

# **Annual Self-Assessment Report**

## **April 2022 to March 2023**

Executive Summary .....	3
1. Introduction .....	6
1.1 Context .....	7
2. Processes and Approach .....	9
2.1 How do PCC Carry out Self-Assessment? .....	9
2.2 Consultation and Engagement .....	9
3. What We Know About Our Performance Against the Well-being Goals .....	10
3.0.1 Method and limitations .....	12
3.1 We will develop a vibrant economy .....	13
3.2 We will lead the way in providing effective, integrated health and care in a rural environment .....	13
3.3 We will strengthen learning and skills .....	14
3.4 We will support our residents and communities .....	14
4. What we know about our progress on Strategic Equalities Planning (SEP).....	15
4.1 How do we identify and collect relevant information .....	16
4.2 How does the Council use this information in meeting the three aims of the general duty? .....	16
4.3 How effective are the Council’s arrangements for identifying and collecting relevant information? .....	16
4.4 What do our arrangements tell us regarding the equality of access to employment, training and pay? .....	17
6. How are we working more sustainably? .....	19
7. What we Know About our Governance Performance.....	26
7.1 Our performance against the 2022/23 AGS action plan.....	26
7.2 Key performance insights from the AGS.....	29
7.3 Action Plan.....	31
7.3.1. Self-Assessment Priority Actions Summary for 2023-24 .....	31
8. Certification of the Annual Self-Assessment Report 2022-2023 .....	33
Appendix 1: Governance and Audit Committee .....	33

## Executive Summary

This report presents the results of the 2022/23 Powys County Council (PCC) corporate self-assessment in fulfilment of its obligations under Part 6 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. The Council is obliged to publish an annual report that examines not only how we perform in several areas but also how we review our processes to ensure that they are working (and how we respond to audits and regulatory reports). The period covered by this report is April 2022 – March 2023.

This report collates the results gathered from a variety of assessment processes and represents the Council's performance as an organisation against its [Well-being Objectives](#) as required by the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 and its Strategic Equality Plan Objectives as required by the Equality Act 2010. It also evidences the Council's level of assurance that robust [governance](#) processes are in place. This report does not aim to provide insight into the performance of individual services (although the opinions expressed here have commonly been informed by the assessment of service-level evidence) but rather to indicate how the organisation is delivering at a strategic level.

In consideration of the [performance evidenced by the Council against its Well-being Objectives](#) during 2022/23, the Cabinet considered that the degrees of ambition (as defined by the [Well-being of Future Generations Journey Tracker](#)) that had been displayed were as follows:

Well-being Objective	Where we think we are	What does this mean?
Objective 1: We will develop a vibrant economy	Being more adventurous	Stepping out of a business-as-usual mindset and acting to change how things are currently done.
Objective 2: We will lead the way in providing effective, integrated health and care in a rural environment	Making Simple Changes/Being more adventurous	Steps that are quick and easy to implement. Methods have been tested by others and have a low risk of failure. /Stepping out of a business-as-usual mindset and acting to change how things are currently done.
Objective 3: We will strengthen learning and skills	Being more adventurous but moving towards Owning our Ambition	Stepping out of a business-as-usual mindset and acting to change how things are currently done/May be the first organisation to take these actions and act as a guide for others to follow. Systematic transformation

Objective 4: We will support our residents and communities	Making simple changes/being more adventurous	Steps that are quick and easy to implement. Methods have been tested by others and have a low risk of failure/Stepping out of a business-as-usual mindset and acting to change how things are currently done.
--	--	---

While wider national and global issues have continued to have a significant impact on the Council's ability to complete some of its planned improvement work, sufficient evidence exists to conclude that the Council has been able to effectively maintain most of its public-facing services over the past year while continuing to work towards attainment of its Well-being Objectives. The additional and cumulative pressures and challenges of the cost-of-living crisis has exacerbated existing challenges and staffing recruitment and retention is increasingly an issue across most services, while increases in the cost of materials, labour and land has inevitably diverted resources from some existing programmes.

Conclusions surrounding the effectiveness of our Governance will be made within the Annual Governance Statement, which is due to be published alongside the Statement of Accounts.

Progress against areas for further development identified in the 2021/22 Corporate Self-Assessment Report are shown in the table below and the actions identified for development during 2023-24 may be viewed at [section 7.3.1](#).

BRAG (Blue, Red, Amber, Green) definition:

	Action is complete
	Action is on track
	Action mainly on track with some minor issues
	Action not on track with major issues
	Action not started

Issue requiring further action	Responsible Officer	BRAG	Mitigation/notes
Further develop the prominence of equalities, and the Strategic Equality Plan, across the organisation	Chief Executive	Blue	Equalities has been embedded as a central thread of new Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan

Issue requiring further action	Responsible Officer	BRAG	Mitigation/notes
Work between Finance and Service areas to improve further understanding of outcome-based budgeting and look to implement further	Head of Finance (S151 Officer)	Green	Budget holders are now aware of outcomes-based budgeting
Review performance measures used as part of the Corporate Improvement Plan to ensure there is a robustness as outlined in this report	Head of Transformation and Democratic Services	Blue	A new suite of measures have been designed building on these lessons learned to support the new Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan
Integration of the Annual Council Reporting Framework (Director of Social Services Annual Report) within annual self-assessment report	Chief Executive	Blue	A potential integration was explored but it was agreed upon further detailed exploration, that an integration would not be appropriate.
Promote the role of the Performance Management and Quality Assurance Framework within the organisation to embed golden thread and understanding of self-assessment	Head of Transformation and Democratic Services	Green	There has, and continues to be, ongoing promotion of PMQAF and self-assessment activity throughout the Council.
Work with recognised Trade Union representatives to engage further in understanding their views as part of the strategic planning and performance process	Head of Workforce and Organisational Development / Head of Transformation and Democratic Services	Amber	Whilst the Council has ongoing monthly engagement with Trade Unions and for instance discusses workforce planning and planned changes within services, work is yet to commence in terms of detailed engagement surrounding

Issue requiring further action	Responsible Officer	BRAG	Mitigation/notes
			improvement. Nationally an approach is being developed (supported by WLGA) which will ensure that we have more effective arrangements to engage with Trade Unions in line with the Local Govt and Elections Act and Social Partnerships Act)

## 1. Introduction

This report represents Powys County Council’s fulfilment of its responsibility to undertake an annual corporate self-assessment, a requirement which has been placed on local authorities by Part 6 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. This Act passed into law in April 2021 and requires local authorities in Wales to keep under review the extent to which they are fulfilling the ‘performance requirements’, meaning that Powys County Council is expected to use this opportunity to demonstrate:

- That it is exercising its functions effectively
- That it is using its resources economically, efficiently, and effectively and
- The extent to which its governance is effective for securing the above

Under the new legislation, the Council is expected to develop and publish a self-assessment report once in every financial period. The fiscal period covered by this report is 6 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Guidance provided by Welsh Government defines self-assessment as ‘a way of critically, and honestly, reviewing the current position to make decisions on how to secure improvement for the future’.<sup>1</sup> In line with the requirements of the Act, the focus of the self-assessment report is that of

<sup>1</sup> Statutory guidance on Part 6, Chapter 1, of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, pp. 15-16.

revealing what can be determined from existing evidence and feedback regarding the Council's performance and the identification of further actions to drive improvement.

