

Pembrokeshire County Council
Cyngor Sir Penfro



Pembrokeshire County Council

Annual Self-Assessment 2024-25

(Consultation version, July 2025)

Introduction

This is Pembrokeshire County Council's fourth annual self-assessment as required under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act. The Act introduced performance requirements for local authorities and central to this is a duty to report annually on performance through a process of self-assessment. The Act requires each council in Wales to keep under review, through self-assessment, the extent to which it is meeting the 'performance requirements', which is the extent to which:

- It is exercising its functions effectively
- It is using its resources economically, efficiently, and effectively
- Its governance is effective for securing the above

A self-assessment report must be produced in respect of each financial year and published as soon as is reasonably practicable after the end of the financial year on which it is reporting. **As such this is the Council's self-assessment report for the 2024-25 financial year.**

The report sets out the Council's conclusions on the extent to which it has met the performance requirements during that financial year, and any actions it intends to take, or has already taken, to increase the extent to which it is meeting the performance requirements.

There are a number of broad overarching principles which have informed the Council's approach to undertaking this self-assessment:

- Corporate leadership and ownership is key to developing a culture of improvement.
- Self-assessment process needs to be embedded into the Council's corporate planning, performance and governance processes – it is not a one-off event or standalone process.
- There is acceptance that the self-assessment process will evolve and be continually refined.
- This is not necessarily about introducing new systems and processes – rather this is about utilising what is already in place in a more coherent, integrated and effective way.
- The legislation states that this is a corporate self-assessment, not an assessment of individual service performance.

Methodology – a thematic approach

To provide a clear structure and focus, our self-assessment is designed around a thematic framework built around key corporate and organisational themes, with performance under each of these themes assessed.

Our self-assessment framework is aligned to our Corporate Strategy which for this reporting period is the version agreed by Council in May 2022 consisting of twelve Well-being Objectives. As is set out in 2.1 of this report, a new Corporate Strategy 2025-2030 was agreed in March 2025 and therefore the framework for next year's report will need to be adapted to reflect the four new Well-being Objectives agreed as part of the new strategy.

The overarching themes for our self-assessment report are:

1. The Council's Well-being Objectives (as set out in the Corporate Strategy 2023-2028)
2. Corporate planning, performance and working with others

Each theme is supported by a set of sub-themes to supplement our understanding of how we are performing in each area.

Ref	Theme	Sub Ref	Sub Theme
SA1	Well-being Objectives		
		SA1.1	We will improve the provision of education and learning, equipping our learners with lifelong skills and knowledge they will need for the future
		SA1.2	We will ensure the appropriate provision of care and support, focusing on prevention and ensuring vulnerable people are safe
		SA1.3	We will enable the delivery of affordable, available, adaptable and energy efficient homes
		SA1.4	We will deliver our economic ambition through supporting growth, jobs and prosperity and enable the transition to a more sustainable and greener economy
		SA1.5	We will promote and support initiatives to deliver decarbonisation, manage climate adaptation and tackle the nature emergency
		SA1.6	We will support our communities, maintaining positive relationships with them to help to build active, resourceful, connected, sustainable and creative communities
		SA1.7	We will support the Welsh language within communities and through schools
		SA1.8	We will focus resources on delivering core services such as highways, waste and recycling, public protection and leisure and culture that contribute to communities' quality of life, ensuring residents live in neighbourhoods that are clean, green, safe and active
		SA1.9	We will develop a strategy to reduce poverty and inequality

		SA1.10	We will build a culture of good governance in the Council to enhance trust and confidence in our decision-making processes
		SA1.11	We will be a financially sustainable and resilient Council managing our resources and assets effectively and efficiently, for instance by reviewing and optimizing our corporate estate
		SA1.12	We will enhance the development of our workforce, improving skills and opportunities as well as tackling issues of recruitment and retention
SA2	Corporate planning, performance and working with others		
		SA2.1	Corporate planning and performance
		SA2.2	Strategic partnerships
		SA2.3	Consultation and engagement
		SA2.4	Complaints and compliments
		SA2.5	Equalities

Self-assessment is an evidence-based analysis, understanding what a range of quantitative and qualitative information at the Council's disposal reveals about how it is exercising its functions, using its resources and governing itself. We have asked ourselves 3 key questions to assess performance under each sub-theme. These are:

- How well are we doing? (*Assessing current performance using both qualitative and quantitative information.*)
- How do we know? (*Providing appropriate evidence to demonstrate the above.*)
- What can we do better and how? (*Identifying forward looking improvement actions.*)

The self-assessment draws on a range of internal and external sources, ensuring a broad evidence base to inform the actions the Council will take to increase the extent to which it is meeting the performance requirements in future. Below are a range of examples of the type of information we have drawn on as an evidence base:

- Service plan self-assessment sections
- External regulatory reports
- External service reviews
- Corporate Performance Scorecard
- Citizen engagement and consultation exercises
- Annual Governance Statement
- Budget monitoring reports
- Other statutory reports e.g. Director of Social Services Annual Report

It is worth noting that the Council is scheduled to undertake its first Panel Performance Assessment (PPA) in October 2025. This is a separate performance requirement under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act and places a duty on Councils to arrange for an external panel to conduct a PPA at least once each electoral cycle. A PPA is an independent, organisational-level assessment undertaken by expert peers, designed to support Councils to actively seek external challenge and assurance, and to embrace different perspectives around how they are performing and where they can improve.

In this context, this year's annual self-assessment report is an important source of evidence for the Council's PPA, in that its findings will be used to identify the themes and areas of improvement where the Council can benefit most from the independent perspectives and expertise the panel members can bring to our PPA.

Theme: SA1.1 Wellbeing Objectives

Sub-theme: We will improve the provision of education and learning, equipping our learners with lifelong skills and knowledge they will need for the future

Assessment of current performance – how well are we doing

- We wanted to improve school standards and pupils' skills levels, especially Language, maths, science and the gap in attainment between pupils from low-income families and those who are not. Outcomes from school inspections undertaken in 2024-25 have been positive and in April 2025 none of Pembrokeshire's schools are in a follow up category with Estyn. Based on our own assessment, three of Pembrokeshire's schools are of cause for concern (which in total educated 15% of pupils), a reduction from last year.
- We used standardised, termly assessment to measure pupils' core skills against the national average. Results were significantly lower for boys compared to girls, as well as weaker outcomes in Year 3 compared to older cohorts. Furthermore, data showed numeracy as the weakest-performing core indicator, with a local drop of nearly one-third of a grade compared to a national decline of one-fifth.
- In terms of attainment at GCSE, the three-year average capped 9 point score for Pembrokeshire's mainstream schools was 363.5. Welsh Government calculate modelled outcome results for schools that take into account their level of deprivation and compare this to the actual result for June 2024's exams. Two of Pembrokeshire's schools' results were more than 10 points higher than their modelled result, whilst three had actual results that were more than 20 points lower.
- Literacy deep dive reviews were successfully delivered in the autumn term, with positive feedback, especially regarding the involvement of peer headteachers. The findings are helping shape support provided for schools and messages at leadership network meetings.
- Retrieval practice (techniques to strengthen memory and retention) has been embedded in around one-third of schools, including all secondaries and 12 primary schools.
- We implemented the Raising Attainment for Disadvantaged Youngsters deep dive as a consistent framework for closing the attainment gap. It reinforced the importance of leadership ownership, targeted planning, and consistent evaluation when supporting disadvantaged learners. We were pleased that outcomes for pupils entitled to Free School Meals in science improved significantly, with their average grade rising by a third, a key success compared to national patterns.
- We worked on increasing attendance and reducing exclusions and it is a clear example of where a preventative approach is resulting in improved outcomes and reduced demand on other services. Initiatives to improve attendance include extending the number of schools that have access to a Family Engagement Officer and by undertaking targeted attendance reviews with schools. Overall primary school attendance was similar for the 2024-25 financial year compared to previous

years. Secondary school attendance improved by 0.8 percent points. Attendance figures for both primary and secondary schools are close to the Welsh average.

- Exclusions were considered in detail by Schools and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November 2024. The Committee concluded the decline in fixed-term exclusions reflects a shift toward inclusive, supportive, and proactive approaches to managing behaviour in Pembrokeshire. By focusing on addressing root causes, increasing mental health and Additional Learning Needs (ALN) support, involving families, and offering alternatives to exclusion, schools create a more positive environment where students feel supported and are less likely to face exclusion.
- We strengthened oversight and support for Elective Home Educated children. Two additional officers are now in place enabling 266 annual home visits up to end 2024, with the child spoken to in 70% of visits. There has also been an increase in formal intervention.
- Strong progress was made this year in improving school leadership through the 50Penfro|Pembs50 school leadership development programme. This has addressed gaps created by changes to national training schemes and helping to ensure a sustainable pipeline of skilled and confident school leaders and is an example of how we are managing workforce issues.
- We implemented a robust approach to managing mobile phone use in schools through collaborative working, and this is now beginning to show a positive impact on behaviour and learning environments. For instance, 96% of staff reported improved pupil concentration and 94% reported fewer behavioural challenges. The policy was praised by the Senedd's Petitions Committee, which identified it as a sensible and well-balanced approach for the Welsh Government to consider as a model for other local authorities.
- The Early Years Team has made significant strides in improving the quality of provision, particularly in supporting ALN, enhancing play opportunities, and upgrading environments through the effective use of capital funding. The Play Sufficiency Report was updated and considered by Cabinet at its 28 April 2025 meeting. The report was based on extensive consultation and engagement with providers, families and young people. It noted: the comprehensive access to play opportunities provided by the Council and its partners; the trained workforce; and the breadth of provision for younger children. It noted challenges such as the limited budgets available for developing play providers, training, and outreach programs and the need to widen provision for young people with additional learning needs.
- To better support pupils with ALN, we have halved the length in delays in issuing Individual Learning Plans. Support for ALN sits within a wider framework of a whole school approach to mental health and well-being. Almost all schools have access to Diploma trained Trauma Informed Schools practitioners and training is being rolled out across a wider cohort of professionals that support young people, for instance youth workers (and the Youth Service's reach extended to 17.5% of Pembrokeshire's 11 – 25 aged population, well above the national average of 14.4%).
- The most complex and controversial issue the Council committed to undertake in 2024-25 was a review of the organisation of Pembrokeshire's schools. In essence Pembrokeshire has too many school places for the number of children it has and is likely to have in future. By addressing this mismatch, we can meet four objectives:

improving standards; extending Welsh medium provision; creating sustainable education communities; and ensuring schools are housed in better quality buildings.

- Following discussion by Schools and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee, in July 2024 Council established a politically balanced working group to examine evidence and to bring forward proposals to a future Council. In May 2025 Council considered the working group's recommendations and agreed to commence statutory consultation on discontinuing: Manorbier VC School; Cilgerran VC school; Ysgol Clydau with Cilgerran and Ysgol Clydau to be replaced by a single 3-11 community school. Council also agreed to undertake a review of English and Welsh medium, primary and secondary provision in the Tenby cluster.
- Our school building programme is managed by the Sustainable Communities for Learning Strategic Board and its minutes are reported to Cabinet to ensure transparency (e.g. 25 Sept 2024 and 1 May 2025). Major projects currently include preparing the strategic outline cases for developments at Milford Haven Secondary School and Portfield School (due to be considered by July 2025 Council).
- A progress report on the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2031 was considered by Cabinet at its 28 April 2025 meeting. The report concludes that targets of at least 33% (or an aspirational target of 37%) of Year 1 learners are taught through Welsh by 2031 can only be achieved by changing existing schools to Welsh medium or by establishing new Welsh medium provision.

Evidence – how do we know?

- Mobile Phone Policy at School in Pembrokeshire report, Schools and Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 6 Feb 2025:
<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=560&MId=6307&Ver=4&LLL=0>
- School Modernisation Working Group, 8 May 2025
<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/documents/s79418/School%20Modernisation%20Working%20Group.pdf?LLL=0>
- Schools Falling into Budget Deficits, Schools and Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 6 February 2025
<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=560&MId=6307&Ver=4&LLL=0>
- Elective Home Education, Schools and Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 26 September 2024
<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/documents/s75907/2024.08.21%20OSC%20Report%20Elective%20Home%20Education.pdf?LLL=0>
- Progress report on Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2031, Cabinet 28 April 2025: <https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/documents/s79282/3.3%20-%20Cabinet%20WESP%20April%202025.pdf?LLL=0>

Improvement actions – what can we do better and how?

- Undertake projects designed to support the preventative agenda for 0-25 year olds and the 0-25 Prevention Programme Board.

- Focus on improving standards particularly literacy for younger pupils and numeracy across all ages. Current attainment levels signal both a significant challenge across Wales and reinforces the need for sustained Pembrokeshire improvement efforts. The causes of this decline in standards are complex and include many factors outside of schools' direct control e.g. increasing child poverty; the legacy of interrupted early years provision during COVID; and excessive use of social media and mobile phones by young people.
- Increase parental engagement in children's learning by 20% over the next academic year through the implementation of a comprehensive parental involvement strategy. This will be complemented by an improved tracking system for Early Years.
- Continuing to improve school attendance to meet our target.
- Refresh and implement actions in Whole-School Approach to Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy.
- Continue to progress both the sustainable schools for learning programme and our school re-organisation.

Theme: SA1.2 Wellbeing Objectives

Sub-theme: We will ensure the appropriate provision of care and support, focusing on prevention and ensuring vulnerable people are safe

Assessment of current performance – how well are we doing?

- The Council produces an annual report of the Director of Social Services. This report is likely to be considered by Council in autumn 2025 and contains much more detail about this area.
- Social care is the second highest spending Council function. There have been significant increases in social care spending as a result of the increasing costs of delivering service, as well as increases in demand. These are commented on in the Resources section.
- In April 2024, CIW carried out inspection activity in accordance with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. They acknowledged during the visit that a significant level of transformational change was already taking place within Pembrokeshire, however did also highlight some areas of concern, with particular reference to consistency of adult safeguarding practice and timeliness of assessments and reviews.
- In response an Improvement Board for Social Care was set up. This met monthly and was chaired by the Chief Executive. A paper to Cabinet's July 2024 meeting has details of its structure. The board has overseen the transformational change that was driven by the social care team, for instance: reducing our review and assessment backlogs; providing a strategic direction to the adult safeguarding team (we are no longer an outlier for the number of referrals); reinstating the practitioner forum; and a much stronger focus on the scrutiny of improvement data.
- We wanted to re-design the front-of-house process for accessing Adult Social Care through service reconfiguration. This is a two-year project, and the first phase was completed in 2024-25. We used Vanguard methodology to reduce waste/unnecessary referrals within the system. For complex cases, we have adopted an innovative method of structuring case discussions between different professionals involved in care (e.g. the Citizen's Advice Bureau and Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services) called [Fishbowl](#) discussions. The outcome has been greater capacity at the front door of social care and giving people more independence by recognising their strengths.
- The success of the redesign of front-of-house processes and adult safeguarding is demonstrated by improved waiting times for assessments of need which is monitored through our performance management processes. On 7 July 2025 Cabinet considered performance across the 2024-25 year and noted the improvement in this area.
- As a result of 2024-25 budget decisions, we accelerated changes to day services in line with Welsh Government strategy on inclusion and independent living. The Anchorage building was closed and day opportunities were reconfigured. Individuals who received the service were offered alternative placement within the community. We supported development of a social enterprise to provide services at Bro Preseli. Lee Davies Day service concluded on 31st March 2025 and has been replaced with

services within the community. Oversight of these changes has been provided by the Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee visited Pembroke Dock library to see how the re-modelled Day Services are working. Their report went to its June 2025 [meeting](#).

