

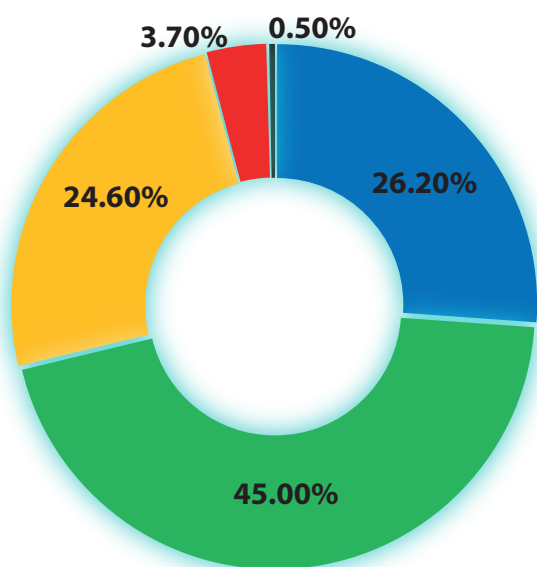
Highlights of our Annual Self-Assessment and Wellbeing report 2022/23

We use our County Plan and our Characteristics of an Outstanding Council to check our progress in delivering the council's ambitions.

In Torfaen our county plan priorities are helping:

- raise educational attainment
- children and families thrive
- reduce inequalities
- connect people and communities
- improve the local environment and increase recycling rates
- new businesses start up
- people choose healthier lifestyles
- make communities safe and attractive
- deliver citizen focused services.

Our progress against our key activities in 2022/23:



- BLUE (action completed)
- GREEN (action on target)
- AMBER (action off target but with a clear route back to 'GREEN')
- RED (action off target - significant concerns)
- BLACK (action aborted)

Overall, we've made good progress with the vast majority being on target or completed. Of 191 projects, only 1 has stopped and only 7 are causing concern.

Some key highlights from the last year:

Wellbeing objective 1

– raising educational attainment, helping young people and adults to gain qualifications and skills needed to live positive lives

- Estyn noted improvements in Leadership and several schools received positive inspection reports
- we delivered new ALN and new Digital Learning strategies
- pupil attendance in school improved
- opportunities for Welsh learners increased
- we published our 8 year Economy and Skills Strategy
- we started a council work experience programme for young people in September 2023
- we enrolled 894 adults for essential skills, GCSEs and vocational courses
- we reached 3,555 adult residents needing support to find employment
- we helped over 350 young people needing extra support make progress in school
- we supported over 150 young people into employment education or training
- we opened a drop-in advice hub to help people return to work and improve skills.

Wellbeing objective 2

– encourage and champion children, young people and families so they can thrive

- we reduced our children looked after population from 407 to 388
- we set out plans for a children's residential home
- we expanded our Flying Start scheme
- we extended Crownbridge School
- we put solar panels on 3 schools to generate electricity

Wellbeing objective 3

– tackle inequality by focusing on early identification and prevention activities that support people to live independent lives and fulfilling lives

- we paid 4,318 claims to help residents with rent
- we paid 9,716 claims to help residents with council tax
- we helped people remain at home with discretionary housing payments of £449,224



- we made 11,863 payments to residents, as part of the Winter Fuel Scheme
- we paid 2,302 claims totalling £806,000 to eligible unpaid carers
- we provided almost £400,000 in additional £150 payments to support families who are accessing free school meals
- we supported 414 residents through the Building Resilient Communities Scheme, to maximise their income
- we were the first organisation in Wales to be granted Carer Friendly Employer Accreditation by the Care Collective
- we created a new Adults and Communities Division to focus on front door access to adult social care and will develop an integrated community rehabilitation offer
- we helped prevent 36 people from being made homeless

Wellbeing objective 4

– make Torfaen more sustainable by connecting people and communities, socially, digitally and physically

- we encouraged active travel by improving safe routes to schools plus widening walking and cycle paths
- we developed a new 'Communities Approach' to work more closely our local communities
- we increased the number of forms and transactional services on our website
- we expanded public wifi

Wellbeing objective 5

– address our climate and nature emergencies, recycle more and make improvements to the local environment