In addition, this report fulfils the Council's obligations with regards to providing an Annual Performance Report and Strategic Equality Plan as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015.

## 1.1 Context

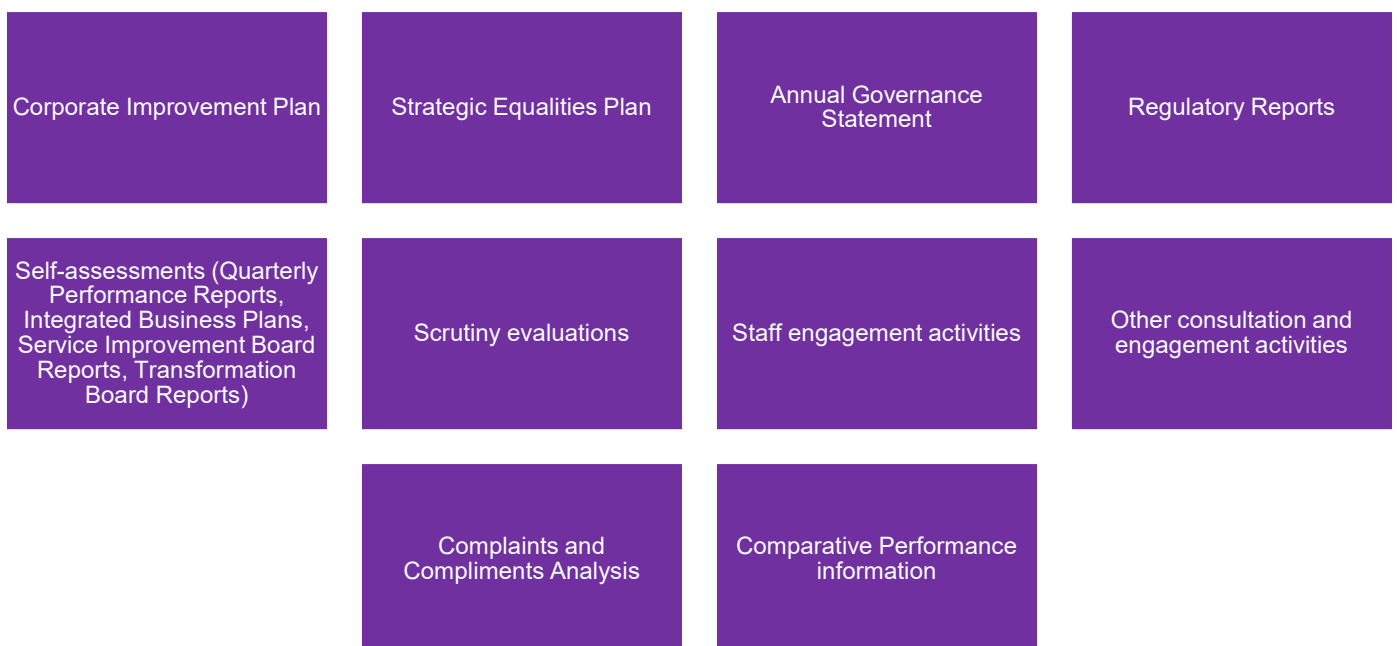
In order to assess the Council's performance over the past year in a transparent and fair way, it is necessary to consider the social, financial and environmental factors that have influenced the Organisation's focus and ability to effect improvement. 2022/23, brought new and evolving challenges experienced by local authorities both during and following the pandemic, and has created a range of pressures and demands on the Council which include:

- The ending of a number of COVID and post-COVID additional funding streams which will have an impact on the capacity of some services to continue to meet the increased demand that currently shows no sign of slowing.
- Services are required to address the backlogs of work that resulted from the widespread impact on performance and resources because of disease outbreaks; not only the COVID-19 pandemic but also e-coli, norovirus, and avian influenza.
- The ongoing situation in Ukraine which is impacting both the organisation itself and businesses within Powys, and the continuing efforts to understand and offset the impact of rising costs on services, suppliers, and contractors. In terms of direct impact, over the past year the Council has supported 459 Ukrainian guests and 91 hosts. Alongside this, Powys continue to support other migrant communities with 14 Unaccompanied Asylum-seeking children (UASC) coming into its care via the National Referral Scheme.
- The organisation is currently operating with a high number of interim posts in place at the Executive and Senior Leadership level. An interim Chief Executive Officer (CEO) has been in place since April 2023 to cover the substantive CEO's absence due to sickness, and other posts had already been made interim during the previous year because of staff leaving to take up positions with other organisations.

- The recruitment and retainment of staff remains challenging across all services, although this has often manifested in a service-specific way. Ongoing challenges include:
  - Difficulty in recruiting Welsh speaking staff which creates pressure for teams providing translation services, customer services and Schools services.
  - Ageing workforce in some operational teams, when combined with strenuous manual work, leading to a high sickness rate and difficulty in maintaining full staffing levels.
  - Loss of experienced staff through retirement or change of employment leading to relatively inexperienced teams in some specialist areas.
  - Losing specialist staff to more highly paid positions with other organisations, exacerbated by the move towards online working and the wider national skills shortages.
  - National shortage of social workers, care workers and HGV drivers.
  - Skills shortage for other specialist posts in areas such as Environmental Health.
- Continuing high levels of staff sickness for some services because of workforce fatigue and stress.
- Increases in inflation continue to threaten the organisation’s ability to develop new programmes of work without the identification of additional sources of funding and have in some cases affected existing programmes.