- During 2024-25, the pressure on children's services as a result of the ever-increasing demand and complexity of need has continued to build. This is most starkly evidenced by the continued increase in the numbers of young people looked after and the numbers of children requiring care within residential settings. Cabinet's June 2025 paper Children's Services: Operation SALUS Phase 2 summarises work on how the Council has responded to these challenges. Cabinet's 10 February 2025 paper describes how prevention work will be resourced and taken forward into 2025-26 and beyond.
- We opened West Lodge Children's Residential Home, the first in-house full-time residential home in the Authority's history. This enables care for children which is far closer to home, responds to Welsh Government's 'Elimination of profit' agenda and is resulting in financial savings. At the time of writing the unit is looking after three children with one vacancy. This will be used as the blueprint for addition facilities (see Social Services Commissioning Plan 2025-2035).
- During 2024-25 we launched two effective prevention projects. In September 2024 we launched our pilot 'Parent and Baby Early Intervention Project' and feedback from parents and professionals alike suggests that the intervention has achieved meaningful change. The Step-Up Step-Down fostering pilot provides specialist foster carer support in the form of respite for children and mentoring to parents, along with creating communities of support involving groups of parents and carers. Both of these projects will be supported in 2025-26 through our Accelerated Change Programme.
- The Preventions 0-25 year old agenda is an integral thematic within the new Transformation and Innovation programme. Work will be overseen by a programme board reporting directly to the Transformation and Innovation Board which will provide strategic direction and challenge.
- We commissioned an external support to review current arrangements and make recommendations around future transitions service design is needed by children with complex needs and disabilities when they reach adulthood.
- The continued flow of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) into the service has resulted in increasing pressures on staff. Whilst the cohort of UASC is capped at 23 for Pembrokeshire, those young people turn 18 and are then supported by the leaving care team, and so the numbers of former UASC continues to grow year on year.
- We want to grow the for not for profit/ social enterprise sector both for adults' and children's services and as a result a commissioning team was established. Good progress has been made to secure local market capacity and work with local providers. An Action for Children care home established so additional not for profit capacity created in the market. We continue to support the micro-enterprise sector through Catalyst 4 Care work.
- A ten-year commissioning plan for social care was developed throughout 2024-25 and was agreed by Cabinet at its June 2025 meeting. The strategy plans for development of older adults' services (e.g. growing the Council's own domiciliary

and residential care services), adults, especially those with learning disabilities, children where alongside the focus on prevention, there are plans to grow the Council's own residential care capacity and grow in-house foster carers and technology enabled care. Delivering the plan will require the use of capital funding (much of it via grant) as well as 'invest to save' funding.

- A new unpaid carers Information, Advice and Assistance service was commissioned, which started in October 2024.
- Whilst Adult's social care changed to the Eclipse IT system in 2023-24, in 2024-25 Children's services changed to this system and went live in December 2024. This necessitated working on over 200 processes and forms. Whilst there were some 'teething problems, the additional workflow functionality and generation of task lists is facilitating smooth transfer of cases, monitoring of workloads and tracking of tasks being delivered against target waiting times.
- The financial support team liaise with customers so that they pay contributions towards the cost of their care in accordance with the Social Care and Wellbeing Act. It has implemented Vanguard process mapping to make financial assessment processes more efficient and have re-designed the Direct Payment process to reduce the need to clawback funding. In 2024-25 the team recovered an additional £2.785m. The annual percentage recovery rate for residential is 99% and 94% for non-residential debt. This debt will be a key focus for 2025-26, and this is an area which has received investment through the Accelerated Change Programme.

Evidence – how do we know?

- Social Care Service plans (four in total)
- Target Operating Model, Operationalising Prevention, Cabinet, 10 February 2025: <https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=78121>
- Operation Salus, Cabinet, 12 February 2024: <https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/documents/s73637/6.2%20-%20Operation%20Salus%20Cabinet%20Report%20202401%20djm.pdf?LLL=0>
- Corporate Scorecard, Cabinet, 7 July 2025: <https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/documents/s80052/5.1%20-%20Final%20Cabinet%207%20July%202025%20Cabinet%20covering%20report.pdf?LLL=0>
- Operation Salus Phase 2, Cabinet, 2 June 2025: <https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=79619>
- Care Inspectorate Wales Letter, 13 June 2024 Improvement Check visit to Pembrokeshire County Council adult services: <https://www.careinspectorate.wales/sites/default/files/2024-06/240613-Pembrokeshire-improvement-check-letter-en.pdf>
- Adult Services Improvement Agenda, Cabinet, 11 July 2024: <https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/documents/s75421/6.2%20-%20July%2024%20Cabinet%20Report%20Adult%20Services%20Improvement%20Plan.pdf?LLL=0>
- Pembrokeshire County Council Social Services Improvement Board Terms of Reference May 2024, Cabinet, 11 July 2024:

<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/documents/s75423/Appendix%20Atodiad%202.pdf?LLL=0>

- Social Services Strategic Commissioning Plan 2025-2035, Cabinet, 2 June 2025:
<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/documents/s79613/6.2%20-%20Cabinet%20Report%20-%20Social%20Services%20Strategic%20Commissioning%20Plan%20-%2002-06-2025.pdf?LLL=0>
- Delegated Decisions by Chief Executive and Director of Resources taken on 3 April 2025. Sixteen projects in total making up the Preventions Programme funded by the Council's Accelerated Change Programme:
<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/mgCalendarMonthView.aspx?M=5&CID=0&OT=&C=-1&MR=0&DL=0&D=1&ACT=Earlier&DD=2025&LLL=0>

Improvement actions – what can we do better and how?

- Deliver the 0-25 Preventions programme agreed on 3 April 2025, reporting to Cabinet and the Transformation and Innovation Board as appropriate.
- Deliver the second stage of the re-design the front-of-house process for accessing Adult Social Care. A review of the service model is being undertaken jointly with the Health Board, the third sector and colleagues in the Contact Centre. The potential for using Artificial Intelligence to direct people to the correct service will also be explored.
- Restructure the front of house services into a 'preventions and child protection' service area, alongside implementation of the 0-25 preventions board to coordinate wider preventions approach across the service.
- Redevelop the transitions service through re-establishing an identified team will enable the 0-25 Preventions Board to improve the experience of children with disabilities as they move from children's to adults' services.
- Deliver the Social Care Commissioning Strategy 2025-2035 and the capital projects outlined within it. We will develop and publish a refreshed Market Stability Report which the plan will respond to and will provide a health check of the social care market.
- Develop additional residential children's home capacity.
- Further strengthen our in-house Foster Care offer to increase the number of in-house foster carers.
- Implement Eclipse Person. This functionality will enable us to implement the 'digital front door' enabling people to make referrals online.

Theme: SA1.3 Well-being Objectives

Sub-theme: We will enable the delivery of affordable, available, adaptable and energy efficient homes

Assessment of current performance – how well are we doing?

- A report on the progress of the Housing Strategy 2024-2029 over the last year will be taken to Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 17th June 2025. It describes how the Council has been supporting the priorities it set out in the Housing Strategy since it was agreed by Cabinet in December 2023. The report highlights how, despite significant budget pressures, there is a high level of work taking place that is helping to reduce and address housing challenges in Pembrokeshire. This work has been conducted alongside third sector and wider housing partners.
- A review of the progress of the Rapid Rehousing Plan went to Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November 2024. The review highlighted that Pembrokeshire is still in the midst of a serious housing crisis and unprecedented levels of homelessness. Despite a reduction in homelessness figures, the use of temporary accommodation (TA) remained significantly high in 2024-25, with average length of time spent in temporary accommodation or on waiting lists both increasing. This was primarily due to the number of single-person households requiring TA and a lack of 1-bed units which were affordable or available as social rent. Work remains ongoing to identify opportunities for reducing the reliance and costs of temporary accommodation provision.
- Stock condition surveys of Council owned housing have been commenced to help provide a more accurate picture of the true costs of compliance with the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) 2023. As evidenced by the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan, agreed by Cabinet in March 2025, achieving compliance with the WHQS is not possible without significant reliance on borrowing and additional funding from Welsh Government. The HRA Business Plan also sets out the 5-year capital programme from 2025-30. This will support planned maintenance related to the WHQS 2023 requirements, such as decarbonisation, floor coverings, noise insulation, water butts and more.
- The Affordable Housing Team has worked throughout the year to develop the new Homebuy scheme for Pembrokeshire. This scheme, funded by the second homes council tax premium, will be offered to eligible first-time buyers as an interest free loan, to be used towards the purchase of a property in a preferred area of the county. The scheme aims to support those who already have a deposit saved, want to purchase their own home and get a mortgage, but are struggling to find an affordable property. The Homebuy Scheme was officially be launched in June 2025.
- Despite initial delays, two of the main housing development schemes, Old School Lane (Johnston) and Tudor Place (Tiers Cross), were both fully completed and tenanted in June 2024, with a total of 44 new homes. Later in the year, phase 1 of Glasfryn (St Davids) was completed, with 7 new homes ready and available for new residents by January 2025.
- The Council's Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) was amended and approved in 2024, based on Welsh Government queries. The GTAA identified that

the total unmet need from 2025-2033 is 30 pitches. As a result, Cabinet agreed in May 2024 that financial provision should be made in the Capital Programme for 2024-25 onwards, to facilitate any necessary site acquisition costs, site investigation report(s), where needed, site remediation works, and other related survey and investigation work required for the site(s) put forward. Capital improvements were undertaken throughout the year and a Welsh Government grant of £86,602 was secured.

- Pembrokeshire County Council remained the largest social housing provider in the county during 2024-25. As of February 2025, there were 5,853 properties in PCC's residential housing stock. Housing stock numbers continue to increase due to the active acquisition and build programmes. Similarly, demand for council housing remained high throughout the year, with 332 bids for PCC properties from April 2024 to January 2025.
- The Council have continued to provide adaptations to homes of all tenures but particularly for private sector housing. 317 small and medium disabled adaptations (up to £10,000) were completed in 2024-25, a 28.9% increase from the year before. There were also 26 completions during the year under the Disabled Facilities Grant (up to £36,000). A review of the Adaptations and financial assistance policy has also been undertaken and agreed by Cabinet in March 2025.
- The number of people on the Choice Homes @ Pembrokeshire Housing Register decreased steadily throughout the year, from 5,181 in April 2024 to 3,661 by March 2025. This was due to the implementation of the Annual Review Process for applications held with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). As the applications have not been reviewed for a number of years, the decrease in applications are likely to be visible until May 2025 when all application reviews will have been completed.

Evidence – how do we know?

- Housing, Building Maintenance & Public Protection Service Plan 2025-26
- [Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, Implementation Review, September 2024](#)
- [Report to Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, June 2025 – Progress on implementation of the Pembrokeshire Housing Strategy 2024-2029](#)
- [Report to Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, November 2024 – Homelessness Rapid Rehousing Transition and Housing Support Programme progress reports 2024](#)
- Homebuy Pembrokeshire information booklet and press release, 3 June 2025: <https://newsroom.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/news/homebuy-pembrokeshire-scheme-launched-to-help-first-time-buyers>
- [Minutes of Cabinet meeting, 20th May 2024 – Delivery of Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation](#)
- [Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2019 \(amended in December 2020 and March 2024\)](#)
- [Cabinet report, 20th May 2024 – Delivery of Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation](#)
- [Housing Revenue Account \(HRA\) Business Plan 2025-2055](#)
- Social Services & Housing Directorate Scorecard

- [Cabinet report, March 2025 - Review and amendment of Pembrokeshire Housing Financial Assistance and Adaptations Policy 2025-2030](#)

Improvement actions – what can we do better and how?

- Successfully launch and implement the Homebuy Pembrokeshire scheme.
- Continue and complete the review of the Building Maintenance service.
- Implement work following the review of the Choice Homes Allocations Policy.
- Expand and develop building maintenance Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for relevant services.
- Housing development programme – implementation and number of social homes brought into the HRA.
- Review of homeless temporary accommodation provision to provide more appropriate and affordable solutions.
- Complete council housing condition surveys and identify Target Energy Pathways for achievement of WHQS 2023.

Theme: SA1.4 Wellbeing Objectives

Sub-theme: We will deliver our economic ambition through supporting growth, jobs and prosperity and enable the transition to a more sustainable and greener economy

Assessment of current performance – how well are we doing?

- This well-being objective is delivered through our Pembrokeshire Recovery and Regeneration Strategy 2020-2030. Now in its fifth year of delivery, the plan will be refreshed in 2025-26. This will ensure synergy with the refreshed South West Wales Regional Economic Delivery Plan which is due to be re-published in autumn 2025.
- One of the key outcomes we track is Pembrokeshire's claimant count rate, a measure of unemployment. The rate¹ has changed little over 2024-25 at 3.3% for much of the year (and very little changed from 2023-24 levels). 26% of claimants for out of work benefits were aged over 50, a slightly higher proportion than the year before.
- There is anecdotal evidence that the outlook for sectors such as hospitality is less positive and continued high retail vacancy rates. The 2023 Retail Survey once again identified higher than UK average vacancy levels in all town centres apart from Narberth and Milford Marina and whilst vacancy rates in some towns fell (e.g. Milford), it increased in others (e.g. Haverfordwest). This intelligence feeds through to our town regeneration programmes (see below).
- This well-being objective can only be delivered through effective partnership. In January 2025, we re-launched the Pembrokeshire Economic Ambition Forum, whose purpose is to comment on the Council's economic development plans and provide focused feedback from key industry sectors and Pembrokeshire's major businesses. The Forum is chaired by the former CEO of Valero's Pembroke Refinery with representation from major employers, both senior member and officer representation from the Council and with representation from young people.
- The Forum has discussed how Pembrokeshire's Economic Regeneration and Recovery Strategy 2020-2030 might be updated (and noted the progress made against its objectives) as well as discussing developments in the energy industry within Pembrokeshire; which spans refining, LNG, as well as developments within year such as Floating Offshore Wind (the Crown Estate awarded 4.5GW licences for the Celtic Sea in June 2025) and hydrogen (both RWE at Pembroke Power Station and Haush in Pembroke Dock).
- The Celtic Freeport offers tax relief and other benefits to industry aims to foster green economic growth and advance skills development around the Haven estuary and Neath Port Talbot. During the year, the Celtic Freeport appointed its first permanent Chief Executive who has completed the final setting up tasks such as developing plans for Skills, Innovation and Net Zero plans submitting the Full Business Case (which was not possible until after a new UK Government was in place following the General Election). The Celtic Freeport was launched in March 2025 and the Freeport's Final Business Case being accepted by both the UK and Welsh

¹ An estimate of unemployment

Governments in June 2025. Successful achievement of this milestone means that the Freeport can focus on delivery in 2025-26 and beyond.

