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

2025/26

Caru·Love Ceredigion

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Photo: Ynyslas Beach, near Borth
Cover photo: Aerial view of New Quay

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INTRODUCTION

From the Leader of Ceredigion County Council



Councillor Bryan Davies

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 2025/26.

As we enter the fifth year of the current administration, I am delighted to report that the last year has been another very productive one for the Council.

There have been many achievements throughout the year, from improving services, completing key projects and delivering the commitments in our Corporate Strategy.

For example, work on Aberaeron's £32m coastal defence scheme has been completed and will protect the town and the surrounding coastline from rising sea levels, preventing flooding and coastal erosion.

We have also received a further tranche of funding, worth £11.9m, from the UK and Welsh Governments through the Mid Wales Growth Deal. This investment will help us realise the potential of the local economy, improve regional prosperity and create opportunities for local people.

The new Ysgol Dyffryn Aeron School was officially opened providing Welsh medium education for 240 pupils while enriching the learning and teaching experience in the local area.

The relocated Aberaeron Library opened in November 2025 offering modern and accessible facilities and an improved library service with a wider selection of resources. Further investment in the town involved refurbishing Aberaeron Leisure Centre with a new floor, lighting, and redecoration.

During the last year, Ceredigion residents recycled more of their waste than ever before with 73% recycled, helping to divert waste away from landfill and creating a greener and more sustainable Ceredigion.

Plans for the development of Llettytwppa Farm are continuing. A number of successful open days were held showcasing the training opportunities relating to the agriculture and horticultural sectors that will be offered from September 2026 onwards.

Elsewhere, the success of major events such as Rali Ceredigion and the Lloyds National Cycling Championship not only brings investment and prosperity to the County but both will be held again during summer 2026.

We are also continuing to invest in new ways of working and new technology to transform the way services are provided to local people.

For example, work is continuing in the rollout of the Through Age Well-being Programme which focuses on early intervention, prevention, and promoting well-being across all age groups. The "Through-Age model" enables individuals to access the right support at the right time, helping them maintain independence and reducing the need for statutory services.

Independent regulatory inspections continue to highlight Ceredigion County Council as a high-performing and well-run authority, that makes effective and efficient use of its resources.

For example, our latest inspection carried out by Care Inspectorate Wales highlighted the positive progress made in adult Social services, commending the Council's commitment to person-centred care, strong leadership, and having a clear vision for continuous improvement.

Meanwhile, Ceredigion's education system continues to be highly regarded with no schools requiring follow-up action, while Audit Wales acknowledges Ceredigion's strong financial management and track record of setting balanced budgets.

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

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

OUR COUNTY IN NUMBERS

Ceredigion's population has grown by 1,923 since the 2021 Census due to an increase in migration within the UK. The 15-19 age group saw the largest increase.



72,599
residents

31,590
households

47 years
average age

2,900
active enterprises

22%
with a disability

90km
of coastline

45.3%
are Welsh speakers

2,265km
of roads

8,970
university students

18.4%
in material deprivation

4%
from ethnic minority backgrounds

2,500km
of bridleways and footpaths

43
schools and 9,220 pupils

2.87m
visitors to Ceredigion annually

8,200
people are self-employed

3
council run leisure centres and 1 Well-being Centre

Photo: Spring on the Ceredigion Coastal Path

ABOUT CEREDIGION



Ceredigion covers an area of 1,900km^2 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 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 human health and social work (15.4%), wholesale and retail trade (15.4%) and education (15.4%). Accommodation and Food Services, which includes Tourism, is also strong (13.5%). Meanwhile, agriculture, forestry and fishing continues to be the largest sector accounting for a third of all enterprises in the County.

Ceredigion has a population of 72,599 and is the second most sparsely populated county in Wales. About 10% of its population are students.

The County is home to Aberystwyth University and national institutions such as the National Library for 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 has a highly qualified workforce with educational attainment at all levels consistently amongst the best in Wales.

It is also one of the heartlands of the Welsh language. 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 three that had a Blue Flag Award during 2024, 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 John Roberts is the current Chair of the Council.

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

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.

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.

** This is a "head count" of the total number of staff employed.*

CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL STRUCTURE

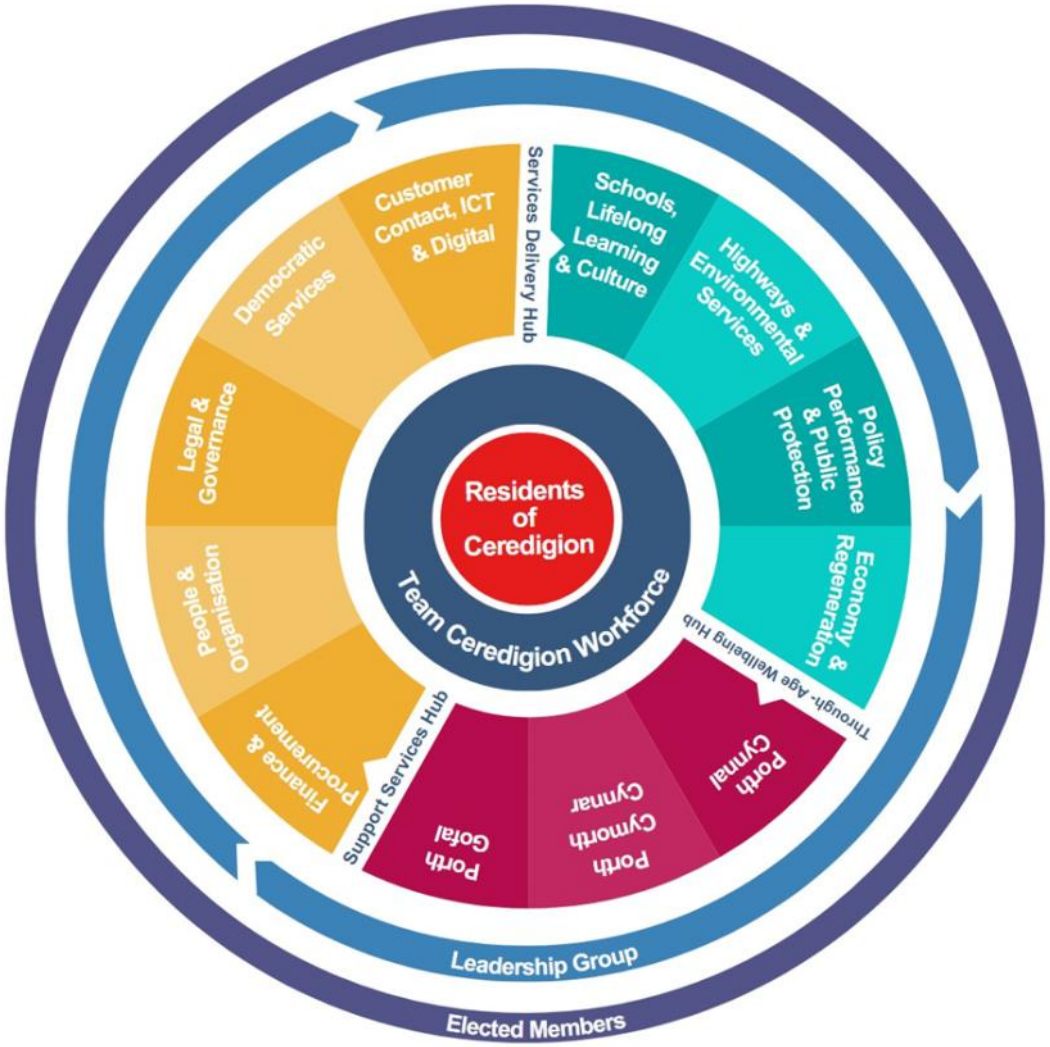




Photo: the £32 million Aberaeron Coastal Defence scheme was completed in October 2025, reducing the risk of flooding to 168 non-commercial and residential properties in Aberaeron and provide protection against the predicted sea level rise in the future.

WE ARE

'TEAM CEREDIGION'

Team Ceredigion is the Council's culture and is integral to its new ways of working

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Team Ceredigion 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

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We are operating in a challenging environment with escalating budgetary pressures. It is critical that 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.

WHAT WE DELIVERED IN 2025/26...



The **Caru Ceredigion Awards** were held in December 2025, at the Lampeter Campus, University of Wales Trinty St David's and celebrated the exceptional contributions and achievements of businesses, community projects, and individuals across the county.



A new **Graduate Scheme** was launched by the Council, offering recent graduates the opportunity to progress their careers in a variety of key areas within the region and the communities where they were raised



Construction works on **Aberaeron's Coastal Defence Scheme** were completed in October 2025



Ceredigion's Planning Service won 3 awards at the 2025 Royal Town Planning Institute Cymru Awards for Planning Excellence



Aberaeron Leisure Centre was refurbished, including a new floor, LED lighting, redecoration and enhanced fitness suite



In March 2026 Growing Mid Wales welcomed the release of a further tranche of funding, £11.857m, from the UK and Welsh Governments through the **Mid Wales Growth Deal**



The relocated **Aberaeron Library** opened in November 2025 offering improved library and customer service. The new space offers extended opening hours, meeting rooms, and a Maker Space, strengthening its role as a centre for learning and engagement.



Works to improve the **path that links Llanbadarn Fawr with the National Library of Wales** were completed to improve accessibility. The path has been widened with a new smooth surface making it suitable for shared use by cyclists and pedestrians

...AND WHAT'S COMING IN 2026/27!



Momentum is building across the **Mid Wales Growth Deal** with many initiatives entering the delivery phase over the next 12-months, as Mid Wales looks to the future and unlocking further investment and opportunity



Following the success of the first **Well-being Centre** in Lampeter (pictured above), work is progressing to deliver the second Well-being Centre in the County, located in Cardigan and serving the south of the County



Llettytwppa Farm, now owned by the Council, is being transformed into an educational site for pupils who wish to follow courses related to the agricultural and horticultural sectors



The Council will again proudly support **Rali Ceredigion** in September 2026, hosting a round of the FIA European Rally Championship



During June 2026 Ceredigion will be home to the **Lloyds National Road Racing Championships** by British Cycling for a second year running



Ceredigion's **Economic Strategy** is being refreshed, and will consider the responses from local business owners, community groups and residents to help shape our future local economy

PANEL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Background

Panel Performance Assessments are intended to provide an independent and external perspective of the extent to which the Council is meeting the performance requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, these are whether:

- it is exercising its functions effectively;
- it is using its resources economically, efficiently and effectively;
- its governance is effective for securing the above.

The aim is to support councils to achieve their aspirations through developing an understanding of how they are operating and how they can ensure they are able to deliver effective services long-term.

The Panel's Findings

Ceredigion's first Panel Performance Assessment took place between 30 September and 3 October 2024.

The Assessment was a success for the Council and this is reflected in the positive experience of the Panel and the conclusions drawn in their final report.

The Panel concluded that considering the current high service demands and very challenging financial pressures, Ceredigion County Council is a well-run local authority.

The Panel highlighted the following as examples of this:

- The Council has clear and effective leadership with strong relationships across the political and officer executive and wider structures.
- The Council is delivering its functions effectively in light of the significant financial, strategic, and operational pressures it is dealing with on a daily basis.
- The Council has effective governance and reporting arrangements in place.
- The Council has made effective and efficient use of resources to date.
- The Council has established and is developing areas of innovation including Well-Being Centres, Information Communication Technology, and hybrid working.

During the week, the Panel visited the recently launched Well-being Centre in Lampeter, the Hafan y Waun care home in Aberystwyth and the Centre for Independently Living at Penmorfa to see firsthand how the Council is innovating and investing in new technology to support the physical, mental and social well-being of the County's residents.

The report also highlights the challenges being faced by the Council:

- Difficult financial pressures particularly through demand-led services.
- Sustainability of funding in social care given the financial pressures.
- The disadvantages for rural authorities caused by some elements of the funding formula financial reporting, and the inconsistent application of funding floor mechanisms.
- The impact of rural de-population and broader challenges associated with rurality and sparse population.
- Recruitment and retention of staff in some services such as social care.

Recommendations

The Panel are also required to make any recommendations to guide the Council in identifying actions that will increase the extent to which it is meeting the performance requirements.

Opportunities for improvement have been identified, which will enhance the arrangements in place, to support effective communication, relationship management and collective ownership of current and future challenges.

The Panel made a series of eight recommendations which are listed on page 14, along with the Council's response to the Assessment.

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

"Considering the current high service demands and very challenging financial pressures, Ceredigion County Council is a well-run local authority."

"The Council has clear and effective leadership with strong relationships across the political and officer executive and wider structures"

"The Council is delivering its functions effectively in light of the significant financial, strategic, and operational pressures it is dealing with on a daily basis."

"The Council has effective governance and reporting arrangements in place."

"The Council has demonstrated it has made effective and efficient use of resources to date."

RESPONDING TO THE PANEL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

The Council welcomed the Panel Performance Assessment Report and is grateful to the Panel for their work in providing an independent and external perspective of the extent to which the Council is meeting the performance requirements under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

The Council also recognises the areas for improvement identified by the Performance Assessment Panel and accepts their recommendations.

The Council`s agreed actions are listed in the Response to the Panel Performance Assessment. A summary of the recommendations and the Council's progress in delivering its actions in response are shown in the table to the right.

The Governance and Audit Committee are reviewing progress to provide assurance that the recommendations are being addressed. At March 2026, seven of the ten actions were complete with two of the remaining three actions due to be complete in the summer of 2026, these are publishing the Communications Strategy and providing further training to Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee members regarding the role of scrutiny.

Panel recommendation	To address the recommendation, we will	Status
1) The Council will need to consider how best to consult on potential budget cuts given the narrow timetable for consultation due to the statutory budget setting deadlines.	Actively consider undertaking an overall corporate consultation prior to the approval of the 2026/27 budget.	Complete
2) Council has, to date, been able to provide significant additional funding for the provision of social care, and it will need to consider how sustainable this is going forward given the financial pressures.	Establish county-based staffed homes for looked after children. Reduce reliance on agency workers where it is safe to do so.	Complete Complete
3) The Council should consider the opportunities for further partnership working.	Explore new and innovative ways to deliver services with all partners, including the pursuit of further opportunities for service provision and shared functions and facilities with partners.	Complete
4) There is an urgent need for the Council to revisit whether their current strategy for social work recruitment is effective and to explore alternatives.	Deliver and invest in the "grow your own" strategy for social workers, with the achievable aim of 21 individuals qualifying as social workers over the next 4 years.	In progress and on schedule
5) The Council should consider how to address a recurring theme of ineffective communication across the authority particularly with partners and residents and the effectiveness of "Clic".	Undertake regular analysis of interaction of social media posts, videos and Corporate e-newsletters and use the information to inform future strategies. Develop a Communication Strategy highlighting the style and willingness to engage.	Complete In progress and on schedule
6) There is something of a disconnect between backbench members and the executive/senior leadership teams which need to be addressed.	The Leader will continue to convene informal meetings with the leaders of the opposition groups to keep them informed of upcoming issues and challenges facing the Council, to engender a spirit of cooperation and mutual understanding.	Complete
7) The relationships between scrutiny function and the executive needs to be further developed.	Provide further training to both Overview and Scrutiny Committee members and to Cabinet Members regarding the role of scrutiny and holding the Cabinet Member(s) to account. The training will provide information regarding how to identify and prioritise topics to be scrutinised.	In progress and on schedule
8) The performance management system is comprehensive but there needs to be more of a focus on outcomes.	Re-balance the aggregated outcome and output focused performance measures within Level 1 Business Plans across the Council.	Complete

BACKGROUND TO 2025-26 SELF-ASSESSMENT

This is Ceredigion County Council's fifth Self-Assessment Report, which reviews the 2025/26 year.

We have learnt a great deal since first implementing the local government performance regime introduced by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. This knowledge is used to help in our business planning, in service provision and in resourcing.

This year's Self-Assessment Report, brings 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. This is 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 previous Self-Assessment Reports by including the following additional information for this year:

- An overall view of our performance, risks, budget and value for money, all in one place.
- Further information on how we are working to improve outcomes for local people and communities. Case studies and outcome performance measures are used to demonstrate the impact we are having. Driving better outcomes for local people and communities is one of the underlying principles of the Self-Assessment process.
- A progress update on the delivery of the ten recommendations from our Panel Performance Assessment, conducted in October 2024.

We reviewed our approach to Self-Assessment during the autumn of 2025 and made some minor adjustments to the process. This was mainly to strengthen the data pack from the desktop review of evidence which is used to inform the workshops with mangers.

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. This was backed up by the findings of the Panel Performance Assessment, which you can learn more about on page 9.

The aim of the review is 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 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 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

VERY GOOD

Overall considered to be very good and meets best practice no further action required

GOOD

Overall consider to be good but minor adjustments may be required

SATISFACTORY

Satisfactory but action required

BELOW SATISFACTORY

Urgent action required

UNACCEPTABLE

Immediate action required

SUMMARY OF 2025-26 PERFORMANCE

EXERCISING OUR FUNCTIONS EFFECTIVELY

The Council published its Corporate Strategy in 2022, setting out its long-term vision and Corporate Well-being Objectives. This continues to be supported by a suite of key strategies which help deliver these objectives, including the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, Through Age Well-being Strategy and Economic Strategy.

During 2025/26, significant progress has been made in strengthening the Council's strategic framework and performance management arrangements. A key milestone has been the development and implementation of mechanisms to track delivery of the Corporate Strategy and Corporate Well-being Objectives, providing greater oversight of progress and helping to ensure that corporate priorities are translated into outcomes for residents and communities. The Council has also continued to strengthen its approach to planning through the development of more outcome-focused Business Plans, supported by updated guidance and enhanced cross-service alignment.

Progress in delivering key priorities continues to be positive. Notable achievements during the year include continued investment in schools, leisure facilities, libraries and community well-being infrastructure, further development of the Llettytwppa Farm project, progress in developing in-county accommodation for children, and strong performance in waste and recycling, with residents recycling more waste than ever before during the latter part of 2025. The Council has also continued to celebrate and promote culture and the Welsh language, while investing in initiatives such as the Graduate Scheme to support future workforce sustainability.

There is increasing evidence that sustainability and long-term thinking are embedded within decision-making processes. This is demonstrated through the growing use of Integrated Impact Assessments, the Council's organisational values work, economic development activity, and investment programmes that support people to live, work and thrive within the county. The Council's financial position has also continued to stabilise, with strong financial management helping to avoid service reductions and providing a platform for future investment and innovation.

The Council's corporate Performance Management Framework continues to mature and provides a structured mechanism to monitor delivery, performance, risks and improvement activity. Delivery of the Self-Assessment Action Plan and the recommendations arising from the Panel Performance Assessment continue to be closely monitored, with good progress achieved to date. The Performance Board is becoming increasingly strategic in its role, informing scrutiny work programmes and supporting a stronger focus on outcomes rather than activity alone. The Council is also working proactively with partners, including the WLGA, to support the development of a national outcomes framework.

Regulatory and external assessments continue to provide assurance regarding the Council's overall direction. In addition, recruitment challenges identified in previous years, particularly within social care, have improved significantly, demonstrating the positive impact of targeted workforce initiatives.

The Council has an ambitious and sustainable vision for the future, and overall we consider that the strategies, plans and governance arrangements in place provide a strong foundation for delivering positive outcomes over the short, medium and long term.

However, challenges remain. Capacity within Asset Management continues to require attention, although significant work has been undertaken through the Asset Management Action Plan, including structural reviews and recruitment activity. We also recognise the need to further strengthen engagement with some elected Members and continue improving how performance and outcomes are communicated and understood. As expectations, demand and financial pressures continue across local government, maintaining organisational capacity while delivering transformational change will remain an important focus.

Overall, the Council has made substantial progress in strengthening strategic planning, performance management and delivery during the year. While there remains more work to do, particularly in demonstrating outcomes and continuing to modernise services, we are increasingly well placed to deliver our Corporate Well-being Objectives and respond effectively to future challenges.

EXERCISING OUR FUNCTIONS EFFECTIVELY

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

Very Good

Are these strategies delivering their aims and objectives?

Good

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

Very Good

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

Satisfactory

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

Good

SUMMARY OF 2025-26 PERFORMANCE

USING OUR RESOURCES ECONOMICALLY, EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY

The overall position in relation to the efficient use of resources is assessed as being good, particularly in relation to the management of the Council's finances and workforce. The Council continues to demonstrate strong financial stewardship, evidenced through robust budget management, a stable financial position and the ability to maintain services despite ongoing pressures facing local government. Leadership Group and Corporate Lead Officers continue to demonstrate a strong corporate approach to financial management, ensuring that resources are directed towards the Council's priorities while maintaining financial resilience.

This is supported by positive regulatory feedback. The Panel Performance Assessment concluded that the Council makes effective and efficient use of resources, while external reviews continue to recognise the strength of the Council's financial management arrangements. The Council's ability to produce qualified accounts consistently remains a significant achievement and provides assurance regarding financial governance.

The Council has continued to invest strategically in key priorities. Good use has been made of capital resources, including investment in children's accommodation, highways infrastructure, leisure and well-being facilities, and programmes that support prevention and independence. The Local Government Borrowing Initiative has enabled a significant increase in highway resurfacing and surface treatment programmes, improving the condition and resilience of the county's road network. Continued success within waste and recycling services has also demonstrated the effective use of resources while contributing to environmental objectives.

The Council continues to recognise that its greatest asset is its workforce. People Survey results have remained exceptionally strong for a second consecutive year, with increased participation levels and positive findings that compare favourably with other public sector organisations. The introduction of the Values and Behaviours Framework has further reinforced a positive organisational culture where staff feel valued and engaged. This provides a strong foundation for workforce sustainability and organisational performance.

Progress is also being made in strengthening the Council's approach to procurement and asset management. Significant legislative changes have required a flexible and responsive approach to procurement activity, while work is continuing to ensure that systems, controls and governance arrangements remain fit for purpose. Similarly, the Strategic Asset Management Plan is in development and an Asset Management Action Plan is being implemented to address areas identified for improvement.

Overall, the Council considers that resources are being used effectively to support the delivery of Corporate Well-being Objectives. However, while good progress is being made, Asset Management remains an area requiring continued focus as improvements are embedded and the Council's long-term strategic approach continues to develop.

USING OUR RESOURCES ECONOMICALLY, EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY

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

Good

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

Good

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

Good

ENSURING OUR GOVERNANCE IS EFFECTIVE

Overall, the evidence demonstrates that the Council's governance arrangements remain robust and continue to support the effective delivery of services and Corporate Well-being Objectives. Governance arrangements are well established, supported by a comprehensive Governance Framework, a strong Annual Governance Statement process and positive relationships with regulators and external auditors.

External assurance provides confidence in these arrangements. The Panel Performance Assessment concluded that the Council has effective governance arrangements in place, while Audit Wales has provided positive feedback regarding governance processes, including the Council's approach to reviewing and maintaining its Annual Governance Statement. Governance and Audit Committee continues to play an important role in providing challenge and assurance, and members have recognised improvements in its effectiveness during the year.