## 1.2 Annual Reports Aligned with this Self-Assessment

Pre-existing reporting channels that contain evidence that is aligned with the self-assessment report include, but are not limited to the:





## 2. Processes and Approach

### 2.1 How do PCC Carry out Self-Assessment?

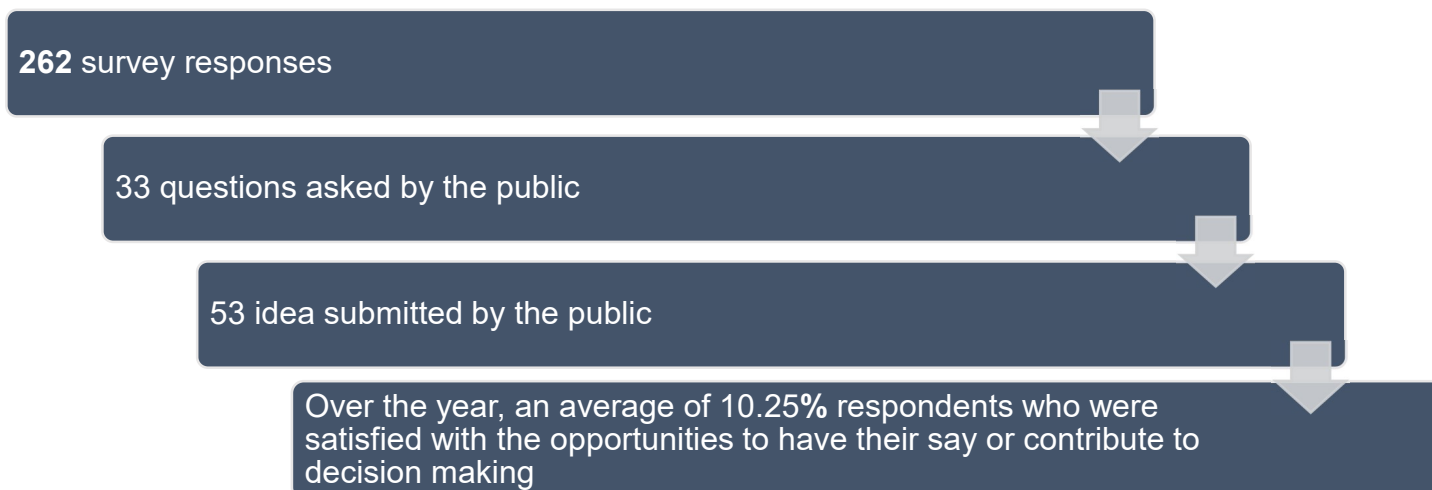
The processes that Powys County Council used up to May 2023 to monitor and evaluate its performance against its objectives are set out in the [Performance Management and Quality Assurance Framework](#) (PMQAF). The PMQAF was retained during 2022/23 in line with the completion of Vision 2025 but in March 2023, the Authority agreed a revised approach to performance that sets out the processes and methods used by the organisation to manage and assess performance, and which will in due course replace the previous PMQAF.

These processes follow a cycle of 'Plan, Do, Review' and seek to provide a rigorous framework within which staff are enabled to monitor performance, ensure compliance, assess effectiveness against objectives and produce valuable localised insight and intelligence that will support and enable future strategic planning.

### 2.2 Consultation and Engagement

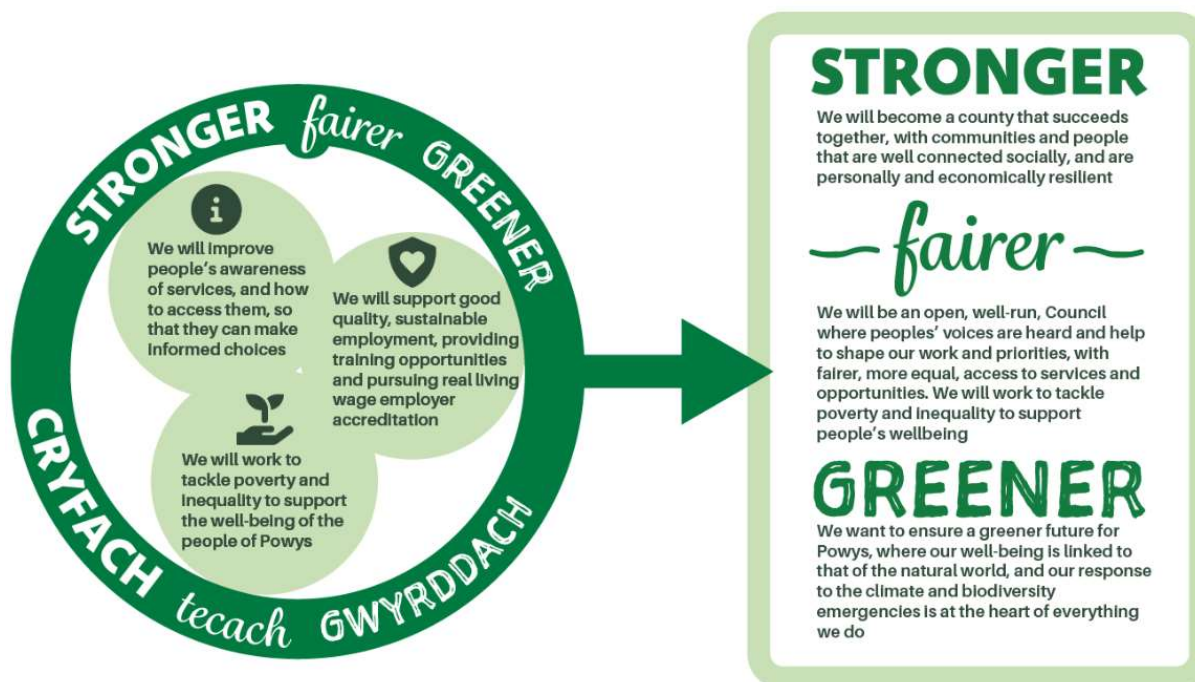
In compliance with the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act Part 3 Promoting Access to Local Government, the organisation has made available its [Public Participation Strategy](#), to ensure that all our stakeholders, including residents, partners, and businesses, have opportunities to participate and engage with us and to influence future decisions and service provision across Powys. The Council has a [Consultation and Engagement Framework](#) that provides guidance for services that are planning to engage with the people of Powys. A summary of the consultation and engagement activities undertaken by the Council during 2022/23 may be viewed below. For full details of all consultation and engagement activities undertaken by PCC during 2022/23, please see [Consultation and Engagement Activity 2022/23](#) [link].

In 2022/23, Cabinet approved plans for a Performance Feedback Ongoing Engagement Project to gather views from the local community. Figures up to **31<sup>st</sup> March 2023** show that there have been:



### 3. What We Know About Our Performance Against the Well-being Goals

During 2022-23, Powys County Council's new administration finalised its ambitious five-year plan '[Stronger, Fairer, Greener](#)'. The key priorities of the plan are shown below.



Because the performance referred to in this report is that of 2022-23, the performance described here is assessed against the objectives included within the previous Corporate Improvement Plan, Vision 2025, during its final year of application.