- As part of the Council's Accelerated Change Programme bids (most of which were for preventative work in early years and children's social care) we invested £186k over 2025-26 to support the team that manages the Council's contributions to the Freeport programme and in order to maximise its benefits for Pembrokeshire.
- We continue to work with colleagues across the region on the Swansea Bay City Deal. Now in its ninth year (and with funding for another six years) the City Deal had funded workboat pontoons at Port of Pembroke, contributed to Fibre/Broadband roll out (e.g. Digital Champions) and skills programmes (e.g. Pembrokeshire Passport to Employment which is focused on the renewable energy sector). Full Fibre Broadband availability increased by 17% over 2024-25 and stands at 65% with a target to increase this to 99%.
- We continued to deliver on a range of regeneration projects in our main towns. These are funded through a range of sources including the Transforming Towns Project, UK Government regeneration funding and the Shared Prosperity Fund.
- In Haverfordwest, the £26m Heart of Pembrokeshire project is progressing, 69% of which has been funded from external funding grants. A report to April 2025 Cabinet gives the position at year end. Essential repair work has been undertaken on the Inner Bailey of the Castle, a complex task as it is both a scheduled ancient monument and the need to avoid damage to protected species. Repair work to Castle Back walls are due to start on site in August 2025. Haverfordwest Castle Community Interest Organisation has been set up which will run the tourism attraction/museum within the Castle grounds in the old gaol building. Funding has also been secured for public realm work around Castle Square which will be completed in 2025-26.
- The ground floor of the Western Quayside was occupied from November 2024 by Waldo Lounge and funding was secured for the public realm space and the fit out of the adjacent Foundry building. Significant progress has been made with regards to retaining wall, paving and bin stores. Fabrication of the signature footbridge is complete, and this is due to be installed in August 2025.
- At its May 2024 meeting Cabinet received an update on the Pembroke South Quay regeneration project, a complex and high-risk site due to the poor condition of buildings, heritage and ecology conservation and its constrained nature. Once complete this will host the Henry Tudor Centre (tourist attraction), a library and a social care facility Cabinet weighed the risks and benefits of the project and appointed a contractor to undertake construction which started in July 2024 and is expected to complete by July 2026. At its July 2024 meeting, Cabinet agreed to award the Henry Tudor Trust a 50-year peppercorn lease to operate the attraction as well as underwriting some of the Trust's costs for the first three years if it is not able to attract external grants.
- We are considering options for the next phase of Withybush Food Park Incubator Units following receipt of tenders in autumn 2024. A redesign of the scheme is being commissioned with cost plan up to concept design stage.
- Funded via the Shared Prosperity Fund, we have continued to host monthly Drop-In Business Support at the Business Innovation Centre in Pembroke Dock. This is one of the services provided by the Council's business support team who aim to foster a successful enterprising and entrepreneurial culture within the Pembrokeshire

economy. Cabinet continues to be updated on the Shared Prosperity Fund, a key source of regeneration funding for instance, at both its January and April 2025 meetings. Approximately £7.750m (both capital and revenue) is available for Pembrokeshire in 2025-26 in what is likely to be its final year prior to a transition to a new funding model.

- Tourism is one of Pembrokeshire's key industries. We worked with partners to develop a revised destination management plan for 2024 to 2028. The plan's vision is for Pembrokeshire to become a global leader in regenerative tourism. This is to be delivered through three strategic priorities: regenerative, events and seasonality and well-being and active.
- The plan is managed by Visit Pembrokeshire, a partnership between the Council and other public bodies and the sector itself. Visit Pembrokeshire updated Councillors on its work on promoting tourism (as well as the progress it has made in achieving greater financial independence from the Council) in November 2024. In April 2025, the current administration ruled out implementing a discretionary visitor levy (the legislation which gives the Council the power to consider this is still being considered by the Senedd) before the next set of Council elections in 2027. July 2025's Cabinet considered how the Council will continue to support Visit Pembrokeshire whilst reducing the financial contribution the Council makes to the partnership (decision currently subject to a call-in).
- We continued to improve public transport. The £18.1m Haverfordwest Public Transport Interchange is now being constructed (ground-breaking ceremony in April 2025) with 90% of funding coming from external sources. Part of the site is being used to fabricate the Signature Bridge, but this has not impacted on the planned completion of June 2026. In October 2024, Cabinet agreed additional capital funding for a transport interchange at Milford Haven train station.
- We planned for the changes that will be required because of bus franchising (considered by Cabinet 4 November 2024). All public transport routes were retendered in 2024-25 allowing a number of improvements to be made. In parallel, we are reviewing school transport (some of which is provided by the bus network), and this will be a substantial piece of work for 2025-26.

Evidence – how do we know?

- Review of the South West Wales Regional Economic Delivery Plan South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee Economic Well being and Regional Economic Development Sub Committee, 6 May 2025: <https://democracy.npt.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=532&MIId=11947&Ver=4>
- Retail vacancy rates in Local Development Plan Annual Monitoring Report 11: 2023-24 <https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/adopted-local-development-plan/implementation-and-monitoring>
- Haverfordwest Regeneration Update, Cabinet, April 2025: <https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/documents/s79287/3.5%20-%20Haverfordwest%20Regeneration%20Cabinet%20Paper%20April%202025final.pdf?LLL=0>
- Launch of Celtic Freeport: <https://www.celticfreeport.wales/launch-of-celtic-freeport-vital-for-economic-growth-and-clean-energy-missions/>

- Regeneration update Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 5 September 2024:
<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/documents/s75914/10.%20Services%20OS%202024%20Regeneration%20Update%20FINAL.pdf?LLL=0>
- Operator for South Quay phase 1, Cabinet, 11 July 2024:
<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=75444>
- Haverfordwest Transport Interchange – Tender Award of the Stage 2 contract for construction services, Cabinet, 22 April 2024:
<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/documents/s74661/4.2%20-%2020240422%20Haverfordwest%20Public%20Transport%20Interchange%20-%20Tender%20Award.pdf?LLL=0>
- Press release PCC plans transport interchange at Milford Haven railway station:
<https://newsroom.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/news/pembrokeshire-county-council-plans-transport-interchange-at-milford-haven-railway-station>
- Visit Pembrokeshire Year 4 update, Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 15 November 2024:
<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=561&MId=6152&Ver=4&LLL=0>
- South Quay Regeneration update, Cabinet, 20 May 2024:
<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/documents/s74938/1.1%20-%202024.05.13%20-%20South%20Quay%20April%202024%20Cabinet%20report%20V11.pdf?LLL=0>
- Decision sheet Establishment of the Celtic Freeport Company, Cabinet, 7 May 2024:
<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/documents/g6208/Decisions%2007th-May-2024%2010.00%20Cabinet.pdf?T=2&LLL=0>
- PCC press release 15 July 2024, Feedback wanted on regional transport vision
<https://newsroom.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/news/feedback-wanted-on-regional-transport-vision>
- PCC press release July 2024, Future of Haverfordwest
<https://newsroom.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/news/the-future-of-haverfordwest-were-planning-the-next-phase-for-haverfordwest-and-we-want-you-to-be-a-part-of-it>
- South Quay Regeneration Project update, Cabinet, 20 May 2024:
<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/documents/s74938/1.1%20-%202024.05.13%20-%20South%20Quay%20April%202024%20Cabinet%20report%20V11.pdf?LLL=0>
- Operator for Phase 1 of South Quay, Cabinet, 11 July 2024:
<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/documents/s75444/1.5%20-%20Henry%20Tudor%20Operator%20cabinet%20paper%20final.pdf?LLL=0>
- Revised Destination Management Plan, Cabinet, 22 April 2024:
<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/documents/s74502/3.1%20-%20DMP%20Cabinet%20April%202024.pdf?LLL=0>

Improvement actions – what can we do better and how?

- Effective regeneration projects are often long term and subject to changing economic conditions as well as the practical difficulties which can beset construction projects. Many of the projects underway in 2025-25 will continue into 2025-26 and

beyond, the Council has retained its commitment to delivering these key projects, often in challenging circumstances. The July Cabinet Outturn report comments on the effectiveness of capital programme, substitution of grant funding for planned PCC spend in order to maximise grant draw-down.

- Review and renew Pembrokeshire's Economic Development Strategy.
- Plan for the replacement to the Shared Prosperity Fund, which is anticipated to be the Local Growth Fund.
- Continue to support the Freeport now that it is fully operational. The Council and partners have a significant opportunity to attract inward investment in the industries of the future. As examples from elsewhere in the UK show, new technologies such as Floating Offshore Wind are subject to risk and rising costs and a collaborative approach will be required to secure investment.
- Restructure and re-organise regeneration resources. In May 2025, the Council agreed a new Target Operating Model and the resulting restructure had a larger operational impact on regeneration than on many other services. There will be a need to restructure and re-organise regeneration resources; never a simple task given the reliance on changing external finance and the need to respond to both local and regional partnership working.

Theme: SA1.5 Wellbeing Objectives

Sub-theme: We will promote and support initiatives to deliver decarbonisation, manage climate adaptation and tackle the nature emergency

Assessment of current performance – how well are we doing?

- The Council is committed to doing its part to meet the challenges presented by the climate change and nature emergencies and becoming a net zero Council. For context, in 2019 the Council voted to declare a climate emergency and to produce an action plan which could steer the Council towards becoming a net zero-carbon local authority by 2030. This agenda cuts across a range of Council services and needs to be tackled through an integrated and holistic approach and the Council's Net Zero action plan has been developed to address this.
- The Council is currently planning a review of the Net Zero action plan which will include a cost analysis of the affordability and deliverability of our net zero commitments. Governance arrangements have also been strengthened to ensure this key Council priority receives sufficient oversight and direction. Decarbonisation is one of the four thematic programmes under the new Transformation and Innovation Board and this Board will oversee the delivery of this work.
- In addition, the Council's activity continues to be focused on meeting its legal duties such as the Environment Act and the Environmental Protection Act, and policy directives as set out in Welsh Government's strategies "Towards Zero Waste" and "Beyond Recycling".
- A new Environmental Services Strategy was agreed by Cabinet on 28 April 2025. This strategy outlines our approach to improving waste prevention, reuse, recycling, and the sustainability of Pembrokeshire's streets, beaches, and green spaces. The strategy also emphasises engagement, compliance, and behaviour change to support the county's environmental goals, including becoming a net carbon-neutral council by 2030.
- We publish detailed information on our carbon emissions on our website <https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/Net-Zero-Carbon/our-carbon-footprint>
- Pembrokeshire's Public Services Board (PSB) through its Well-being Plan has established a Well-being Objective which reflects the Council's Well-being Objective around this theme. As a statutory partner of the PSB, this commitment means that in addition to its own activity as an organisation the Council will work collaboratively with its partners to tackle shared challenges. A key element of this work has been the production of a Climate Adaptation Strategy for Pembrokeshire and a Climate Adaptation Toolkit, designed to help communities in Pembrokeshire plan and prepare for climate change.
- Pembrokeshire remains one of the top performing Recycling Authority in Wales, and the UK. Continuing to perform above the Welsh average and the Statutory Recycling Target for Wales at 72% in 2023-24. (2024-25 figures are currently being verified by Natural Resources Wales and Welsh Government).
- Following a successful funding application to Welsh Government, plans are being made to roll out of Re-use facilities at Waste and Recycling Centres (WRC's) across Pembrokeshire in 2025-26.

- The new Pembrokeshire Eco Park to enable enhanced recycling segregation and an efficient and effective service opened in Autumn 2024. These high recycling rates continue to have the desired impact of reducing the amount in tonnage of residual waste collected, a trend which has continued for several years. Further details can be found at <https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/pembrokeshire-eco-park>.
- We are also continuing to educate households on ways to reduce their residual waste arising through waste minimisation, reuse and recycling schemes – linking with the national “Be Mighty” campaign from Welsh Government. We have also supported with the roll out of Workplace Recycling Regulations, the next step to supporting changing behaviours to recycle whether you are at home, work, school or visiting our county.
- A new trade waste service has been developed and rolled out in line with the Welsh Government Workplace Recycling Regulations, enabling the segregation of recycling from businesses across Pembrokeshire. This is in addition to the commencement of an initiative fund project surrounding compliance with Businesses duty of care including holiday homes across Pembrokeshire.
- We have continued to achieved street cleansing levels above the Wales average through the LEAMS (Local Environmental Audit and Management System) analysis for Street Cleanliness and the % of street graded B or above.
- The Council continues to work closely with local community energy groups to ensures that the community is involved in the arena of clean energy and sustainability. One project with Egni Co-op has enabled the successful installation of rooftop solar PV alongside engagement events run in leisure centres and schools. This includes the successful rollout of Energy Sparks in 35 schools.
- The Council runs the successful Sustainable Schools Award Scheme (SSAS). The scheme seeks to promote sustainable development and global citizenship in Pembrokeshire’s schools. It takes a holistic approach to this and encourages schools to embed sustainability and a global outlook throughout their activities.
- We are continuing to develop accessible, low-carbon transport systems and infrastructure that encourages active travel (walking, wheeling and cycling), improves public transport options and reduces the reliance on private vehicles. By prioritising sustainable mobility and integrating environmental considerations into transport projects (such as the Fflecsi Bus Service, the Haverfordwest Public Transport Interchange or the E-Bike Scheme), the Council is leading by example in reducing emissions, improving air quality and creating safer, healthier communities.
- By investing in low-emission and electric vehicles for the Council’s fleet, optimizing travel routes to reduce fuel use, and supporting the shift to sustainable transport modes, Pembrokeshire is working towards removing carbon. It also includes integrating electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure, adopting smart technologies to manage traffic flow efficiently, and designing infrastructure that supports energy-efficient operations (e.g., LED street lighting and sustainable construction methods). These measures directly reduce emissions from council-owned vehicles and transport-related infrastructure, contributing to the wider decarbonisation of the Council’s operations.
- In terms of reducing emissions from our vehicle fleet, on 2nd December 2024, the Fleet Transition Plan was adopted by Cabinet to provide direction for the vehicle replacement programme and adoption of Ultra Low Emissions Vehicles (ULEV).

Currently, the existing fleet of 501 vehicles consist of 54 electric vehicles (EVs), which equates to 10.8%. The adoption of the Fleet Transition Plan means that any vehicle replacements will be low carbon, subject to a Technical, Economic, Environmental, and Practicable (TEEP) assessment. We have implemented a ULEV Fleet Transition Plan which we see EVs purchased to replace ICE, where feasibly possible.

