “domains” of Local conditions, Sustainability and Equality. They are not performance indicators specifically for Ceredigion County Council, instead they are indicators to which all public bodies in the County contribute.

CEREDIGION THRIVING PLACES INDEX



The scores produced by the index are presented on a scale between 0 and 10 with 5 representing the Wales average. A score of 10 indicates exceptionally good conditions for well-being and a score of 0 indicates exceptionally poor conditions for well-being.

While not its primary use, the index does provide comparisons between areas. The latest results are from 2022 and show that:

- Ceredigion performs slightly above average on the **Local conditions** theme with a score of 5.28.
- Ceredigion performs below average in Wales on the **Sustainability** theme with a score of 4.56.
- Ceredigion performs significantly above average on the **Equality** theme with a score of 6.47, which is one of the highest results nationally.

The chart below shows Ceredigion’s scores for each of the three domains compared to the Wales average.

Well-being of Wales National Indicators

The 50 [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 June 2024. Data is available at local authority level for 39 of these indicators. The results show that:

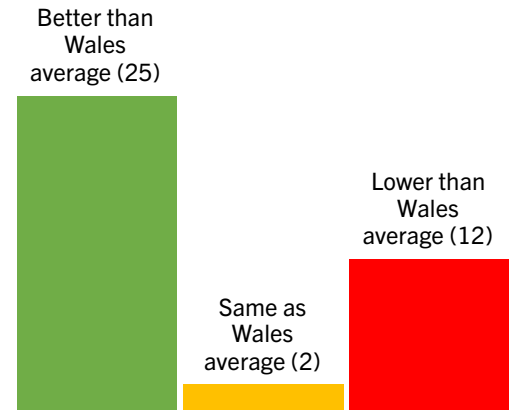
- Ceredigion is performing better than average in 25 (or 64%) of the indicators.
- Ceredigion is performing the same as average in 2 (or 5%) of the measures.
- Ceredigion is performing lower than the average in 12 (or 31%) of the measures.

This suggests that Ceredigion is making a positive contribution to the National Well-being Goals.

The annual [Well-being of Wales Report](#) provides an update on progress made in Wales towards the achievement of the 7 National Well-being Goals and draws on the latest national indicators results.

The chart above right summarises Ceredigion’s contribution to the National Well-being Indicators.

CEREDIGION’S CONTRIBUTION TO THE NATIONAL WELL-BEING INDICATORS



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 2024 and 2025 to strengthen the measures and fill gaps in data such as in assessing value for money, asset management and consultation.

Follow the links in this section to find out more about the different ways of benchmarking performance of Ceredigion County Council specifically and the wider county of Ceredigion.

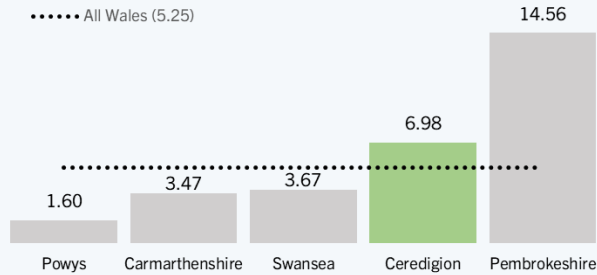
The pages that follow provide a selection of the key performance measures for the Council and the wider Community. ►

KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Community Learning

Number of learners in local authority community learning per 1,000 population including learning provided in collaboration with Further Education institutions (2022/23)

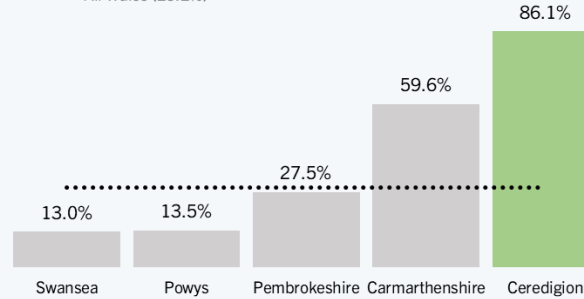
..... All Wales (5.25)



Welsh Medium Schools

% of primary schools that are Welsh medium (2022/23)

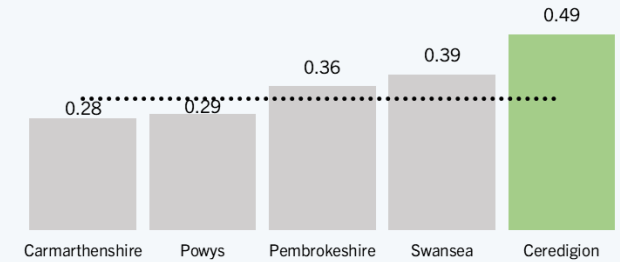
..... All Wales (29.2%)



Complaints Received by the Local Authority

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

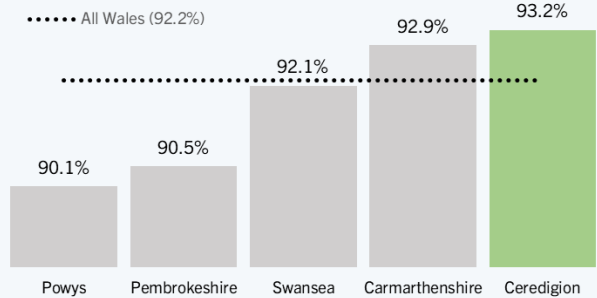
..... All Wales (0.33)