Our Well-being objectives evidence the extent to which the work of the Council contributes to the national well-being goals, as set out by the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

**How Our Well-being Objectives Contribute to the Seven Well-being Goals**

Our Well-being Objectives	A prosperous Wales	A resilient Wales	A healthier Wales	A more equal Wales	A Wales of cohesive communities	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	A globally responsible Wales
We will develop a vibrant <b>ECONOMY</b> (including Equality Objectives 1 and 2)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
We will lead the way in providing effective, integrated <b>HEALTH AND CARE</b> in a rural environment (including Equality Objectives 3 and 4)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
We will strengthen <b>LEARNING AND SKILLS</b> including Equality Objective 5)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
We will support our <b>RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITIES</b> (including Equality Objective 6)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Figure 1 How our Well-Being Objectives Contribute to the Seven Well-Being Goals

Assessing the Organisation’s performance against its Well-being objectives provides a focussed view of some of the Council’s work. In addition to the opinions presented in this report, further insight into the evidence base that is drawn upon here is available via the following documents:

- The Council’s [Corporate Improvement Plan](#) (CIP) set out the objectives and measures that were still in place during 2022-23 and which underpin the Well-being Goals and support the assessments discussed in this section.
- A summary of quarterly reporting of performance against objectives and measures over 2022/23 may be viewed here.
- A summary of 2022/23 delivery against Corporate Improvement Plan objectives and measures may be viewed at [\[link\]](#).
- A SWOT (Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats) report assessing the information provided by Services during the self-evaluation process may be viewed at [\[link\]](#).

### 3.0.1 Method and limitations

The Cabinet and Executive Management Team jointly attended a workshop to facilitate their assessment of the Council's performance during 2022/23 against its Well-being Goals and to formulate their opinion regarding the level of ambition evident in attainment over the past year. The discussion was supported by a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats ([SWOT](#)) report developed from information provided by the Services during the self-evaluation process (and in turn informed by a summary of performance against the CIP metrics which may be viewed at [link](#)). The group provided a rating for each Well-being Goal in line with the Well-being of Future Generations Journey Tracker (below) and these ratings and the key points raised in the discussion



are provided below:

Figure 2 Well-Being of Future Generations Journey Tracker

A number of important issues were raised by the Group regarding the limitations of the process and validity of the judgements that could be made, and these may be summarised as follows:

- Changes in some senior positions led to a change in approach and performance for some areas of work during the year, making it challenging to set an overall ambition level for objectives reliant on that underpinning activity.
- As a result of a very challenging winter, some services having remained in business continuity for extended periods, it was felt that it had very much been 'a year of two halves' in terms of performance and the Council's ability to fulfil its ambitions to the extent that it might wish.
- Some ambition levels have been recorded as covering two levels of achievement; this reflects differences in ambition level felt across different areas of activity that sits within each well-being objective.

- d) Over the winter, Social Services achieved a great deal of relationship building work with Partners, which while not reflected in the objectives adequately, constituted a huge amount of work and achievement that can be viewed as ambitious.
- e) Last year was very much a year of consolidation and recovery, undertaken by a new administration but much ambitious additional work was completed with results that will be apparent in next year's Self-Assessment.
- f) National, and even global issues are having a significant impact on the performance of the Council and for many of the challenges being encountered, a wider governmental discussion is needed to address the obstacles to improvement.

These points notwithstanding, the following judgements were considered by the Cabinet to represent a fair and accurate view of the Council's performance during 2022/23.

### 3.1 We will develop a vibrant economy

We consider the Council's performance against this goal to indicate it having been '**Being More Adventurous**' in its approach.

During 2022-23, this objective has contributed to 'a prosperous Wales' through working towards decarbonisation of our fleet and seeking grant funding to buy electric vehicles for our domiciliary carers, supporting the local economy by securing and managing major programmes of funding (including the Levelling-up Fund and the Transforming Towns Programme), and improving local employment opportunities through our good-quality apprenticeships.

For further information about how our work supported the Well-being of Future Generations Act Well-being Goals last year, see

To understand what people have said around this area during 2022-23, key Consultations and Engagement Activities for this Objective, see

### 3.2 We will lead the way in providing effective, integrated health and care in a rural environment

We consider the Council's performance against this goal to indicate having been '**Making Simple Changes/Being more adventurous**'.

During 2022-23, this objective has contributed to 'a Wales of cohesive communities' by ensuring access to key well-being services through early help and intervention for children and families (759 referrals during the first three quarters of the year and no waiting list) and supporting 642 people to remain in their own home through Technology Enabled Care. We have supported people to feel connected by our staff working with Ukrainian pupils across the County, ensuring that they feel integrated in school and community life by introducing them to sports and physical activity opportunities which allow them to engage. For further information about how our work supported the Well-being of Future Generations Act Well-being Goals last year, [see](#)

To understand what people have said around this area during 2022-23, key Consultations and Engagement Activities for this Objective, [see](#)

### 3.3 We will strengthen learning and skills

We consider the Council's performance against this goal to indicate it having been '**Being more adventurous but moving towards Owning our Ambition**' in its approach.

During 2022-23, this objective has contributed to 'a prosperous Wales' by ensuring that our young people are in school and learning effectively (Powys has maintained the second highest attendance figures across Wales during the autumn and spring term of 2022-23) and by supporting all our learners to access the education locally that will best allow them to fulfil their potential (Powys has three special schools, two PRU and 21 specialist centres; a significant achievement of this year has been the establishment of two satellites special schools - as a result, the council is on track to achieve its vision of ensuring that learners with the most complex needs are educated as close to home as possible). For further information about how our work supported the Well-being of Future Generations Act Well-being Goals last year, [see](#)

To understand what people have said around this area during 2022-23, key Consultations and Engagement Activities for this Objective, [see](#)

### 3.4 We will support our residents and communities

We consider the Council's performance against this goal to indicate it having been '**Making simple changes/being more adventurous**' in its approach.

During 2022-23, this objective contributed to 'a resilient Wales' by ensuring that 256km of public rights of way were maintained or improved under the Service Level Agreement with Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (exceeding the target of 150km) and by developing eight of the



Powys libraries as litter picking hubs, lending out kits to community groups. It also contributed to ‘a healthy Wales’ by directly providing, managing, and maintaining 5,500 social housing homes (9.2% of all homes in Powys) and by enabling housing associations to build 31 affordable homes, (10 rent-to-own and 2 Home buy purchases).