The Council continues to maintain open and constructive relationships with regulators and inspectors. Positive engagement has been maintained across a range of regulatory bodies, with a particularly strong relationship continuing with Estyn. The Council remains committed to working transparently with all regulators and responding positively to challenge and recommendations.

Governance arrangements continue to evolve to reflect changing requirements and expectations. During the year, a dedicated Governance Group was established and has commenced its work, providing an additional layer of oversight and strengthening coordination of governance-related matters across the organisation. This reflects the Council's commitment to continual improvement and organisational learning.

The Council also continues to play a leading role within regional governance arrangements, including the Corporate Joint Committee and Growing Mid Wales structures. While governance arrangements are now firmly established, some concerns remain regarding the additional administrative burden and demonstrable value arising from some regional structures.

Overall, the Council considers its governance arrangements to be effective, well embedded and supportive of good decision-making, accountability and continuous improvement.

LONG-TERM INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY

Innovation and creativity continue to be significant strengths for the Council and are increasingly embedded within the organisation's culture. The Council has a strong track record of identifying new approaches to service delivery and continues to encourage innovation as a means of improving outcomes, enhancing customer experience and ensuring long-term sustainability.

A number of significant initiatives during the year demonstrate this commitment. The continued development of Llettytwpa Farm and associated initiatives provide examples of innovative approaches to economic development, community regeneration and long-term sustainability. Equally, work undertaken to address workforce recruitment challenges demonstrates creative solutions to issues affecting local government nationally and is already contributing positively to workforce resilience.

Digital transformation continues to be a key driver of innovation across the Council. During the year, services have continued to embrace new technologies and digital solutions, including the implementation of new business systems, developments within education and highways services, the rollout of Microsoft Copilot technologies and the successful introduction of new technology to support electoral processes. Digital solutions are also being used creatively within social care settings, helping improve access to information and services for residents.

The Council continues to recognise innovation as central to its long-term sustainability. This can be seen through ongoing transformation activity across a range of service areas and through a willingness to explore new approaches where they provide clear benefits for customers, communities and the organisation. Innovation is no longer confined to individual projects but increasingly forms part of how the Council operates on a day-to-day basis.

While financial pressures and increasing demand continue to create challenges, the Council considers that its culture of innovation and continuous improvement provides a strong platform from which to respond to future opportunities and challenges.

COLLABORATION

The Council remains proactive in engaging

ENSURING OUR GOVERNANCE IS EFFECTIVE

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

Very Good

How effective is the governance framework applied and observed?

Good

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

Very Good

LONG-TERM INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY

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

Very Good

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

Very Good

SUMMARY OF 2025-26 PERFORMANCE

in local, regional and national partnerships and recognises collaboration as an essential tool for improving outcomes and delivering services effectively. Collaborative working continues to support a wide range of Council priorities and increasingly enables the organisation to maximise resources, influence and expertise.

There are numerous examples of effective partnership working during the year. Strong relationships continue with neighbouring local authorities, the Health Board, educational institutions and a variety of regional partnerships. Integration with health services continues to develop positively, with examples including joint working from shared facilities, Section 33 partnership arrangements and collaborative approaches to community equipment services and de-conditioning programmes.

The Council also continues to play a leading role within a number of regional partnerships. These include chairing the Regional Safeguarding Board, chairing work relating to community equipment services, supporting regional work on preventing radicalisation and contributing to the development of electoral arrangements across Wales. The Council's collaborative approach has also helped secure additional investment through regional funding programmes.

Partnership working is also supporting strategic priorities such as the Lampeter project, workforce development and social care recruitment. Collaborative arrangements with educational partners are helping create new pathways into professions facing recruitment pressures, while engagement with stakeholder organisations is strengthening the delivery of economic and community development projects.

The Council continues to take a pragmatic approach to collaboration, recognising that partnership working must add value and deliver tangible benefits for the people and communities of Ceredigion. This remains particularly important given the financial challenges facing the public sector. The Council will therefore continue to review partnerships critically and focus resources on those arrangements that provide the greatest benefit.

Overall, collaboration remains a significant strength and an important contributor to achieving the Council's strategic ambitions.

INVOLVEMENT

The Council remains committed to ensuring that residents, communities, partners and stakeholders have opportunities to contribute to decision-making and service development. During the year, significant progress has been made in strengthening engagement and participation arrangements and in developing a more coordinated approach to gathering and using insight.

A significant milestone has been the development and publication of a new Engagement and Participation Strategy, providing a refreshed framework for engagement activity across the organisation. This is supported by the continued development of the Insights Board, which brings together information from a variety of engagement, consultation and evidence sources to help inform decision-making and service improvement.

The introduction and expansion of the Ceredigion People's Panel has been a particular success. Membership has continued to grow and the Panel has already been used to gather valuable feedback on a range of issues, including public perceptions of Council performance and the development of electoral guidance materials. The Panel

COLLABORATION

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

Good

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

Good

INVOLVEMENT

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

Good

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

Good

provides an additional mechanism for engaging with residents and gathering evidence to support future decision-making.

There were also several examples of effective engagement activity during the year. The Council's budget engagement exercise generated significant participation and online reach, while services across the organisation have continued to engage with communities, stakeholders, young people, carers and older residents to ensure a wide range of perspectives inform decision-making. The Council has also continued to strengthen the use of Integrated Impact Assessments and provide training to support meaningful consideration of consultation feedback.

While progress has been positive, challenges remain. Consultation fatigue continues to be a concern, particularly where residents are asked to engage on multiple issues. There is also a continuing need to improve understanding of the purpose of consultation exercises and manage expectations regarding how consultation findings influence final decisions.

Overall, engagement and involvement arrangements have strengthened considerably during the year and provide a strong foundation for continuing to develop meaningful participation in the future.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The Council's approach to risk management continues to strengthen and is increasingly recognised as an area of organisational maturity. During the year, positive feedback from Audit Wales provided external assurance regarding the effectiveness of the Council's arrangements and the progress made in embedding risk management throughout the organisation.

Audit Wales identified the Council's risk management arrangements as mature and recognised the strong links between service-level risks and the Corporate Risk Register. The escalation process for significant risks is clearly understood and provides assurance that emerging issues can be identified and managed appropriately. This reflects considerable progress over recent years in strengthening the Council's risk management framework.

Risk management is increasingly embedded within day-to-day business activity. Risks continue to be reviewed and updated regularly, with Leadership Group playing a key role in assessing and managing strategic risks facing the organisation. Governance and Audit Committee has also developed its approach and now places greater emphasis on discussing the substance of risks and mitigation rather than the process itself. Scrutiny Committees continue to contribute by reviewing corporate risks on a rolling basis.

The Council has demonstrated an ability to respond proactively to an increasingly complex risk environment. Leadership Group receives regular briefings on emerging national and international issues which may impact local service delivery, ensuring that risks are considered corporately and at an early stage.

As part of the Council's commitment to continuous improvement, the Risk Management Policy, Strategy and Framework are currently being reviewed and updated. This work includes implementing recommendations arising from external reviews, strengthening the Council's risk appetite arrangements, improving risk descriptions in line with national good practice and ensuring risks are clearly linked to Corporate Well-being Objectives.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Does the Council have a comprehensive strategy and framework in place for managing risk?

Good

Are these strategies delivering their aims and objectives?

Good

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

Good

Overall, the Council considers its arrangements for identifying, managing and monitoring risk to be effective. While continual refinement is expected as part of good governance, risk management is now firmly embedded within the Council's decision-making and performance management processes.

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.

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. Previously completed actions are retained as a log of progress on our self-assessment performance journey.

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

SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTION PLAN: OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

DESCRIPTION	TIMESCALES	LEAD OFFICER	OUTCOMES
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)	• 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
STATUS: In Progress  Implementation and delivery of the Through Age Wellbeing Programme (TAW) continues as the transformation of services progresses with the integration of social care 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. As the third year of the six-year TAW Model Strategy came to an end (in October 2024), the planning for the second half of the TAW programme focuses even more on strengthening the base practice, responding to and leveraging repair action from the Care Inspectorate Wales evaluation to ensure the full benefits of proportionate assessments, what matters conversations and early interventions can be fully achieved.			
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 2027	Russell-Hughes Pickering (Corporate Lead Officer Economy & Regeneration)	• 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  The Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP) is currently being drafted for consideration at Scrutiny in July 2026 before proceeding to Cabinet and Council later in the year. The SAMP was pushed back to 2026 to allow for a more fundamental review of the Assets Team, their priorities and their capacity. Subsequently, a specific Assets Team action plan is currently being implemented to tackle various areas of work including improving business/services plans, implementing the new structure in the team, and developing capacity including team building. The Plan will provide clarity on specific programmes of work including asset management, identifying an Asset Development Programme, and delivering an Asset Programme that supports the delivery of the Corporate Strategy and/or other strategies. Based on current progress, the Plan is expected to be complete by March 2027.			

KEY:	COMPLETE (6)	IN PROGRESS (4)	NEW ACTIONS (0)

DESCRIPTION	TIMESCALES	LEAD OFFICER	OUTCOMES
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 2027	Duncan Hall (Corporate Lead Officer Finance & Procurement and Section 151 Officer)	• 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
STATUS: In Progress The development of the new Procurement Strategy has been pushed back due to the unprecedented volume of procurement legislation and reform emerging at national level. Although the previous Strategy has technically expired, the scale and pace of regulatory change mean that drafting a new document at this stage would risk it becoming outdated almost immediately. However, significant work is continuing across the Procurement Service, and the Strategy will be revisited once the legislative landscape has settled. Producing a new Joint Procurement and Commissioning Strategy is therefore not a simple task - the Council is prioritising the essential "backbone" work required to ensure compliance and readiness for the new legislation. This has already included a comprehensive update of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules (now with a greater emphasis on supporting local Suppliers). It is important to note that the Council continues to be agile, responding to developments as they arise, and applying procurement rules effectively to support service delivery and good governance.			
DELIVER THE ACTIONS IN THE RESPONSE TO THE PANEL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT			
Deliver the agreed actions in the Council's Response to the Panel Performance Assessment	May 2025 - March 2027	All Corporate Lead Officers	• Increases the extent to which the Council meets the performance requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 • Strengthen communication, consultations and understanding of resident's views • Increases in-house social capacity and reduce reliance on agency staff • Reduces the costs of out of county placements for looked after children • Identifies more innovate ways to deliver services with all partners • Strengthen the scrutiny function
STATUS: In Progress Since the final Panel Performance Assessment Response was published, work has been underway to deliver the 10 actions in the Response and good progress has been made. The latest progress shows that 7 actions are complete and 3 are in progress and on schedule.			

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)	• 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
STATUS: Completed March 2024  Ceredigion County Council is committed to engaging with its residents, service users and other key stakeholders. The Engagement and Participation Strategy was developed and approved by Cabinet in October 2022. The 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.			
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)	• 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
STATUS: Completed March 2025  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.			

KEY:	COMPLETE (6)	IN PROGRESS (4)	NEW ACTIONS (0)

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)	• 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
STATUS: Completed March 2025  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 2025/26 to 2027/28 was approved by Cabinet in July 2025. The Capital Outturn Report for 2024/25 reported that the actual expenditure was £29.7m higher than the level incurred during 2023/24 due to a combination of two major capital schemes during the year (Dyffryn Aeron School and the Aberaeron Coastal Defence scheme). The Capital Programme continues to be reported to Cabinet detailing the outturn position and the amended programme for the next three years.			
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)	• 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
STATUS: Completed March 2025  The new Digital Strategy was published in Mach 2025 following public consultation. It sets out how the Council will achieve the overall aim of creating a "Digitally Confident Ceredigion", focussing on delivering sustainable, long-term digital development across all services and supporting the national digital strategy. Split into 3 core pillars of Digital Organisation, Digital Residents and Digital Communities, it outlines the objectives that will be delivered against each. The Digital Strategy will be overseen by the New Ways of Working (NWOW) Project Board, which includes the "Digital Champion" from each service area.			

SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTION PLAN: OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

DESCRIPTION	TIMESCALES	LEAD OFFICER	OUTCOMES
DELIVER THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE CIW INSPECTION OF SOCIAL SERVICES			
Implement the recommendations made in the CIW performance evaluation inspection report to help the Council deliver its vision for the delivery of social care across Ceredigion according to the Through Age Well-being model	May 2023 - March 2025	Audrey Somerton-Edwards (Corporate Lead Officer Porth Cynnal and Statutory Director of Social Services)	• Ensures that people's voices are central to the work we undertake • Increases provision of respite for parents and carers and positively impacting on people's outcomes • Ensures people are kept informed of how well social care services are being delivered in Ceredigion • Prioritises a sufficient and sustainable workforce with the capacity and capability to consistently meet statutory responsibilities • Ensures a standardised approach to supervision and oversight of practice • Ensures a competent and confident workforce • Provides a robust quality assurance framework • Ensures complaints are consistently responded to in accordance with the prescribed timescales
STATUS: **Completed March 2025**  Most improvement areas from the 2023 Performance Evaluation Inspection have now been addressed and recognised as improvements in the more recent CIW Improvement Check conducted in May 2025. The Improvement Check highlighted the positive progress made in Adult Social Services, in particular, the Council's commitment to person-centred care, strong leadership, and a clear vision for continuous improvement. The Inspection Team also found that there is a clear strategic focus on helping people avoid needing long-term statutory care and promoting resilience in local communities, which is one of the principal objectives of the Through Age Well-being Programme. Furthermore, all residential care homes operated by the Council are currently rated as either 'Good' or 'Excellent', reflecting the high standards of care and support provided across the county. The remaining issues are included in the updated action plan that will go through the democratic process during the autumn of 2025.			

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	• 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 local people and their perceptions • Provides a greater understanding of customer's needs, wants and priorities • Helps to identify where additional communication is needed to support people and / or advertise services • Aids the Council's learning to improve the customer experience
STATUS: Completed March 2025 Over 6,000 residents have signed up to the new MyAccount service including 1,600 receiving the accompanying newsletter and 1,300 signed up to take part in further engagement. The new MyAccount Surveys have commenced with 635 responses received so far and an average service rating of 7.6 out 10 and a variety of feedback. The Council has also been working with Data Cymru in the development of the new National Residents Survey to provide a robust and comparable citizens survey in future years. The first of these surveys was run in Ceredigion between August and October 2024, attracting 1,961 responses, which were reported to Scrutiny in January 2025. The new Insights Board was also set up in September 2024 and continues to develop well considering a range of different consultations and engagements, along with a variety of other data to maximise insights and develop a greater understanding of local people's views to shape future services.			

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 undertook its first Panel Performance Assessment in October 2024 and the results are shown on page 9.
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

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.

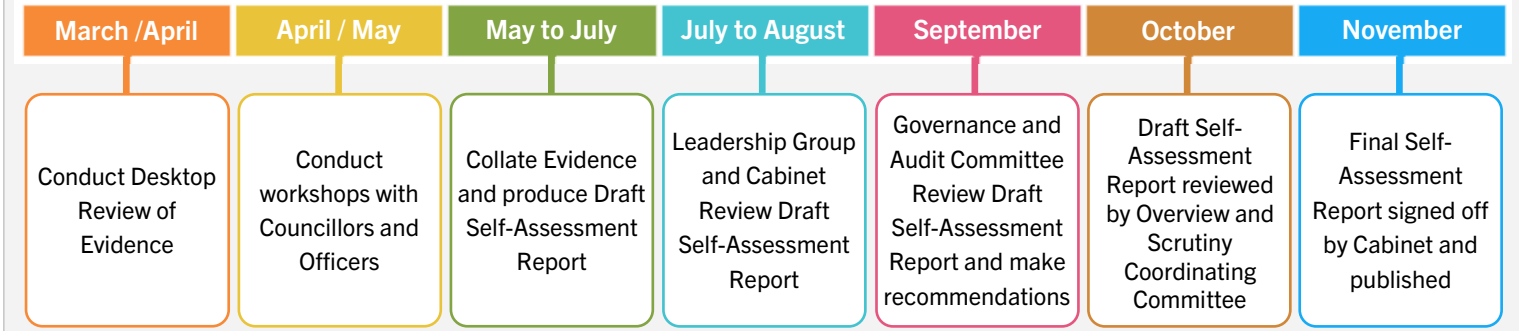
Part of the collation includes cross- checking the scoring with the evidence provided and seeking clarity on our conclusions where necessary. Gaps in evidence and understanding of our performance are also highlighted, all of which is designed to ensure the process is robust.

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.

Steps and timetable for completion of Ceredigion’s Self-Assessment Report



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.

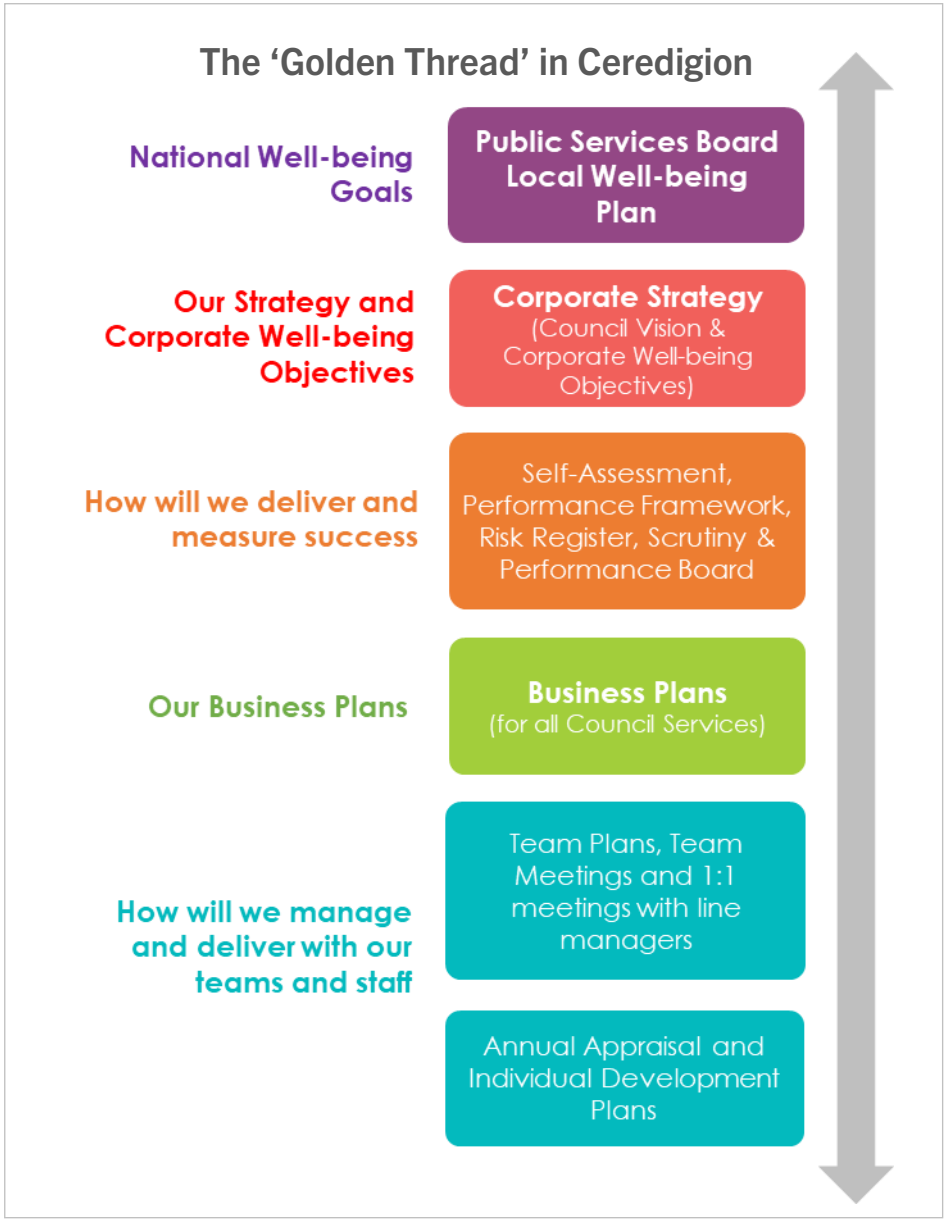
It is also an integral part of operational performance and used in the setting of annual business plans for each service. We all recognise that capacity is at a premium and demand is high, and as a result effective business planning has never been so important to ensure we are delivering 'the right services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

The Continuous Improvement Cycle in Ceredigion



- Plan
- Do
- Review
- Reflect

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.

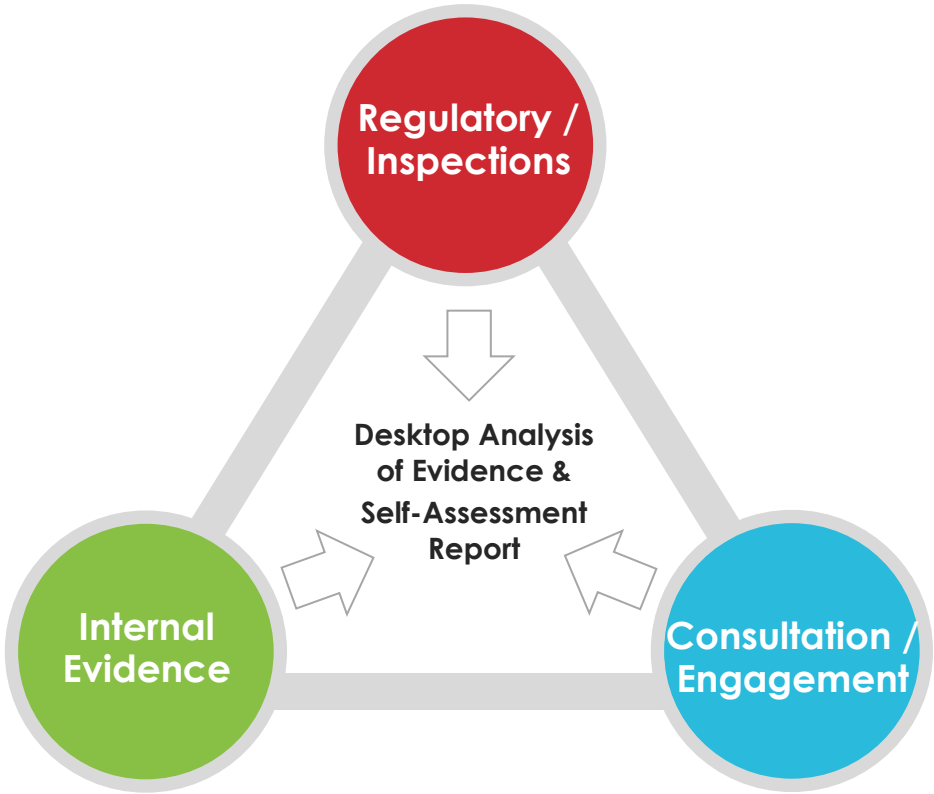
We also draw on the extensive **regulatory and external evidence** that exists. This includes inspection reports from Estyn, Care Inspectorate Wales and the ongoing work conducted by Audit Wales. It also includes the Panel Performance Assessment conducted by an independent review panel in 2024. This 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 29-34).

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 local people's 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.