- Since 2019, a total of 73 public EV chargers have been installed across 34 sites, these are managed through a charge-point operator. In 2024, 4 rapid chargers were installed across Withybush, Thornton, Templeton, and Fishguard depots to enable the charging of fleet vehicles and funding was secured from the Welsh Government Energy Service to install a further 15 chargers across the Eco Park and Thornton Depot. These fleet chargers are installed to enable the Fleet transition, and to ensure that Council owned vehicles can be charged as efficiently as possible. This is supported by the implementation of solar panels and battery storage energy solutions at the Eco Park, just one of the many sustainable solutions which have been incorporated into this facilities design.
- The Council has also built its first net zero in operation school, Ysgol Bro Penfro. The school is heated by air source heat pumps and hosts a large solar array to generate as much renewable electricity as it uses.
- The forthcoming Celtic Freeport and Milford Haven: Energy Kingdom seeks to further our goals by providing green energy and off-shore energy supplies to the nation. Working together with our private partners, local businesses and encouraging investment in Pembrokeshire, advancement in this area is leading to more economic opportunities to invest in smarter, greener infrastructure.
- The new Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) 2023 applies to our housing stock which represents an updated and ambitious set of guidelines, with particular emphasis on decarbonisation, tackling climate change, and improving the overall quality of life for tenants. We continue to proceed with a programme of decarbonisation works on our properties which include installations such as air source heat pumps, wall insulation, efficient heating systems and PV panels. We receive grant of £1.2 million from Welsh Government under the Optimised Retrofit Programme with match funding expected from the HRA to undertake retrofit measures on our housing stock. £39 million has been identified in the Business Plan over the next 10 years to progress on the programme of installing retrofit measures on the housing stock.
- The Council leads and co-ordinates the work of the Pembrokeshire Nature Partnership which exists to co-ordinate, promote and record existing and new actions to conserve, promote and enhance nature in Pembrokeshire, including the National Park, the inshore waters and seabed around the Pembrokeshire coast to 12 miles offshore. The Conservation Team (through the Pembrokeshire Nature Partnership) has continued to deliver projects in collaboration with internal PCC service areas (as well as with the PCNPA and other external bodies). These projects are centred around the protection and enhancement of biodiversity across the county and contribute to the Council's biodiversity duty under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. Revenue and capital grants to a value of £2.7 million were drawn into the county for the financial years 2023-2025. A further two years of grant funding has recently been confirmed.

- Collaboration between Environmental Services and the Conservation Team including the Nature Partnership continue to focus on improving public spaces and there has been a number of changes in maintenance practices and design of spaces (such as Fortune Frolics in Haverfordwest) to develop spaces which meet the needs of users while also supporting our duties under the Environment Act.

Evidence – how do we know?

- Project group updates to PSB meetings:
<https://planed.org.uk/pembrokeshire-public-services-board/>
- Report to Cabinet, 28 April 2025 on the new Environmental Services Strategy 2025-2030:
<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=281&MId=6292&Ver=4&LLL=0>
- Report to Cabinet, 28 April 2025 on the new Transformation and Innovation Board and strengthened governance arrangements for the Council's work on decarbonisation:
<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=281&MId=6292&Ver=4&LLL=0>
- Report to Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 5th September 2025 on decarbonising the Council's housing stock:
<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=561&MId=6151&Ver=4&LLL=0>
- Report to Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 27th March 2025 following a review of waste and recycling collections
<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=561&MId=6288&Ver=4&LLL=0>
- Local Development Plan
<https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/local-development-plan>

Improvement actions – what can we do better and how?

- Review Net Zero Action Plan and continue to strengthen governance arrangements around the Council's approach to decarbonisation through the Transformation and Innovation Board.
- Implement the Environment Services Strategy, including the introduction of re-use shops at WRCs and continued initiatives to increase recycling and reduce residual waste.
- Ongoing actions to decarbonise the transport system, continuing the transition of the Council's fleet to ULEV and improvements to the charging network.
- Public transport improvements - modal shift is important in terms of reducing travel to achieving carbon reduction.
- Coastal and flooding impacts: develop forward schemes at Newgale, Amroth, Tenby, Pembroke and Lower Priory and Havens Head.

- Maximise opportunities for affordable warmth solutions in private sector housing in support of Welsh Government target to achieve EPC A for those in fuel poverty by 2030 and all housing tenures by 2050.
- Maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote ecosystem resilience in line with Section 6 duty.

Theme: SA1.6 Wellbeing Objectives

Sub-theme: We will support our communities, maintaining positive relationships with them to help to build active, resourceful, connected, sustainable and creative communities

Assessment of current performance – how well are we doing?

- The work of the Public Services Board Strengthening Communities Group supports the delivery of our corporate priority to make communities more resourceful and sustainable and builds on the pivotal role our communities can play around new ways of working and creating transformational relationships with traditional service providers.
- Membership of this group – Health, Social Care, PAVS, MAWW Fire, PLANED and Welsh Government - reflects its focus on strengthening and empowering our communities to meet the challenge of future slimmed-down public services alongside promoting working with local people on the things that matter most to their communities. The work of the group is focused on the objectives of Active, Connected, Resourceful and Sustainable communities.
- A Volunteering Strategy for Pembrokeshire has been produced and will be published in June 2025. Developed by PAVS with input from PVON (Pembrokeshire Volunteer Organisers' Network), members of town and community councils, local communities, Pembrokeshire County Council and other Public Services Board members, the strategy aims to support and inspire individuals, organisations, and businesses to engage in meaningful volunteer activities that benefit volunteers, the volunteering 'ecosystem' and the wider community.
- A stakeholder group for Community profiles and Well-being plans was established in late 2024 with communities from across Pembrokeshire invited to apply to co-create their own plans and profiles. Following selection, four communities were selected with two (Crymych and St Davids) choosing to go forward and develop their own plans. The plans demonstrate the value of engagement and co-production, however, the projects were only funded in the short term so discussions are underway to ensure that the momentum behind these projects is not lost due to lack of funding.
- Training on the Most Significant Change (MSC) story gathering methodology was delivered by Together for Change, Swansea University and PCC in June 2024. The first set of stories have been collated and considered at two panel discussions and a small selection of these were presented at the PSB meeting in February 2025 to promote discussion about how such qualitative evidence can influence decision making.
- The Enhancing Pembrokeshire Grant enables Pembrokeshire County Council to work in partnership with local communities and organisations and support them to mitigate the local impact of second homes. It has supported many projects, helping restore the viability of communities and well-being of local residents, and has attracted money from other grant sources into Pembrokeshire.
- A number of smaller grants have been awarded during 2024-25 to support community hubs; culture, arts and festivals; play areas; improvements to facilities that contribute to strengthening and improving services at the heart of communities,

improving accessibility to Pembrokeshire's vulnerable and older residents; and activities that connect communities including the Haverfordwest Mosque events calendar planned by Lamphey Community Council and Templeton Community Council.

- Larger grants have also been awarded, including those for projects supporting young people to recognise their own potential, build confidence/raise self-esteem and improve their employability skills and to help them prioritise emotional well-being through community opportunities. Another project has supported the purchase of a 'Green Bus' for Bloomfield Community Centre, Narberth, promoting sustainable, accessible transport for those with mobility challenges and filling gaps where there is no public transport.
- The Council has refreshed its approach to working with town and community councils. A new Working Better Together network has been established as a means of progressing information sharing, relationships building and discussing areas of mutual concern. Over the past twelve months these bi-monthly meetings have discussed the community boundary review, developed a cost neutral way of supporting town and community councils to meet their duty to have a website, and are exploring how a Clerks network could facilitate information sharing and mutual support for Clerks.
- The Council continues to work with town and community councils (as well as other public bodies, such as Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority) on joint funding models for community-based services. For instance, in November 2023 Tenby Town Council provided funding to maintain 2023-24 opening hours into 2024-25.

Evidence – how do we know?

- Volunteering Strategy, Community Well-being Plans and Strengthening Communities Group updates to PSB meetings:
<https://planed.org.uk/pembrokeshire-public-services-board/>
- Enhancing Pembrokeshire – summary of supported projects
<https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/enhancing-pembrokeshire-grant/summary-of-supported-projects>

Improvement actions – what can we do better and how?

- The delivery group for the PSB Strengthening Communities project will continue to use the Most Significant Change process and methodology to support partnership working and decision making.
- The group will also support ongoing delivery of key activities to support communities including Keep Well roadshows, Live Well for Less and Keep Warm, Keep Well campaigns.
- The 2025-26 Enhancing Pembrokeshire Grant will continue to offer targeted support to community groups building upon last year's work that focused on areas of low response. Alongside this, scaling up community ideas could increase the scope and potential of projects, making more effective use of the grant. With reduced funding and staff capacity this financial year, there will be a single funding round in the autumn. But we will continue our enabling a broader advisory and supportive role to

communities. So, communities have greater opportunities to develop community-based ideas and activities, which could result in more related and collaborative projects of strategic benefit to Pembrokeshire. Most importantly, it will continue to make a real difference to the vibrancy of communities.

- Rebrand and refresh the Intranet volunteering page and volunteering newsletter.
- Continued development of a new Community Strategy.

Theme: SA1.7 Well-being Objectives

Sub-theme: We will support the Welsh language within communities and through schools.

Assessment of current performance – how well are we doing?

- Our commitment to the development of the Welsh language in the county is reflected in the Corporate Strategy 2025-30, Welsh Language Strategy 2021–26 and the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-31.
- Much of the information in this section is taken from the Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2024-25. This was considered by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its June 2025 meeting and adopted at Cabinet in July 2025.
- The number of calls to the Council's Contact Centre made in Welsh has increased slightly by 2% from 6,764 in 2023–24 to 6,903 in 2024-25.
- The time that customers must wait for their call to be answered (queue time) when calling the Council's Contact Centre has increased slightly for both English and Welsh languages when compared to 2023-24. Callers to the Welsh language line now wait an average of 32 seconds (an additional 1 second) and callers to the English line waiting an average of 53 seconds (an additional 8 seconds). These queue times are well within the service target for 2024-25 which, as last year, is currently for calls to be answered within 2 minutes on average. This target applied equally to both English and Welsh language queues.
- Number of users of the [English website](#) has decreased by 24%, while numbers of users of the [Welsh site](#) has decreased by 40% since 2023–24. These decreases may be due to the other channels we have introduced which also provide customers with information including social media, My Account and Alexa reducing the need to solely rely on the website for information.
- Overall, there is continued growth in the number of customers registering for My Account and to receive communication through the medium of Welsh or English with an increase of 9.6% for the English account and an increase of 7% for the Welsh account.
- Interest in the Council's Facebook pages continues to grow, though at a reduced rate for 2024-25. Likes for the English language Facebook increased by 4%, likes for the Welsh language page increased by 1.25%.
- Compared with 2023-24, written translations of all lengths in 2024-25 have increased by 15%, simultaneous translation has increased by 31%, from 5 in 2023-24 to 16 in 2024-25.
- We had 2 complaints in 2024-25 relating to Welsh language service delivery standards (Standard 158). The complaints related to information displayed in Welsh that was thought to be poorly translated and an error in sending a response in English when it should have been sent in Welsh, it had been handled and acknowledged in Welsh.
- Welsh language skill levels decreased by 11.8% from 868 in 2023-24 at Level 1 or above to 765 in 2024-25 and remained static at 170 at Level 3/4 in 2023-24 compared to 169 at Level 3/4 in 2024-25. A review of the Welsh language skills self-assessment process is ongoing.

- There were 100 Health and Safety related training courses delivered through the medium of Welsh, a decrease of 8.7% compared with 2023-24. This slight decrease may be due to many factors including the timing of renewals for mandatory courses e.g. every 3 years.
- A designated tutor funded by the National Centre for Learning Welsh delivers the Work Welsh courses to Council staff. During 2024-25, 168 staff attended Work Welsh classes and 93 attended Community courses at various levels. The overall total Council staff learners is 261, an increase of 28% compared to 2023-24 (203 learners). Learn Welsh Pembrokeshire also offer courses which are available at various times and locations throughout Pembrokeshire.
- The designations of Welsh language requirements on posts advertised has remained largely static since 2020-21 across all designations: 7% Welsh language essential, 78% Welsh language desirable, 1% Welsh to be learnt and 14% Welsh not required.
- On 1st July 2024, Cabinet formally approved the offer from the WLGA to host the [2026 Eisteddfod](#) in Pembrokeshire on a site in Llantood. 2026 marks the 850th anniversary of the Eisteddfod in the Dyffryn Teifi area. Preparations are well underway for the “Eisteddfod y Garreg Las” which will be making its first visit to Pembrokeshire since 2002. Held next year from 1st- 8th August, it will be a unique collaboration with neighbouring counties, with the catchment not only including the whole of Pembrokeshire, but also extending into western areas of Carmarthenshire, and southern Ceredigion. The traditional Proclamation Ceremony, held in Narberth on 17 May 2025, was a resounding success.

Education:

- Our new 3-11 Welsh medium school in Pembroke, Ysgol Bro Penfro, was officially opened by the Education Cabinet Secretary in January 2025. The new build represents further investment in Welsh medium primary education in Pembrokeshire and a significant means of contributing to the Council’s Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. Ysgol Bro Penfro opened for pupils in September 2024 and currently has 148 children on roll.
- In relation to the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP), the overarching target of increasing the number of children in Year 1 being taught through the medium of Welsh has continued to be met. As at the baseline year of 2020, 292 (22.8%) children met this criteria. In 2024-25, the number had fallen to 287 (25.7%), but this is set against a further decline in the year group cohort, i.e. a decline of 167 pupils between 2020 and 2025. See Evidence - Welsh Medium Year 1 pupils (Source: PLASC).
- The launch of the Welsh language oracy retrieval platform, *Meistroli*, marked a major innovation. This was complemented by reading and writing question banks in Welsh added to the Carousel learning retrieval platform, creating a comprehensive resource set for language development to support coherence and progression between year groups and independent learning (homework). Overall, retrieval practice has progressed from a promising initiative to a system-wide improvement strategy. The growing resource base, teacher engagement, and innovative Welsh-language developments position Pembrokeshire as a leading authority in embedding retrieval to support long-term learning. The next phase will benefit from sharper impact analysis and continued alignment with curriculum goals.

Youth and Community Education:

- Work Welsh classes continue for Council staff via the work Welsh tutor. Learning Pembrokeshire continue to provide Welsh language courses and events for Welsh learners at all levels across Pembrokeshire through Community education Centres.
- We have progressed the recommendations made by Estyn in 2023 regarding Welsh for Adults. This has included strengthening strategic planning, sharpening processes for evaluating teaching and learning and strengthening processes for monitoring and tracking. We have reviewed the staffing model creating an additional tutor post in place of sessional tutor hours and changes have been made to the delivery model.
- We have developed Welsh Language provision in partnership with Menter Sir Benfro in two key service areas: Youth provision and activities and as part of mainstream ACL provision. A number of workshops and St. David's Day/youth activities have been delivered through this partnership.

Evidence – how do we know?

- Welsh Language Strategy Annual Report 2024-25:
<https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/customer-service/welsh-language-standards>
- Agenda and meeting notes of the Welsh Language Strategy Delivery Group (internal documents)
- [Eisteddfod 2026](#)
- Welsh Courses: <https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/our-courses/welsh>

Education:

- Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)
<https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/pembrokeshire-schools/welsh-in-education-strategic-plan>
WESP 2023-24 Annual Report – Cabinet
<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/documents/s79282/3.3%20-%20Cabinet%20WESP%20April%202025.pdf?LLL=0>
- PCC Press Release (10 July 2024)
[Successful Handover of Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Penfro](#)
PCC Press Release (30 January 2025)
- [Cabinet Secretary opens new Welsh School](#)
- [Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet yn agor ysgol Gymraeg newydd](#)

Improvement actions – what can we do better and how?