For further information about how our work supported the Well-being of Future Generations Act Well-being Goals last year, see

To understand what people have said around this area during 2022-23, key Consultations and Engagement Activities for this Objective, see

#### 4. What we know about our progress on Strategic Equalities Planning (SEP)

In setting its SEP objectives, the Council has developed overarching objectives that are based on the needs and issues that people with protected characteristics face, and this is described in further detail in [Vision 2025](#). Where a specific protected characteristic is likely to experience disadvantage, this has been discussed in the CIP section ‘Why is this objective important and how will it support people with protected characteristics?’<sup>2</sup> 2021/22 performance against the Equalities Objectives may be viewed at [\[link\]](#).

Characteristic	Supporting Objective					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sex			✓			✓
Age		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Disability	✓	✓			✓	✓
Race						✓
Gender Reassignment						✓
Religion/Belief						✓
Sexual Orientation						✓
Pregnancy/ Maternity						✓
Marriage/Civil Partnership						✓

<sup>2</sup> These objectives were based on the evidence available at that time.

#### 4.1 How do we identify and collect relevant information

- Information is collected during the PCC recruitment process via an Equality Monitoring form.
- Equalities data is collected by services alongside other data during resident and service user surveys and other forms of engagement. This information is retained by the services to support decision-making and assist in service delivery.
- An equalities staff network continues to meet to help explore and better understand the issues and opportunities involved.
- Some equalities data is collected through the Staff Engagement and Well-being Survey.

#### 4.2 How does the Council use this information in meeting the three aims of the general duty?

- During 2021/22, the Council rolled out the implementation of New Ways of Working. Staff are encouraged to work in a flexible way to enable them to balance work against their other priorities, whilst also ensuring the needs of the Council are met. The flexible nature of many of our roles are promoted widely and part time working is promoted and supported wherever possible.
- The Council's main public website has been ranked 2nd in Wales and 17th in the UK (Councils) for compliance with Accessibility Regulations.
- [The Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan](#) (CSEP) for 2023-27 was considered and approved by Council on 23 February 2023 and was implemented from 1 April 2023.

#### 4.3 How effective are the Council's arrangements for identifying and collecting relevant information?

- While continuous improvements are being made regarding the ways in which the Council engages with the people of Powys, it is acknowledged that the identification and collection of information in support of the Council's Strategic Equalities Planning requires further development to reflect the importance that the organisation places on ensuring a fairer and more equitable future for the people of Powys. Last year, a new Cabinet portfolio was created with responsibility for 'a Fairer Powys' to provide increased focus on equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- The Gender Pay Gap Action plan has been reviewed and updated in Quarter Four, to ensure that not only is the Gender Pay Gap being monitored but also to provide better



insight regarding the employment of staff with protected characteristics. This work is supported by an increase in the percentage of employees providing sensitive personal information (from 46% to 55% since 2022).

- The Physical Disability and Learning Disability Forum - work has commenced on a citizens' charter and grant funding has been applied for. It is anticipated that this will be a good facilitator of co-production. Members of these forums have been involved in shaping and designing of a range of services including the Adult Services Web page, the commissioning of Disability supported living services, the Powys Teaching Health Board learning disability Health leaflet, budget efficiencies, the experience of transitioning from children to adult services. Members co-developed the Terms of Reference for the forums and co-chair meetings. The Forum has been instrumental in the discussion and consultation around key draft policies, e.g., the Easy Read Advocacy Policy.

#### 4.4 What do our arrangements tell us regarding the equality of access to employment, training and pay?

- The median average GPG is 7.39%, which has increased from 4.14% in 2021, however last year it was acknowledged that 4.14% was likely to be an anomaly created by the way median average is calculated. The Council continues to compare favourably with the national average and other public sector organisations.

	Powys County Council	National Average * ASHE whole sector		Powys County Council	National Average * ASHE whole sector	
Median Gender Pay Gap	2022	2022 (Wales)	2022 (UK)	2021	2021 (Wales)	2021 (UK)
	7.39%	11.4%	14.9%	4.14%	11.6%	15.4%

\*Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) which is a Snapshot in April of the relevant year.

- The mean average Gender Pay Gap (GPG) continues to gradually reduce from 8.18% in 2021 to 8.03% in 2022 (this figure was 10.7% when reporting started in 2017).
- The anomaly in 2021 was as result of IR35 workers being included for the mean gender pay gap (most were male which increased the average hourly rate) and the median was as a result of an increase of circa 100 "relevant employees", most of which were in the higher quartiles which tipped the median hourly rate point showing how external factors can impact of figures. This year's figure of 7.39%, when compared to previous years, does show a gradual (and more realistic) reduction from 7.62% in 2020 and 10.2% in 2017 when

reporting began. Since the Council commenced reporting in 2017, there has been a regular reducing positive trend in both the mean and median figures.

- In 2022, whilst the number of males employed has remained consistent, a further 100 females were employed, however these tended to fall in the lower quartile roles.<sup>3</sup>

## 5. How good is our Self-Assessment Process?

- Powys County Council currently has robust processes in place that support self-assessment (these include quarterly performance review meetings, bi-annual Executive Management Team (EMT)/Cabinet Panels and Service Improvement Boards etc.). Work has been undertaken during 2022-23 to update and align performance monitoring with self-assessment processes and while the Performance Management and Quality Assurance Framework was retained over 2022/23 to provide continuity during the completion of Vision 2025, in March 2023, the Authority agreed a revised approach to performance which will in due course replace the previous [Performance Management and Quality Assurance Framework](#). In addition, a Corporate Scorecard will be adopted to detail progress against our objectives and measures.
- Performance measures are in place and the mechanisms for collecting, recording, and reporting data are adhered to, but the quality of evidence provided is often of insufficient quality or focus as to allow a clear understanding of performance against the well-being objectives to emerge. The new Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan measures have been developed building on these lessons learned.
- Increased efforts to establish baseline trends are needed, along with a clear, evidence-based rationale for action.
- Actions formed in response to audit report findings are included in workplans to ensure action and monitoring.
- Cabinet and Scrutiny are engaged through opportunities to contribute towards the quarterly reporting process.
- There is a positive relationship between the organisation and corporate performance colleagues, which has developed considerably over time to increase engagement with the strategic planning and performance process.