The Council's Digital Strategy supports this by putting in place a framework for managing and monitoring data quality, including through data quality indicators for core systems, maintaining records of data processing and upskilling for all key business areas.

Our Performance Framework also 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.
  - Mid Wales Regional Transport Plan
  - Review of Household Waste Sites
  - Statement of Licensing Policy
  - Ceredigion Drone Policy
  - Corporate Enforcement Policy
- Engagement exercises including:
  - Shaping the Future of the Local Economy
  - Ceredigion Placemaking (village place plans)
  - Culture Strategy
  - Town and Community Councils engagement
  - Age Friendly Ceredigion Survey
  - Budget engagement
  - Youth Services Strategy
  - Plascrug Active Travel Bridge
  - Ceredigion Active Travel Network
- Engagement with stakeholder groups including Disability Forum and Older Persons Forum
- Trade Unions monthly meetings
- People (staff) Surveys

LEARNING FROM CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

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

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.

Consultation and engagement helps us improve our services. It lets people know what the Council does and how we set our priorities and policies. It helps us to explain what services we can and cannot provide.

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.

The Policy was reviewed during 2025 and a revised version published in March 2026. Our engagement campaign during the summer of 2025 helped us to understand what we are doing well and to identify areas where further work is needed. An updated action plan will be delivered over the next three years to achieve the following outcomes:

- Increase Transparency and Feedback
- Enhance Communication and Promotion
- Improve Accessibility and Inclusion
- Simplify Engagement Materials
- Support Councillor Engagement

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 and to consult local people about the extent to which the council is exercising its functions effectively.
- **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.

This is not just about our legal duty, however, as engaging and consulting with the public provides us with better information to help our decision making. This can lead to better outcomes for our residents.

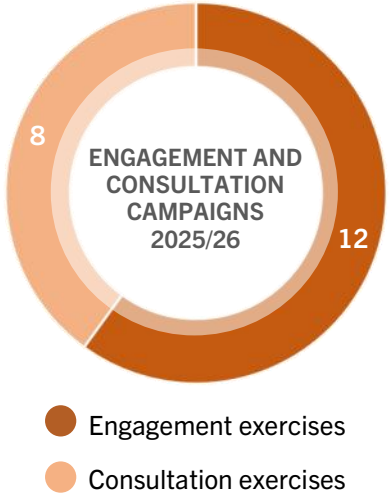
We take a "continuous engagement" approach to developing our services. This is achieved through an ongoing conversation between the Council and our local communities. For example, we regularly engage with the Ceredigion Youth Council, Disability Forum, Local Nature Partnership and the Carers forum.

This 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.

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

Public Consultation and Engagement Exercises in 2025/26

There were 20 engagement and consultation campaigns during 2025/26, with 12 being specific engagement campaigns and 8 consultation exercises.



In 2025/26 we have benefitted from some important engagement events that provide a unique insight into the views of citizens and stakeholders. These included engagement to help inform the

Council's new Culture Strategy, how the Council should spend its budget in 2026/27 and a series of drop-in sessions across the County to collect local businesses and residents views to help shape the future of the local economy and the refreshed Economic Strategy for Ceredigion.

The results of campaigns like these are used to inform decisions taken by Elected Members. In 2025-26 Cabinet and Council made three 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. All of the reports requiring this type of decision included a synopsis of the consultation carried out to help develop the proposed change.

All of our public consultations are published on our **Engagement and Consultations website.** In recent years we have improved this webpage to differentiate between Open and Closed Consultations, and update details of the original campaign with information about the final decision so that people can see the whole story.

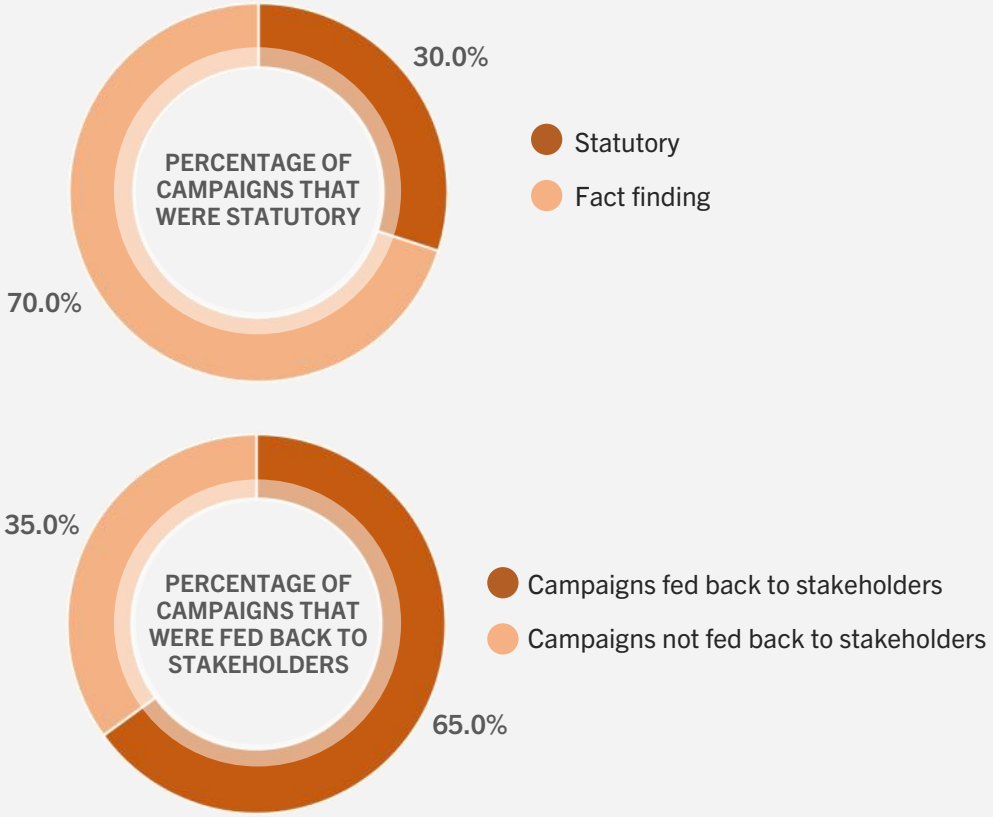
The number of responses we received varies depending on the topic of the campaign. For example, there was a very high number of responses to the Plascrug Active Travel Bridge engagement in Aberystwyth, held between January and February 2026, which attracted 1,978 responses. Conversely, the consultation on the new Corporate Enforcement Policy received just thirteen responses due the specialist nature of the topic.

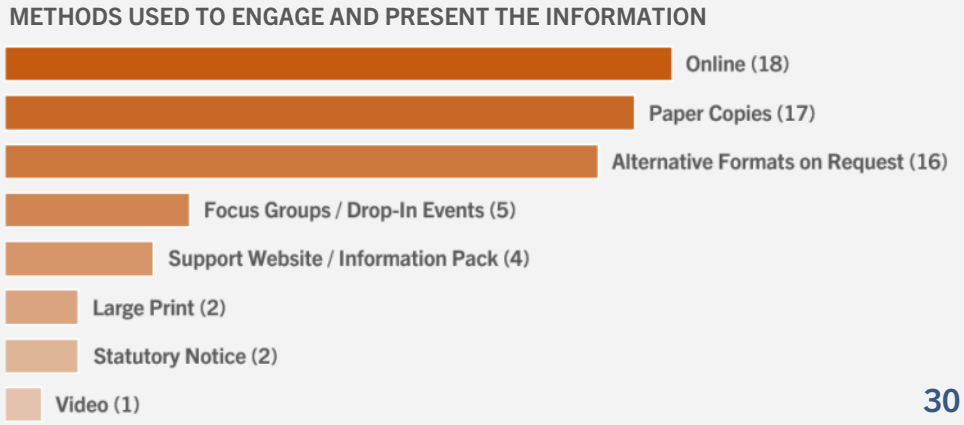
A lot is being done to strengthen the way we engage with residents and stakeholders. We send regular engagement e-bulletins to people who have signed up to receive these through MyAccount and have established a Ceredigion People's Panel who take part in surveys and other opportunities to express their views on Council services throughout the year.

Details of the engagement and consultation exercises conducted during 2025/26 can be found overleaf, along with the number of response and how the feedback was used to inform policy decisions and changes to services.

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 2025/26





ENGAGEMENT CAMPAIGNS IN 2025/26

Title of Activity	Dates	Response	What next
Corporate Engagement and Participation policy	04/07/2025 - 20/08/2025	186	Feedback was used to inform the development of the draft Engagement and Participation policy which went out for public consultation in Winter 2025-26.
Shaping the Future of our Local Economy	04/11/2025 - 17/11/2025	49	Drop in sessions at 9 locations for business owners, community groups and residents to input to the revised Economic strategy.
Shaping Places Project	11/11/2025 - 04/12/2025	605	The aim was to empower 13 rural communities to understand their needs, shape a vision for their village and identify priorities. The findings can be used as evidence of engagement to support funding bids and to inform Council plans and strategies.
Culture Strategy	04/11/2025 - 12/01/2026	524	The feedback will be used to inform the draft Culture Strategy for Ceredigion. There will be a public consultation on the draft Strategy during 2026.
Annual meeting with representatives from Town and Community Councils	25/11/2025 - 27/11/2025	47	An opportunity for members of Town and Community Councils to discuss local matters and to hear from the Leader and Senior Officers of the Council. Feedback from a Community Councillor, "it was useful to get a better understanding of County Council processes and the challenges in delivering services in the face of continued budget cuts to the public sector."
Age Friendly Ceredigion Survey	24/11/2025 - 20/03/2026	237	The feedback will be used to inform the draft Age Friendly Action Plan for Ceredigion. There will be a series of stakeholder workshops to develop the plan further. The final Age Friendly Action Plan will be presented to Cabinet for approval in autumn 2026.
Budget engagement	01/12/2025 - 09/01/2026	300	Feedback was presented to Cabinet in February 2026 to inform the 2026-27 budget setting process. Cabinet's recommendations were approved by Council on 2nd March 2026.
Youth Services Strategy 2027-2032	06/01/2026 - 31/03/2026	503	The feedback will be analysed and used to inform a draft strategic plan for Youth Services from 2027 to 2032. There will be a public consultation on the draft plan; this will be launched at the end of June 2026.
Plascrug Active Travel Bridge, Aberystwyth	14/01/2026 - 25/02/2026	1,681	The feedback will inform a detailed design to make sure that it is viable for construction. Further engagement with key stakeholders will be needed, particularly since the bridge crosses Network Rail. Planning permission may be needed. It may take another one to two years before construction can proceed.
Future plans for 2 key sites in Llandysul	28/01/2026 - 06/03/2026	220	The responses will be incorporated into a feasibility study. We will ask for people's views on this to make sure that we've captured all reasonable options. We'll then move onto identifying funding or developing a partnership with a relevant partner to deliver the chosen option.
Rhiwarthen Bridge, Capel Bangor	16/02/2026 - 22/03/2026	74	The feedback will help shape the final design. When this is in place we will start land negotiations, environmental assessments, consents and planning permission (if needed). Further engagement with key stakeholders will follow and then procurement and construction.

Title of Activity	Description	Response	What next
Ceredigion Active Travel Network map	09/02/2026 - 22/03/2026	392	Responses to the survey will be reviewed. Potential amendments to Ceredigion Active Travel Network Map will be shared for further feedback during our statutory 12-week public consultation later this year.

CONSULTATION CAMPAIGNS IN 2025/26

Title of Activity	Description	Response	Impact of the Consultation
Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) - Proposed Prohibition Of Parking At Any Time on the westward side of Heol Pengraig/Lewis Terrace, New Quay	22/07/2025 - 12/08/2025	0	No objections received. The Traffic Regulation Order was approved, in order to protect road safety at a new access.
Statement of Licensing Policy	24/10/2025 - 01/12/2025	13	Elements of the Licensing Policy were changed as a result of feedback from the consultation. It was approved by Council in January 2026.
Ceredigion Drone Policy	03/11/2025 - 14/01/2026	243	Amendments were made to the draft Drone Policy as a result of the feedback from the consultation. The draft Drone Policy will be presented to Cabinet in July 2026
Corporate Engagement and Participation policy	05/12/2025 - 20/02/2026	12	The policy was informed by an engagement campaign earlier in the year. The policy was amended following more feedback from the public. It was presented to Cabinet in March 2026 and has been published on the corporate website. We will start working on the action plan from April 2026.
Corporate Enforcement Policy	08/12/2025 - 20/01/2026	13	Feedback was presented to Cabinet in March 2026. The consultation didn't highlight any changes that were needed. It has been published on our website for public view.
Mid Wales Regional Transport Plan	04/02/2026 - 04/04/2026	214	Changes were made to the Mid Wales Regional Transport Plan as a result of the public consultation. It was approved by Welsh Government in September 2025, delivery to start April 2026.
Proposed new parking space, near Maes Mwldan, Bath House Road, Cardigan	25/03/2025 - 15/04/2025	0	No objections received. The Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) was approved.
Review of Household Waste sites	15/05/2025 - 04/08/2026	1,250	Feedback was included in the paper presented to Cabinet in October. The decision was to maintain all Household Waste sites with no change and to recommend that the £100k base Budget reduction from the 24/25 Budget Process be reversed.

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. This has continued into 2025/26 with the latest "People Survey" conducted between December 2025 and January 2026. The survey records staff sentiment across a range of issues from their personal well-being to working arrangements.

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. It is a key part of the Team Ceredigion approach. The results of the latest survey are shown opposite.

Business Consultation

The Growing Mid Wales partnership, which represents the two local authorities of Ceredigion and Powys, conducts regular consultation with local businesses.

During 2025/26, the Mid Wales Regional Transport Plan consultation was conducted to invite people to share their experiences of travelling in the region and highlight priorities for improvement.

Following feedback, the Welsh Government approved the Plan in late 2025. Ceredigion and Powys began delivering specific regional transport and active travel schemes in April 2026.

The Plan sets out the region's long-term transport vision, priorities and proposed interventions, providing a strategic framework to guide future transport investment, planning and delivery across Mid Wales.

The Council facilitated drop in sessions at nine locations across Ceredigion for business owners, community groups and residents to input to the revised Economic strategy. A total of 49 responses were received that are currently being used to help produce the updated Economic Strategy for Ceredigion which is due in autumn 2026.

CEREDIGION PEOPLE'S PANEL

The Ceredigion People's Panel is a council-led initiative where local residents participate in quick surveys and focus groups to help shape council services, policies, and the local democratic process. The Panel is a key part of the Council's ongoing Engagement and Participation Policy.

The aim is for the Panel to represent the people of Ceredigion as closely as possible, including different ages, genders, and backgrounds. While not every survey or discussion will be perfectly representative, they still give useful insight into people's experiences and opinions.

In the last year, the Panel has been expanded to 81 people. Residents can join the panel and respond to ongoing consultations by signing up for an account on the Ceredigion County Council My Account portal.

In the last quarter of 2025/26 the Panel has been consulted twice, once on understanding why the Council performance (which is largely positive) does not match public opinion of the Council. A survey and a hybrid focus group were used to gather feedback.

The second was to gather feedback on the draft Prospective Candidates Guide. This provided valuable insight to inform revisions to the guide.

40 Panel members responded to our survey to better understand why the Council often performs well in official measures, but public opinion can sometimes be more negative. The survey included both short answers and detailed comments, giving a mix of facts, opinions, and personal experiences. 10 panel members attended a follow up focus group.

Three key messages stand out from the survey and focus group discussions are shown below. As a result of this feedback we are providing more information on everyday services (waste, street cleaning, road maintenance etc) in our Self-Assessment Report, reflecting lived experiences in our reporting of outcomes and including more on the challenges we face so they are more clear.

PEOPLE'S PANEL FEEDBACK

What you told us about our performance and communicating our performance to you:

1. **People judge performance through everyday services they can see and use.**
2. **Communication is critical, especially when decisions are difficult or unpopular.**
3. **Consultation doesn't always feel meaningful, which can reduce trust in the process.**

PEOPLE SURVEY 2025/26

Background

The aim of the People Survey is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the employee experience, covering areas such as job satisfaction, development opportunities and well-being. A total of 1,345 staff participated.

These annual surveys are an important part of the Team Ceredigion approach. They help us understand where we are making progress and where we need to focus our efforts to continue improving.

The Results

Overall, the results paint a largely positive picture, with improvements seen across many of the areas that influence how staff feel about working for the Council.

One of the strongest findings is that 88.2% of respondents said they would recommend the Council as a good place to work, an increase from 85.2% in 2024 and significantly higher than national comparator organisations. This reflects the pride many colleagues feel in being part of Team Ceredigion.

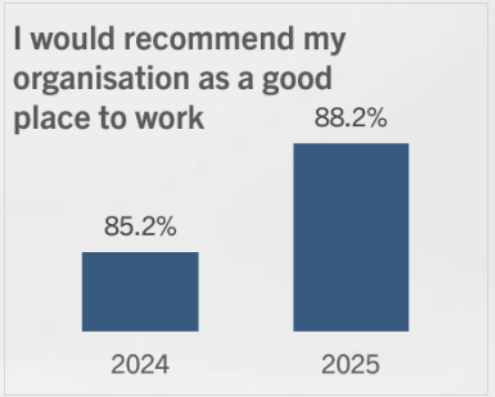
Furthermore, this year more respondents felt their contribution was valued by the organisation, 81.9% compared to 76.6% in the previous year.

Pride in working for the Council also continues to grow. Over three quarters (76.7%) said they were proud of the standards of performance and services provided by the Council, compared to 74.7% previously.

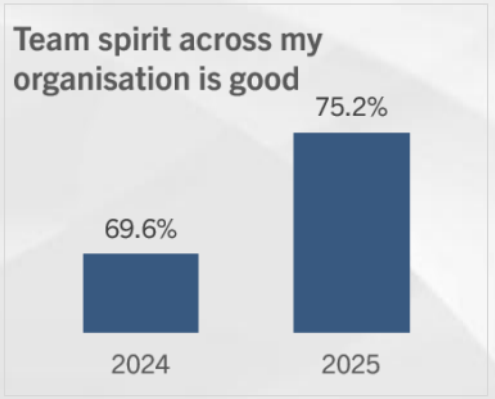
For most of the questions asked, the views of staff exceed all national comparators and where trends can be tracked, there is either stability or positive improvement across most indicators. However, we also recognise there will be some areas which will require further support and engagement.

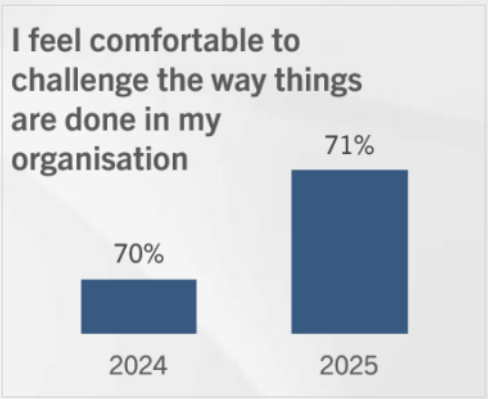
The survey has provided valuable insights into the experiences and perceptions of our workforce. The high level of participation and the positive feedback across all areas reflect the dedication and engagement of Team Ceredigion. Some of the headlines are shown to the right.

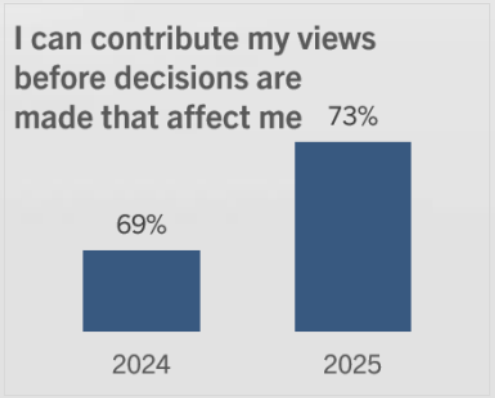
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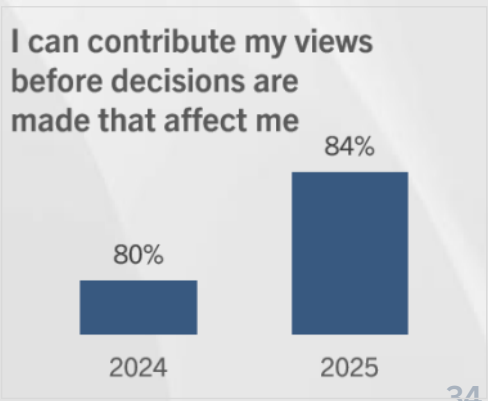












SETTING AND REVIEWING OUR WELL-BEING OBJECTIVES

The Council's Corporate Strategy 2022-27 sets out four Corporate Well-being Objectives for the Council. These are:

- 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 publication of the 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 2025 they were reviewed and it was agreed by Council that they remain the priority areas for the County and will remain in place for 2025/26.

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:



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

ASSESSING PROGRESS 2025/26

The Legislation

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.

The "Journey Checker" Tool

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 following table. See pages 37, 41, 45 and 49 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

LEADING THE WAY	
OWNING AMBITION	
MORE ADVENTUROUS	
SIMPLE CHANGE	
NO CHANGE	



Photo: In December 2025, around 160 Ceredigion pupils received a taste of the courses available at Llettytwppa Farm from September 2026



BOOSTING THE ECONOMY, SUPPORTING BUSINESS AND ENABLING EMPLOYMENT



PROGRESS MADE IN 2025/26

- Ceredigion County Council has long championed the development and growth of its local economy as a key corporate ambition as set out in its 15-year Economic Strategy. Most areas of delivery, supported by external funding sources, are subject to independent evaluations, which are in varying stages of commissioning and delivery. A number of key strategic programmes are being delivered, and their impacts collectively being assessed.
- The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) has provided the Council's Lifelong Learning and Skills Service with targeted funding to enhance the life chances of young people in Ceredigion. This has enabled the development and delivery of appropriate training opportunities and vocational skills courses, supporting young people to progress and contributing positively to the local economy. 142 individuals were supported to gain a qualification, above the target of 50. Similarly, the number of individuals supported to participate in education exceeded its target of 100, with 119 enrolments recorded.
- Developed by Growing Mid Wales, in partnership with Ceredigion and Powys County Councils, the Mid Wales Regional Transport Plan has now been approved by the Welsh Government. As a result, just over £13 million of funding has been allocated to improve transport across Mid Wales, as the region moves from strategic planning towards practical, on-the-ground improvements. The majority of the funding will be spent on physical improvements focused on delivering transport infrastructure that improves everyday journeys. This includes investment in active travel, bus infrastructure, electric vehicle charging and targeted improvements to key routes and places across the region.
- Cynnal y Cardi continues to support rural community regeneration through pilot projects, feasibility studies, facilitation, networking activities and training and mentoring. Its aim is to stimulate innovation that increases the value and variety of sustainable economic opportunities for the people of Ceredigion.
- The Revitalising Aberystwyth Promenade project, funded by the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund, has continued to progress during the year. The project is transforming Aberystwyth's iconic seafront into a safer, more accessible, and inviting space for both residents and visitors. The scheme is also creating better pedestrian and cycling connections and enhancing underused areas to encourage more people to explore Aberystwyth's historic landmarks and vibrant spaces. In the last year the Castle footbridges have been installed, improvements under Trefechan Bridge have been made and the Castle lighting is now complete. Most recently Walk Wheel Cycle Trust has unveiled new community-focused artwork along the National Cycle Network in Aberystwyth, forming part of the wider improvements across the town.
- The second Gwobrau Caru Ceredigion Awards were held in December 2025 to celebrate the county's exceptional talent and achievements of businesses, community projects and individuals across the county. The awards received more than 110 applications, with 40 finalists featuring across 12 categories. The event was a night of celebration and recognition, which saw County Councillors, officials, representatives from across the business world and community groups honour the exceptional efforts and accomplishments within the county.
- The Council again proudly supported Rali Ceredigion in September 2025, an official FIA European Rally Championship event. Rali Ceredigion continues to champion sustainability and safety, with the event once again holding FIA environmental accreditation and showcasing low-carbon fuels and electric vehicles. During the buildup there was engagement with schools and communities. The event brought a wider, international audience to our area, and highlighted our region's unique offerings to a global audience and generating over £4million in economic benefits across the County.
- Ceredigion County Council was also proud to support the 2025 National Cycling Championships that took place across Aberaeron and Aberystwyth, drawing professional cyclists and spectators from across the UK to the heart of Ceredigion. This prestigious event brought many visitors to the County enjoying all the things local businesses have to offer.
- In June 2025, Ceredigion's Planning Service won three awards at the Royal Town Planning Institute Cymru awards for planning excellence. The awards showcase and celebrate the best plans, projects, and people in planning. Team Ceredigion was recognised for transforming the planning function to meet rural challenges head-on and was awarded Planning Authority of the Year, along with Young Planner of the Year and Best Plan or Project.
- 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. In the last year, partners have been working together to help reduce household costs and maximise the income of people experiencing hardship, while improving our understanding of local poverty and addressing the stigma associated with living in poverty.