In Education, Training or Employment

% of Year 13 school leavers in education, training or employment (2023)

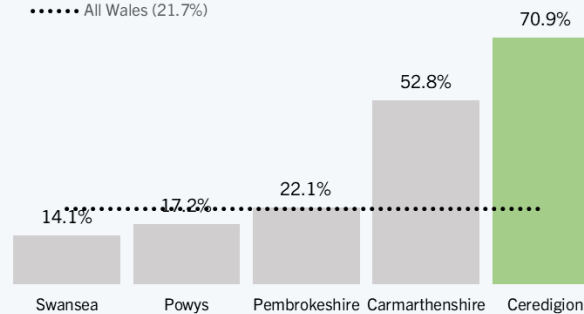
..... All Wales (92.2%)



Welsh Language

% of pupils taught Welsh as a first language (2023/24)

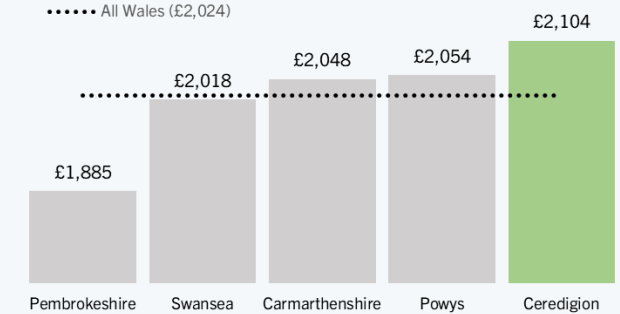
..... All Wales (21.7%)



Council Tax

Average Band D Council Tax Rate (2024/25)

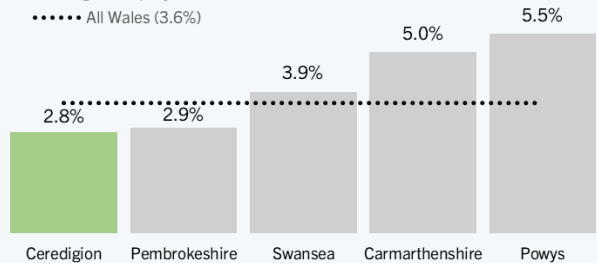
..... All Wales (£2,024)



Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET)

% of Year 13 school leavers known not to be in Education, Training or Employment (2023)

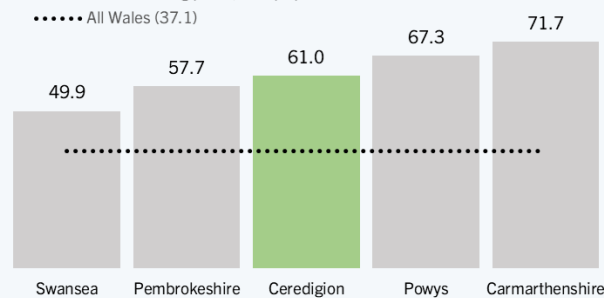
..... All Wales (3.6%)



School Counselling

Number of children and young people in years 6 to 13 who received counselling per 1,000 population (2022/23)

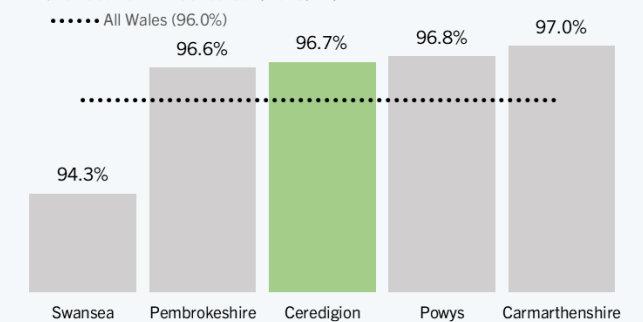
..... All Wales (37.1)



Council Tax Collection

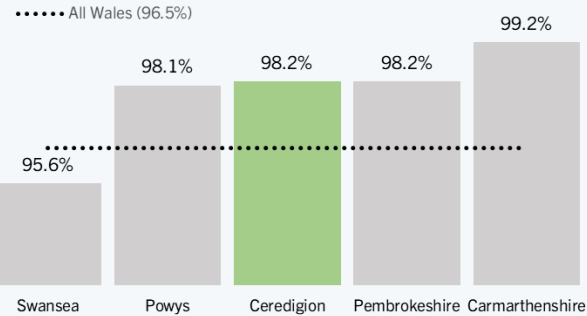
% of Council Tax collected (2023/24)

..... All Wales (96.0%)