---

<sup>3</sup> All GPG Information cited from the Powys 2022 Gender Pay Gap Report (not published at time of drafting)

- The Council uses a range of measures, and indicators to monitor its performance, and these include localised measures developed by individual services to reflect their attainment against objectives; in alignment with the Council’s Corporate Improvement Plan (CIP) and some residual use of Public Accountability Measures (although no longer reported). Service-level objectives are set out in their Integrated Business Plan (IBP), and this forms the link between the strategy set out within the CIP and the actions required to implement that plan at Service-level. While most of the necessary elements are present to allow us to evaluate our performance against the well-being goals, some obstacles remain that prevent the emergence of a clear picture. Barriers that have been identified as impeding effective and holistic evaluation include:
  - The measures that were still in use last year (belonging as they did to the previous strategic planning and performance cycle) were, in a few cases, not fully achieving their purpose. The reasons behind this are complex and varied but have been used to inform the Corporate Strategic Equality Plan.
  - Some of the measures that were in use by the Council until March refer to large-scale and complex issues over which it cannot have a direct influence. Consideration will be required in the future to clarify how the Council approaches accountability, to provide clarity between the population-level trends that we are attempting to influence (but cannot be expected to have total control over) and the measures that evidence our own performance (and for which we are accountable).
  - There continues to be a tension between the longer-term aspirations of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act and the way in which Bodies monitor their progress against Well-being objectives.

## 6. How are we working more sustainably?

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 places a duty on local councils to consider how they can work more sustainably across 7 core areas of change. The table outlines what we have been working on during 2022-23 to ensure our processes, the way we plan and the way we support services is done in a sustainable way, that considers the long term, prevention, integration, collaboration, and involvement.

Area of change	How are we using the five ways of working to change how we think, plan and act?
Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council’s risk management arrangements have continued to be significantly improved during 2022-22</li> <li>• The Risk Appetite Statement was agreed by Cabinet on the 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023 and will be included into future Risk Policy and Guidance that is due to be reviewed by Cabinet on the 11<sup>th</sup> July 2023. The Risk Appetite Statement is to be reviewed annually, while the Risk Policy and Guidance is reviewed at three-year intervals, following the release of new risk management legislation, or following audit review. <b>(prevention)</b></li> <li>• The Council’s risk management system (JCAD) holds all risk registers, and this is where all strategic, service and transformation programme risks are registered, mitigating actions identified and risks monitored. <b>(prevention)</b></li> <li>• Consideration of risk is an integral part of quarterly performance reviews held with Portfolio Holders, Directors, and Heads of Service. <b>(integration)</b></li> <li>• The Governance and Audit Committee also has a key role in monitoring and challenging the Council’s risk register. Heads of Service and Executive Directors attend Governance and Audit Committee to discuss their specific risks and mitigations when requested. <b>(involvement)</b></li> </ul>
Performance Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The processes that Powys County Council used up to May 2023 to monitor and evaluate its performance against its objectives are set out in the <a href="#">Performance Management and Quality Assurance Framework</a>. The PMQAF was retained during 2022/23 in line with the completion of Vision 2025 but in March 2023, the Authority agreed a revised approach to performance which will in due course replace the previous arrangements. <b>(long-term/prevention)</b></li> <li>• Alongside the new performance documentation, a Corporate Scorecard will be adopted to detail progress against our objectives and measures. <b>(prevention/involvement)</b></li> <li>• PCC’s first Annual Corporate Self-Assessment Report was published in July 2022, and considered areas such as performance and risk amongst others to provide a holistic view of performance to shape future delivery. A self-assessment workbook was completed by each service (as well as Scrutiny and Governance and Audit) to gather the required information and in addition to the panel presentations, the information provided was used to</li> </ul>

assist in fulfilling the Authority's obligations under Section 6 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. During the following year, the Council considered feedback received (both internal and external) and revised some elements of the process to reduce work and to align the collection of information for self-assessment and the AGS. The new Corporate Safeguarding Audit Tool was also appended to the Self-Assessment Workbook this year. (**integration/collaboration/involvement**)

#### Corporate Planning

- [The Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan](#) (CSEP) for 2023-27 was considered and approved by Council on 23 February 2023 and was implemented from 1 April 2023.
- The Council undertakes **Integrated Impact Assessments** for all significant service, financial or policy changes to ensure the implications are understood, to support effective decision making and to ensure legislative compliance.
- The Council continues to embed a new **Transformation Approach** which draws on a range of key disciplines and methodologies, such as a customer centric approach to service re-design and agile project management. It focusses on having multidisciplinary teams to plan and deliver projects and development is based on continual customer feedback.
- The Council's digitised **Integrated Impact Assessment** (IIA) encourages the consideration of the impacts that our actions may have on the well-being goals, on our objectives, on the workforce and residents and on other organisations. IIAs are completed for all significant projects and proposed actions. The IIAs are held in a central repository for Members and staff to access and support the development of proposals and the sharing of information, evidence, and good practice. The new system allows the Council to interrogate the data from multiple impact assessments, to look at the cumulative impact of decisions on geographic areas or groups within the community, as well as identifying changes that can be made to the proposal to improve the impact of an element of the assessment.
- The Authority works with its strategic partners through the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) to deliver **integrated** care services.
- The Mid-Wales Corporate Joint Committee was established in 2022 to strengthen local democracy and accountability by integrating decision making with regards to regional transport, strategic development plans and

the improvement of economic wellbeing. It comprises of representatives from PCC, Ceredigion County Council and Bannau Brycheiniog, and will in due course, be responsible for the preparation of several documents that will provide additional governance for its areas of accountability. The Corporate Joint Committee Corporate Plan 2023 – 2027 is currently in draft for consultation.

- The Public Service Board (PSB) is a statutory strategic partnership established under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to improve the economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being of Wales. The most recent available [PSB annual report](#) highlights work that was completed during 2021-22 to deliver the objectives presented in [Towards 2040 – Our Well-Being Plan](#). There is no annual report available for 2022-23 as the time was set aside for the development of the new Wellbeing Plan and there was therefore no reporting requirement for that year. **(collaboration)**
- [The Powys Wellbeing Plan](#) was approved in June 2023 and sets out the way the Public Service Board wants Powys to look in the future. It contains three local objectives and three well-being steps to achieve those objectives. Prior to the drafting of the Wellbeing Plan, a public consultation was undertaken which ran from 27th January to 19th April 2023 and received 235 responses. **(collaboration, prevention, involvement)**

#### Financial Planning

- The Authority's Medium-Term Financial Strategy ties the current financial position to the desired future outcomes of the Council's vision and helps to chart a sustainable course between the two positions. **(long-term)**
- The CIPFA Financial Management Code (FM Code) sets out the standards of financial management expected for local authorities and is designed to support good practice and to assist local authorities in demonstrating their financial sustainability. The Council assessed its processes, procedures, and governance arrangements as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, and identified the actions to be developed to strengthen its compliance with the Code.
- The Council has a clear Treasury Management and Investment Strategy which is approved at Council each year and sets out the expected activities and appropriate strategies of the Treasury function in respect of borrowing and investments. **(long-term)**