- The last year has seen excellent progress in the development of micro care enterprises in Ceredigion providing a range of assistance to help individuals live independently such as home help, companionship and personal care. 57 enterprises were set up during the year with support coming from PLANED, the community-led charity working across West Wales in delivering sustainable outcomes for communities.
- During 2025/26, the number of childcare places available has increased, providing greater choice and support for parents. There are now 1,609 registered childcare places in Ceredigion, an increase of 112 on the previous year.
- The Childcare Unit continue to regularly promote the Childcare Offer for Wales scheme along with other funding support streams such as Tax-free Childcare to help with the cost of childcare. This has included promotion through social media, Teuluoedd Ceredigion Families pages and face-to-face at local events.
- A further 123 children in Ceredigion have benefitted from the Flying Start expansion area of childcare for 2-year olds. Flying Start is the Welsh Government-funded early years program designed for families with children under four years old living in disadvantaged areas. It provides free part-time childcare for two-year-olds, enhanced health visiting services, parenting support, and speech and language development.
- A new Graduate Scheme has been launched by the Council, offering recent graduates the opportunity to take their first step on the career ladder and access quality career opportunities in public service. Graduate Trainees are offered a 12-month contract, during which they will earn while they learn, receive support to develop specialist skills and knowledge, and build a strong foundation for a future career.
- £4million of funding has been allocated for projects across Ceredigion and Powys over the next two years, as part of the Welsh Government's Transforming Towns programme. The investment will boost town centre regeneration, helping to create jobs, boost economic activity, and breathe new life into high streets and town centres across the region.
- Food Centre Wales celebrated its 30th Anniversary in March 2026 - three decades of championing Welsh food and drink businesses. Operated by Ceredigion County Council and funded by the Welsh Government, Food Centre Wales has become a cornerstone of the industry offering expert technical advice, state-of-the-art product development facilities and tailored business support. Since opening in 1996, the Centre has supported hundreds of producers, from ambitious start-ups to household names, helping them innovate, grow and succeed.
- A new Assets Action Plan has been implemented to optimise the use of Council property assets, improve service delivery and contribute more to the local economy. The Action Plan incorporates a range of actions that look to improve strategic planning to support Council objectives, reduces the lease renewals and rent review backlog, sets out a clear asset development programme, implements a review of county farms, identifies appropriate acquisitions, and ensure capacity meets ambition. Apart from supporting the efficient operation of the Council, it will also contribute to the growth of the economy in Ceredigion while halting and reversing the decline in nature.



ACHIEVEMENTS

£11.3m
of Local Growth Funding allocated to Mid Wales to support growth and tackle economic inequalities

£1.5m
of Pride in Place Impact Funding allocated to revitalize local high streets and improve public spaces

142
businesses supported across Ceredigion

31
new businesses in Ceredigion supported

4
apprenticeship opportunities offered within the Council during the year

57
micro care enterprises were set up within the care sector during the 2025/26 year

6,865
hits on the Council's Cost of Living Website to help tackle poverty

28%
New housing completions were for affordable housing

IMPROVING OUTCOMES

CELEBRATING OUR CULTURE & CREATIVITY

In October 2025 Aberystwyth joined over 50 Cities recognised by UNESCO for their contribution to literature, including Barcelona, Dublin, Seattle and Rio de Janeiro. The City of Literature designation makes Aberystwyth the first UNESCO Creative City in Wales.

The new City of Literature was created after a compelling application by the Dinas Llên strategic partnership, which includes Ceredigion County Council. The UNESCO designation brings together Aberystwyth and the wider county of Ceredigion to celebrate the centuries-old literary traditions of the area and its thriving bilingual cultural scene.

Aberystwyth has a vibrant infrastructure of festivals, bookshops, theatres, cultural events, lectures, centres of academic excellence and research, publishing, poetry and writing that connects all parts of the county. Literature and creativity help make Aberystwyth a great place to live, work, study and visit.

This mark of global recognition **celebrates the vibrancy and strength of Ceredigion's and Wales' bilingual literary culture** and its contribution to creativity nationally & internationally.

The designation brings global prestige that helps cities **attract tourism revenue**, **secure cultural funding**, and **boosts civic pride.** Wales' first City of Literature will be a catalyst for further growth **in the creative industries**, **benefit local businesses** and help more people to discover Ceredigion and its rich cultural and literary history.

SHAPING THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Ceredigion's 15-year Economic Strategy sets out how we will work together towards achieving strong, sustainable and resilient economic growth for Ceredigion, created and shared by all. The Strategy focuses on the areas where the Council can make a positive contribution to the local economy through the use of its resources, partnerships and influence.

Many initiatives have already been delivered, **supporting businesses to grow**, **promoting Ceredigion as a place to live, work and visit,** and helping to **strengthen the skills of the local workforce**. Significant external investment has also been secured, creating opportunities for further economic growth and regeneration across the county.

During 2025/26, we commenced a full review of the Economic Strategy to ensure it remains relevant to the challenges and opportunities facing Ceredigion. Engagement sessions were held across nine locations in the county, providing businesses, residents and community groups with the opportunity to contribute their views. A stakeholder workshop also brought together representatives from key partners to help shape the future direction of the Strategy.

The refreshed Strategy, which is due in autumn 2026, will place a stronger emphasis on skills, sustainability, housing, town regeneration and cultural promotion, This review provides a valuable opportunity for local people and organisations to help **shape the future of the Ceredigion economy** and ensure that **future growth reflects the county's communities, strengths and values.**

GROWING THE ECONOMY

The Mid Wales Growth Deal continues to make good progress. In March 2026 the Welsh and UK governments confirmed the release of the latest tranche of funding worth £11.8million.

There are currently 10 projects in the Growth Deal's portfolio, across key sectors including digital, energy, agri-food and advanced manufacturing. Several projects are in the process of moving from the planning stage and into the delivery phase. Approximately £6.8million of Growth Deal funding has been committed to these early projects.

The business case for other projects will be considered during the next year, and support is being provided to help bring these to fruition.

Early-phase schemes, such as the Elan Valley Lakes sustainable tourism and Celtic Rainforest expansion, have successfully transitioned into active delivery.

The Growth Deal is a ground-breaking partnership to bring a combined investment of £110m from UK and Welsh Government, which is expected to lever in significant additional investment from other public and private sources.

The programmes and projects that form the Mid Wales Growth Deal Portfolio 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 outputs that are achievable in Mid Wales through the 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**.

Growing Mid Wales is continuing to move forward with the latest tranche of £11.8m funding unlocked. Hosting and supporting major sporting and cultural events are also making a positive economic contribution and promoting Ceredigion as a place to visit. The UNESCO literary designation makes Ceredigion truly unique in Wales. The Revitalising Aberystwyth Promenade project is almost complete for everyone to enjoy. Further funding has been allocated through the Mid Wales Regional Transport Plan to improve transport across the region.

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 help generate growth in productivity
- Attracting and creating high paid job opportunities will help prevent households falling into poverty and hardship

Collaboration

- Working with Powys County Council and Welsh and UK Government to maximise the 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
- 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

- Private sector businesses, the drivers of future economic growth, are involved in identifying key priorities and strategies
- Private, public and third sectors are 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. 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 provisions, including education, skills, planning and infrastructure

KEY OUTCOME MEASURES

£11.8m

Of additional Mid Wales Growth Deal funding unlocked to boost the economy and create jobs across the region

41

new jobs created during the year through the work of the Council increasing economic growth, improving social well-being and creating opportunities for career advancement

300+

Total participants supported by Ceredigion's Employability Support Team helping to increase employment opportunities, and promote well-being

£12.4m

allocated to Ceredigion in UK Shared Prosperity Funding to invest in pride in place and increase life chances across the county



CREATING CARING AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

PROGRESS MADE IN 2025/26

- 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.
- 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.
- Following the opening of Ceredigion's first Well-being Centre at Lampeter in October 2023, plans are progressing for the second centre located in the south of the county. The preferred location was agreed by Cabinet as the Cardigan Memorial Pool / Fairfield Car Park site and that a new build development was preferred rather than a refurbishment of existing facilities. Work on the project will continue during 2026/27.
- The Lampeter Health and Well-being Show was held at the Lampeter Well-being Centre in February 2026. This free event was co-hosted by the Council and Hywel Dda University Health Board, and featured over 20 stalls and activities. Residents were able to access advice and free information on a variety of health topics including mental health and well-being, healthy eating and pharmacy services, quitting smoking and substance misuse support, and general cost-of-living support.
- The Cylch Caron Integrated Care Centre Project is continuing to progress and both the Council and Hywel Dda University Health Board remain fully committed to the project. The scheme is being re-scoped with updated feasibility, funding and procurement options. The next steps focus on agreeing the refreshed business case and funding route with Welsh Government. This ground-breaking scheme will deliver an integrated health, social care and housing resource centre for Tregaron and surrounding rural communities. This means bringing together a GP surgery, community pharmacy, outpatient clinics, community nursing services, specialist social housing and extra care flats for individuals with care needs.
- Ceredigion's Targeted Care & Enablement Service has embedded a 'patch-based geographic model' which divides the county into defined local patches, each coordinated by a designated Targeted & Short-Term Services Care Coordinator. This has strengthened the service's support for timely discharge and admission avoidance. During the year, 354 reablement and bridging packages were provided, 74 more than the previous year, and 185 people regained independence following reablement, an increase of 35. Reablement is a short-term, intensive social care service designed to help individuals regain the confidence, functional ability, and skills needed to live independently at home.
- Ceredigion County Council's Porth Gofal (Targeted Intervention) Team is being expanded to reduce delays for residents who are ready to leave hospital but require care support. £726,503 in recurring funding has been secured from Welsh Government which is being used to recruit additional social care staff and strengthen services that support timely hospital discharge, admission avoidance, and independent living at home.
- The Council continues to promote and facilitate social prescribing, such as gardening, walking and swimming, as a way to connect patients with non-medical support services in their community to improve their health and wellbeing.
- Ceredigion's Grow Your Own programme continues to strengthen the local workforce. In January 2026, five newly qualified social workers who trained through the scheme took up permanent posts within the County. This has helped reduce vacancies, lessen reliance on agency staffing and retain skills within local communities. The programme also supports a more sustainable workforce by developing practitioners who understand local needs, local services and, in many cases, can offer support through the medium of Welsh.
- Ceredigion County Council continues to develop its support to unpaid carers in the county, and there are now over 2,600 carers registered with the Carer's Information Service, an increase of more than 300 on the previous year.
- At present, there are 32 offers of discounts and breaks accessible to unpaid carers in Ceredigion using their Carers' Card. The Council also arranges carer breaks events and has partnered with Ceredigion Actif to enable carers to access our Well-being Centre facilities and Swimming Pools. During 2025-2026, 541 carers benefitted from this service, providing vital support and respite for the County's 7,250 carers.
- During the year, the Ceredigion Carers' Forum has also been re-established to ensure people of all ages have a platform and opportunity to share views and ideas to help shape our services. The Ceredigion Carers Forum meets bi-monthly to offer support, information, and friendship for unpaid carers.
- Over Christmas 2025, 108 wellbeing packs were distributed to support vulnerable young people. The packs provided practical tools, sensory items, and uplifting resources to help young people feel supported, included, and cared for at this time of year.
- The Council is investing in smart technology to improve services. For example, the Ceredigion Actif app provides information on booking

activities within Council owned leisure facilities. There have been 3,236 downloads so far and 746 active monthly users.

- There were 80,043 attendances across all Health Intervention programmes in 2025/26 compared to 70,838 in 2024/25, a 14% increase. Health intervention programmes refer to a range of services designed to improve people's health and well-being, focusing on physical activity and mental health. These include the National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS), Fit4Life and Walking4Wellbeing.
- At the end of the year, additional support was made available for residents experiencing unexpected financial crisis and hardship who rely on heating oil through the Welsh Government's Discretionary Assistance Fund (DAF). Eligible households can now receive up to £750 per award for heating oil and access two awards within a 12-month period, with at least three months between awards.
- The Planning Policy team have undertaken place shaping work across 13 larger settlements in the 2025/26 financial year which will lead to the publication of 13 distinct plans that support community cohesion.
- Ceredigion has a history of supporting families fleeing from war, hunger and homelessness. At the end of the 2025/26 year Ceredigion supported 172 asylum seekers under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme and Afghan Resettlement Scheme. The Homes for Ukraine scheme allows UK residents with spare accommodation to sponsor Ukrainian nationals fleeing the war to live with them in the UK, while the Afghan Resettlement Programme offered relocation and resettlement to Afghan citizens, who worked or assisted the UK's mission or were considered vulnerable.
- All children and young people in Ceredigion have opportunities to access after-school, evening and weekend activities. For example, 197 young people engaged in structured holiday activities and 216 in half-term programmes during 2025/26. A wide range of activities are provided including sports, creative arts and digital projects.
- During 2025/26, the Council's Parenting and Family Support Team is proud to have achieved the Bronze Investors in Carers Award, recognising the team's commitment to supporting carers within our workforce and the wider community. The Bronze Award highlights the positive steps the team has taken to raise awareness of carers' needs, embed good practice, and promote a culture that prioritises well-being.
- In July 2025, Team Ceredigion officially signed the Age-Friendly Employer Pledge, a nationwide programme led by the Centre for Ageing Better to improve the recruitment, retention, and development of older workers. We believe that age should never be a barrier to opportunity. By signing the pledge, we are demonstrating our commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive workplace for people of all ages.
- Ceredigion County Council has been honoured with an award for supporting the Armed Forces community. The Council was among 12 employers to receive the Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award at a ceremony at HMS Cambria, Cardiff Bay. Awarded by the Ministry of Defence, the Employer Recognition Scheme formally recognises organisations which employ and support those who serve in the Armed Forces, veterans and their families.
- The Council has worked with the Ceredigion Association of Voluntary Organisations (CAVO) to maintain a network of 39 Warm Welcome Spaces across the county. These community-led venues provide a safe, heated environment with free hot drinks, meals, and social activities. The aim is to bring communities and support anyone struggling with the increased cost of living particularly during winter.



ACHIEVEMENTS

9,000+
carers magazines printed and distributed across Ceredigion

850
unpaid carers participated in leisure activities to maintain their health and well-being

80,043
attendances across all Health Intervention programmes

74
Activity classes per week were provided across all leisure facilities

1,395
monthly members of Ceredigion Actif, helping people to get physically active so they can benefit from positive health and well-being

1,245
public protection enforcement actions taken to improve the well-being and public health of people and communities

126
Young people in rural and community settings were supported through mobile and outreach youth provision

583
clients supported by Ceredigion's Telecare Service, providing health and care services to people in their own homes

£279,548
of grant funding provided to community organisations to improve provision

20
public engagement and consultation campaigns run to record resident's views



IMPROVING OUTCOMES

SUPPORTING PEOPLE'S INDEPENDENCE

Now in its second year, the Penmorfa Centre for Independent Living continues to support individuals live safely and independently at home for longer.

It does this by providing the opportunity to see a range of solutions related to Care, Technology, Mobility, and Independent Living. But it's also a community hub, where people can connect with experts through regular drop-in sessions, workshops and demonstrations.

In the last year, we have been increasing awareness and use of assessment tools, assistive technology and telecare.

For example, the "Just Checking" programme completed 100 technology enabled care assessments, generating 68 referrals and 56 installations of the care monitoring system.

During 2025/26, the Centre supported 1,744 visitors - an increase of 744 compared with the previous year. There were also 583 people receiving a telecare service, 349 more than last year. The telecare service connects users to a 24/7 monitoring centre, providing immediate support in an emergency.

In addition to **promoting and supporting independent living**, the innovative solutions on offer help people to **manage their health** and **improve their quality of life**, and are transforming the way individuals **find solutions and access help**.

INVESTING IN LEISURE AND SPORT

During 2025/26, the Geraint Evans Leisure Centre in Aberaeron was refurbished. Works totalling £331,000 were carried out between August and October 2025 to install a new floor, decorate the sports hall and enhance the fitness suite. This followed the refurbishment of the accessible toilet and shower facilities earlier in the year.

The upgrades were supported by a Sport Wales grant from the Welsh Government, alongside funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Ceredigion County Council.

The refurbishment included a new sports hall floor, LED lighting, redecoration, and new line markings for Boccia and Pickleball, marking a first for council-operated facilities.

Jack Sargeant MS, Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership, visited the centre in December 2025, and said: "it is great to see how Welsh Government investment is making a real difference to communities in Ceredigion."

Apart from transforming the leisure centre into a **modern and accessible space**, it **expands local sporting opportunities**, **enhances fitness environments**, and **fosters better overall public health**.

The improvements cater to all users, including residents accessing health intervention programmes, and **encourages more people in the county to lead active and healthy lives**.

TRANSFORMING SOCIAL CARE THROUGH THE DELIVERY OF THE THROUGH AGE WELL-BEING PROGRAMME

Ceredigion's Through Age Wellbeing (TAW) model is at the heart of our approach to social care, focusing on prevention, early intervention and helping people remain independent for as long as possible.

This approach was positively recognised during the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) inspection of Adult Social Services in May 2025. The CIW praised the Council's commitment to person-centred practice, visible and responsive leadership, and having a clear vision for continuous improvement.

The inspectors highlighted the focus on prevention, community resilience, and the effective application of strengths-based approaches that ensure people's voices, choices and priorities shape the support they receive.

The inspection confirmed strong progress and positive outcomes, with the TAW model delivered within budget during 2024/25, demonstrating both sustainability and value for money.

Furthermore, The Council's residential care homes maintained ratings of Good or Excellent, and workforce capacity was strengthened through the recruitment of six additional social workers.

The Authority's strategic focus on preventing the need for long-term statutory care and fostering resilience in local communities was also highlighted as a key strength.

The CIW concluded that the Council has strong foundations, a positive culture of learning and wellbeing, and a clear trajectory for further improvement in outcomes for people who need care and support.

Now in its fifth year, the Through Age Well -being model has enabled Ceredigion to deliver a number of outcomes. The focus on preventative support **promotes independence**, **strengthens community resilience** and **reduces the need for longer-term statutory intervention**.

Improved access to information, advice and assistance supports adults, children and families to **build resilience**, **maintain independence** and achieve the outcomes that matter most to them.

The approach promotes a greater voice, choice and control, **empowering individuals, carers and communities to play an active role in identifying solutions and supporting wellbeing**.

Operationally, the model has also contributed to **stronger partnership working** across the County and improved workforce capacity through "growing its own" social workers to increase capacity and support demand.

Overall assessment of the journey so far

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

The most recent Care Inspectorate Wales inspection reflected positively on the Through-Age Well-being programme that is transforming social care in Ceredigion. The Centre for Independent Living is expanding its services and supporting a growing number of customers, while the Council continues to provide dedicated support to the County's unpaid carers.

The investment and refurbishment of leisure facilities, combined with the ongoing project to establish a second well-being centre in the south of the county demonstrate progress towards providing modern, accessible and sustainable services for all of Ceredigion's residents to maintain active and healthy lifestyles.

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.

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 work together to maximise the contribution to a 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

KEY OUTCOME MEASURES

100%

of clients reported an improvement in physical or emotional well-being through participation in health intervention programmes

85.1%

receiving carers breaks reported that their well-being had improved, higher than the target of 70%

83.3%

of people accessing the Council's Housing Gateway Services achieved greater independence, above the target of 80%

185

people regained independence following reablement, an increase of 35 on the previous year.