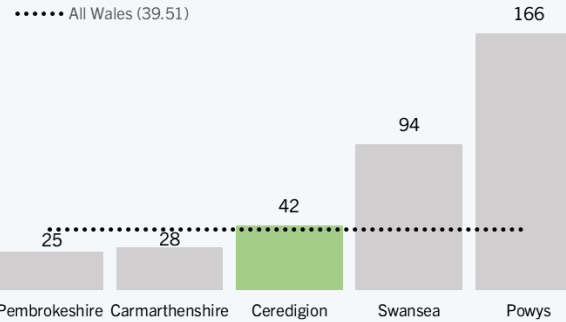
Non-domestic Rates

Collection rates of non-domestic rates (2023/24)



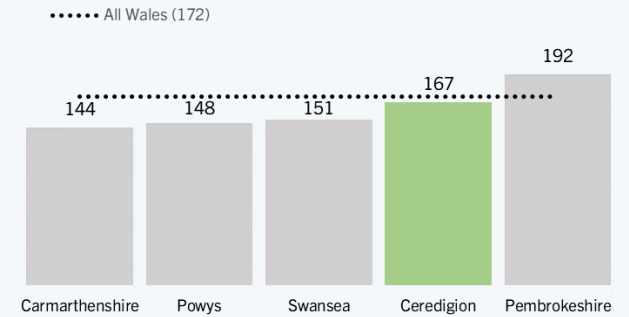
Disabled Facilities Grants

Number of dwellings improved per 10,000 dwellings (2022/23)



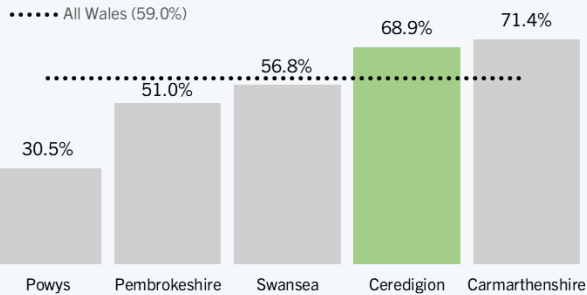
Waste Collection

Kilograms of household waste produced per person (2022/23)



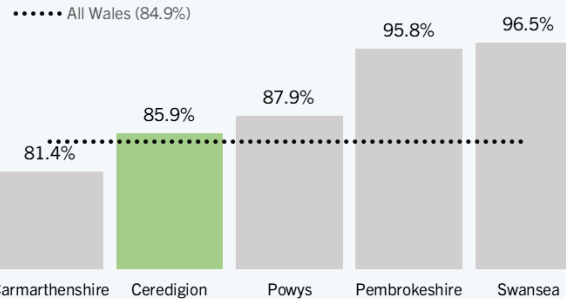
Homelessness Prevention

% of households successfully prevented from becoming homeless (2022/23)



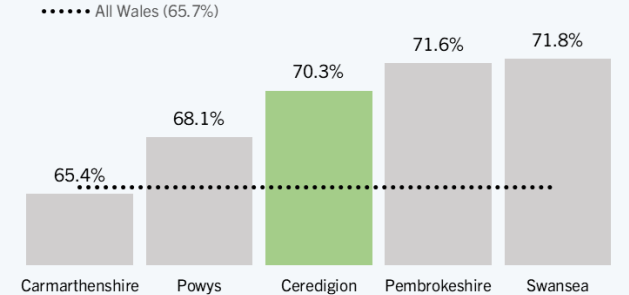
Planning

Planning applications determined within statutory and agreed timescales (October to December 2023)



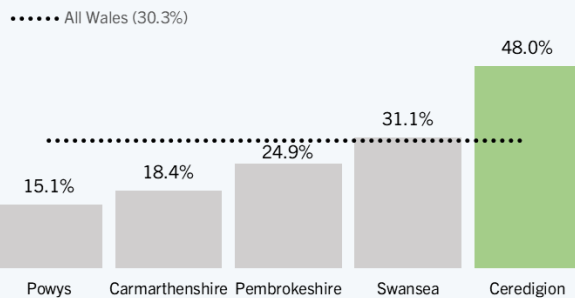
Recycling

Percentage of municipal waste reused, recycled or composted (2022/23)



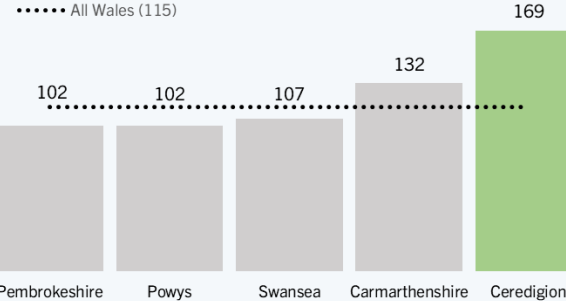
Homelessness Relief

% of households successfully relieved from homelessness (2022/23)



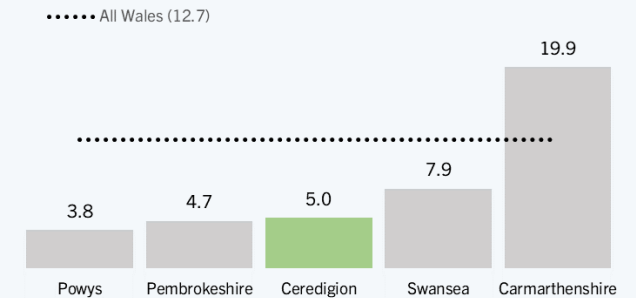
Planning

Average time in days to determine planning applications (October to December 2023)