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The investment environment has experienced a turbulent 12 months due to the performance of the global economy. The Pension Fund has several risk mitigation strategies (protection/diversification) to help manage this and the outlook is more positive, so strategy review may be appropriate if required. <b>(long-term)</b>.</li> <li>• In December 2022, the Authority introduced a new Financial Risk Management regime of Council’s suppliers. This includes working with services to address suppliers with a poor financial risk status identified by Dunn and Bradstreet reporting and agree mitigations. <b>(prevention)</b></li> </ul>
Workforce Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In response to an Audit Wales recommendation that the Council should strengthen the performance management of its workforce<sup>4</sup>, the Head of Workforce and Organisational Development (WOD) has acted as chair of an all-Wales group of local authorities working to develop key performance indicators (KPI’s) to support the improvement of measurement and reporting of workforce management in local government. To date, this group has agreed terms of reference and delivered an early draft suite of KPIs, which are now undergoing further development and review. <b>(collaboration)</b></li> <li>• A new workforce plan is in place with a three-year phased approach.</li> <li>• The Leadership Behaviours Competency Framework has been developed will be embedded and integrated in the Council’s induction and training programmes. <b>(integration)</b></li> <li>• Following the Line Manager Induction programmes, four Line Manager forums have been established and are regularly meeting as a means of peer support to staff, with regards to managing remotely and implementing New Ways of Working protocols. <b>(collaboration)</b></li> <li>• Training Needs analyses have been completed by each service area to ensure that the skills need of the workforce are identified and supported. <b>(prevention)</b></li> <li>• A suite of learning and development opportunities has been identified for Senior Leadership Team.</li> <li>• ILM 7 Leadership and Management and ILM 5 Coaching and Mentoring programmes have been offered to senior managers along with ILM Leadership and Management programmes from levels 2 – 5 being offered</li> </ul>

<sup>4</sup> Springing Forward – Workforce Management Audit report (Audit Wales)

	<p>to the wider workforce via the Welsh Government apprenticeship programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work has commenced on developing an electronic appraisal process which will providing robust performance reviews and identify Continued Professional Development needs of the workforce and areas for improvement. (<b>integration</b>)</li> <li>• Significant changes have been made to the Discipline and Grievance Policy and a complete refresh of guidance and toolkits for managers, with the introduction of an Informal Resolution Framework. The main changes are improving the timeliness of investigations and procedures and moving to a culture of supporting change and improvement rather than punishment and blame. (<b>collaboration</b>)</li> </ul>
Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Strategic Asset Management Review is underway to ensure that the Council has a robust and affordable Capital and Treasury Management Strategy. Approximately 69% of assets will have been surveyed by Autumn 2023. (<b>prevention</b>)</li> <li>• The Council adopted an Asset Management Strategy in October 2022.</li> <li>• The Strategic Property Team on behalf of Powys County Council continue to explore partnership working with both public and third sector organisations. The shared use of buildings is a key strategy, ensuring public services are maintained and accessible to all. (<b>involvement/collaboration</b>)</li> <li>• We continue to make accommodation available to partner organisations including national government agencies. (<b>integration</b>)</li> </ul>
Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have modified our procurement process so that from the outset we consider how any procurement would support and / or could have an impact on the seven well-being goals. This ensures that at the point of drafting specifications, terms and conditions and invitations to tender we can build specific requirements into our contracts to support these goals or mitigate any negative impacts.</li> <li>• A Commercial Performance and Risk Board was established during December 2022, that builds on the work of the Council's Ukraine Costs and Risk Cell. The Board's activity includes greater focus on establishing a clear procurement pipeline as this will aid improved planning of future procurements and will also help to prepare the council for the future as</li> </ul>



publishing a procurement pipeline will be a legal requirement under the new UK and Welsh Procurement legislation expected to come into force in FY23/24. (**long-term, prevention**)

- Commercial Services have introduced a monthly Commercial Dashboard to highlight and promote performance management on Commercial activity across the Council. This provides a clear picture of commercial performance throughout the Authority and any actions underway to manage supply chain risks.
- We have updated the [Procurement strategy](#) to be more **inclusive** and assist smaller businesses and local suppliers to bid for contracts, as well as using procurement models such as the dynamic procurement system (DPS) for smaller repetitive procurements.
- We keep our procurement processes (e.g., terms and conditions and prequalification processes) under continual review to ensure that we are fully compliant with new legislation and policy requirements, such as the Modern Slavery Act and the Code of Practice for Ethical Employment in the Supply Chain. (**integration**)
- The five ways of working underpin our approach to procurement and commissioning, with each procurement requiring the completion of an **integrated impact assessment** which includes an evaluation of the extent to which the procurement is considering the sustainable development principle.
- Under the Powys Pound initiative, we are helping local businesses to improve their tendering skills. We are speeding up our payment processes and using payment cards where possible so that local companies are paid faster and without delay to boost their business. Project Bank Accounts are used on all major capital projects to increase the speed of payment to subcontractors and suppliers. Annualised events are also undertaken to show and discuss our forward programme and up and coming procurement packages with suppliers and to encourage more localised bidding and engagement. We are utilising the TOMS and social value for all relevant (over £2 million) contracts, and these have been mapped against the Well-being of Future Generations goals and require tenderers to submit and to be evaluated on their social value content in any contract. The portal will

also monitor progress against all the tender submissions to show that each measure has been achieved successfully.

- For more information about procurement and contracts, including opportunities to tender, please visit:

<https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/4894/Procurement-and-Contracts>

## 7. What we Know About our Governance Performance

A full outline and assessment of the governance processes that have been in place in Powys County Council for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 may be viewed in the [Annual Governance Statement](#) (AGS). BRAG (Blue, Red, Amber, Green) ratings for the below actions have been considered using the method defined within the Performance Management and Quality Assurance Framework (PMQAF).

### 7.1 Our performance against the 2022/23 AGS action plan

Development Action (Completed actions are linked to further detail provided under each principle)	Supporting Actions	Lead/Deadline	BRAG	Mitigation/ Notes
Reintroduce face to face engagement, particularly with seldom-heard groups to maximise reach	Launched a new public participation strategy. Identified groups to engage with	John Evans	Green	
Continue to develop the effectiveness of the Cabinet Work Programme	Forward work programme is discussed regularly and	Catherine James	Green	

Development Action (Completed actions are linked to further detail provided under each principle)	Supporting Actions	Lead/Deadline	BRAG	Mitigation/ Notes
	forward looking in its approach			
FM Code action plan continues to strengthen our compliance and we aim to deliver outstanding actions and monitor it	The process has been established. Appendix (TBC) highlights delivery in year and continuing actions	Dan Paley	Blue	Review of the of the FM Code will be reported annually in the AGS.
Further develop the prominence of the Strategic Equality Plan, across the organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed new plan</li> <li>Implemented new Plan</li> <li>Alignment of objectives to all Service IBP's</li> <li>Alignment to individual appraisal actions</li> <li>Plan published</li> </ul>	Caroline Turner	Blue	N/A
Work between Finance and Service areas to improve further understanding of	Taking forward through Sustainable Powys Programme,	Jane Thomas	Green	Programme timetable is 2023-25