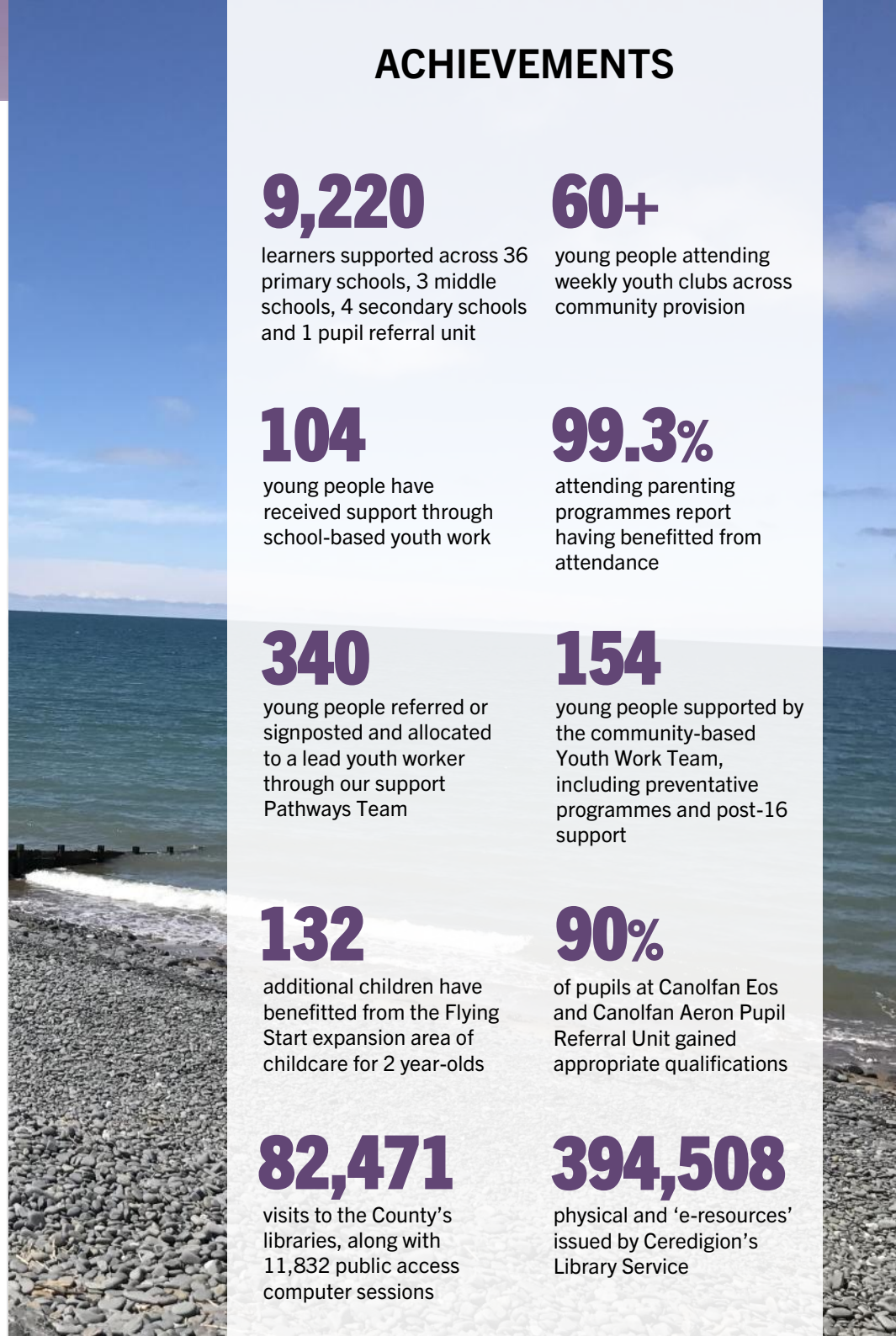
PROVIDING THE BEST START IN LIFE AND ENABLING LEARNING AT ALL AGES

PROGRESS MADE IN 2025/26

- The Council is continuing to modernise education establishments. The new Ysgol Dyffryn Aeron School that provides modern, state of the art learning facilities for pupils, won a further award during the year - 'Project of the Year - Inclusive Design' at the Education Building Wales Awards in recognition of integrating specialist learning facilities into an innovative and accessible campus.
- Other initiatives in the County are progressing - the Business Justification Case for the Ysgol Gymraeg project has been approved by Welsh Government, with funding secured to deliver a school extension and refurbishment, providing a new language immersion centre and enabling the removal of temporary portacabins. The language immersion Centre and school are due to open in September 2027.
- The project to refurbish and reconfigure Llwyn yr Eos School to expand and improve ALN provision for Foundation Learning and Key Stage 2 is also progressing. The Strategic Outline Case was approved by Welsh Government in January 2026, and the project will now progress through the Outline Business Case and Full Business Case stages during the next year in order to secure funding for the project.
- 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 89.6% in Ceredigion, higher than the national average in Wales of 87.1%. Level 2 qualifications are five or more GCSEs at grades A-C or equivalent.
- Inspections outcomes for Ceredigion's schools have been strong during 2025/26. All 36 of the inspection reports and interim reports issued by Estyn reflected positively on the school being inspected, and none of Ceredigion's schools require follow-up measures.
- 6 of Ceredigion's schools received "spotlights" for good practice during the past year from Estyn, the education and training inspectorate. These are examples of innovative and effective practice in teaching, leadership and in well-being.
- The pioneering 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. To date, 243 schools across Wales have participated with 12,900 pupils engaged.
- All Ceredigion Schools have access to a Ceredigion Equity and Deprivation Strategy and almost all schools inspected have received positive comments relating to the support of disadvantaged learners and the funding allocated to support this.
- Over 2,250 young people in Ceredigion took part in the 2025 '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 jobs and career opportunities, ending violence against women and girls, and improvements to mental health services. 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.
- Over 400 young people have engaged in consultation and co-production activity across Ceredigion. The work of the Youth Council and youth-led campaigns influence local decision-making.
- 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 successful collaborative funding bid to Welsh Government with Carmarthenshire. Pembrokeshire and Powys County Councils has instigated a project to develop a Regional Culture Strategy and a Priority Culture Plan for Ceredigion. The project aims to strengthen cultural opportunities, setting a shared vision for the future whilst aligning with the Welsh Government's recently published National Priorities for Culture. Work will commence in 2026/27.
- Flying Start supports and monitors all Cylchoedd Meithrin, Day Nurseries and Playgroups within the county and ensures all staff are offered training to improve the quality of their provision alongside the Childcare Team who offer mandatory training.
- Ceredigion is part of the "Welsh Veg in Schools" project, with all schools in Ceredigion serving organic vegetables grown in Wales as part of their school lunches, with the majority of vegetables grown within the county itself. In 2025, Ceredigion schools served 2,537kg of vegetables from Castell Howell, the largest amount of any county in Wales, providing healthy and nutritious meals for pupils while growing Wales' horticulture sector.
- 94 local people gained employment as a result of help and support from the Employment Service.
- 1,798 learners engaged with the Lifelong

Learning and Skills Service.

- 98 learners were enrolled on the apprenticeship programme helping learners combine on-the-job work experience with vocational qualifications.
- 78 members of Council staff accessed the "Welsh in the Workplace" training in 2025-26 to learn or improve their Welsh language skills.
- Welsh Language Standards training is provided to all Council staff as part of their induction. All staff in the Council's contact centre, "CLIC", are able to respond to enquiries through the medium of Welsh ensuring that the first point of contact for all Service Users can be in the customer's preferred language. The staff "People Survey" conducted in 2025/26, found that 96.8% of staff feel they have opportunities to use the Welsh language during their working day.
- In June 2025 the Council held its first Welsh Language Conference with over 60 attendees from all over Wales. This conference was the first of its kind and provided the opportunity to celebrate the successes of the Welsh Language in Ceredigion, consider the Council's ongoing efforts to promote the Welsh language in the County, and consider the plans for the future. Guest speakers included the Welsh Language Commissioner Efa Gruffudd Jones.
- 83 qualifications have been achieved by young people in Ceredigion through youth work programmes. These have been achieved through the delivery of life skills, employability workshops and informal learning opportunities.
- Children and young people identified as at risk of exclusion and disengagement are supported to access structured informal learning programmes and activities to support their attainment. During the year, 57 young people identified as at risk of Not being in Education Employment or Training were supported, and 32 young people were successfully re-engaged into Education, Employment or Training.
- The Council provides a wide range of activities supporting the social, emotional and physical development of young people. These include youth clubs and outreach activities, which provide access to safe, supportive spaces. For example, during the year, 197 young people took part in structured holiday programmes.
- In April 2025, a new Play Sufficiency Assessment was undertaken, and a Ceredigion Play Action Plan 2025-28 developed. This statutory duty requires all local authorities to assess the availability and quality of play opportunities for children in their area every three years. Since the last Assessment, the Council has worked collaboratively with partners and communities to enhance play opportunities across the county. The Assessment also sets out the plans to enhance play provision over the next three years.
- As part of our commitment to creating and improving play areas in Ceredigion, Play Improvement Capital Grants were awarded to 12 organisations with Welsh Government funding and a further 11 awards were made with Pride in Place funding. The aim is to help young people to develop their skills, knowledge, and confidence to be physically active.
- School swimming has been made available to every primary school and Additional Learning Needs unit in the county. 624 children received community swimming lessons at council operated swimming pools in 2025/26, which is a further 2% increase compared to 2024/25.



ACHIEVEMENTS

9,220
learners supported across 36 primary schools, 3 middle schools, 4 secondary schools and 1 pupil referral unit

60+
young people attending weekly youth clubs across community provision

104
young people have received support through school-based youth work

99.3%
attending parenting programmes report having benefitted from attendance

340
young people referred or signposted and allocated to a lead youth worker through our support Pathways Team

154
young people supported by the community-based Youth Work Team, including preventative programmes and post-16 support

132
additional children have benefitted from the Flying Start expansion area of childcare for 2 year-olds

90%
of pupils at Canolfan Eos and Canolfan Aeron Pupil Referral Unit gained appropriate qualifications

82,471
visits to the County's libraries, along with 11,832 public access computer sessions

394,508
physical and 'e-resources' issued by Ceredigion's Library Service

IMPROVING OUTCOMES

INVESTING IN OUR EDUCATION FUTURE

In the last year, Ceredigion County Council purchased Llettytwppa Farm (near Lampeter) to transform it into a hands-on, vocational educational centre for students aged 16+.

This project is part of a broader vision to support Ceredigion's rural economy by offering courses that reflect the needs of agricultural, horticulture and related industries.

Managed by Hyfforddiant Ceredigion Training, the site will feature Level 2 and Level 3 apprenticeships, alongside practical courses in subjects like safe machinery use, mechanics, and sustainable farming, from September 2026 onwards.

During 2025/26 a series of successful engagement events and open days were held to promote the site and showcase the courses on offer. In December 2025, 160 pupils from years 10 to 13 in Ceredigion received a taste of what Llettytwppa Farm has to offer during two open days and took part in a variety of practical exercises.

This exciting project will provide **enhanced vocational training** and **establish agricultural apprenticeships** for young people and lifelong learners alike. It will support the rural economy by providing the **skills and training** needed to support one of Ceredigion's key sectors.

In so doing, it creates further **employment opportunities** and career options for local people, particularly young people starting their career, to **stay, learn and succeed in their local communities**.

PROMOTING THE WELSH LANGUAGE

The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) has further developed the provision of Welsh medium education in five primary schools in Ceredigion.

The first year of implementation was highly successful in four schools at Nursery level, where pupils adapted extremely well to the change.

Since September 2025, the provision has been extended to include all four year old pupils in five primary schools. As a result, 100% of three and four year old pupils in all Ceredigion Schools are now being educated through the medium of Welsh.

This rolling programme will continue to progress into older year groups in line with the agreed implementation plan.

Recent Estyn inspections in two of the schools have highlighted successful practice in the implementation and development of the Welsh language.

Evidence shows that bilingual education supports **strong academic achievement** and opens **new career opportunities** as employers across Wales actively seek bilingual staff. Culturally, the greater awareness of Welsh culture, history, and identity **builds cultural confidence** and **community cohesion**. Nationally, it support's the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 goal of **building a confident, bilingual nation** by doubling the daily use of Welsh and reaching 1 million Welsh speakers.

MODERNISING LIBRARY FACILTIIES

In November 2025, Aberaeron Library relocated to Penmorfa, on the ground floor of the Council building.

The new location provides modern and accessible facilities, designed to better meet the needs of library users of all ages. It contains is a wider selection of books and resources, including a 3D printer and a dedicated Maker Space area, comfortable areas for reading and studying, and plenty of room to take part in community activities.

The transformed library space is already proving to be a vibrant hub for learning, creativity and community connection.

It was developed with the support of a £212,000 Welsh Government Transformation Grant and demonstrates the Council's commitment to creating modern, accessible facilities that serve everyone.

In addition to providing **modern and accessible facilities,** the new library is open for longer, has improved parking and is conveniently **co-located with other facilities** including the Centre for Independent Living and face-to-face Council services.

It is helping to **building stronger communities** where everyone has access to excellent learning and cultural opportunities. The budgetary savings delivered through the relocation and reduced running costs, ensure that the new facility is also **sustainable for the future.**

DEVELOPING SKILLS AND CONFIDENCE

Ceredigion's Youth Service plays a vital role in supporting young people to develop the skills, confidence and resilience needed to progress in learning and employment.

For example, through targeted youth work, 83 young people achieved accredited qualifications during 2025/26, with 27 progressing into education, training or employment.

Furthermore, school-based and community youth work supported young people who were at risk of disengagement, with 32 supported back into education, employment or training through tailored support. This included programmes such as "Inspire" which provide flexible, informal learning opportunities focused on life skills, well-being and employability.

Their work is underpinned by strong early identification systems. This ensured that the 57 young people identified as being at risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education Employment or Training) received coordinated support.

Engaging with the service **develops life skills** and **personal development opportunities** to build confidence and independence. It also provides safe spaces to socialise and be creative, to **reduce anti-social behaviour** and **promote positive choices**. It provides young people with a voice through the Ceredigion Youth Council, **empowering them to participate in decision-making** and **influence services available to them.**

Overall assessment of the journey so far

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

The results of Estyn inspections show that none of Ceredigion's schools are in follow-on measures and that education services are highly regarded in the County.

The Youth Service has been instrumental in supporting young people's personal development, in building confidence and in opening career pathways. Ceredigion continues to have a very high proportion of school leavers who continue into education, training or employment.

The opening of the new Aberaeron Library at Penmorfa provides a range of improved facilities and is sustainable for the future.

There are further, exciting plans ahead with the development of vocational training at Llettytwppa Farm supporting the agriculture and horticultural sectors in Ceredigion.

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 to help reduce inequalities and improve outcomes for children and families.

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 strengthens each of the four pillars of well-being (economic, social, environmental and cultural)

KEY OUTCOME MEASURES

93.1%

of Year 13 school leavers in education, training or employment, above average nationally (92.9%)

70.9%

of pupils taught Welsh as a first language in Ceredigion, above average nationally (21.7%)

96.0%

of Ceredigion's working age population qualified to Level 2 or higher, above average nationally (87.6%)

77.5%

of Ceredigion's working age population qualified to Level 3 or higher, above average nationally (68.6%)



CREATING SUSTAINABLE, GREEN AND WELL-CONNECTED COMMUNITIES



PROGRESS MADE IN 2025/26

- The coastal defence schemes in Ceredigion are continuing to progress well. Construction at Aberaeron is complete, and the scheme has already protected the town on several occasions since completion during the winter of 2025/26.
- Work is continuing to finalise the Aberystwyth Outline Business Case to meet Welsh Government requirements, and funding has been secured to develop the Full Business Case. The scheme is expected to progress to detailed design and Full Business Case stage in 2026/27, supported by £500k of Welsh Government investment.
- Borth Leat and Borth / Ynyslas are expected to reach Outline Business Case stage by the end of 2026/27, supported by £55k of Welsh Government funding. Llangrannog is also expected to reach Outline Business Case stage by the end of 2026/27, supported by £110k of Welsh Government funding.
- Improvements to Rhiwarthen Bridge and Capel Bangor is expected to reach the Outline Business Case stage by the end of 2026/27. Meanwhile, Tal-y-bont Flood Alleviation Scheme is expected to progress to detailed design and Full Business Case stage by the end of 2026/27, supported by £220k of Welsh Government funding.
- 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 44% in the county from a total of 561.6 ktCO2e in 2005 to 314.4 ktCO2e in 2023. (ktC02e = kilotonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent)
- Ysgol Dyffryn Aeron is Ceredigion's first net zero carbon school. The school has subsequently achieved a BREEAM Outstanding rating and score of 93.6% - the highest achieving for any educational building in the UK. BREEAM provides a sustainability assessment framework, measuring value such as low impact design and carbon emissions reduction.
- The Council continues to work closely with partners, including Welsh Government, Transport for Wales, the Mid Wales Corporate Joint Committee and transport operators, to develop sustainable, accessible and affordable travel solutions.
- The Mid Wales Corporate Joint Committee's Regional Transport Plan has been approved by Welsh Government, providing a significant increase in capital funding over the next five years for active travel, public transport infrastructure and electric vehicle charging.
- Bus infrastructure improvements were delivered at 14 bus stops during 2025/26, with further works planned in 2026/27 to improve reliability, accessibility and passenger experience at 16 bus stops.
- Enhancements to the TrawsCymru network have already increased journey opportunities on key strategic routes.
- The Council operates several biodiversity sites along its highway network. Biodiversity sites refer to protected habitats, roadside verges, and ecological corridors managed by road authorities to support wildlife. These networks act as vital wildlife corridors, preserving native flora and fauna while offsetting the environmental impact of roads and providing vital green corridors and refuges for pollinators, insects, and small mammals.
- During 2025/26 a further 6 electric vehicles were added to the Council's corporate fleet, bringing the total to 11 vehicles to help reduce the Council's carbon footprint and achieve the overall vision of net zero by 2030.
- Existing Local and National Planning policies support Renewable Energy Technology. Building Regulations require new build housing to be built with low energy technology embedded to reduce household carbon emissions annual energy bills.
- Three of Ceredigion's most popular beaches flew Blue Flags in 2025 after receiving the award from Keep Wales Tidy. The Blue Flag beaches were Borth, Llangrannog, Tresaith, and Aberystwyth South.
- A further six beaches achieved Seaside Award status which were Aberystwyth North, Aberystwyth South, New Quay Harbour, Aberporth, Clarach, and New Quay Dolau/ North. Beaches achieving Blue Flag-award status must meet the highest "excellent" water quality standard and are judged for the provision of facilities for beach users and for demonstrating good management and safety provision.
- Cilborth, Llanrhystud, Mwnt and Penbryn-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.
- Significant lobbying by Ceredigion County Council and others has resulted in 69.6% coverage of full fibre broadband giving over 100 Mbps capability across the County. Over the last year, the provision of Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) has increased from 56.7% to 69.6%.
- Collected 107.05 kilograms of waste per person in 2025/26, and managed over 700

litter bins across the County.

- The Council managed over 1,700 pay and display vehicle parking spaces across the County.
- The Council's investment in active travel meant that during 2025/26, approximately 683 metres of active travel routes were created or improved, alongside the delivery of 11 dropped kerb and tactile paving crossing schemes, improving accessibility and safety for disabled people and active travel users alike. Significant funding has been received for further improvements during 2026/27.
- Following completion of construction work, the path between Llanbadarn Fawr and the National Library of Wales opened in time for Green Libraries Week in October / November 2025. The works removed barriers to improve accessibility, along with being widened with a new smooth surface making it suitable for shared use by cyclists and pedestrians.
- Following the development of Place Plans for the county's largest towns, the Council is now focusing on assisting 13 smaller communities and rural villages to develop their own plans. This involves helping them to understand their needs, shape their vision and identify priorities. The place making process guides the future use, development, and improvement of local land and spaces. The development of place plans provide a focus and access to funding for realising the plan's vision.
- A new website has been launched to showcase the West Wales Nutrient Management Boards, set up to protect the Tywi, Teifi and Cleddau rivers. These river catchments are Special Areas of Conservation and are currently failing to meet phosphorus targets, putting precious ecosystems at risk. Funded by the Welsh Government and led by local authorities in Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire, the Boards bring together public bodies to develop long-term solutions to improve water quality while supporting sustainable development. The site includes detailed resources for landowners and developers, and citizen science findings. People can also find out how to join the stakeholder groups or take part in upcoming consultations. To find out more why not visit: the Nutrient Management Board Website.
- Ceredigion Museum is one of 12 UK partners working with the Natural History Museum in London on "Fixing Our Broken Planet: Interconnected", a programme supporting community focused climate action. With funding, displays and input from scientists, the museum is working with local young people who have chosen to create a short film about the Dyfi Estuary, expressing what they value about it and their hopes and concerns for its future. The film will be shown in the Archaeology Gallery, linking past climate driven change to the present, and will also feature in the Changing Tides coastal adaptation handbook co-produced with Dyfi residents.
- Ceredigion is a key member of the Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership. To help drive Ceredigion's transition to net zero, the Partnership identifies labour market shortages through detailed employer engagement and surveys. This enables the Partnership to work with training providers to deliver courses and apprenticeships in key areas such as retrofit, renewable energy, and environmental sustainability. The Partnership aligns workforce development with the demands of the local economy and supports a sustainable, low-carbon future.



ACHIEVEMENTS

29

Empty properties brought back into use following intervention by the Housing Service

13

Of Ceredigion's beaches recognised in the 2025/26 Wales Coast Awards

4.30

Days on average to clear fly-tips across the County, better than the target of 5 days

107.1

Kilograms of residual waste generated per person, better than the target of 165kgs

69.6%

Provision of full Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) broadband, increased from 56.7%, due to investment in digital connectivity over the last two years

5,078

Total kilowatt hours of renewable energy generated by council assets, above the target of 2,899 kilowatt hours

95.9%

Of waste collection routes collected on the scheduled day of collection, above the target of 90%

92.0%

Of category 1.5 highway defects repaired or made safe within 5 days of identification, above the target of 90%



IMPROVING OUTCOMES

REDUCING CARBON EMISSIONS, SUPPORTING ZERO-CARBON TRAVEL AND BEING GLOBALLY RESPONSIBLE

Ceredigion has seen a growth in demand for electric vehicle (EV) charge points in recent years.

The Council has an important role to play as a facilitator in meeting this demand and a responsibility to its residents to contribute to the move to zero emissions vehicles. The Council is committed to becoming carbon net zero by 2030.

Significant progress has been made in relation to the delivery of charging points in council owned and managed car parks. 96 public charging sockets were delivered in 2025/26.

The first tranche of EV charge points, as part of the government's Ultra Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) Pilot scheme, are also being installed on residential streets in Ceredigion for local access to charging facilities.

From September 2025 with match funding from the Welsh Government, it is hoped that we will roll out approximately 40 sites in residential areas. The Council is prioritising areas that do not have easy access to the destination chargers or residents that are unable to charge their vehicles from home.

The aim is to encourage decarbonisation of transport and increase uptake in Ultra Low Emission Vehicles.

The number of charge points in Ceredigion per 100,000 population is 250, which is the second highest in Wales and significantly higher than the UK average of 127.3.

The number of rapid charging points in Ceredigion is 51.7 per 100,000, also the 2nd highest in Wales and higher than the UK average of 25.7.

This has a number of positive outcomes for local people, business and the County as a whole.

Firstly, it delivers **net-carbon savings** by **reducing greenhouse gases** and **removing air pollution**. Electric vehicles reduce overall lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions by 60% to 70% compared to internal combustion engine vehicles.

But it also helps to drive **renewable energy integration**, where modern charging infrastructure often pairs directly with solar arrays and battery storage. This helps **power transportation with zero-carbon energy** instead of fossil fuels and contributes to the Council's drive to achieve carbon net zero.

It also enables **smart grid balancing**, **increases energy efficiency of transport** and **creates the infrastructure for the future of transport** which is recognised as most likely being electric.

By investing in this technology today, we can help to make Ceredigion a **healthier**, **more sustainable** and more **globally responsible county**, from which everyone can benefit.

STRENGTHENING RIVER HEALTH

Over the last 4 years, Ceredigion County Council has created the Teifi Nutrient Management Board which has introduced groundbreaking approaches to protect and restore the Teifi river system.

The project combines cutting-edge technology with community-driven efforts to address water quality challenges.

For example, the river Teifi was the first fully monitored river in Wales, with a full citizen science programme in place. The river is also a designated Demonstrator Catchment and the Council, alongside partner organisations, have been successful in securing a multi-million pound Heritage Lottery bid for river restoration known as Teifi Fyw, which will commence in June 2026.

Projects have already been undertaken as part of the Phosphate Reduction and Mitigation Project such as the installation of 9km of riparian fencing and installation of 6 sustainable urban drainage schemes.