Fly-tipping

Number of recorded fly-tipping incidents per 1,000 population (2022/23)

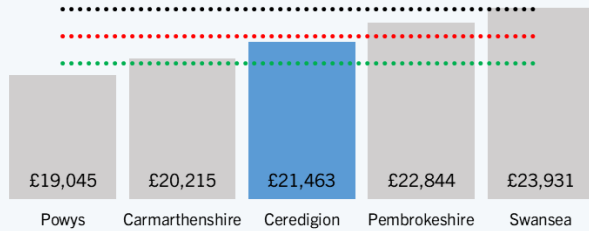


WIDER COMMUNITY MEASURES

Gross Value Added (GVA)

Gross Value Added per head (balanced) (2022)

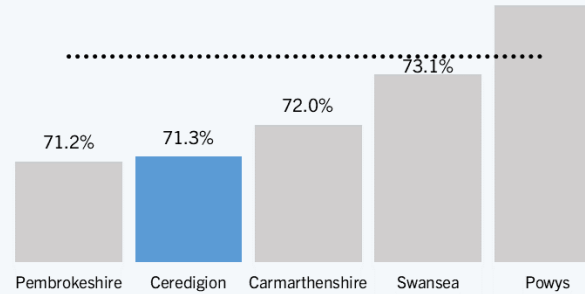
- All Wales (£23,804)
- South West Wales Region (£21,836)
- Mid Wales Region (£19,888)



Employment

Employment rate (April 2023 to March 2024)

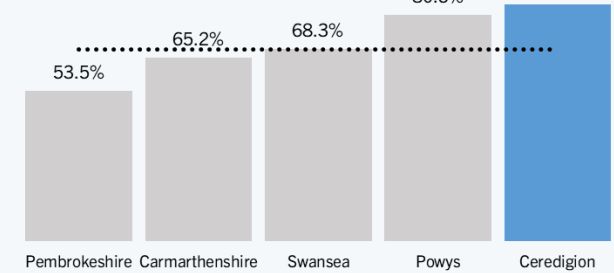
- All Wales (73.5%)



Business Survival

2-year survival percentage of new enterprises in 2020 (Business Demography 2022, ONS)

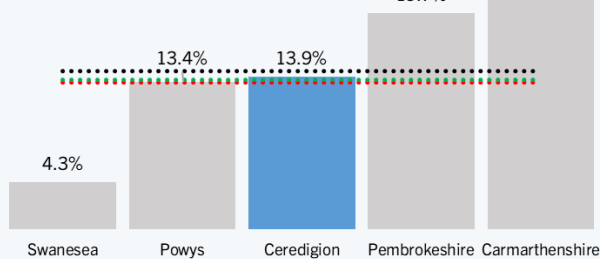
- All Wales (68.2%)



Gross Value Added

Change in Gross Value Added (balanced) 2018 to 2022

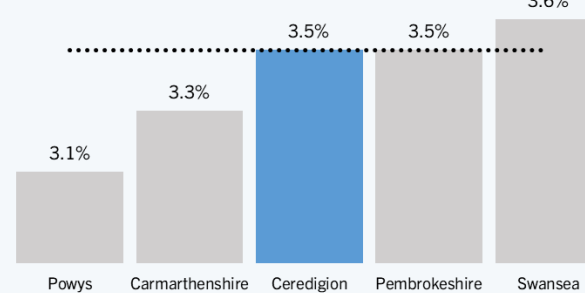
- All Wales (14.4%)
- South West Wales Region (13.4%)
- Mid Wales Region (13.6%)



Unemployment

Unemployment rate (April 2023 to March 2024)

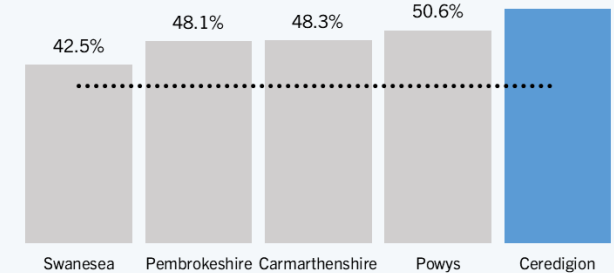
- All Wales (3.5%)



Business Survival

5-year business survival of new enterprises in 2017 (Business Demography 2022, ONS)

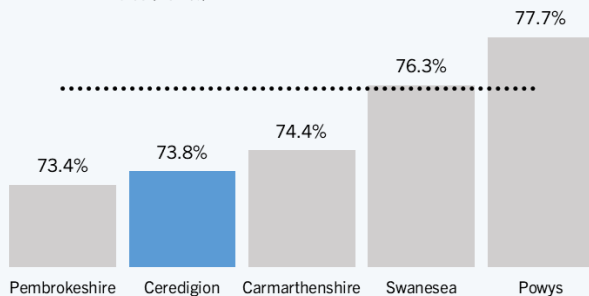
- All Wales (37.3%)