Development Action (Completed actions are linked to further detail provided under each principle)	Supporting Actions	Lead/Deadline	BRAG	Mitigation/ Notes
outcome-based budgeting and look to implement further	reviewing services and their redesign			
Review the MTFs principles with the new Cabinet and align to their manifesto and new CIP	Reviewed and amended narrative, and the MTFs was approved as part of budget setting	Jane Thomas	Blue	N/A
Develop the outcomes / benchmarking /VFM template and use within service reviews to support budget setting	Some areas of benchmarking fully rolled out such as Schools, other local benchmarking has been put in place (legal / HR)	Anne Phillips	Green	Taking forward through Sustainable Powys Programme, reviewing services and their redesign
Asset review completed to support the future capital requirements and strategy	The asset review is ongoing, circa 69% of assets will have been surveyed by Autumn 2023.	Neil Clutton	Green	Surveys will need to be reviewed and an evaluation of the assets is required to determine whether assets should be retained, refurbished or disposed of.
Review performance	Measures reviewed and	Emma Palmer	Blue	N/A

Development Action (Completed actions are linked to further detail provided under each principle)	Supporting Actions	Lead/Deadline	BRAG	Mitigation/ Notes
measures used as part of the Corporate Improvement Plan to ensure there is a robustness as outlined in report	aligned to 3 objectives Corporate Report Cards. Supporting measure definition documents created and collaborated on with Services.			
Continue to review the opportunities to embed Service Improvement Boards within business as usual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stepped down Social Services, Housing and Education Boards</li> <li>Continued with HTR and stepped up Planning</li> </ul>	Caroline Turner	Green	Interim CEO reviewing and suggesting next steps

## 7.2 Key performance insights from the AGS

- The Authority has faced a challenging year, with many issues arising that have had a strong bearing on its governance landscape.
- As mentioned earlier, the Authority is currently operating with a high number of interim posts in place at the Executive and Senior Leadership level. In May 2023, Full Council opted to continue to extend the existing interim arrangements for up to 12 months, following

the decision that it would not be appropriate for any permanent changes to be made to the leadership structure while no substantive Chief Executive is in post.

The following posts are included under this arrangement:

- Director of Social Services and Housing
- Director of Education and Children's Services
- Director of Corporate Services
- Head of Transformation and Democratic Services
- Head of Housing
- Head of Community Services
- Head of Commissioning and Partnerships

The substantive Chief Executive had already begun a review of the interim changes but due to her unexpected absence this has not been completed.

- In early 2022, some COVID restrictions were still in place and even once these passed some services remained in business continuity while they dealt with the ongoing impacts. Adult Services returned to business continuity again over the winter and remained so until spring 2023 in order to support Powys Teaching Health Board with the increased numbers of delayed transfers of care and difficulties in providing domiciliary care and other services that would allow patients to return home.
- A number of audit reports were received this year that found significant gaps in the Authority's procedures and made extensive recommendations regarding the Authority's governance processes and the spirit in which those processes are being implemented. These included:
  - An Audit Wales report [Follow-up Review of Arrangements for Corporate Safeguarding – Powys County Council](#)
  - The Audit Wales [Review of the PCC Planning Service](#)

Further detail of the recommendations made and actions carried out are included in this year's AGS.

- Powys County Council follows a system of corporate governance that is consistent with the seven principles of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and Society of Local Council Chief Executives (SOLACE) Framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government (2016 Edition). This statement is structured around the

seven core principles and provides an overview of how the Council has discharged its responsibilities during 2022/23 and sets out recommendations of suitable areas for development.

### 7.3 Action Plan

The below action plans have been identified. These have been prioritised using the below matrix:



Figure 3 Action Plan Matrix

#### 7.3.1. Self-Assessment Priority Actions Summary for 2023-24

Issue requiring further action	Responsible Officer	Priority (P1-P4)
Work with Service areas to look at wholesale service redesign to ensure a more sustainable Council, reflecting upon the current financial and socioeconomic situation.	Chief Executive	P1
To deliver against improvement action plans related to recent Audit Wales inspection of the Planning service and Corporate Safeguarding.	Executive Director Economy and Environment Director of Social Services and Housing	P2
Work across the organisation to embed an organisational culture that is customer focused that helps residents achieve their outcomes	Executive Management Team	P2
To support the development of the organisation by embedding revised approach to performance and highlighting opportunities for improvement.	Executive Management Team	P2

Issue requiring further action	Responsible Officer	Priority (P1-P4)
To further develop the involvement of the people of Powys and draw on their views in the work of the Council to support improvement.	Communications Manager	P2
To work with Digital Services and proactively identify and seek opportunities for digital innovation in enhancing service delivery, including process automation.	Senior Leadership Team (All services)	P2
To review the workforce planning process within the Council and ensure that management staff have reviewed their workforce plan based upon the pressures identified.	Head of Workforce and Organisational Design	P2
To support the embedding of the revised risk management framework, including risk appetite, within the Council and ensure risks are managed appropriately and support the Council's improvement activity.	Head of Finance	P3
To work with recognised Trade Union representatives to engage further in understanding their views as part of the strategic planning and performance process (linking to Social Partnership and Public Procurement Act 2022).	Head of Transformation and Democratic Services Head of Workforce and Organisational Design	P4

Further additional actions in areas which require improvement surrounding delivery against the Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan (CSEP) and for operational services are considered and managed via their integrated business plans and monitored through the performance cycle and reported accordingly.

There are also wider actions surrounding how the organisation works to ensure the people of Powys achieve their well-being goals, as identified above and within the Public Service Board Well-being Assessment and Regional Partnership Board Population Needs Assessment. These were used as key evidence bases to support the development of the new Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan and the Public Service Board Well-being Plan.



## 8. Certification of the Annual Self-Assessment Report 2022-2023

Signed on behalf of Powys County Council:

Chief Executive		Leader of the Council	
Date		Date	

### Appendix 1: Governance and Audit Committee

Following the draft of the self-assessment report, the report was shared with the Governance and Audit committee and a session was held on the 21st of July to review the findings and provide any recommendations surrounding the conclusions made and the information provided within the report.

Feedback during the session indicated that the Committee would like to include outcomes against the self-assessment priority actions outlined in table 7.3.1 and would also like to monitor these throughout 2023-24. It was agreed that this approach was valuable and would help to ensure that priority actions were delivered to plan.