- Hosting the Eisteddfod in 2026 will help us to progress our support for the Welsh language and culture within our communities.
- Use the support and best practice guidance provided via the Promoting Compliance Programme 2024-25 of the Welsh Language Commissioners Office to support implementation and compliance with the standards, support the development of the next 5-year Welsh Language Strategy 2026-2031, and review of the Internal Use of Welsh Policy.

- Complete review and pilot the new process for the Welsh language skills self-assessment to simplify the process, to increase the number of completions and to support annual reporting requirements.
- Respond to requirements emerging from the new Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill. Aimed at giving every child in Wales a fair opportunity to speak Welsh independently and confidently, whatever their background or schooling, support for schools will include working with the sector to increase the number of staff able to work through the medium of Welsh, developing the language skills of the existing workforce, and providing Welsh language learning materials.
- Consider further catchment changes where applicable.
- Further examine changing language categories of existing Dual Stream, and English medium schools where appropriate.
- Review Welsh for Adults provision and align with funding target.
- Develop and monitor Post-16 Welsh Medium partnership to increase pupil numbers accessing post-16 provision.

Theme: SA1.8 Well-being Objectives

Sub-theme: We will focus resources on delivering core services such as highways, waste and recycling, public protection and leisure and culture that contribute to communities' quality of life, ensuring residents live in neighbourhoods that are clean, green, safe and active

Assessment of current performance – how well are we doing?

A number of these updates cross-reference with SA1.4 and SA1.5.

Environment

- In 2024-25, the Council had the opportunity to loan a 16t EV recycling vehicle. Having given it a challenging route, positive feedback was received from the crew. The Council will continue to explore EV options with future vehicle loan options available.
- Fly-tipping reduced in Q1 and Q2 of 2024-25, dropping from 190 incidents to 156. Unfortunately, there was a big spike in fly-tipping in Q3, rising to 253 incidents (61% increase). This was a possible knock-on effect of issues with waste and recycling collections and changes to collection days over the Christmas period. Whilst fly-tipping incidents began to reduce again towards the end of the year, there were a total of 807 fly-tipping incidents in 2024-25, an 18.2% increase from 2023-24. More work is needed going forward to reduce fly-tipping.
- For the fifth year running, the Council has exceeded Welsh Government's recycling target, which for 2024-25 was raised to 70%. PCC's average recycling performance for the year was around 72%, although this has not yet been verified by Natural Resources Wales (NRW). This was lower than expected due to continued issues with the wood off-taker, in which an outage at the facility resulted in wood being held in storage rather than recycled. New contracts with contingency sites have been made (subject to NRW permits) to ensure this does not happen again in the future.
- The Council met the Welsh Government target of zero waste to landfill in May 2024, and no further waste has been sent direct to landfill by PCC. The remaining waste to landfill figures for 2024-25 represents what off-takers are sending to landfill, such as rejects from Energy from Waste (EfW) processes that cannot be recycled.
- Construction on the Pembrokeshire Eco Park, located in Milford Haven, was completed and the facility opened following the obtaining of an Environmental Permit in October 2024. The Eco Park became fully operational by December 2024.
- Since March 2024, the Council has been making efforts to address the odour coming from Withy hedge Landfill Site, following a petition by members of the public. While the Council's pursuance of legal action against Resources Management Limited (RML) was unsuccessful, this, along with the strength of public concern and action taken by NRW, led to increased urgency for the company to carry out measures to mitigate the escape of odours from the site. An update report was taken to Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee in June 2025. The report noted that air quality monitoring of Hydrogen Sulphide has been occurring near the site, and the Council receives weekly monitoring reports to allow for interventions when needed.

Infrastructure

- Pembrokeshire has continued to lead in coastal adaptation in 2024-25 though significant challenges remain for certain coastal adaptation schemes in locations like Newgale and Amroth.
- A listening exercise around Welsh Government's 20mph speed limit policy was undertaken between May and October 2024 with residents, businesses and community representatives across the county. This identified that there are concerns that a 'one size fits all' approach is not appropriate for Pembrokeshire's diverse and predominantly rural road network. As a result, the Council will be undertaking a review of the implementation of the policy across the county over the 2025-26 financial year.
- There has been significant development of the Regional Transport Plan (RTP) throughout 2024-25. This is as a result of good collaborative working across the region, public consultation and support from the region's Cabinet administrations. The RTP will be submitted for approval by Welsh Government in 2025-26.
- Highway performance remained generally satisfactory in 2024-25, despite the year-on-year cuts. However, some trends have begun to emerge, such as increased pothole instances and rising complaints about potholes.
- Council officers have been working closely with Transport for Wales (TfW) regarding Bus Reform and the introduction of Bus Franchising, planned to be introduced in 2027. These changes mean that decisions about bus services (routes, timetables, fares, hours of operation and service quality standards) will be made by Welsh Government and TfW, working in partnership with local authorities and Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs). Bus operators will be able to bid for contracts to run services to these specifications. The proposed base network was presented to Cabinet in November 2024, and Cabinet agreed to endorse these plans.
- Construction for the Haverfordwest Interchange commenced following a groundbreaking ceremony in early 2025. The project includes the construction of a modern bus station and multi-story car park in Haverfordwest town centre. Construction is due to complete in late Spring/early Summer 2026.
- Development of the Milford Haven Public Transport Interchange project continued in 2024-25, with an update report presented to Cabinet in October 2024. Cabinet supported the continuation of the scheme, approving the grant application going forward into the 2025-26 financial year. The project will include an improved railway, bus and car facilities at Milford station, and the development of a future proofed scheme which will enable additional services (such as an hourly train service). Construction is planned to start in Autumn 2025 ready for completion in October 2026.

Culture, Leisure and Registration

- Progress was slower than desired regarding condition surveys for Tenby and Pembroke swimming pools, but work was completed in 2024-25. Building Maintenance have ensured that legionella risks are managed effectively, pool tiles are addressed as they become evident (Tenby), structural columns are repaired (Pembroke), additional lighting is installed, and outside rendering is made safe. In March 2025, additional funding was agreed by Cabinet to undertake an additional level of detail through intrusive works. This will provide visibility into areas of the

pools that a standard visual inspection cannot achieve, and ensure that Cabinet are given sufficiently robust information and costs to make an informed decision on investing in extending in the life of these assets.

- A new library needs assessment was completed in 2024-25, agreed by Cabinet in December 2024. This document demonstrates the positive impact that public libraries have in a range of areas such as health and well-being, learning, child and adult literacy, supported employment, economic growth, digital inclusion, combating social isolation, and enriching lives. Public engagement around the document showed that people value and need a safe and welcoming community space, support from staff, a place to find information, and books and resources. As a result of the Library Needs Assessment, the Library Service now has a clearer understanding of the needs of the communities it serves, as well as an awareness of different suggestions for change.
- Work was conducted with Visit Pembrokeshire and other partners to complete a refreshed Destination Management Plan for Pembrokeshire. The new plan was formally adopted by Cabinet in April 2024, and this has supported a joined up, strategic approach to sustainable tourism development in Pembrokeshire.
- There were 1,343,131 visits to leisure centres in 2024-25, surpassing the year's target by 2,610 visits. Leisure facilities performed excellently throughout the year, and a 1% growth target has been set for 2025-26 as a result.
- There were 356,928 total visits to libraries in 2024-25, an increase of 2.4% from the previous year. This is despite a reduction in opening hours for Milford Haven Library, the temporary closure of Narberth Library for relocation, the temporary closure of Tenby Library to replace shelving, and mechanical issues for the Mobile and Library at Home vehicle, which will be replaced in 2025-26.
- Throughout the year, the Heart of Pembrokeshire project (a flagship regeneration scheme in Haverfordwest) has made good progress under challenging circumstances. Challenges included pressure on the budget, programme (funder deadlines) and restrictions due to archaeology, the historic environment and the natural environment (rare bats). Fundraising for the post-completion fitout project was successful with a stage I National Lottery Heritage Fund award. Additionally, the Haverfordwest pop-up museum, located at the Riverside Shopping Centre, continued to operate throughout 2024-25 following its opening in March 2024. The museum is planned to be relocated back to Haverfordwest Castle when it reopens in early 2028.

Public protection

- The Service continues to be challenged by ongoing vacancies and long-term staff absences. Considerable work has been progressed in the development of a Workforce Plan for the service, which is as a result of continued recruitment challenges across the Trading Standards and environmental health service areas. A suite of incentive schemes including Gateway Payments and Golden Hello has been agreed and will be rolled in over 2025-2026 in an attempt to fill long standing vacant posts.
- The demand for empty property support continued in 2024-25 and, as of June 2025, there were 1,469 empty properties in Pembrokeshire (empty for over 6 months). An Empty Property Action Plan and a list of problematic empty properties has been developed as a result. Less progress was made on the delivery of this plan than

hoped due to high service demand, loss of staff and the time taken to recruit replacements. The Council has also signed up to participate in the Welsh Government's Empty Homes Grant Scheme, with match funding identified from the council tax empty homes premium. This scheme supports the renovation of empty properties to make them safe to live in and improve their energy efficiency. There have been 70 applications to date for the scheme in Pembrokeshire.

- Public Protection did not resume collecting, validating and reporting on performance measures for the Corporate Scorecard during 2024-25 due to loss of key business support staff, and the subsequent time required for recruitment and familiarisation. This will remain a priority going forward into 2025-26.
- Service demands continue to be high with the private sector housing teams dealing with over 1000 service requests in 2024, public health teams with over 1500 and licensing teams with nearly 4000. These numbers have trended upwards steadily since 2019.
- Innovative channels such as the Noise app continue to see high demands and improved customer satisfaction and the ability to record incidents of disturbance when officers cannot be there. There have been several high-profile enforcement and prosecution cases in 2024 and the team continue to make use of novel enforcement tools such as community protection notices and in 2025 has seen a development where Ateb Housing Association being provided with delegation to take limited types of anti-social behaviour enforcement. It is hoped that the ability to take early intervention steps will reduce workloads for our public health team and help with sustained tenancies for Ateb.
- Despite challenging and significant vacant posts the Trading Standards service has continued to prioritise certain national enforcement priorities which are aimed at protecting the most vulnerable in our communities, focussing on the activities of rogue traders, on protecting vulnerable consumers from scams and on the sale of illegal tobacco and non-compliant vapes, including the sales of these items to minors, which presents a significant issue to health and wellbeing. Investigations have unearthed serious and, in some cases, persistent offences being committed, which have resulted in both the seizure of non-compliant products and criminal prosecutions.
- A Food Safety and Standards Service recovery plan, reflecting workforce planning developments and updated assumptions was submitted to and approved by Cabinet in December 2024, with the aspiration of realigning with the national Framework Agreement and Food Law Code of Practice by the end of September 2026. Despite these challenges, as at the end of 2024-25, the Service had through the combination of measures reduced the overall backlog of overdue inspections to 650 premises from 1337 which were overdue at the start of 2023-24.
- Despite service demands, the service has continued to enforce its regulatory powers to ensure the protection from harm to the public and animals, with a number of successful prosecutions having been completed.

Evidence – how do we know?

Environmental

- Infrastructure & Environment Service Plan 2025-26

- Corporate Scorecard
- [Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee report, June 2025 – Update Report on Withyhedge Landfill Site](#)
- [Minutes of Council meeting, 6th March 2025 – Update Report on Withyhedge Landfill Site](#)

Infrastructure

- Infrastructure & Environment Service Plan 2025-26
- [Press release, June 2025 – Pembrokeshire County Council undertakes review of 20mph speed limits following community feedback](#)
- [Cabinet report, November 2024 – Bus Franchising Development](#)
- [Minutes of Cabinet meeting, 7th October 2024 – Milford Haven Public Transport Interchange – Scheme Update](#)
- [Cabinet report, October 2024 – Milford Haven Public Transport Interchange – Scheme Update](#)
- [Milford Haven Public Transport Interchange webpage](#)

Culture, Leisure and Registration

- Culture, Leisure and Registration Service Plan 2025-26
- [Cabinet report, March 2025 – Tenby and Pembroke Swimming Pools](#)
- [Library Needs Assessment 2024](#)
- [Cabinet report, December 2024 – Library Needs Assessment](#)
- [Cabinet report, April 2024 – Destination Management Plan 2024-28](#)
- [2024-28 Pembrokeshire Destination Management Plan](#)
- Corporate Scorecard
- [Press release, March 2024 – Pop-up museum launching in Haverfordwest](#)

Public Protection

- Housing, Building Maintenance & Public Protection Service Plan 2025-26
- [Services O&S report, June 2025 – Progress on implementation of the Pembrokeshire Housing Strategy 2024-2029](#)
- [Cabinet report, December 2024 – Recovery Plan for Food Law Enforcement Services](#)
- [Cabinet report, November 2024 – Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2024 – delegation of powers to issue Community Protection Notices to local Registered Social Landlord](#)
- Successful prosecution press releases:
 - [October 2024 - Buddha Buddha restaurant fined for failing to display correct food hygiene rating](#)
 - [March 2025 - Crackdown on illegal tobacco in Pembrokeshire](#)
 - [March 2024 - Substantial fines for farmers who knowingly kept cattle with bovine TB reactors on farm](#)
 - [March 2025 - Pembrokeshire father and daughter plead guilty to causing unnecessary suffering to animals](#)

Improvement actions – what can we do better and how?

Environment

- Implement the Environmental Services Strategy 2025-30.
- Continue work with Enviro-crime in an effort to reduce fly-tipping incidents in 2025-26.

Infrastructure

- Complete a review of the School Transport Policy.
- Review the implementation of the 20mph speed limit policy across the county.

Culture, Leisure and Registration

- Complete refurbishment works to Tenby and Pembroke swimming pools.
- Negotiate and enter into a new grant agreement with Visit Pembrokeshire and progress the delivery of the Destination Management Plan.

Public Protection

- Resume collecting, validating and reporting on Public Protection performance measures.
- Oversee delivery of an Empty Property Action Plan, and implementation of empties back into use.
- Review the services' Workforce Development Plan.
- Implement triage exercise for services, to ensure prioritisation and demand management of service requests.

Theme: SA1.9 Wellbeing Objectives

Sub-theme: We will develop a strategy to reduce poverty and inequality

Assessment of current performance – how well are we doing?