Economic Activity

Economic Activity Rate (April 2023 to March 2024)

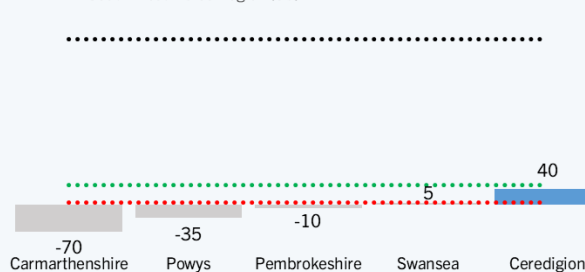
- All Wales (76.2%)



Business Births

Net birth rate of enterprises (Business Demography 2022, ONS)

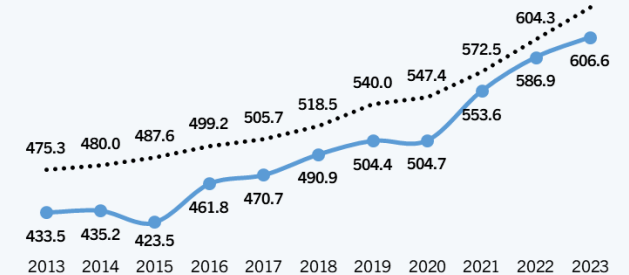
- All Wales (430)
- Mid Wales Region (5)
- South West Wales Region (50)



Earnings

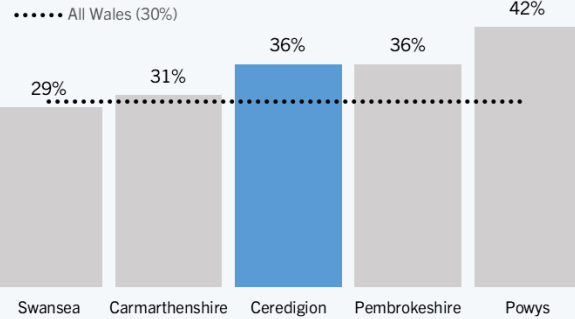
Gross weekly pay or all full-time workers by place of residence in Ceredigion (£)

- Wales



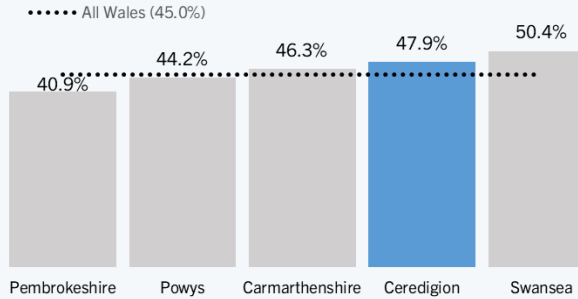
Volunteering

% of people who volunteer formally and informally (2022/23)



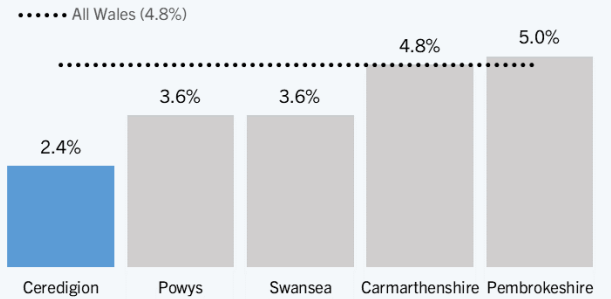
Skills and Qualifications

% of working age adults qualified to Level 4 or above (Year ending December 2023)



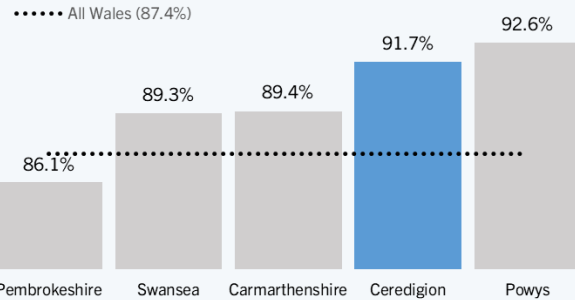
Claimant Count 18-24

Claimant count as a proportion of resident population area aged 18-24 (June 2024)



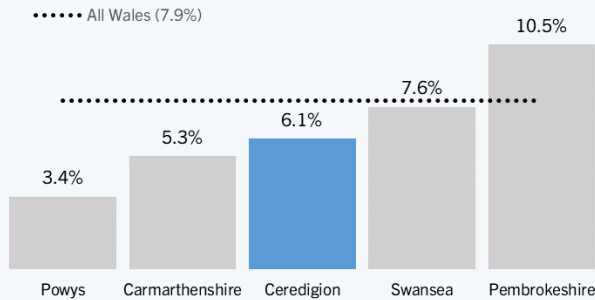
Skills and Qualifications

% of working age adults qualified to Level 2 or above (Year ending December 2023)