The Board is playing a critical role in **improving the river's health** by **unifying stakeholders** (local authorities, water companies, and environmental agencies) to **reduce nutrient pollution**, specifically phosphorus. It is also driving positive outcomes through its use of high-tech data monitoring, citizen science and nutrient neutrality which are **offsetting the environmental impacts of new developments** and allowing **sustainable building** while actively **working to restore the River Teifi.**

MAXIMISING RECYCLING

In the last several years Ceredigion has consistently achieved one of the highest recycling rates in both Wales and the UK. In 2025/26, the recycling rate increased further to 74.0%, which is not only above the Welsh Government target of 70%, but also the highest amount ever recycled by Ceredigion's residents.

This increase follows data showing that almost half of the waste found in kerbside residual waste bags could have been recycled. In response, the Council introduced new residual waste restrictions to encourage residents to separate recyclable materials into the correct containers.

Initial results proved positive, indicating a 8% increase in clear bag recycling, a 11% increase in food waste collections, and a 15% reduction in residual waste collected at the kerbside.

The high levels of recycling in the county **divert waste away from landfill**, **prevent soil and water contamination, saves natural resources** and **protects local ecosystems**.

In addition to environmental conservation, it also helps to **mitigate the effects of climate change** through reducing greenhouse emissions and **providing economic benefits** through the creation of jobs and innovation in the recycling and waste management industry.

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. It is leading on the West Wales Nutrient Management Board to address water quality challenges and is investing in new technology such as electric vehicle charge points to continue reducing carbon emissions and provide the infrastructure for the future of transport.

Ceredigion continues to perform amongst the best nationally in recycling and diverting waste away from landfill. 2025/26 was a record-breaking year for everyone in the County with almost three quarters of waste recycled. These are examples of how Ceredigion is leading the way in creating sustainable, green and well-connected communities.

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 with a variety of local bodies, charities, voluntary organisations and other partners through the Ceredigion Local Nature Partnership. This open collaborative network delivers projects focusing on protecting, restoring, and celebrating wildlife and habitats across Ceredigion

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 OUTCOME MEASURES

74.0%

Of waste recycled composted or reused during 2025/27, above the target of 70% to help reduce pollution and conserve our natural resources

44%

Reduction in carbon dioxide emissions since 2005 to help reduce the impact of climate change and improve the health of local communities

100%

Of highway safety inspections completed on time to ensure a safe highway network across Ceredigion

90%

of food premises that are compliant (achieving a score of 3 to 5) following a food hygiene inspection to maintain food standards and secure public health

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 ongoing cost of living crisis is impacting many households in the County, rural poverty and access to services has been a consistent challenge, while household incomes and earnings are lower than average.

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.

Some of these issues have been exacerbated in recent years due to the COVID-19 pandemic such as housing affordability, while others remain a consistent challenge such as tackling poverty.

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 Public Services Board Poverty Sub Group tackling the impact of Poverty across the County, and leading on the Nutrient Management Board for the river Teifi to improve the condition of the river and to facilitate nutrient neutral development to proceed.

The Council's Well-being Objectives 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.

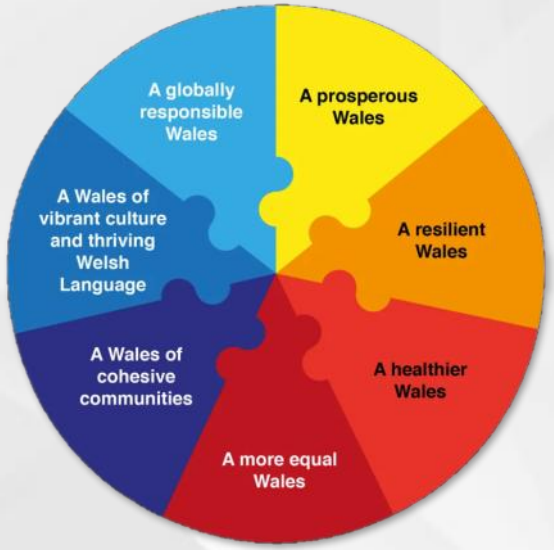
We monitor and review progress towards delivering the Objectives on a regular basis and produce an annual Self-Assessment Report in which we convey progress.

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 existing business and new start-ups to grow will help to increase productivity, create more and better paid jobs and support the workforce through opportunities for learning. A more prosperous Ceredigion will also help to tackle poverty and hardship.
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 to improve their physical and emotional wellbeing will support other initiatives to deliver a healthier Wales and create more resilience communities.
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 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 including the new Welsh Language Strategy.
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
	**Long term** Looking to the long term so that we do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs	• 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.
	**Integrated** Taking an integrated approach so that public bodies look at all the well-being goals in deciding on their Wellbeing Objectives	• The Corporate 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.
	**Involvement** Involving a diversity of the population in the decisions that affect them	• 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 with citizens and its engagement groups on the setting of its Corporate Well-being Objectives. • The Council has signed up the National Resident's Survey developed by Data Cymru and the Welsh Local Government Association and run its first survey during summer 2024. • The Council's Engagement and Participation Strategy will help to ensure the voices of all groups in Ceredigion are heard.

	Collaborative
	Working with others in a collaborative way to find shared sustainable solutions
		• The Council actively supports, amongst others, the following partnerships:
		  ○ The Growing Mid Wales Partnership
		  ○ The Ceredigion Public Services Board
		  ○ The Community Safety Partnership
		• 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.

	**Prevention** Understanding the root causes of issues to prevent them from occurring	• 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 Corporate Equalities Working Group meets every three months to monitor the progress of the Strategic Equality Plan and to discuss other issues relating to equality. An Annual Monitoring Report assessing the impact of the Strategic Equality Plan is published each year.

WELSH LANGUAGE

Ceredigion County Council's vision is for the Welsh language and Welshness to belong to everybody in Ceredigion and to instil a sense of pride amongst all of the County's residents.

In order to achieve this, the Council's new Welsh Language Promotion Strategy was published in December 2024 following public consultation, and builds on the foundations laid in the previous strategy to increase the opportunities to use the Welsh Language across the county.

It is recognised that the viability of the Welsh language is dependent on maintaining communities where a significant number of the population can speak the language and have access to it in all aspects of daily life.

Ceredigion continues to be regarded as one of the strongholds of the Welsh language with the third largest proportion of Welsh speakers nationally at 45.3% according to the 2021 Census, that's 31,680 residents.

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 Bilingual Futures Forum Committee is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Strategy and developments in Welsh language in the county.

The Strategy contains a number of ambitious actions and outcomes in order to see the language thriving across the county split across the four themes of Learn, Live, Belong, Succeed.

The overall target is that the proportion of Welsh speakers in Ceredigion will increase by 1.5% from 45.3% to 46.8% by 2029. This will result in an increase of 612 Welsh speakers from the baseline in 2021, and will also start to reverse the decline seen between 2011 and 2021.

The Council's actions contribute towards raising awareness of the importance of the Welsh language as an essential part of Ceredigion's identity and heritage, along with introducing definite and specific interventions to encourage the use of the Welsh language in all aspects of the county's social, cultural and economic life.

The Strategy supports the Council's overall vision of "delivering value for money, sustainable bilingual public services" and the Welsh Government's vision to have a million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050. Further information on Promoting and Facilitating the Welsh Language in Ceredigion is available on the Council's website.

FINANCE

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

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

JOINING UP OUR PLANS - LINKS TO KEY RESOURCES

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, 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.

Due to the unprecedented volume of procurement legislation and reform emerging at national level, the review and update of the Procurement Strategy has been pushed back until the legislative landscape has settled. However, the Council continues to be agile, responding to developments as they arise, and applying procurement rules effectively to support service delivery and good governance.

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 well-being of the county.

The Council has a Governance Framework which 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 2025/26 was presented to the Governance and Audit Committee in March 2026 and confirmed that the Council's governance arrangements are effective and fit for purpose.

The review of the 2025/26 Annual Governance Statement concluded:

- Provided high assurance that there was a sound system of scrutiny and robustness in place and that the systems and procedures in preparing the Governance Framework are satisfactory.
- The Council is assessed as having a satisfactory framework of governance, risk management and internal controls in place to manage the achievement of the organisation's objectives during the year.
- The Council has made good progress during the year with recorded achievements against each of the seven core principles.

The Annual Governance Statement is an assessment of the Council's governance arrangements and is used as a tool for corporate improvement, to evaluate strengths and weaknesses in the governance framework and as part of an annual action plan.

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.

A new Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP) is currently being drafted for consideration at Scrutiny in July 2026. During the last year, a fundamental review of the Assets Team has been undertaken, looking at priorities and capacity available.

Subsequently, a specific Assets action plan is currently being implemented to tackle various areas of work including improving business/ services plans, implementing the new structure in the team, and developing capacity including team building.

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.

The Workforce Plan addresses 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. It also supports the delivery of new ways of working, such as hybrid working, in order to secure

increased productivity, reduced travelling and improved work life balance.

The Plan also recognises the achievements over the course of the previous plan, the link with other corporate strategies, and our workforce profile.

The four themed priorities set out in the plan to meet the identified challenges, which are:

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

An overview of each theme is included along with the actions that will be taken to deliver 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 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 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 interventions.

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.

Periodic updates on progress with the delivery of the Strategy are provided to the Council's Thriving Communities Scrutiny Committee. The Strategy provides an exciting opportunity to build on Ceredigion's solid foundations and support an ambitious thriving economy for the future.

During 2025/26, a review of the Strategy was commenced to ensure it is up to date and that the priorities remain relevant. This included a series of drop-in sessions at nine locations across the county for business owners, community groups and residents to input to the revised economic strategy and help shape the future of the local economy. The new strategy is expected to be published during autumn 2026.

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

Following the Review of the Hybrid Working Arrangements in 2023 and the adoption of hybrid working as a permanent but discretionary option for employees, the Council's new Flexible Working Policy was approved in June 2024.

The Policy sets out the details of the hybrid working scheme which seeks to help employees improve their work life balance by reducing commuting time whilst also reducing the Council's carbon footprint and broadening its talent pool. It is recognised that the flexible working practices offered can aid health and wellbeing, reduce turnover, increase motivation and talent attraction.

The Flexible Working Policy was one of a number of Human Resource Policies updated during 2024/25 and ensures that the Council is compliant with current legislation and harnesses the benefits of the Council's learning over the past four years.

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.

Despite previous successes, there continues to be a lack of suitable and affordable housing of good quality. This, coupled with the need to tackle homelessness, and support the most vulnerable in our society, means that significant investment and work is required to address this situation. The Council will also work to ensure that local people are supported to continue to afford to live in their communities, contributing to the vitality of the Welsh culture and language.

DELIVERING OUR BUSINESS PLANS

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 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 2025/26 our performance shows that 59% of our measures were on target and 77% 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.

How this Compares to Previous Years

Since our new Performance Management Framework was installed, the monitoring systems that we used to track performance have improved significantly and we can more effectively monitor the delivery of our Corporate Strategy.

Our business plan performance measures show a decrease in the last year with 59% on target, compared with 62% in 2024/25, and above 70% in the previous two years (see chart below).

While this represents a reduction in the proportion of measures meeting their targets, the context behind this is important. Services have deliberately set more challenging and ambitious targets, reflecting our commitment to continuous improvement and raising performance levels.

At the same time, increasing demand for services, limited resources, and ongoing budgetary pressures have made it more difficult to achieve all planned outcomes within the year.

Despite these pressures, delivery against business plan tasks remains comparatively strong. In 2025/26, 77% of actions were completed or on schedule, slightly lower than the 80% achieved in 2024/25 but still

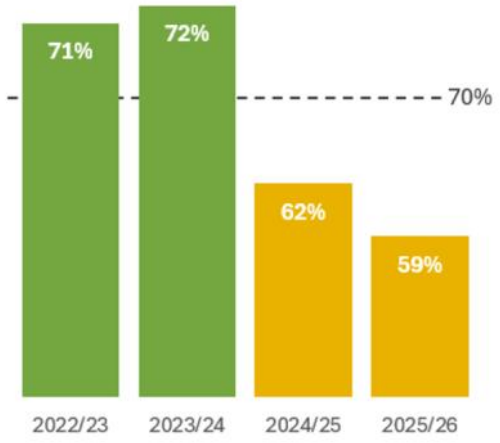


- On target: **106** (59%)
- Off target by less than 15%: **33** (18%)
- Off target by more than 15%: **23** (41%)

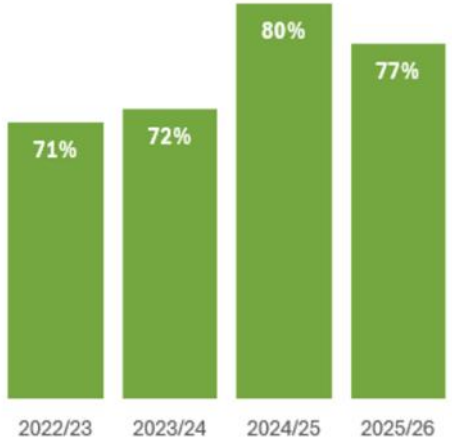


- On schedule / complete: **180** (77%)
- In progress but behind schedule: **48** (20%)
- Not started / not complete **6** (3%)

Business Plan Measures On Target



Business Plan Tasks Progress



DELIVERING OUR CORPORATE WELL-BEING OBJECTIVES

higher than the levels recorded in both 2023/24 (72%) and 2022/23 (71%), see chart below.

This demonstrates that, although some performance measures have been harder to achieve, services continue to make steady progress in delivering the core activities and improvements set out in their business plans.

The upward trajectory over the longer term indicates that our ability to deliver planned actions is strengthening, even in the face of increasing operational challenges.

As we move forward, this insight will help us refine our planning, strengthen performance management, and ensure that targets remain both ambitious and achievable.

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 2025/26 show that:

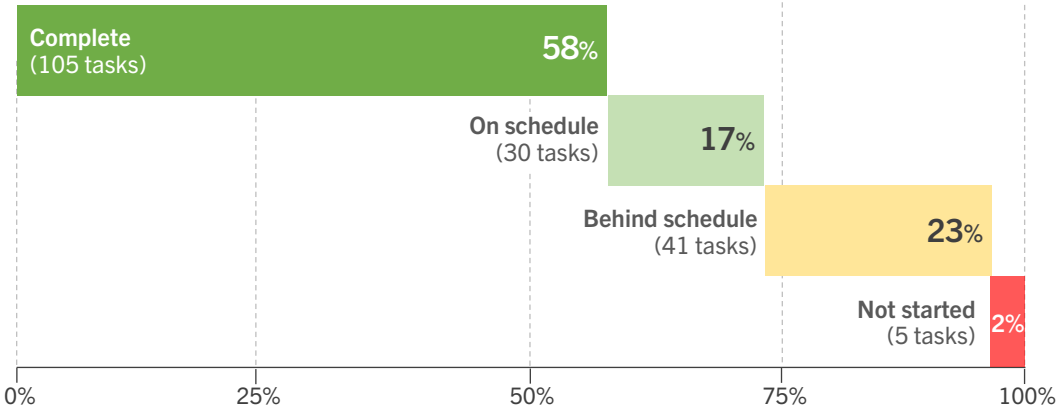
- 58% or 105 tasks were completed that supported the delivery of the objectives, with a further 17% or 30 tasks still in progress and on track at the end of the year, see chart below.
- This represents 75% of tasks either complete or on track at the year's end.
- There were also 41 tasks that were still in progress but slightly behind schedule at the end of the year. These tasks will transfer to the new year and continue to be monitored until completion.
- A further 5 tasks had not been started due to challenges such as changes in priorities, changes in legislation or withdrawal of funding in order to move forward. In these cases, they are reviewed and alternative tasks set or they are cancelled as appropriate.

Overall progress has been good with the majority of tasks being delivered, despite the challenges of the increasing demand and limited resources.

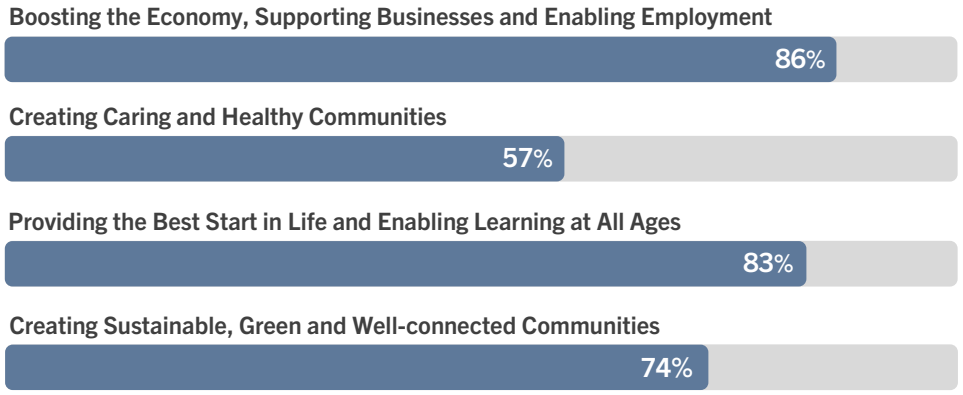
As the current Corporate Strategy for 2022-27 enters its final year, many of the key projects have already been delivered while new ones have been identified as opportunities arise. This includes the post-16 learning at Llettytwppa Farm, the second Well-being Centre serving the south of the County in Cardigan, and the attraction of further national sporting and cultural events such as Rali Ceredigion and Lloyds National Road Cycling Championships.

Within the individual Corporate Well-being Objectives, the results show that progress was particularly strong in the "Boosting the Economy, Supporting Businesses and Enabling Employment" objective, and within the "Providing the Best Start in Life and Enabling Learning at All Ages" objective (see chart below).

CORPORATE WELL-BEING OBJECTIVE PROGRESS DURING 2025/26



PROGRESS BY OBJECTIVE DURING 2025/26



BENCHMARKING - HOW WE PERFORM NATIONALLY

Local Authority Performance Profile

Data Cymru have 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 Profile was used to support the Council's first Panel Performance Assessment in October 2024. It was one of many pieces of evidence to help inform the Panel's view of how the Council is performing.

We also use the Profile's results throughout the year to help identify areas for improvement and areas for scrutiny committee's attention.

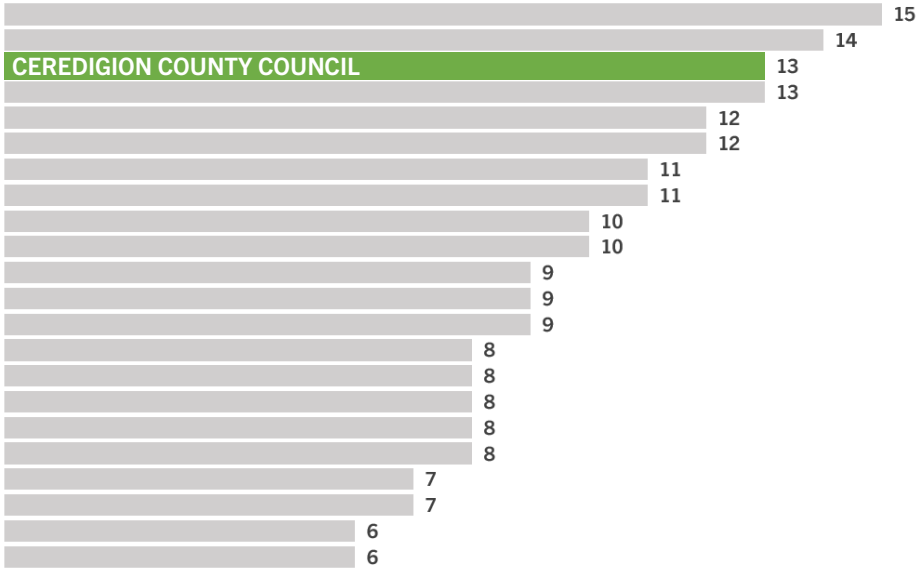
Latest Results

The latest results at April 2026 show that Ceredigion continues to perform well across this set of key measures and is consistently one of the top performing authorities nationally.

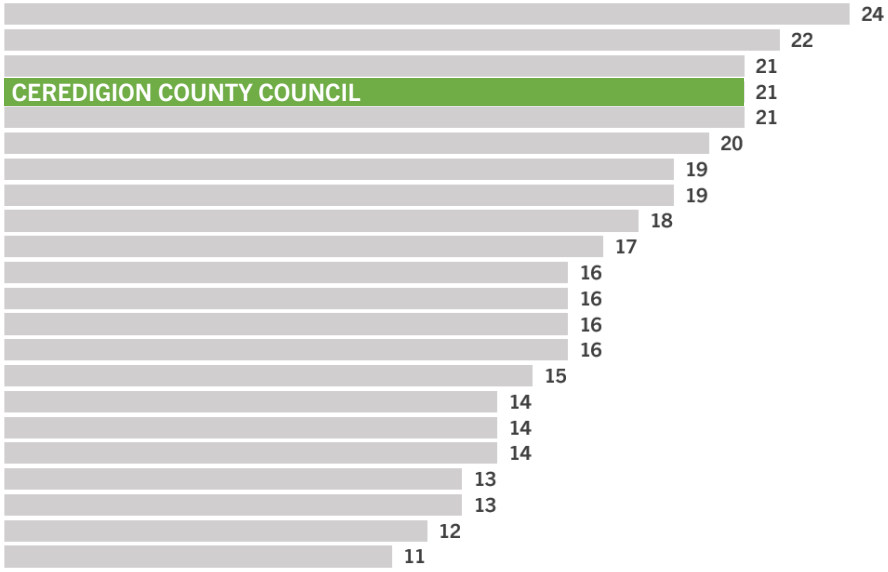
For example:

- Ceredigion has the joint third highest number of performance measures in the upper quartile with 13 (see chart below left).
- Ceredigion has the joint third highest number of performance measures in the upper and upper middle quartile with 21 out of 34 (see chart below).
- Ceredigion has the joint second highest proportion of its measures in the upper and upper middle quartile nationally at 66.7%.
- Overall, Ceredigion has 13 measures in the upper quartile, 8 in the upper middle quartile, 4 in the lower middle quartile and 6 in the lower quartile as shown in the chart below right.
- Since the last update, Ceredigion's performance has improved in 6 of the measures, stayed the same in 20, and decreased in 5. (There is 1 measure that

NUMBER OF MEASURES IN UPPER QUARTILE



NUMBER OF MEASURES IN UPPER AND UPPER MIDDLE QUARTILE



cannot be assessed and two measures where no data was available and are excluded from the charts below).

What the Results Tell Us

Since the Profile was first launched, Ceredigion has consistently been one of the top performing authorities nationwide.

Despite the significant challenges that Ceredigion faces through being one of the lowest funded authorities nationally, 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'.