- Delivery of the Pembrokeshire Tackling Poverty Strategy published in early 2024 continues, led by the Poverty and Inequalities working group of the PSB. The sub-group meets regularly to oversee delivery of actions and to collaborate on delivery of grant funded projects.
- Pembrokeshire's second Poverty Summit held in April 2025, with a continued focus on exploring local issues and identifying creative solutions to combatting poverty in Pembrokeshire. Workshops were held to encourage attendees to consider positive action that can be taken to help resolve issues around poverty.
- Following the 2024 Poverty Summit, feedback suggested that the event was quite hard-hitting in its main messaging. Many attendees did not initially realise the extent of poverty in Pembrokeshire. This year's Summit took a more balanced approach, giving the message that whilst poverty was not going away, there is positive and proactive work that can be done to support and help people.
- This year's Summit included a presentation on the new LIFT (Low Income Family Tracker) Platform. This software was purchased in early 2025 and uses data from a number of sources to identify those who may not be claiming benefits they are entitled to, enabling the Council to pro-actively reach out to those people to support them with making a claim. The first campaign for the platform is currently being prepared.
- A Communications and Collaboration Strategy is currently under development to ensure that people are aware of the LIFT Platform campaign. This includes engaging with elected Members and reassuring members of the public that the letters they may receive about this are genuine.
- Based on actions within the Tackling Poverty Strategy, a lived experience sub-group is also being developed involving individuals affected by poverty, to examine and explore their experiences of accessing available support services and systems.
- Particularly successful has been the People PWR welfare rights project aimed at improving finances and improving futures of those disadvantaged. The project has received 506 referrals, with £261,834 financial gains generated for Pembrokeshire families (with families benefiting on average c£3,000). The project has also supported families with food bank referrals, fuel vouchers and help with accessing the Discretionary Assistance Fund.
- We increased the uptake of universal free school meals for primary school aged children from 68% to 73%. This promotes healthy eating as well as tackling child poverty.
- Most recent child poverty rates are reported here: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/constituency-data-child-poverty/> . For Mid and South Pembrokeshire constituency area for 2023-24 relative poverty has increased to 26% up from 24.3% in 2022-23. This compares with figures of 21.8% for the UK and 24% for Wales. Data for small areas shows that child poverty in 10 of Pembrokeshire's 71 LSOAs, over a third of children are in relative poverty and that

one LSOA, Garth 2, has a rate of 47.2% which is within the top 5% highest rates for LSOAs in the UK.

Evidence – how do we know?

- PAVS Addressing Poverty research:
<https://www.pavs.org.uk/influencing-engagement/current-projects/>
- Pembrokeshire Tackling Poverty Strategy:
<https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/public-services-board/projects-public-services-board>
- ‘Addressing Poverty in Pembrokeshire- Suggesting Solutions’ video link:
<https://vimeo.com/818331302>
- Poverty Group updates to PSB meetings:
<https://planed.org.uk/pembrokeshire-public-services-board/>

Improvement actions – what can we do better and how?

- Review the Tackling Poverty Strategy on an annual basis to ensure the content is relevant and up to date and that the lived experiences of people are appropriately reflected.
- Establish the lived experience sub-group and integrate recommendations from the group into the work of the Poverty and Inequalities working group.
- Reflect on feedback from the 2025 Poverty summit before starting to plan for the next summit in 2026 to ensure the summit meets the needs of those working to support those in poverty in the county.
- Further strengthen the membership of the Poverty Group by inviting representation from schools onto the group - school staff are often the first to see how poverty affects children and young people in our communities.

Theme: SA1.10 Wellbeing Objectives

Sub-theme: We will build a culture of good governance in the Council to enhance trust and confidence in our decision-making processes

Assessment of current performance – how well are we doing?

- During 2024-25, the Council worked on the remaining outstanding actions in its Corporate Governance Improvement Plan (CGIP). These actions were based on findings in Audit Wales' 2022 2022 Public Interest Report as well as the first phase of its follow up report in 2023. Many of the actions in the CGIP depended on changes to the Constitution which were agreed in October 2023.
- Progress against the Corporate Improvement Government Plan was considered by Council at its May 2024 meeting. Training for senior officers and Members on the Constitution and related issues such as Code of Conduct has been built into the Council's calendar with regular events being held each February and this addresses concern around Officer/Member relationships. Some of the actions in the Plan were dependent on Welsh and UK Government timescales, for examples changes brought about by the (delayed) procurement legislation was introduced in February 2025, and this is commented on in the Resources section.
- In March 2025, Audit Wales completed the second phase of its follow up report. It found that the Council continues to make progress in addressing the recommendations in our Report in the Public Interest, but it is not clear how it is assuring itself that the actions it is taking are sustainable and will achieve the intended impacts. Audit Wales has not issued any new recommendations in its report but has stated it intends to continue to monitor the Council's progress in implementing the existing recommendations as part of our ongoing assurance and risk assessment work.
- While outstanding actions in the CGIP continue to be delivered, and Audit Wales indicating that they will issue no further recommendations in regard to this work, the Council has asked the panel for its Panel Performance Assessment to have a specific focus on governance. This is for additional assurance and to take advantage of any opportunities to further strengthen our governance processes through learning from external, independent perspectives.
- The Constitution continues to evolve with a change to the executive scheme of delegation agreed on 7 March 2024. The Constitution continues to be reviewed to ensure that the aims and principles of the Constitution are given full effect and minor changes were agreed in both October 2024 and May 2025. A committed Constitutional Review Committee continues to support the Monitoring Officer and Head of Democratic Services to deliver this work.
- Many decisions are delegated to officers. In 2024-25 we agreed a protocol for recording and publishing officer decisions. The protocol differentiates those decisions which need only to be recorded and more significant decisions (for instance, those that involve expenditure over £100k or where there may be notable political, public or reputational interest) where a decision should be published alongside other committee papers. This will address inconsistencies identified in previous years.

- Our Participation Strategy contains actions around encouraging participation in the planned 2027 local government elections. Further details are in the consultation and engagement section (see section 2.3). Progress in delivering the Strategy is overseen by Democratic Services Committee.
- At its 3 July 2025 meeting, the Democratic Services Committee considered a report on the Adequacy of the Democratic Services Functions. Essentially, this is a report on the work undertaken by the Team in 2024-25 and the challenges it is facing.
- The report concludes that given that there will need to be induction training provided for Members following the 2027 elections the current member training budget is insufficient, and an increase has been recommended. The report also noted that although the resources allocated to the Democratic Services function are adequate there is little flexibility for the team to take on additional work.
- Notably, we reviewed the petition scheme and Petitions – twelve petitions were processed in this period compared to 10 the previous year, five were debated at an Overview and Scrutiny Committee and three at Full Council. Three were rejected as they did not meet the criteria for submission and one is still gathering signatures. The scheme is currently under review having been considered by the Constitutional Review Committee and the Democratic Services Committee and a number of recommendations have been made to Council to improve the scheme. The scheme was reviewed by Council in May and a number of changes were made.
- In 2024-25 we agreed a survey of both Member engagement and meeting times, work that was undertaken in 2025-26 and reported to 3 July Democratic Services Committee.
- All Overview and Scrutiny Committee chairs and vice-chairs were invited to training on chairing skills in 2024 which was led by the Welsh Local Government Association. Additionally, the Chairs produce an Overview and Scrutiny annual report which sets out the work each of the respective committees has undertaken during the year. This was considered in each committee's June 2025 cycle.
- All Councillors are subject to the Code of Conduct and compliance is overseen by Standards Committee (whose remit also extends to Pembrokeshire's Town and Community Councillors). Standards Committee considered a report detailing numbers of complaint that dealt with via informal resolution (five) or via the Ombudsman (twenty-five) in 2024-25.
- Last year we commissioned a report into the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission's recommendations were in line with the Council's own policy. All 77 T&CCs will continue (a number of minor boundary changes) though the number of Cllrs and Wards within T&CCs will reduce. This provides a stability for work with communities but does not address concerns raised by the sector itself around difficulties in recruiting Clerks and maintaining the organisational and governance systems that all T&CCs, no matter how small, are required to have in place.
- The Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for 2024-25 was considered by Governance and Audit Committee on 10 July 2025. The AGS complements the self-assessment, and its conclusions are part of the evidence for this assessment.

Evidence – how do we know?

- Audit Wales second Phase CGIP review, Council, 6 March 2025:

<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/documents/g6227/Agenda%20frontsheet%2006th-Mar-2025%2010.00%20Council.pdf?T=0&LLL=0>

- Corporate Governance Improvement Plan, Council, 9 May 2024:
<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/documents/s74831/Corporate%20Governance%20Improvement%20Plan.pdf?LLL=0>
- Review Of Community Electoral Arrangements, Council, 18 July 2024:
<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/documents/s75525/Review%20of%20Community%20Electoral%20Arrangements.pdf?LLL=0>
- Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2024-25, Policy and Pre-decision Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 10 June 2025:
<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=567&MId=6435&LLL=0>
- Overview of Local Code of Conduct Complaints/Concerns, Standards Committee, 14 July 2025:
<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/documents/s80118/Local%20Ombudsman%20Cases.pdf?LLL=0>
- Pembrokeshire County Council Constitution:
<https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/council-information/constitution>

Improvement actions – what can we do better and how?

- Continue to prepare for the 2027 elections and associated Member training and development via the Working Group of Democratic Services Committee that was established in early 2025-26.
- Consider improvements to Overview and Scrutiny Committees and/or how they engage with the public.
- Continue to undertake training in the Council's Constitution and decision-making processes.

Theme: SA1.11 Wellbeing Objectives

Sub-theme: We will be a financially sustainable and resilient Council managing our resources and assets effectively and efficiently, for instance by reviewing and optimizing our corporate estate

Assessment of current performance – how well are we doing?

- Information on the Council's financial position is reported quarterly to Cabinet. The 2024-25 Outturn report was considered by Cabinet at its 7 July 2025 meeting. This contains a wealth of information, including performance data.
- Councils are facing significant budget pressures that cannot be addressed by councils alone. The following summarises the challenge that the recently commissioned Independent Working Group on Sustainable Local Government for the Future is seeking to address by provide recommendations to the next Welsh Government.

Despite recent increases in the funding allocated to local government, budgetary pressures following the cost-of-living crisis; Covid; and increasing demand for services like social care mean that many councils are having to cut or pause many non-essential services – and the current fiscal and political environment means that further significant increases in funding are unlikely.

- The rate of inflation impact on the Council's real spending power over the medium term. Throughout the first two quarters of 2024-25 inflation (CPIH) was at 3% or below before climbing to around 3.5% at year end. At the time of writing, the UK inflation CPIH rate is 4%, double the Bank of England target of 2%. The Office for Budgetary Responsibility predict inflation will remain at around 3.7% towards the end of 2025, then reducing to 2.3% in 2026 with a further reduction to the target rate from 2027. See Appendix F of July Cabinet's Outturn papers for more detail on how we are planning for the impact of inflation on Council services.
- Whilst 85% of National Insurance contribution (NIC) costs for the public sector will be funded in Wales this leaves a shortfall of £36m across Wales which will be a base budget pressure for 2026-27.
- We proposed advancing the meeting date for deciding the 2024-25 Budget by two weeks to allow more time for extended discussion, but Council decided to defer its deliberations until March 2025 when Welsh Government funding was confirmed. At the budget meeting itself, Standing Orders were suspended to allow consideration of an alternative budget. The agreed increase in Council Tax was 9.35% a Band D equivalent for County Council purposes of £1,651.97.
- In view of the challenges to approve a budget over the past two years, the Council is seeking support and independent perspectives as part of the forthcoming Panel Performance Assessment around financial sustainability. Specifically, we have asked the Panel to look at if there is a 'One Council' approach to financial planning, resource allocation and demand management which places the authority on a sustainable financial footing over the medium and longer term, and if not, what improvements we can make in future to strengthen this area.

- Following recruitment into the Financial Services team in 2023-24, members of the team were supported through accounting technician apprenticeship and professional accounting qualifications. This has had a positive impact on the team resulting in improved staff retention and staff morale. The team has sufficient capacity and resilience that a recruitment freeze was in place in 2024-25 and workloads were re-prioritised. This was a short-term measure that resulted in five vacancies which are being filled in summer 2025. Based on the level of interest for posts, recruitment difficulties are much less acute than they were two years ago.
- Recruitment and retention in the Revenues and Benefits is more of an issue but this is in the context of a reducing workload due to the migration of working age housing benefit cases to Universal Credit and the potential for using IT to simplify processes and reduce workload. Nonetheless, there has been recognition of the need to increase capacity both in Council Tax to reflect the increased workload caused by the council tax premiums, and in the recovery team.
- The revenue outturn financial position reported to July Cabinet confirms the Council's net expenditure for 2024-25 at £301.5m, having accounted for appropriations to and from reserves, an underspend of £2.0m.
- This represents an improved position from the £1.4m projected service overspend reported at Quarter 3 (Q3) this is due to:
 - Receipt of additional grant income during Quarter 4,
 - Grant underspends used to offset core expenditure during the final quarter (where conditions allowed),
 - Early progression of 2025-26 budget savings,
 - Continued vacancy savings,
 - Continued moratorium on non-essential expenditure,
 - Further increase in investment income and reduction in capital financing costs.
- For most of the financial year, we were projecting an overspend so it is a real achievement to have underspent across the financial year despite Children's and Adults' Social Care Services being overspent by £6.5m.
- The July 2025 Cabinet Outturn report contains much more detail on how budgetary pressures were managed. It also comments on the appropriation of £1.228m to the General Fund that has arisen from additional council tax collected from self-catering properties that have transferred from Non-Domestic Rates to Council Tax and the reasons why it is prudent for this to be allocated to reserve. The remaining £2m underspend will be appropriated to the initiative fund so that we continue to have resources to invest in efficiencies and new ways of working.
- The majority of Council services under-spent their budget and it is clear that the moratorium on recruitment (resulting in a council-wide vacancy management saving of £2.4m) played a part in this. Capital Financing costs were £4.176m lower than budgeted as a result of slippage in the Capital programme. Both of these saving mechanisms have an impact on the quality of services. Underspends in some services (such as Highways) have been put into reserve to enable more work in future years. Both Education and Homelessness (services which were overspent in previous years) were underspent in 2024-25.