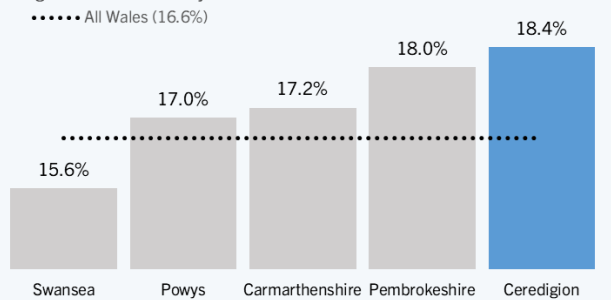
Skills and Qualifications

% of working age adults with no qualifications (Year ending December 2023)



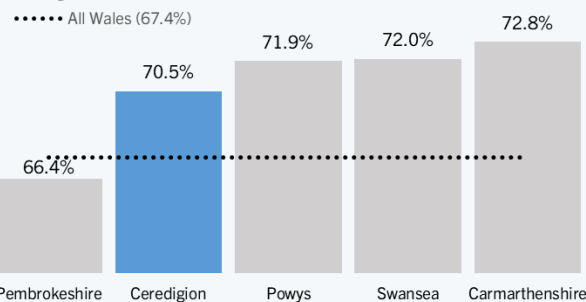
Workless Households

% of households that are workless and have at least one person aged 16 to 64 (January to December 2022)



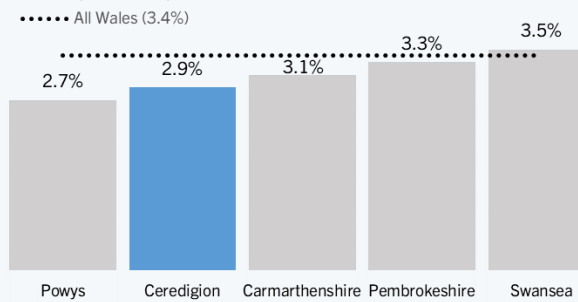
Skills and Qualifications

% of working age adults qualified to Level 3 or above (Year ending December 2023)



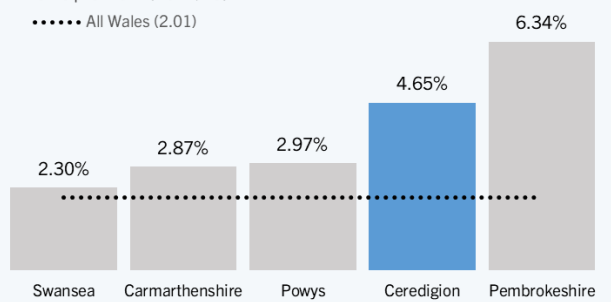
Claimant Count

Claimant count as a proportion of resident population area aged 16-64 (June 2024)



Second Homes

Percentage of dwellings subject to a long term empty / second home premium (2024/25)

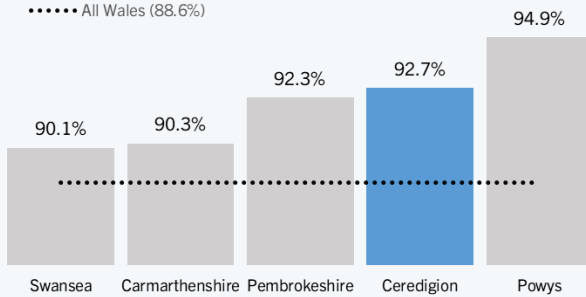


WIDER COMMUNITY MEASURES

Satisfaction with Local Area

% of adults (16+) satisfied with their local area as a place to live (2021/22)

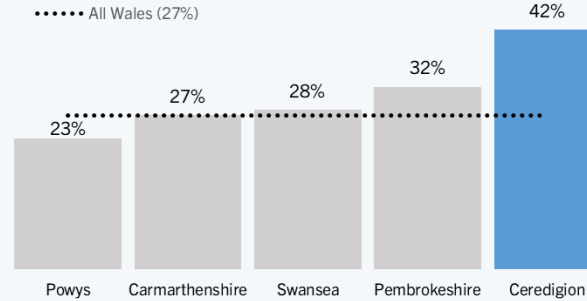
..... All Wales (88.6%)



Sport and Physical Activity

Latent demand for any sport and physical recreational activity (2022/23)

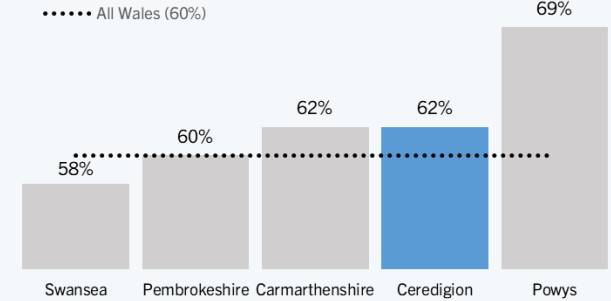
..... All Wales (27%)



Local Democracy

% of people who voted in the May 2022 council elections (2022/23)

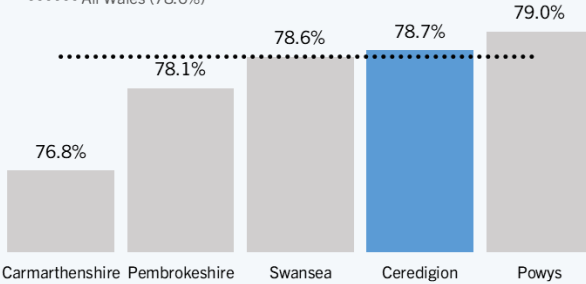
..... All Wales (60%)