- we agreed our first action plan to tackle the Climate and Nature emergencies
- we installed renewable technology in council buildings
- we managed more greenspace positively for biodiversity
- we managed 7 Local Nature Reserves for the benefit of nature and people and designated a new Local Nature Reserve at Blaenserchan
- we opened a re-use shop
- we installed public use chargers for 42 electric vehicles
- we purchased 15 electric council vehicles
- Green Flags were awarded to 7 sites in the borough
- we changed our approach to managing 42 areas of grassland
- we created Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity guidance for developers
- we bought new recycling vehicles to increase what we collect at the kerbside and aim for the 70% recycling rate by 2025

Wellbeing objective 6

– make Torfaen a great place to do business by working with local employers, encouraging new business start-ups and entrepreneurial activities

- Pontypool received a £7.6 million grant to create jobs and grow the local economy
- the grant is part of our £9.3 million Pontypool Cultural Hub plan to transform derelict buildings and boost the night-time economy
- we created Business Direct as a single point of contact for businesses

Wellbeing objective 7

– promote healthier lifestyles in Torfaen to improve mental and physical health

- we have supported schools and clubs to participate in physical activity with funding and coaching qualifications
- we helped 24 community clubs obtain grant funding totalling £302,732
- we launched a new mental health & well-being support programme for new and expectant dads
- we delivered accessible play areas at both Pontypool Park and Cwmbran Boating Lake
- we are now working to 'Marmot' principles to reduce inequalities and address long-term wellbeing

Wellbeing objective 8

– supporting our local culture and heritage and make Torfaen a thriving, safe and attractive place to live and visit

- we adopted a new approach to reduce fly-tipping and increased informal action against fly-tippers
- we published town centre place plans for Blaenavon and Pontypool
- we invested £1.5 million in our roads and pavements

Wellbeing objective 9

– provide efficient customer focused services that reflect the way people live their lives and wish to access services

- we involved customers to improve design and content on our website
- we developed a Communities Strategy to provide advice, assistance and support around residents lives
- we developed an Age-Friendly Plan to help meet the needs of all older people
- we published our Public Participation Strategy and relaunched our Torfaen's People Panel
- we increased opportunities for young people to have their say when we make decisions