- The services that overspent are largely within Social Care. Children's Services overspent its rolling budget of £31.556m by £5.649m (17.9%). Within this budget heading Children's residential care is the largest single item. The largely preventative Approved Lodgings, Personal Advisors, the family Placement / Children with Disabilities staffing teams and Residence Orders budgets were underspent. The picture for Adult Social Care is more complex it overspent its rolling budget of £80.127m by £0.872m (1.1%). Whilst Nursing home placements, Supported Accommodation and Day Services were overspent, other areas such as Assessment & Care Management £0.593m underspend as a result of vacancies.
- During 2024-25, 41 of our 61 schools overspent the funding they received with 13 schools finishing the year with deficit balances. Individual schools have a responsibility to set a balanced budget and that remains the expectation and requirement. During 2024-25 it was recognised that the financial support provided through the school financial support and guidance SLA was no longer sufficient to support schools in preparing and monitoring licensed deficit agreements to bring them back into surplus over the MTFP. As a result a joint finance and education Accelerated Change Programme (ACP) bid was submitted and approved to provide additional capacity to assist Headteachers and Governing Bodies to identify new cost savings through financial and curriculum benchmarking, supporting headteachers and governing bodies to identify areas of their operation that are inefficient through comparison with schools which are efficient in these areas. An existing member of the education finance team will transfer across to support this project.
- The Medium Term Financial Plan projected a funding gap for 2025-26 of £26.9m with the funding gap over the MTFP 2025-26 to 2028- 29 being £73.0m (most likely scenario). September 2025's Cabinet will receive an update on the latest estimate of the size of the funding gap as part of the Quarter 1 2025-26 Budget Monitoring report.
- The publication of the Council's 2023-24 draft Statement of Accounts has been delayed beyond the statutory deadline of 30 June 2024 due to delays in receiving the Property Asset valuations. The Final (audited) 2023-24 accounts were published on 30 November 2024. The publication of the 2024-24 Statement of Accounts is likely to be delayed for similar reasons (though there has been an improvement on many of the non-property related milestones for Account preparation) with a target date of publishing the draft Accounts now 15 August. Details were reported to Governance and Audit Committee at its July 2025 meeting.
- During 2024-25 the Property team stabilised through recruitment to a key post and the team has been improving the efficiency with how the Council's property portfolio is managed and maximising the financial and wider benefits it brings. Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered how the Property service is addressing five recommendations made by Audit Wales in 2022. This concluded that one recommendation is fully met, two partially met and two are still to be concluded.
- A new Community Asset Transfer policy was agreed by Cabinet in November 2024. Since this date, a number of community asset transfers are underway including a public toilet (transferred to St Davids City Council) and Fishguard Town Hall (in the process of being transferred to Fishguard and Goodwick Town Council).

- The Council has operated Haverfordwest Airport since the 1950s. This provides a local base for emergency services as well as promotes economic opportunities for the area), but the facility required a subsidy. In May 2024, following a meeting with stakeholders at the airport the previous month, Cabinet agreed that a lease for Haverfordwest Airport should be negotiated and completed that will allow the airport to continue to operate at no cost to the Council. Negotiations continued throughout 2024-25 and in April, a lease with the Directors of Haverfordwest Airport Ltd, was signed. The airport will continue to operate but at no cost to the Council. Haverfordwest Airport Ltd will take over day to day operations at the airport and Council airport staff will be transferred as part of the lease.
- The new Procurement Act came into effect in February 2025 (delayed from summer 2024) and all new Procurement activity will need to follow this new legislation. This has major implications on how procurement is conducted within the Council and training and capacity building across the Council has commenced.
- How we undertake procurement can bring benefits to the local economy and in 2024-25 49.4% of our spend was with local suppliers, up from 46.6% in 2023-24. This figure is influenced by the Council's large capital spending programme and the lack of local major construction companies.
- We planned to complete the implementation of three IT modules for Citizens Access: "Benefits"; "Full Case Review" and "Landlords which will increase efficiency and the ability for customers to make claims / keep details up to date. This was not implemented in year but the planning and technical IT work for delivery has been undertaken.
- Our council tax collection rate for 2024-25 was 95.10% which is below the budgeted assumption of 98% and the 16th lowest in Wales. The two main reasons for the decrease in performance increased workload in the first quarter (which had a knock-on throughout the year), and a number of properties moved back into Council Tax from Business Rates often resulting in a substantial back-dated bill for second homes council tax premium. In some instances, this has resulted in balances that some taxpayers are simply unable to pay, and we are discussing payment arrangements with them.
- Last year we acted to reduce debt and a total of £1.8 million in Council Tax arrears has been referred to Enforcement Agents. The recovery process has been streamlined to enable referral to Enforcement Agents more quickly. We have recruited a staff member (as part of the Preventions package agreed in April) who is assisting with the recovery of debt including Council Tax. This post complements more specialist social care debt recovery posts as well as a specialist debt recovery lawyer also funded as part of preventions.

Evidence – how do we know?

- WLGA press release Independent Working Group on Sustainable Local Government for the Future: <https://wlga.wales/shaping-a-sustainable-future-for-local-government-in-wales>
- Appendix F Outturn Treasury Report 2024-25, Cabinet, 7 July 2025: <https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/documents/s80062/Appendix%20Atodiad%20F.pdf?LLL=0>

- Identification of Surplus Property for Disposal, Cabinet, 17 March 2025:
<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=78668>
- National Insurance funding announcement: <https://wlga.wales/welsh-councils-welcome-additional-national-insurance-funding-from-welsh-government>
- Service plans for the Resources Directorate
- Corporate Scorecard report, Cabinet, 7 July 2025:
<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/documents/s80052/5.1%20%20Final%20Cabinet%207%20July%202025%20Cabinet%20covering%20report.pdf?LLL=0>
- Delegated Decisions by Chief Executive and Director of Resources. Sixteen projects in total making up the Preventions Programme funded by the Council's Accelerated Change Programme, 3 April 2025:
<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/mgCalendarMonthView.aspx?M=5&CID=0&OT=&C=-1&MR=0&DL=0&D=1&ACT=Earlier&DD=2025&LLL=0>
- Property Service review, Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 23 January 2025:
<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/documents/s77747/11.%20Services%20OS%20Committee%2028%20January%202025%20Property%20Department%20Monitoring%20Report%20on%20implementation%20of.pdf?LLL=0>
- Press release: <https://newsroom.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/news/lease-signed-for-future-of-haverfordwest-airport>
- Inflation figures:
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/timeseries/l55o/mm23>
- Community Asset Transfers new policy
<https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/community-asset-transfer> and Cabinet report
<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=76710>
- Update of Statement of Account closure, Governance and Audit Committee, 10 July 2025
<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/documents/s80081/AppendixAtodiad%20B.pdf?LLL=0>

Improvement actions – what can we do better and how?

- Continue to place the Council on a sustainable financial footing and bridge the funding gap identified in the MTFP.
- Implement three modules of revenues and benefits system to improve customer access and reduce administrative cost.
- Improve the council tax collection rate and reduce outstanding housing debt.
- Review options to procure and migrate to a new platform for our Financial Management System and the associated programme work to support this. We anticipate that this will be a significant piece of work.
- Continue to embed the Procurement Act.
- Work with schools and their governing bodies to address schools' deficits.
- Continue to progress our Strategic Asset Management Plan.

Theme: SA1.12 Well-being Objectives

Sub-theme: We will enhance the development of our workforce, improving skills and opportunities as well as tackling issues of recruitment and retention

Assessment of current performance – how well are we doing?

- Absence levels in 2024-25 continued to be in the lower quartile when benchmarked across Welsh Local Authorities. The number of working days lost per employee was 10 days per year compared to an All-Wales average of 11.7 days. Reasons for absence have become increasingly complex and managers are supported by our Employee Relations Team to navigate through conflict in the workplace, long term chronic illness and the impact of personal emotional trauma. Emotional and mental health continued to be a major contributor to absence levels in 2024-25. 38% of all referrals to Occupational Health were mental health related, with 70% linked to personal reasons. However, the launch of the mental health anti-stigma campaign in 2018 continues to show results, and the Occupational Health Service now coordinates and provides clinical support to 70 mental health champions.
- There has been great success in the pro-active programmes of well-being support, such as quarterly events that highlight well-being to colleagues and an annual Winter Wellness clinic where staff can access flu and covid vaccines. Multiple drop-in wellness clinics in collaboration with our Leisure colleagues were held across the year, providing a friendly environment for staff to enquire about wellness classes, gain information on Wellness Eligibility Membership, undergo a Boditrax scan (body composition analysis), and discuss any results. The Council has also promoted national events, such as Cycle to Work Day on 1st August 2024.
- The Voluntary Severance Scheme (VSS) continued to be promoted in 2024-25, with applications to the scheme considered by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). The policy has enabled the Council to respond to budgetary pressures and has supplemented existing HR policies and procedures, as a means of achieving the required reductions in the workforce whilst helping to avoid compulsory redundancies.
- The Future Workforce Plan (FWP) has been a guide for HR in a landscape of skills gaps in key professions. Whilst the overall position was much improved in 2024-25, there were still some posts that remained difficult to recruit due to national skill shortages. The Pay Structure Maintenance Policy was reviewed to look at additional pay rewards to recruit and retain staff in some critical professions, and the Workforce Panel continues to monitor and ensure governance of these arrangements. As part of the FWP, a master list of critical roles has been collated, and work continues to progress on succession planning for all roles identified.
- Pembrokeshire County Council was awarded the Gold Award under the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme in September 2024, at a ceremony at HMS Cambria in Cardiff. This is as a result of positive practice in recruitment and support for the Armed Forces community. Additionally, as of 1st April 2024, the Council introduced a Guaranteed Interview Scheme at the corporate level for veterans and their spouses or partners. Updates on the progress of this scheme are shared with the Pembrokeshire Armed Forces Forum. Any vacancies within the local authority are

advertised and shared with armed forces platforms and there is now a dedicated armed forces intranet page for Council employees.

- The Social Partnership and Public Procurement Act 2023 became a duty in April 2024 and HR engaged positively with this new Act throughout the year. The framework on consultation was amended to align with the Act, and the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) Forum was renamed the Social Partnership Forum. During the year, the Chief HR Officer and the Chair of UNISON gave a joint presentation in Swansea on the positive examples of social partnership within Pembrokeshire.
- Pembrokeshire County Council's Gender Pay Gap reduced from 1.6% in 2023-24 to 0.8% in 2024-25. This is partly due to a rise in men taking part-time roles, but predominantly due to bottom loaded NJC pay rises over the last years to ensure we track the rise in the National Minimum Wage.
- Whilst the Employee LGBTQ network did not progress as envisaged in 2024-25, we continue to celebrate PRIDE and will endeavour to promote and support this network, other employee networks and employee champions to mitigate the impact of an increase in remote working.
- The Health & Safety team have been focussed on the further development of the EVOTIX health and safety platform which will ensure best-practice hazard and risk management processes, to proactively identify, assess and control hazards for safer, healthier workplaces. The occupational health management module and referral was the latest workflow to be progressed into the system.
- Staff volunteering and fundraising events were also promoted throughout the year. Pembrokeshire FOCUS newsletters shared information on volunteering opportunities of the day, online volunteering fairs and Volunteers Week, encouraging staff to get involved.
- Throughout the year, the Learning & Development team created the new 'Feedback, Focus, Future' (FFF) personal development system, as a replacement for the old POD employee appraisal system. This initiative introduced a new approach to performance management, giving employees recognition for their hard work and providing them with an opportunity to speak about how they are getting on in their role. The new system was developed in response to an employee engagement survey, which indicated that employees did not feel listened to and did not feel able to speak openly about issues they were facing. The FFF system soft-launched in March 2025 and a suite of training for managers and staff was rolled out to support this.

Evidence – how do we know?

- Human Resources Service Plan 2025-26
- Corporate Scorecard
- Pembrokeshire FOCUS newsletters
- Meetings of the rebranded Social Partnerships Forum
- Minutes of the Pembrokeshire Armed Forces Forum
- [Press release – Pembrokeshire County Council awarded gold for outstanding support of Armed Forces community](#)
- Armed Forces and Disability Support Schemes intranet page
- [Pembrokeshire County Council 2024-25 Gender Pay Gap Report](#)

Improvement actions – what can we do better and how?

- Ensure a successful first phase rollout of the Feedback, Focus, Future staff performance framework, with a review of its implementation by March 2026.
- Ensure that the critical posts identified in the Critical Role Risk Register have succession plans in place to spot talent and develop staff for future leadership roles.
- Release the Manager Launch Pad, a programme designed for new managers.
- Increase the number of managers trained in use of mediation to diffuse work conflict.

Theme: SA2.1 Corporate planning, performance and working with others

Sub-theme: Corporate planning and performance

Assessment of current performance – how well are we doing?

- The Council reviewed its existing Corporate Strategy 2023-2028 during the year and subsequently approved a new Corporate Strategy 2025-2030 in March 2025. The Strategy covers a four-year rolling period and will be reviewed periodically. The new Strategy very much builds on the previous strategy as well as the political priorities set by Cabinet in its Programme for the Administration document.
- The Corporate Strategy is the vehicle through which the authority sets its statutory Well-being Objectives. The previous strategy contained 12 Well-being Objectives and the recent review presented an opportunity to reduce this number to four, with the intent of providing greater focus around the Council's priorities and future direction. The new Well-being Objectives are built on the themes of Our Future, Our Place, Our Communities and Our Council.
- Three of these Well-being Objectives are focussed externally on the delivery of key services to residents and centred on the following: (i) Our Future – enabling the best start in life for our children and young people, equipping them with skills for the future; (ii) Our Place - prosperous places, with clean, safe and sustainable environments, where people can live well and thrive; (iii) Our Communities - caring for people, and enabling active, resourceful and connected communities.
- The fourth Well-being Objective provide an inner focus, targeted at strengthening fundamental issues where the Council must improve to enable it to deliver the services which Pembrokeshire residents deserve, namely (iv) Our Council - a financially sustainable, well-governed Council, with a workforce equipped to support the people we serve.
- The Corporate Strategy 2025-2030 sets out clearly the contribution each of the Council's Well-being Objectives will make to deliver the seven national Well-being Goals for Wales, as required under the Well-being of Future Generations Act.
- The Corporate Strategy 2025-2030 is the organisation's lead document and top of the hierarchy in its 'golden thread' of strategies and plans. All Council activity – at directorate, service, team and individual level – filter down from the direction set out in the Strategy. As well as establishing the Council's Well-being Objectives, the strategy also contains headline priorities which filter down into individual service business plans where more detailed delivery actions sit.
- The Council has continued to embed its new approach to service planning, shifting from an annual (short term) focus to plans which look over a rolling four-year period (medium term). The standard templates which all Heads of Service follow continues to be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that they are as effective as possible in taking opportunities to align service activity with the organisational direction set out in the new Corporate Strategy and with our approach to medium term financial planning.
- The link between service planning and financial planning continues to be strengthened and Heads of Service are asked to set out in service plans proposals to

make savings in their service areas in the context of the scale of the financial challenges projected in the Medium Term Finance Plan.

- Service plans are completed annually between February and May and are considered and signed off by the Senior Leadership Team.
- Last year's version of this report was approved by Governance and Audit Committee and by Council in the autumn of 2024. Having reviewed the approach to self-assessment taken by other local authorities and WLGA best practice information sharing sessions, the Council is confident that its approach is robust and fit for purpose. Our annual self-assessment report is the vehicle through which we meet our statutory duty to report on our progress to deliver our Well-being Objectives.
- During this year, the Council has agreed that the Council's first Panel Performance Assessment (PPA), a statutory requirement under the Local Government and Elections Act, will take place in October 2025. Work is ongoing to plan and prepare for the PPA, with support provided by the WLGA. Having taken account of last year's self-assessment report and this year's version, the Senior Leadership Team has asked the panel to look specifically at three areas where we could benefit from external perspectives and independent insight. Broadly speaking, these specific areas of focus cover the themes of financial sustainability, governance and transformation.
- The Council continues to invest in strengthening its arrangements around corporate performance management and monitoring of key measures. The Corporate Scorecard continues to be developed. The purpose of this document is to ensure that Members and senior leaders are sighted on key performance measures which provide a broad overview of organisational and corporate health. As a result the scorecard is subject to reviewed frequently to make sure that the measures reported on provide sufficient coverage across key corporate and service areas.
- The Scorecard is currently considered routinely by the Senior Leadership team, and reported to Cabinet together with other key management information relating to financial monitoring and risk in an integrated approach. Some of the key areas of focus over the past 12 months has seen expanding the suite of measures to include greater operational detail for both social care and some of our residents' services, such as waste and planning.
- Over the past year, the Scorecard has shown that there has been a substantial reduction in waiting times for adult care assessments, improvement in homelessness figures (albeit remains a significant challenge) and maintenance of our historically strong performance in waste and recycling. Q4 figures for 2024-25 reveal that figures in children's services are starting to suggest that the rate in increases in demand are beginning to plateau, though this will clearly need to be continually monitored to ensure that the demand is reducing.
- The Scorecard is formally considered in the public domain by Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee have also received data extracted from the Scorecard to provide oversight of measures within its specific remit and similarly, Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been presented with data relevant to its remit.
- We have continued to embed the use of Power BI to visual data. This has involved using the software for the collection and presentation of information rather than using a spreadsheet-based approach. This is a complex piece of work and it is likely that it will take a considerable period of time before the approach is fully embedded.