General Health

Percentage of population in good or very good health (Census 2021)

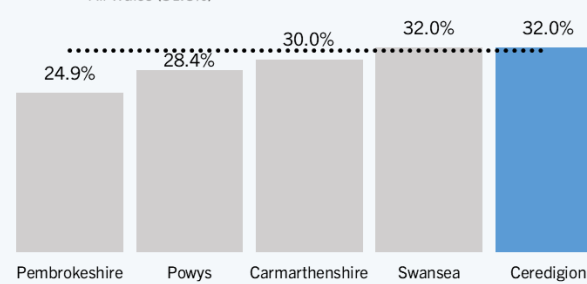
..... All Wales (78.6%)



Museums

% of residents who have visited a museum in the last twelve months (2022/23)

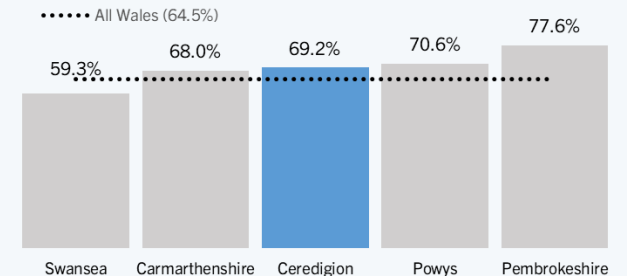
..... All Wales (31.5%)



Community Cohesion

% of people agreeing that they belong to the area; that people from different backgrounds get on well together; and that people treat each other with respect (2021/22)

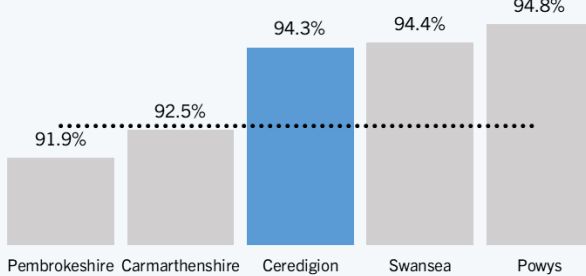
..... All Wales (64.5%)



Healthy Behaviours

% of people who have two or more healthy behaviours (2021/22 & 2022/23)

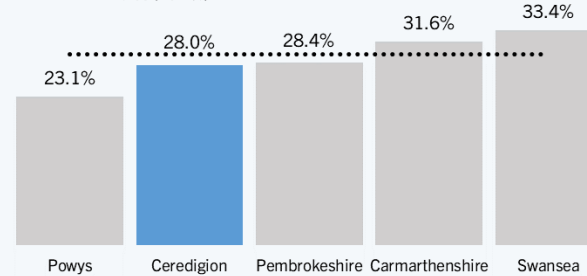
..... All Wales (92.6%)



Decision Making

% of people who feel able to influence decisions affecting their local area (2021/22)

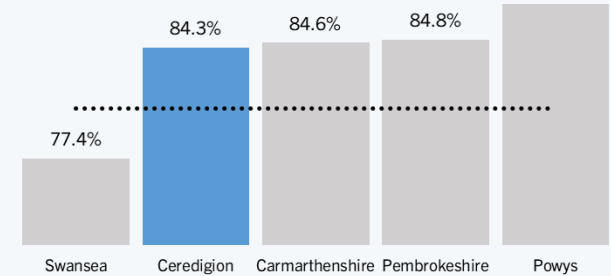
..... All Wales (29.7%)



Transport

% of households with access to one or more cars or vans (Census 2021)

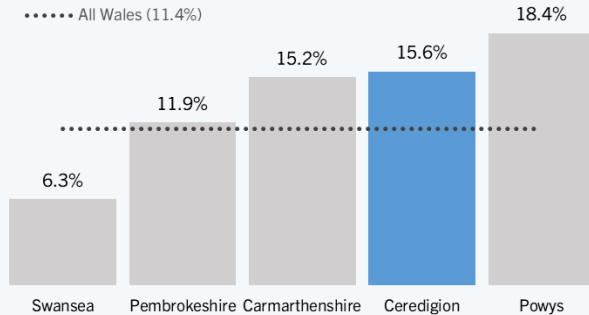
..... All Wales (80.5%)



Travel Times

% of residents who travel 20km or more to work (2021)

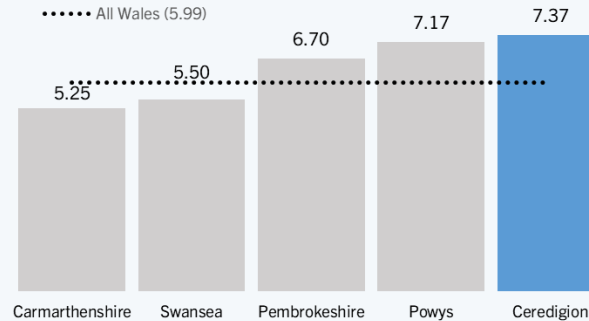
..... All Wales (11.4%)