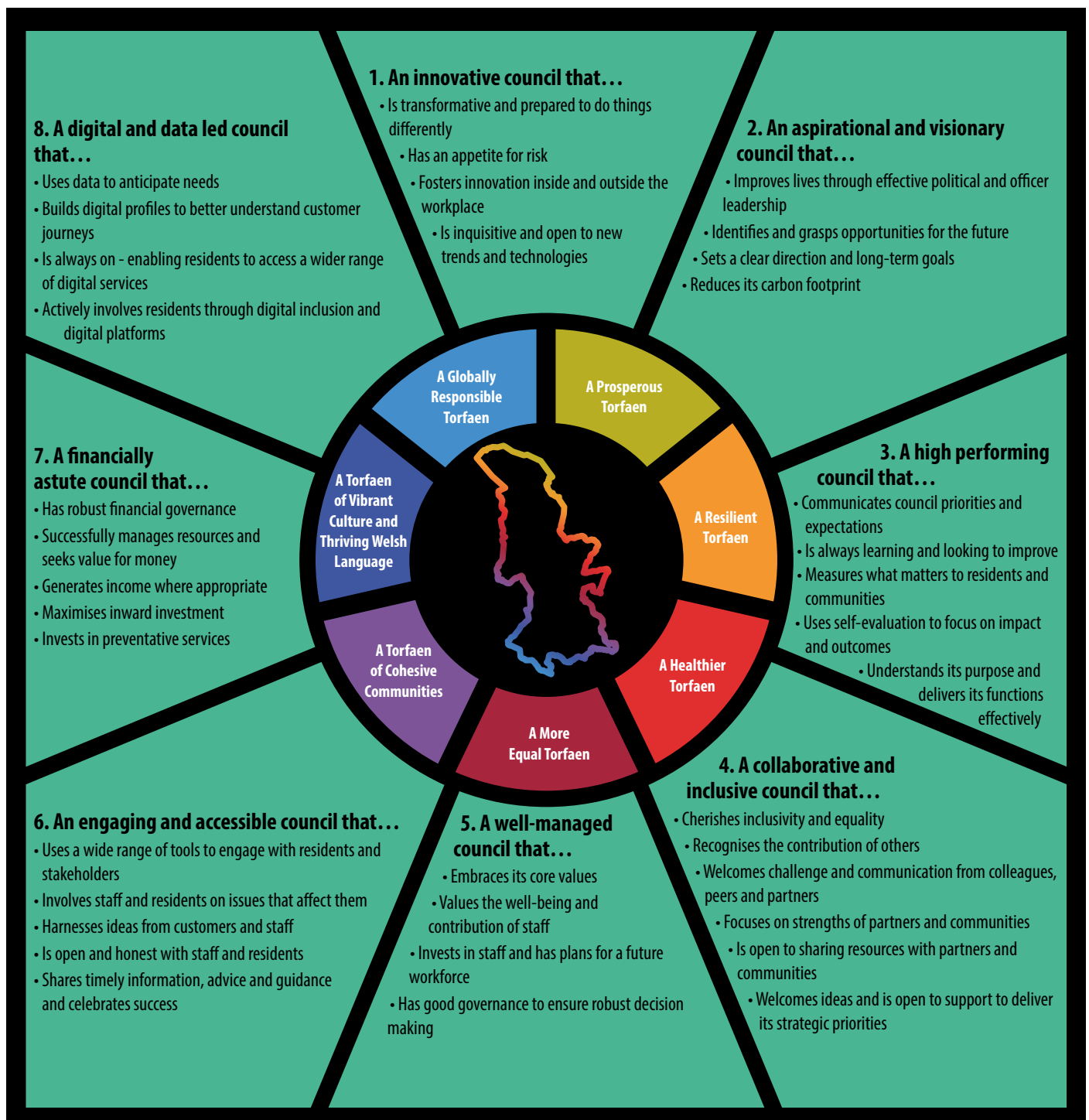


TORFAEN: AN OUTSTANDING COUNCIL:

We have developed our own internal framework for driving improvement within Torfaen Council – our ‘Characteristics of an Outstanding Council’.

Where our County Plan focuses on the improvements we will deliver for the people who live and work within Torfaen, our framework for an Outstanding Council sets out how we will become a more efficient and effective organisation, better equipped to deliver our County Plan aspirations.

Below are our 8 characteristics and an overview of the progress against them in 2022/23.



1

An innovative council that:

- reduced avoidable contact through redesigned online service and forms
- took a new approach to Risk Management to further strengthen the way we identify and manage our risks
- redesigned the civic centre to improve hybrid working so employees can continue to deliver efficient and effective services to our residents.

2

An aspirational and visionary council that:

- uses its County Plan and new annual Delivery Plan to monitor our progress against our aspirations
- uses the 'Marmot' principles to focus on reducing inequalities and address key challenges to current and long-term well-being across our region
- strengthens political leadership through cross-party scrutiny and cross-party focus groups
- is solving problems by creating the culture and environment that encourages for innovation and creativity.

3

A high performing council that:

- diligently monitors and communicates our progress against County Plan priorities and delivery plans
- introduced a new Performance Management Framework and Service Planning process that will help us to better manage our services
- introduced Power BI and local authority benchmarking to help us become more data and intelligence driven.

4

A collaborative and inclusive council that:

- worked with partners to deliver the Gwent Well-being Plan and Strategic Equalities Plan
- improved our workforce's understanding of equality and diversity issues
- created an environment for constructive challenge and an open-door culture throughout the organisation
- introduced a Community Well-Being Strategy that sets out how we will work more closely with our communities to improve community resilience.
- introduced a Public Participation Strategy and involved the public in key decisions.

5

A well-managed council that:

- developed a new Workforce Strategy to focus on staff wellbeing and development
- introduced a new induction programme to share our vision, values and county plan priorities with new employees
- supported staff learning through a new Apprenticeship/Trainee and Upskilling programme.

6

An engaging and accessible council that:

- involved staff, residents, community groups and forums on issues that affect them
- communicated openly, frequently and honestly with residents and councillors
- reintroduced the Torfaen Talks Community Newspaper
- re-launched the Torfaen People's Panel, to involve residents early in consultation.

7

A financially astute Council that:

- has good financial processes which are positively viewed by our regulators
- provides councillors with regular financial reports and forecasts
- developed 8 separate workstreams within 'Project Apollo' to address financial challenges
- added greater resilience and stability to our procurement function through collaboration with Cardiff City Council
- attracted inward investment, including successful bids for Levelling Up Funding and Shared Prosperity Funding.

8

A digital and data led Council that:

- introduced a Digital and Data Team and developed our Digital First Customer Strategy to help us on our journey in becoming a digital and data-led council
- developed digital profiles and customer personas to better understand our customers digital preferences and journeys
- introduced the Torfaen BOT on the website to help answer residents' questions.