Next Steps

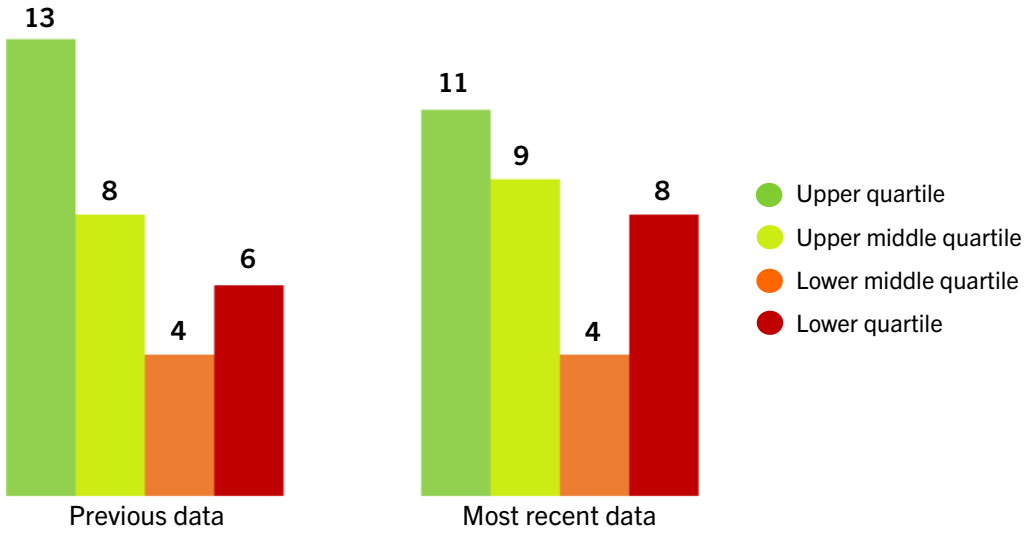
The measures that are below average and fall within the lower middle and lower quartile are scrutinised in more detail by Leadership Group and by the Performance Board. In some cases they will be called into the relevant scrutiny committee to help identify why performance is below average and how it can be improved. This is part of our continual cycle of improvement which is outlined in more detail on page 26.

Future Developments

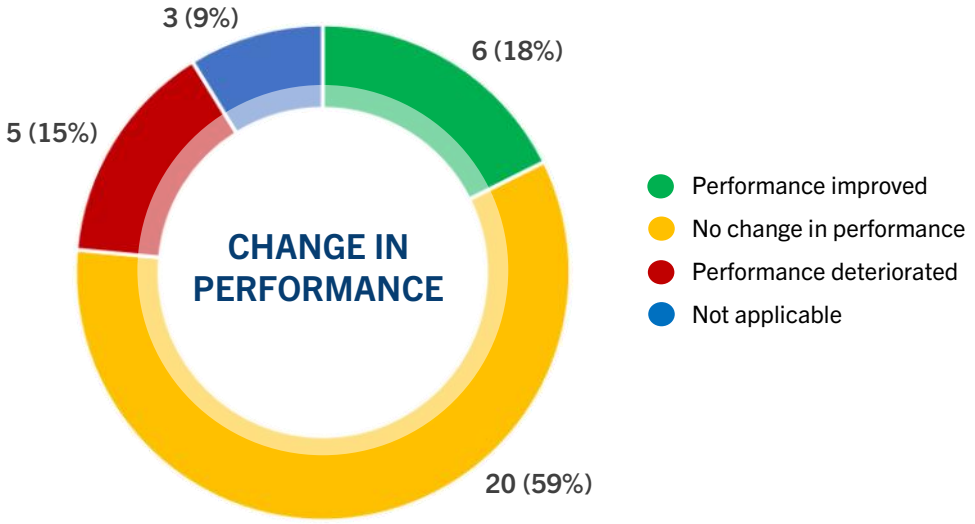
The Performance Profile tool will continue to be developed so the range of measures included and the functionality will improve further in the next year. The Profile is an integral part of the Council's performance management arrangements and a good example of sector-led improvement. We will continue to work proactively with our colleagues at Data Cymru and the Welsh Local Government Association to share and learn from best practice across the sector.

(Please note that there are currently restrictions on which data can be published from the tool, hence why only Ceredigion is identified in the charts on the opposite page).

NUMBER OF MEASURES BY QUARTILE: CEREDIGION



SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE (MOST RECENT DATA COMPARED TO PREVIOUS REPORTING PERIODS): CEREDIGION



DELIVERING VALUE FOR MONEY

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

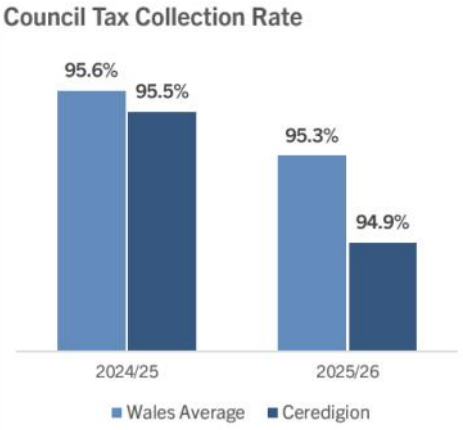
Value for Money can be defined as the relationship between Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness. It assesses whether the Council has obtained the maximum benefit from the goods and services it procures and provides within the constraint of the limited resources facing the Council.

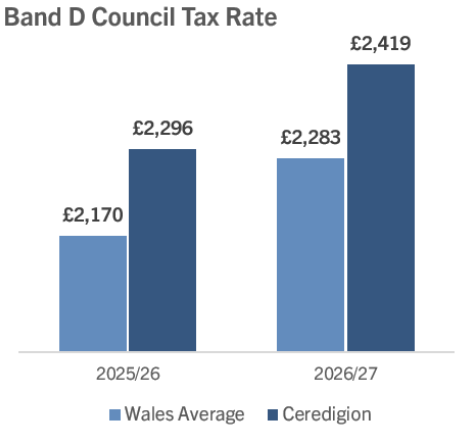
For example, two key measures of efficiency are the collection of Council Tax and Non-domestic (business) rates. While Non-domestic rates collection remains above average at 97.3%, Council Tax collection is slightly below average at 94.9%.

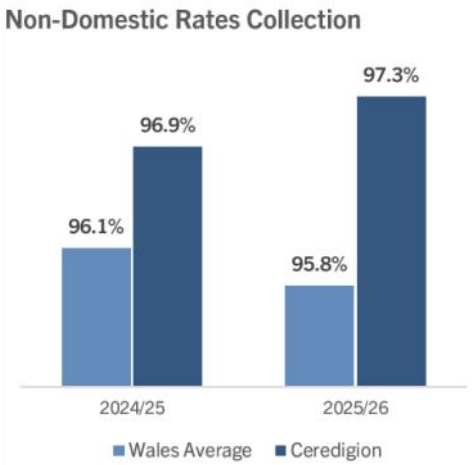
The average Band 'D' Council Tax, often used as a comparator between different counties, shows that current rates are higher than the national average across Wales at £2,419 while our cumulative savings made since 2012 total £70m through a combination of restructuring, service-redesign and transformation projects, with a further £2m achieved during 2025/26.

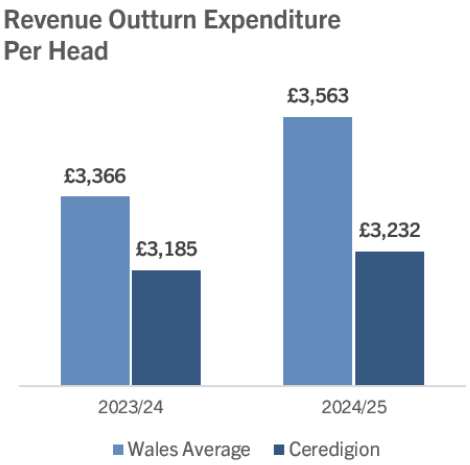
Revenue outturn expenditure per head was £3,232 for the last full year and budgeted expenditure per head for the current 2026/27 year is £3,541. Revenue outturn expenditure is the day-to-day operational costs essential to the running of the organisation.

Like all areas in Wales, the task of setting a balanced budget in 2025/26 was again challenging but was a significant achievement to receive unanimous agreement.

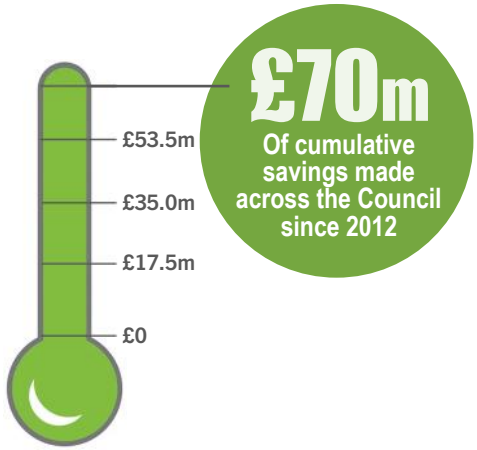




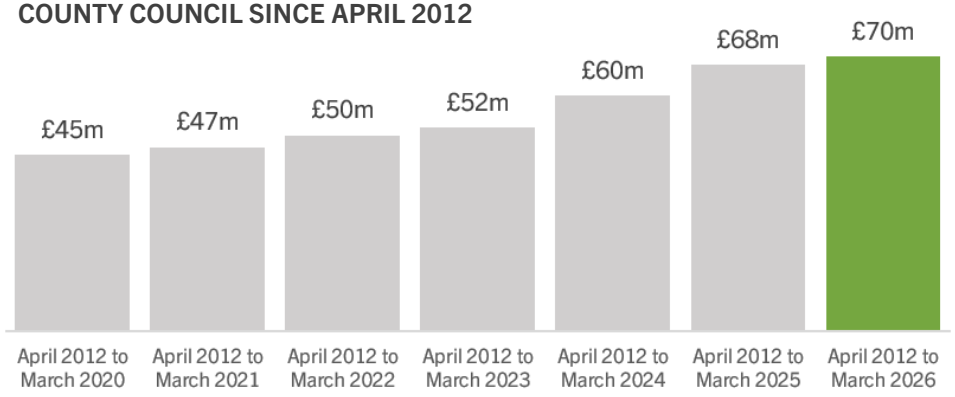




EFFICIENCY SAVINGS MADE



CUMULATIVE EFFICIENCY SAVINGS MADE BY CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL SINCE APRIL 2012



MANAGING OUR RISKS

Our Approach to Risk Management

Ceredigion County Council maintains a robust and proactive approach to risk management, designed to ensure that the organisation can anticipate, understand, and respond effectively to the wide range of risks that may impact our services, our communities, and our Corporate Well-being Objectives. Our approach is built on the principles of transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement, and is embedded across all levels of the Council's governance and decision-making.

Risk management is coordinated through a Risk Management Framework that sets out how risks are identified, assessed, monitored, and reported. Services undertake regular reviews of operational and strategic risks, supported by corporate guidance and tools that ensure consistency in how risks are evaluated and recorded.

Risks are assessed using a standard methodology that considers both the likelihood of an event occurring and the potential impact on service delivery, financial stability, legal compliance, reputation, and the well-being of our communities. This enables us to prioritise risks effectively and allocate resources to areas where mitigation will have the greatest benefit.

The Corporate Risk Register

The Council's Corporate Risk Register provides oversight of the most significant risks facing the organisation. It is reviewed regularly by senior management and elected members, ensuring that emerging issues are recognised early and that appropriate actions are in place to mitigate them. The latest Corporate Risk Register at the end of the 2025/26 is shown to the right. There are currently nine risks on the register with the latest addition being Rural Poverty. The current status indicates the level of risk severity, with red or amber ratings denoting higher-priority risks and explaining their inclusion on the Corporate Risk Register. The review date refers to the date it was last reviewed by the relevant Scrutiny Committee - this is done on an ongoing basis.

Integration into Corporate Planning and Performance

Risk management is not treated as a standalone activity but is integrated into our wider planning, performance, and governance arrangements. Strategic decisions, business cases, and major projects all include consideration of risk, ensuring that potential threats and opportunities are understood from the outset. This helps us make informed choices, strengthens accountability, and supports the delivery of value for money. The Council also promotes a positive risk culture, encouraging staff to raise concerns, share learning, and engage constructively with risk-related discussions.

We recognise that risk management must evolve in response to changing circumstances. Over the next year we will be reviewing our Risk Management Framework and implementing an improved approach to risk appetite.

Overall, Ceredigion County Council's approach to risk management provides a strong foundation for safeguarding the organisation, supporting effective decision-making, and ensuring that we can continue to deliver for our communities both now and in the future.

THE CORPORATE RISK REGISTER (AT 31/03/2026)

Risk	Score	Status	Trend	Reviewing Committee	Review Date
Finance - Reduced and uncertain funding leads to budget pressures causing service reduction risks	20	🟥	→	Corporate Resources	29/09/2025
Information Management Security - Weak information governance leads to data breaches causing regulatory and reputational harm	16	🟥	→	Corporate Resources	16/02/2026
Climate Change - Increasing climate impacts lead to infrastructure and community disruption causing environmental, financial and service impacts	25	🟥	→	Thriving Communities	17/06/2025
Ash Dieback - Widespread ash dieback leads to unsafe trees causing safety, environmental and financial consequences	16	🟥	→	Thriving Communities	17/06/2025
Recruitment and Retention - Labour market challenges lead to staff shortages causing service delivery and compliance risks	12	🟡	↓	Corporate Resources	10/03/2026
Systems end of Life - Ageing systems reach end of life leading to system failure causing operational, security and compliance impacts	16	🟥	→	Corporate Resources	16/02/2026
Cyber Resilience - Increasing cyber threats lead to system compromise causing service disruption and data loss risks	20	🟥	→	Corporate Resources	16/02/2026
Fire Safety - Fore safety non-compliance in council properties leads to fire risks potentially causing serious harm, closures and financial impacts	12	🟡	↓	Corporate Resources	08/10/2024
Rural Poverty - Structural rural poverty and inadequate funding leads to reduced well-being and increasing deprivation and demand on council services	16	🟥	→	Coordinating	06/07/2026

OUR BUDGET - WHERE WE PRIORITISED OUR FUNDING IN 2025/26

Ceredigion has a track record of setting and achieving a balanced budget as well as achieving a clean bill of health from Audit Wales during financial audits and reviews.

At the end of 2025/26, the Council was in a financially resilient position with unqualified accounts and several key priorities already delivered during the year such as the Aberaeron Coastal Defence Scheme, two new children's in-county facilities and attracting major national and international events.

However, all local authorities across Wales are experiencing significant financial challenges brought about by 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.

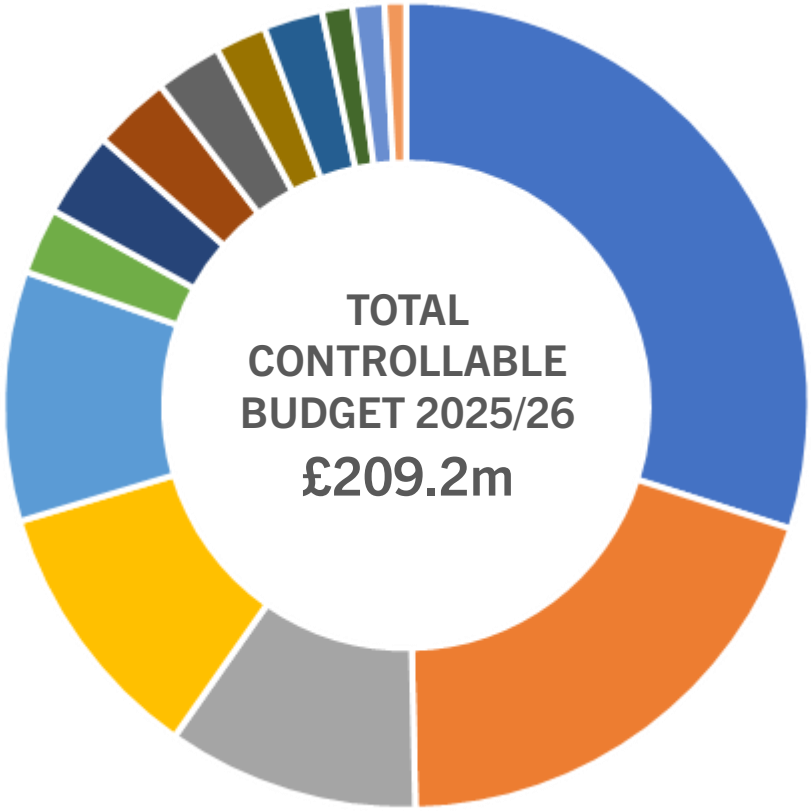
The Council will therefore need to adapt, manage budget reductions and find new ways of delivering services in order to sustain Council services in their current form.

Ceredigion's net budget for 2025/26 was set at £209.2 million, with 69% being funded by Welsh Government and 31% by Council Tax payers. The chart below sets out the Council's expenditure on services in 2025/26.

As part of the Council's drive to ensure continuous improvement and ensure value for money, the Council's activities include maximising the use of buildings, implementing energy efficiency measures, investing in the delivery of the Digital Strategy and seeking operational efficiencies where possible.

This is supported by the overarching Team Ceredigion principle of transformation and innovation across all services.

Further information on the Council's budget position and the financial challenges can be found in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.



Schools & Lifelong Learning*	**30%**	(£62.60m)
Porth Cynnal	**20%**	(£41.24m)
Finance and Procurement	**11%**	(£22.27m)
Highways and Environmental Services	**10%**	(£21.11m)
Porth Gofal	**10%**	(£20.92m)
Customer Contact and ICT	**3%**	(£7.17m)
Levies, Council Tax Premium and Reserves	**3%**	(£6.48m)
Democratic Services	**3%**	(£5.58m)
Leadership Group	**3%**	(£5.54m)
Porth Cymorth Cynnar	**2%**	(£4.95m)
Economy and Regeneration	**2%**	(£4.28m)
Policy, Performance and Public Protection	**1%**	(£2.68m)
People and Organisation	**1%**	(£2.56m)
Legal and Governance Services	**1%**	(£1.80m)

** Including delegated schools budgets*

SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP DUTY ANNUAL REPORT

Background

The Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023 (The "SPPP") requires the Council, as a public body, to produce an annual report to evidence how they have complied with the Social Partnership Duty.

The SPPP Act provides for a framework to enhance the well-being of the people of Wales by improving public services through social partnership working, promoting fair work and socially responsible public procurement. It is intended to complement other legislation, including the Socio-economic Duty and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The SPPP Act requires the Council, in carrying out sustainable development, in so far as is reasonable, to seek consensus or compromise with their recognised trade unions, when setting their well-being objectives (in line with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015) and making decisions of a strategic nature about the reasonable steps they intend to take to deliver those objectives.

Review of Corporate Well-being Objectives

As part of our annual performance reporting cycle, and as required by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, Ceredigion County Council undertakes a regular review of its Corporate Well-being Objectives. This process is combined with our annual Self-Assessment work that was introduced by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

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, and the steps to deliver them, 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.

In autumn 2024 our Corporate Well-being Objectives were reviewed, when it was agreed by Council that they would remain the priority areas for the County and would remain in place for 2025/26.

As part of this review a meeting was held with trade union representatives to seek feedback and consensus on the content of the Self-Assessment and Annual Review of Performance and Well-being Objectives Report. There were no issues raised concerning the continuation of the Objectives into 2025/26.

The Self-Assessment Report outlines the steps taken by the Council to deliver its Corporate Well-being Objectives and is signed off by the Leadership Group (made up of senior staff) and Cabinet, but is also reviewed extensively by Scrutiny Committee and Governance and Audit Committee.

Partnership working

Ceredigion County Council has an excellent working relationship with its trade union partners, who are actively involved in policy development, long-term strategy planning, and resource management. Below are examples of their involvement across key areas:

- **Industrial Relations**

Our trade unions are included in the development of workforce policies from an early stage and are engaged at multiple points during the approval processes to ensure they are able to make significant and meaningful contributions to shaping our policies.

Fortnightly meetings are held with the full -time union officer, bi-monthly meetings of the Corporate Joint Trade Unions Forum take place and a Corporate Employee Forum takes place at least twice a year attended by Elected Members and Senior Officers. The meetings allow opportunities to discuss and address issues or disputes in a way that supports staff whilst maintaining service delivery. Our trade unions also sit on the validation and appeal panels for job evaluation, with equal voting rights, to support a fair and consistent pay grading.

- **Workforce Managing Change**

Our trade unions are involved in all managing change processes from early consultation of proposed change management business cases through to completion of the process. Examples of this over the past year have included restructuring in our Direct Contact and Library Teams within Customer Contact, ICT and Digital Service and the longer-term restructuring within Specialised Disability Services in Porth Gofal. We continue to work with school trade union partners to improve the timeliness of change managing processes and consultation in this area.

We consider our Trade Unions to be key partners in our efforts to identify and address areas of concern within different cohorts of our workforce, and they have played pivotal roles in supporting our efforts. One example being the work done collaboratively to seek resolution of concerns arising in our waste collection service regarding proposed contractual changes in respect of bank holiday collections.

- **Budget Management**

Our trade unions receive a detailed briefing from the Executive Corporate Lead Officer - Finance and Procurement on the implications of the annual budget settlement each year in terms of service allocations and proposed council tax rates. The Executive Corporate Lead Officer also attends the Corporate Joint Trade Unions Forum to provide an update on in-year financial performance.

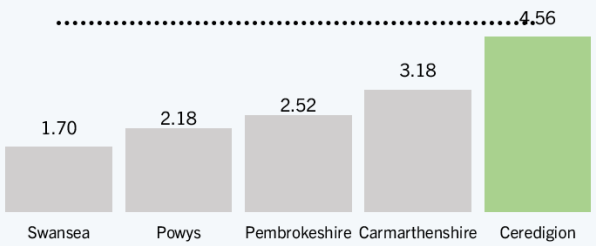
- **Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion**

We work closely with our trade union partners on the introduction of workforce policies to ensure that these promote workplace diversity, tackle discrimination and/or harassment, and support effective services to Ceredigion residents.

KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES: COUNCIL OUTCOMES

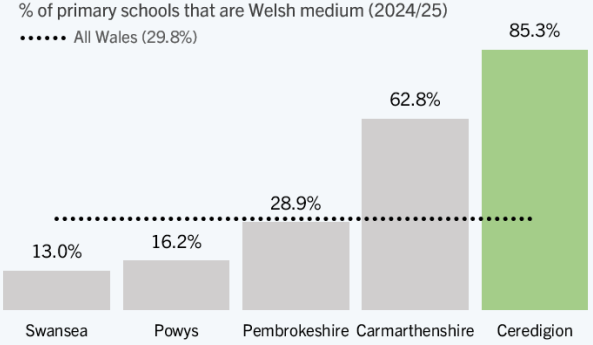
Community Learning

Number of learners in local authority community learning per 1,000 population including learning provided in collaboration with Further Education institutions (2024/25)



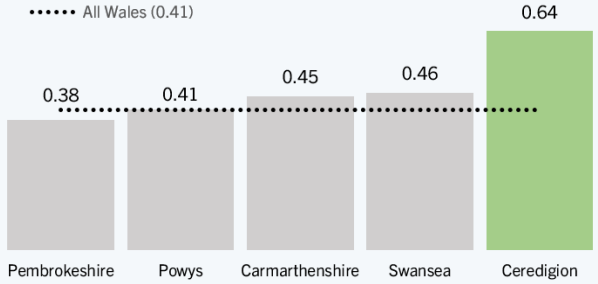
Welsh Medium Schools

% of primary schools that are Welsh medium (2024/25)



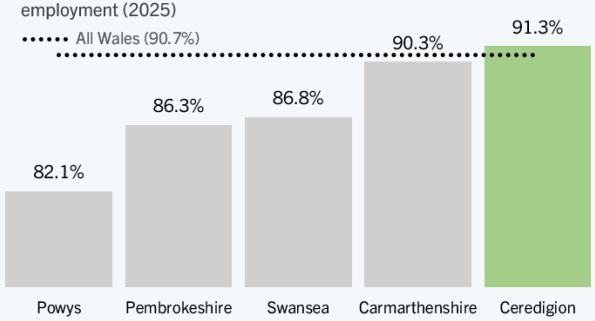
Complaints Received by the Local Authority

Number of complaints received per 1,000 residents (2024/25)



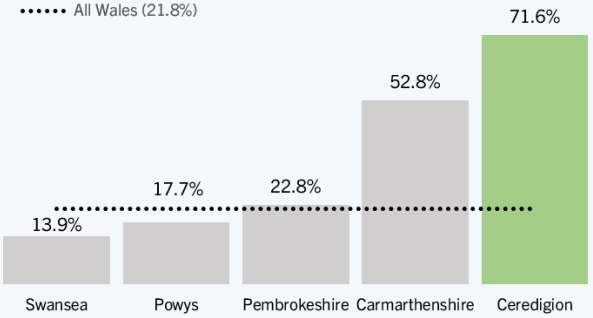
In Education, Training or Employment

% of Year 13 school leavers in education, training or employment (2025)



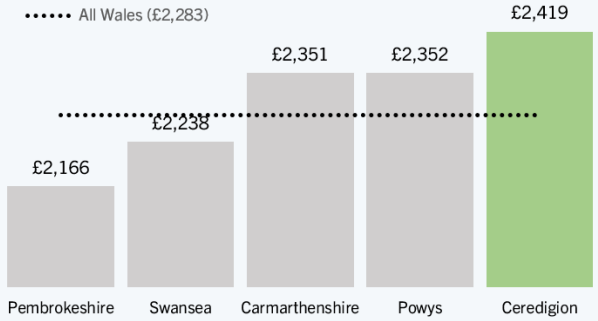
Welsh Language

% of pupils taught Welsh as a first language (2024/25)



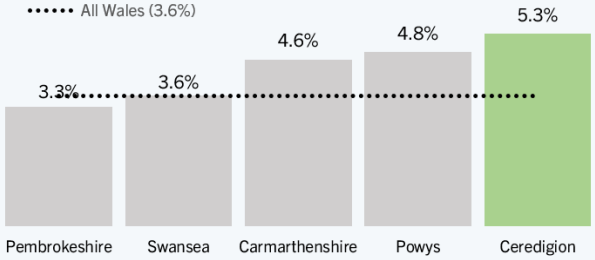
Council Tax

Average Band D Council Tax Rate (2026/27)



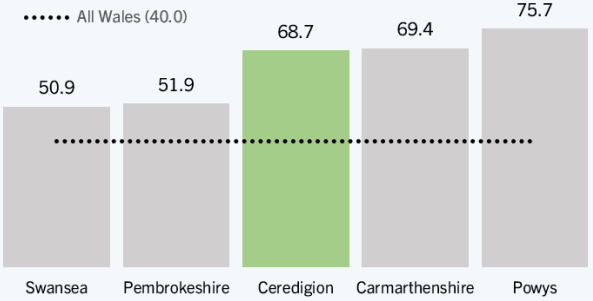
Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET)

% of Year 13 school leavers known not to be in Education, Training or Employment (2025)



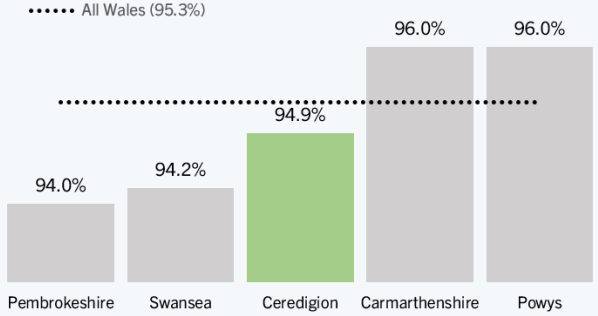
School Counselling

Number of children and young people in years 6 to 13 who received counselling per 1,000 population (2024/25)



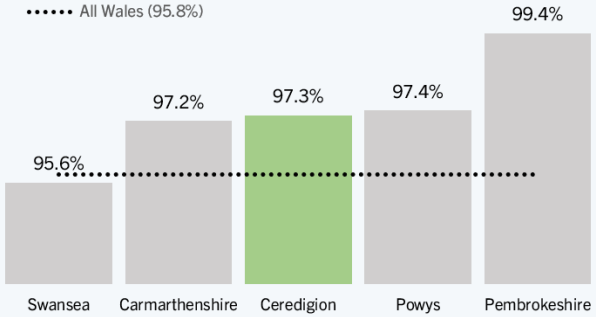
Council Tax Collection

% of Council Tax collected (2025/26)



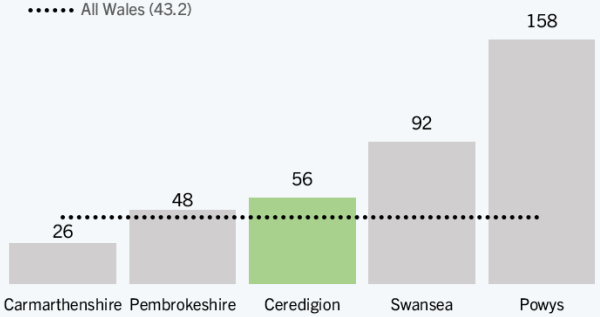
Non-domestic Rates

Collection rates of non-domestic rates (2025/26)



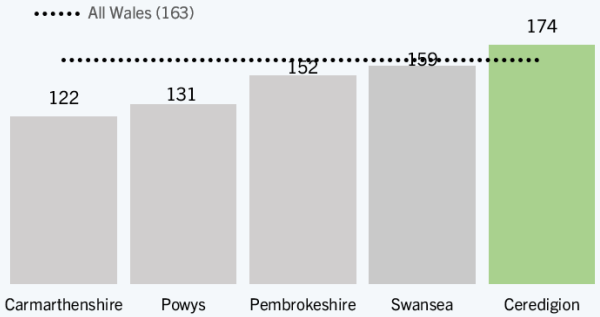
Disabled Facilities Grants

Number of dwellings improved per 10,000 dwellings (2024/25)



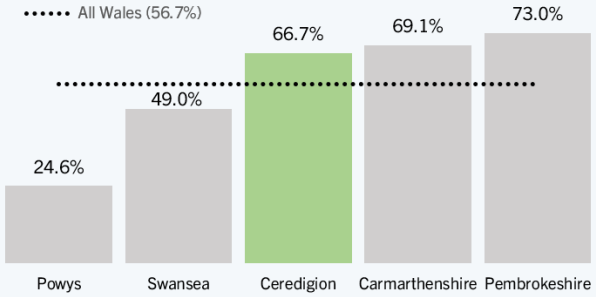
Waste Collection

Kilograms of household waste produced per person (2024/25)



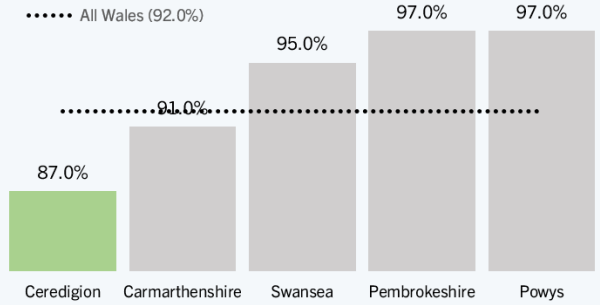
Homelessness Prevention

% of households successfully prevented from becoming homeless (2024/25)



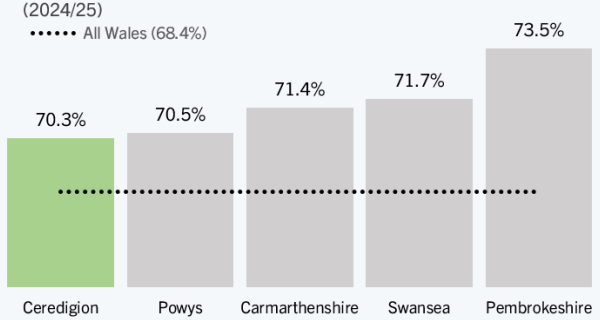
Planning

Planning applications determined within statutory and agreed timescales (October to December 2025)



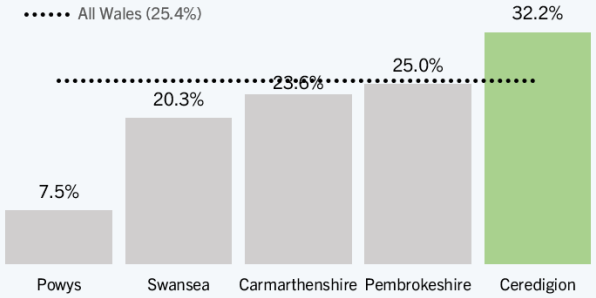
Recycling

Percentage of municipal waste reused, recycled or composted (2024/25)



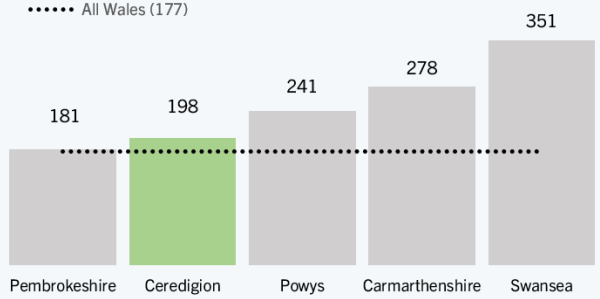
Homelessness Relief

% of households successfully relieved from homelessness (2024/25)



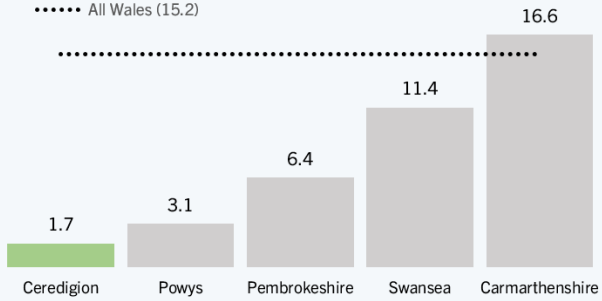
Planning

Average time in days to determine planning applications (October to December 2025)



Fly-tipping

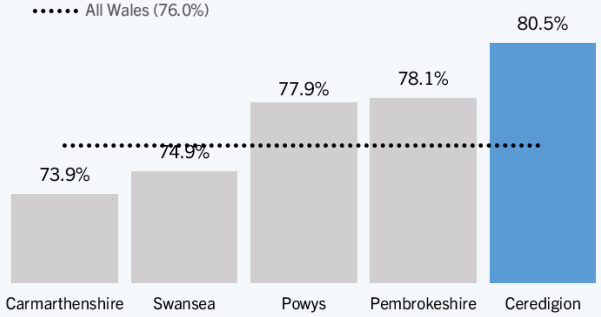
Total recorded fly-tipping incidents per 1,000 population (2024/25)



KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES: POPULATION OUTCOMES

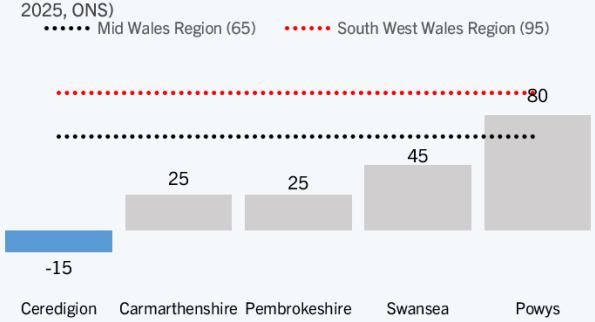
Economic Activity

Economic Activity Rate (January 2025 to December 2025)



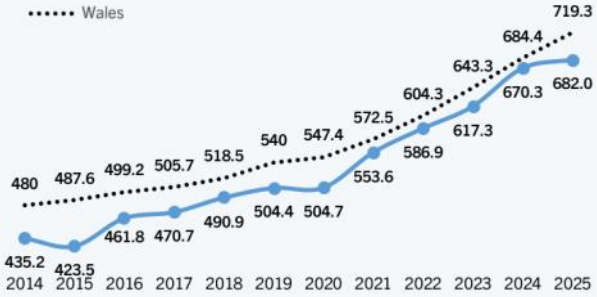
Business Births

Net birth rate of enterprises in 2023 (Business Demography 2025, ONS)



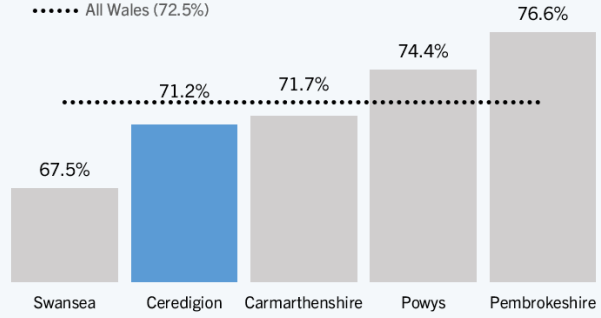
Earnings

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



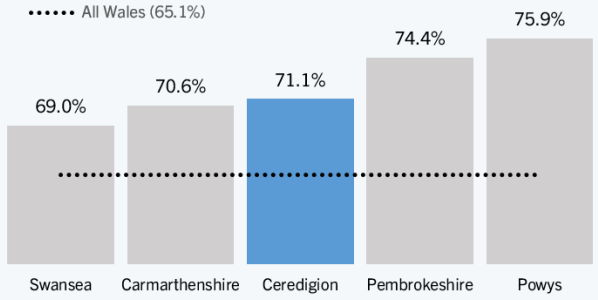
Employment

Employment rate (January 2025 to December 2025)



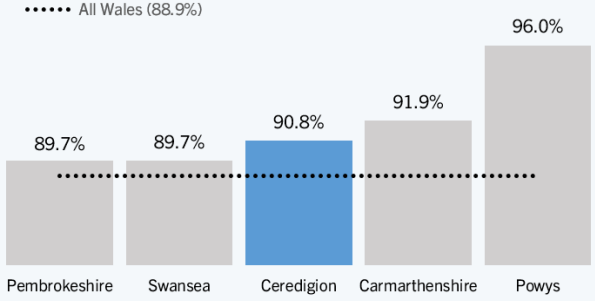
Business Survival

2-year survival percentage of new enterprises in 2022 (Business Demography 2025, ONS)



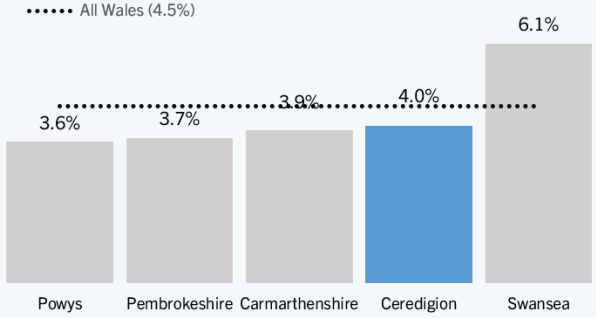
Skills and Qualifications

% of working age adults qualified to Level 2 or above (Year ending December 2025)



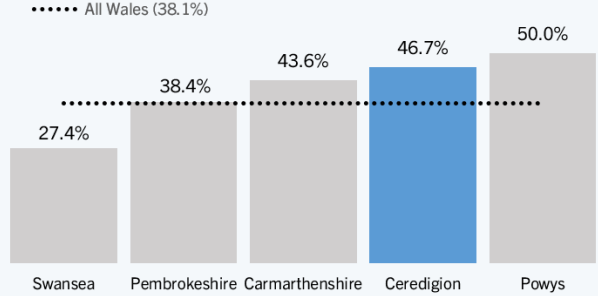
Unemployment

Unemployment rate (January 2025 to December 2025)



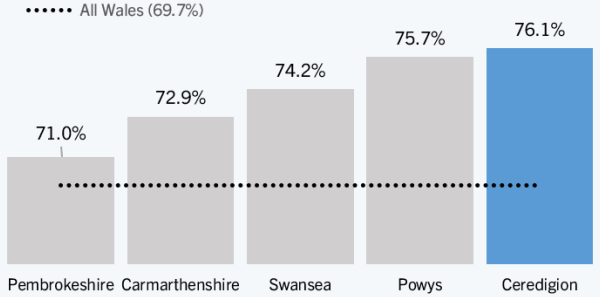
Business Survival

5-year business survival of new enterprises in 2019 (Business Demography 2025, ONS)



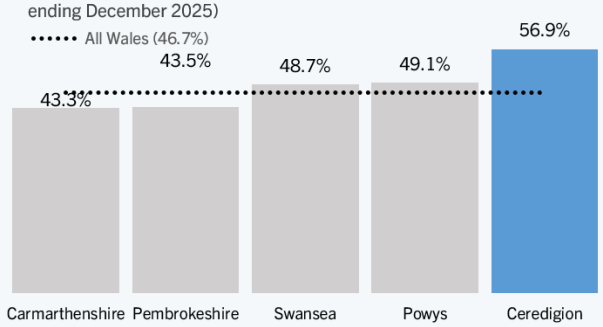
Skills and Qualifications

% of working age adults qualified to Level 3 or above (Year ending December 2025)



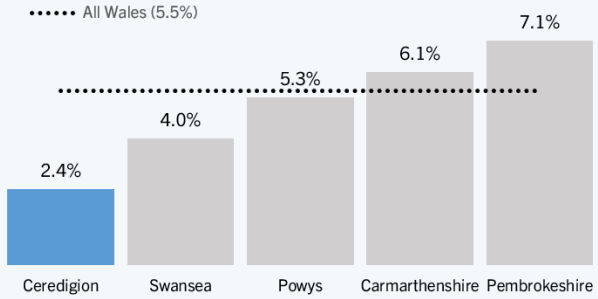
Skills and Qualifications

% of working age adults qualified to Level 4 or above (Year ending December 2025)



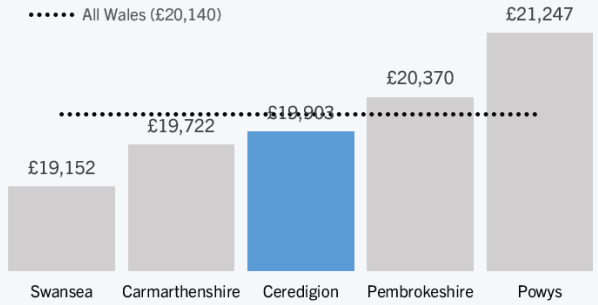
Claimant Count 18-24

Claimant count as a proportion of resident population area aged 18-24 (May 2026)



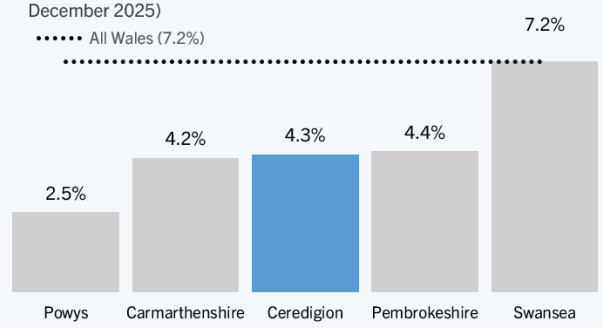
Gross Disposable Income

Gross disposable household income per head (£) (2023)



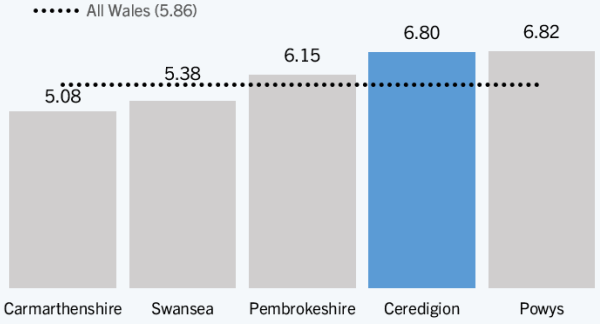
Skills and Qualifications

% of working age adults with no qualifications (Year ending December 2025)



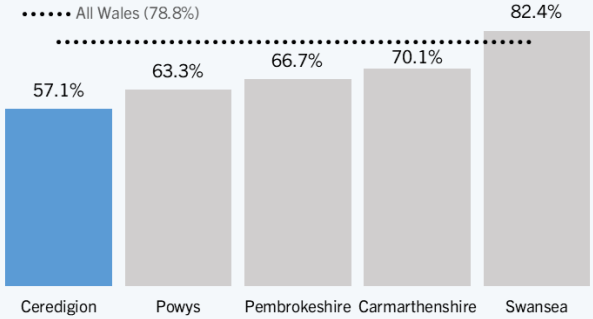
Housing Affordability

House price to residence-based earnings ratio (2025)



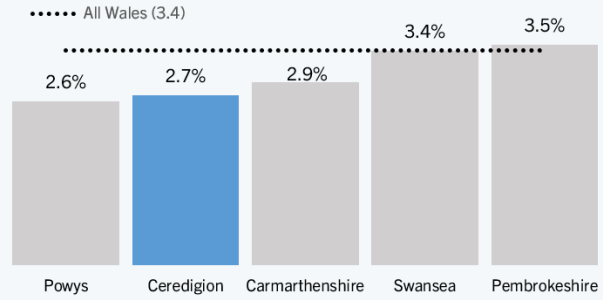
Digital Connectivity

Availability of Full Fibre Broadband (At July 2025)



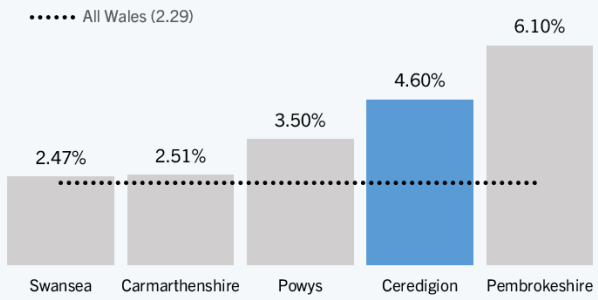
Claimant Count

Claimant count as a proportion of resident population area aged 16-64 (May 2026)



Second Homes

Percentage of dwellings subject to a long term empty / second home premium (2026/27)



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 2026.









Have your say

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

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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/**

✉ **By Post:**

Ceredigion County Council
Neuadd Cyngor Ceredigion Penmorfa
Aberaeron
Ceredigion
SA46 0PA

By Telephone:
01545 570881

By E-Mail:
clic@ceredigion.gov.uk

Or visit us on the web:
www.ceredigion.gov.uk

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