Housing Affordability

House price to residence-based earnings ratio (2023)

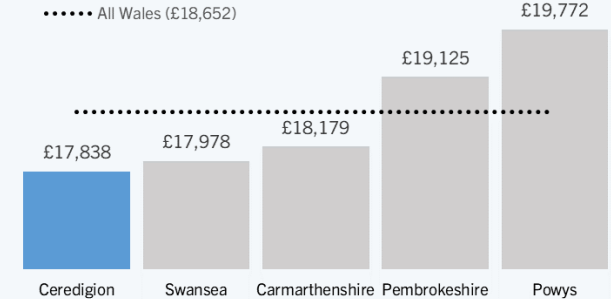
..... All Wales (5.99)



Gross Disposable Income

Gross disposable household income per head (£) (2022 provisional)

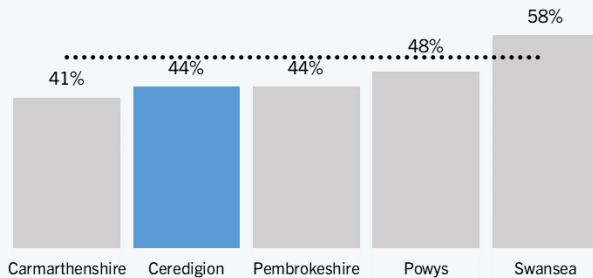
..... All Wales (£18,652)



Active Travel

% of people who walk 10+ minutes or cycle at least once a week as a means of transport (2021/22)

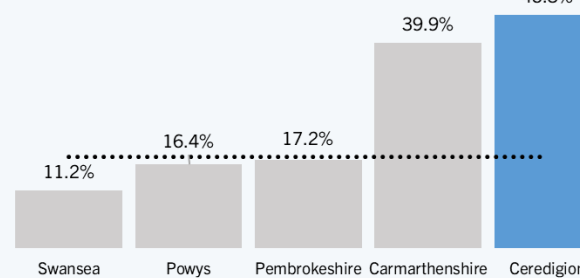
..... All Wales (52%)



Welsh Language

Ability of people aged three or older to speak Welsh (Census 2021)

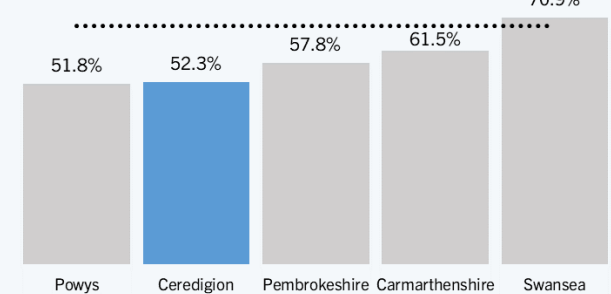
..... All Wales (17.8%)



Digital Connectivity

Availability of Full Fibre Broadband (At August 2024)

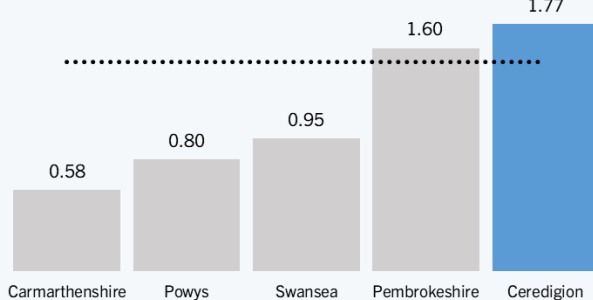
..... All Wales (68.4%)



House Building

Total new dwellings completed per 1,000 population (2023/24)

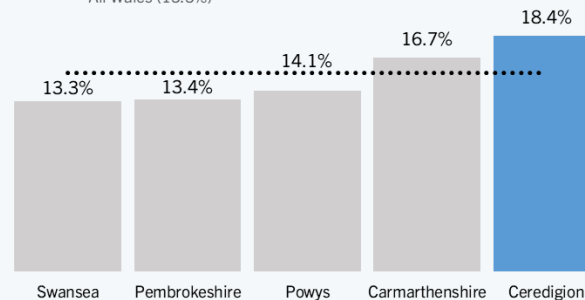
..... All Wales (1.50)



Material Deprivation

% of all adults materially deprived (2022/23)

..... All Wales (15.5%)



Sources:

Performance measures are open data and compiled from the following sources:

- [StatsWales](#)
- [Office for National Statistics](#)
- [NOMIS](#)
- [National Survey for Wales](#)
- [Thinkbroadband](#)

Figures per 1,000 population and per 10,000 dwellings are calculated using [Mid-Year Population Estimates](#) from the Office for National Statistics and [Dwelling Stock Estimates](#) from Welsh Government.

All data presented are the latest available results at July 2024.

Have your say

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

Contact Us

The best way to contact us is by registering or signing in to your **My Account**.

My Account allows you to raise enquiries and monitor progress and also provides many other features that help you interact with us. Go to <https://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/resident/my-account/>

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www.ceredigion.gov.uk

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