Nevertheless, some of the benefits of using Power BI are already being realised, in particular in regards to the presentation of information, the opportunity to see trends over time, and the ability to use the data in a more interactive way.

Evidence – how do we know?

- Council approval of the Corporate Strategy 2025-2030, 6 March 2025:
<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=285&MIId=6295&Ver=4&LLL=0>
- Example of the Corporate Scorecard as reported to Cabinet, 10 February 2025:
<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=281&MIId=6290&Ver=4&LLL=0>
- Meetings of Cabinet and Senior Leadership Team to consider the Corporate Scorecard
- Meetings of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee:
[Browse meetings - Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Pembrokeshire County Council](#)
- Council approval of the annual Corporate self-assessment report, 12 December 2024:
<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=285&MIId=6173&Ver=4&LLL=0>
- Update report to Council on planning and preparations for the Panel Performance Assessment:
<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=285&MIId=6296&Ver=4&LLL=0>

Improvement actions – what can we do better and how?

- Continue to ensure alignment between strategic objectives set out in the Corporate Strategy and the Council's Medium Term Service Plan.
- Strengthen monitoring arrangements of the Corporate Strategy through ensuring appropriate measures to evaluate our progress are integrated into the Corporate Scorecard.
- Delivery of the new Corporate Strategy and Well-being Objectives through the service planning process and monitoring and review of progress through this document.
- Continue to embed the discipline of multi-year service planning in the culture of the organisation and forward planning cycle, undertaking an annual review of the service plan guidance and templates to ensure these are fit for purpose.
- Undertake the Council's first Panel Performance Assessment in October 2025, and respond to any recommendations forthcoming from the panel.
- Continue to review the current list of performance measures reported in the Scorecard to ensure it provides sufficient coverage of metrics targeted at organisational challenges and strategic objectives.
- Continue to roll-out the use of Power BI in the collection and reporting of performance information.

Theme: SA2.2 Corporate planning, performance and working with others

Sub-theme: Strategic Partnerships

Assessment of current performance – how well are we doing?

- This section provides a broad overview of some of the key partnership arrangements which the Council is involved in. More detail on some of these partnership arrangements can be found within specific sections of this report.
- The Council is involved in and supports a number of strategic partnerships both financially and with officer time. The drivers for these partnerships include legislation, policy directives from Welsh Government, and in realising the benefits of collaborative working through economies of scale and reducing duplication by working with others to deliver shared objectives on a regional basis.
- In 2024 the Council reviewed its list of key strategic partnerships and the list was approved by Cabinet on 11 July 2024. The review took a proportionate risk-based approach focusing on the key partnerships where the Council needs to have assurance that effective governance, internal control, financial management and risk management arrangements are in place. The Council's Partnership Procedure was also reviewed and revised by the Senior Leadership Team to support this, and partnership leads across each of the strategic partnerships approved by Cabinet have ensured governance arrangements are robust and fit for purpose. The Council's agreed list of key strategic partnerships are:
 - Swansea Bay City Deal
 - Celtic Freeport
 - SWW Corporate Joint Committee
 - Pembrokeshire Public Services Board (PSB)
 - Safer Pembrokeshire Community Safety Partnership
 - Regional Substance Misuse Area Planning Board
 - Pembrokeshire Nature Partnership
 - Partneriaeth
 - Regional Learning and Skills Partnership
 - Pembrokeshire College
 - West Wales Regional Partnership Board
 - Healthier Pembrokeshire Strategic Partnership Board
 - M&WW Regional Safeguarding Board: Children (CYSUR) & Adults (CWMPAS)
 - M&WW Regional Adoption Service
 - Pembrokeshire Housing Register
- A selection of broad headlines of activity delivered through some of these strategic partnerships is outlined below:
 - The Council is one of four statutory partners of Pembrokeshire's Public Services Board (PSB), and as such the Council plays a key leadership role in the work of the partnership. The PSB is a strategic partnership established under the Well-being of Future Generations Act and is comprised of representatives from key organisations from the public, private and third sectors in the county.

The PSB is required to publish a Well-being Plan once every five years, setting out its statutory Well-being Objectives and the actions it will take to improve well-being for people and communities in Pembrokeshire. The most recent Well-being Plan was published in May 2023 and is focused on the delivery of three key work streams:

- Strengthening Communities
- Reducing Poverty and Inequalities
- Realising net zero and decarbonisation, managing climate adaptation and tackling the nature emergency

The PSB has a 'spotlight' session on one of the project areas at each of its meetings on a rotational basis. Update reports for each of the work streams is also considered at each meeting. Further information can be found in the evidence section below, particularly in respect of the PSB's Annual Report.

- The Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) for South West Wales covering the local authority areas of Carmarthenshire, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire and Swansea (and including the two national parks within the region) was formally constituted in January 2022. CJs are a requirement under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act with the purpose of improving regional planning, co-ordination and delivery of transport, land use planning, economic development and energy. The CJC published its Corporate Plan 2023-2028 during the year establishing its vision for South West Wales 2035. The Committee has recently consulted on its draft Regional Transport Plan, looking at how the transport network across Carmarthenshire, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire and Swansea should be managed and improved over the period 2025 – 2030, in a way that supports economic growth, encourages a shift away from private car use, and reduces environmental impacts. The consultation closed on 6th April 2025 and the final plan will be published in Summer 2025. Once finalised and adopted, the new Plan will replace the existing Joint Local Transport Plan which was prepared in 2015. The power to deliver the schemes and initiatives of the Regional Transport Delivery Plan is down to individual councils in their roles as highway and transport authorities. Pembrokeshire submitted 30 schemes into the Delivery Plan and a decision by Cabinet on which projects will be prioritised to be taken forward will be taken in autumn 2025.
- Pembrokeshire is a key partner in the Swansea Bay City Deal along with the other three regional local authorities - Carmarthenshire Council, Swansea Council and Neath Port Talbot Council - together with the Swansea Bay and Hywel Dda University Health Boards, Swansea University, the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, and private sector partners. The Deal is an investment package of up to £1.3 billion in a portfolio of major programmes and projects across the region with the expectation that it will boost the regional economy by at least £1.8 billion over the next 15 years, while generating more than 9,000 jobs. City Deal programmes and projects are based on key themes including economic acceleration, life science and well-being, energy, smart manufacturing and digital. The major project located in the county is the £60 million Pembroke Dock Marine programme will place Pembrokeshire at the heart of global zero carbon marine energy innovation

while also helping tackle climate change. Pembroke Dock Marine will deliver the facilities, services and spaces needed to establish a world-class centre for marine engineering led by the private sector and supported by the Council. The full business case has been approved by UK Government and Welsh Government. The most recent updates on the progress of projects to date from can be found in the evidence section below.

- The Council is also a key partner in the Celtic Freeport private-public consortium which has been approved and will deliver an accelerated pathway for Wales' net zero economy, generating over 16,000 new, green jobs and up to £5.5 billion of new investment. The transformational project covers the ports of Milford Haven and Port Talbot and spans clean energy developments and innovation assets, fuel terminals, a power station, heavy engineering and the steel industry across south-west Wales. On 1st December 2024, the UK and Welsh Governments appointed a new permanent Chair of the Celtic Freeport, marking the project's transition from the development to the delivery phase.
- In 2022-23 the Council joined with Carmarthenshire County Council and Swansea Council to form Partneriaeth, a new education consortium which has replaced previous arrangements under ERW. The purpose of Partneriaeth is to provide greater value for money, transparency, stronger governance on decision-making and higher quality professional learning. In January 2025 Cabinet agreed to transfer the partnership from a legal agreement to a new collaboration agreement in response to Welsh Government's review of educational partnerships in Wales, with a view to reducing costs, restructuring the workforce and to strengthen governance arrangements.
- Safer Pembrokeshire is the statutory community safety partnership with the purpose of reducing crime and disorder, fear of crime, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse. The partnership receives regular updates on these matters throughout the year with a focus on how partners can work together to address these issues within communities.
- Overview and scrutiny of the Council's key strategic partnership arrangements are managed either through bespoke regional scrutiny committees or through the relevant thematic scrutiny committee within the Council's own arrangements. The Council also has an established Partnerships Panel which sits under, and reports to, Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The panel is designated with the statutory responsibility to scrutinise the PSB and also has oversight of the Safer Pembrokeshire partnership within its remit.

Evidence – how do we know?

- Review of Strategic Partnerships, Cabinet, 11 July 2024:
<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=281&MId=6136&Ver=4&LLL=0>
- PSB Well-being Plan:
<https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/public-services-board>
- PSB Annual Report:

<https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/public-services-board/annual-reports>

- Corporate Joint Committee for South West Wales Corporate Plan 2023-2028:

<http://www.cjcsouthwest.wales/34773>

- Meetings and governance arrangements for the Corporate Joint Committee:

<http://www.cjcsouthwest.wales/32347>

- Swansea Bay City Deal:

<https://www.swanseabaycitydeal.wales/projects/>

<https://swanseabaycitydeal.wales/news/?pn=3&s=0&t=&l=en-GB>

[https://democracy.swansea.gov.uk/documents/s96972/7append%20-](https://democracy.swansea.gov.uk/documents/s96972/7append%20-%20SBCD%20Highlight%20Report%20Sept%202023.pdf?LLL=0)

[%20SBCD%20Highlight%20Report%20Sept%202023.pdf?LLL=0](https://democracy.swansea.gov.uk/documents/s96972/7append%20-%20SBCD%20Highlight%20Report%20Sept%202023.pdf?LLL=0)

- Partneriaeth Newsletters:

<https://www.partneriaeth.cymru/en/collection/cylchlythyr>

- Report to Cabinet on a new collaboration agreement for Partneriaeth, 13 January 2025:

[https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=281&MId=6289&V](https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=281&MId=6289&Ver=4&LLL=0)
[er=4&LLL=0](https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=281&MId=6289&Ver=4&LLL=0)

- West Wales Care Partnership:

<https://www.wwcp.org.uk/>

- Partnership Panel meetings and agendas:

<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=596>

Improvement actions – what can we do better and how?

- Continue to play a key leadership role in all of the Council's key strategic and regional partnerships.
- Support the delivery of the PSB's Well-being Plan for Pembrokeshire.
- Continue to reinforce the importance of the Partnerships Procedure to the lead officers for each of the respective strategic partnerships, to ensure that there is a clear framework in place to achieve effective governance, internal control, financial management and risk management arrangements.

Theme: SA2.3 Corporate planning, performance and working with others

Sub-theme: Consultation and Engagement

Assessment of current performance – how well are we doing?

- To realise budget savings, we ended the contract with an external consultation software provider in June 2024, and replaced this with an internal process. Corporate consultation activities are now managed via our corporate website ([Have Your Say](#)) and responses are submitted using a Microsoft Form. The system no longer requires participants to register to use the system, which was often a barrier to participation. The new consultation system/processes went live from mid July 2024.
- To support the roll-out of the new system Policy and ICT developed a Microsoft Forms training package. 43 staff have completed Microsoft Forms training to date from across the Authority. Guides on accessing and creating forms using Microsoft Forms are available via the ICT Portal.
- A Consultation Protocol has been produced for staff to provide practical advice to plan, prepare and run effective consultations. This was approved by Senior Leadership Team and also taken through Extended Leadership Team and the Managers Forum for broader engagement and awareness.
- The consultation process has been integrated with My Account (online customer account) to automate the delivery of consultation notifications, currently sent to over 4,700 users, to promote open consultations. This has had a positive effect on consultation awareness raising and responses.
- We have reviewed the equality monitoring and Welsh language questions that we ask as part of public consultations which are pre-populated in the Microsoft Forms template ensuring they are consistently used, monitored, and can be compared with national and local statistics e.g. 2021 Census.
- Specific consultations have received significant numbers of responses and growth in response numbers. For example, the 2024 Council Tax Premium consultation received 2,974 responses. This was 1,324 more responses than the 2023 Council Tax Premium Consultation when 1,650 responses were received. The same significant upward trend in responses received has been observed for the budget consultation and other consultations. We have increased our consultation promotion methods, both internal and external, which is supporting a response increase.
- Services from across the Council have undertaken numerous consultation exercises during the year. In 2024, these have included the review of the Local Development Plan, proposed Active Travel Schemes, Council Tax, budget, and regeneration and transport related consultations via the [“Have Your Say”](#) platform.
- The Council engages and supports a number of groups who represent the interests of citizens in Pembrokeshire. Examples include the Pembrokeshire 50+ Forum, Youth Council, and Housing and Homelessness Youth Forum.
- Democratic Services Committee and the Policy and Pre-decision Overview and Scrutiny Committee each agreed that it would review the Public Participation Strategy 2022-27 on an annual basis and reports were considered at Democratic

Services Committee on 11 November 2024 and Policy and Pre-Decision Committee on 12 November 2024.

- The Councils Children and Young People's Rights Office continues to facilitate multiple pieces of work across the county including youth projects and youth forums in communities, Pembrokeshire Youth Assembly, Pembrokeshire Junior Safeguarding, and special interest groups. This work enables young people to have a say on decision making that affects them and also allows them to become actively involved within their community and influence decision making on a local and national level.
- In Social Care and Housing, there is a range of consultation and engagement activities with the people we are supporting, their carers' and their families to gain a better understanding of how we can improve our services to support their well-being.
 - Considerable tenant engagement opportunities have been provided. Tenant Panel currently has 136 tenants signed up who have expressed an interest in communicating and engaging with us and we have held further events and Questions of Month to gather feedback to improve services.
 - Our Youth Forum has gone from strength to strength, meeting every six weeks to shape and improve our housing services.
 - Community events to consult on our Local Lettings Policies for new developments, as well as facilitating open days for the community to look around new properties before they are occupied.
 - An open day in one of our retrofitted properties as part of the decarbonisation programme to demonstrate the new equipment being installed in properties, how to use it and the benefits.
 - We awarded approximately £1000 to tenant groups from our community chest fund to support residents to organise their own engagement activities and events.
 - The Housing section of the Strategic Equalities Plan 2024-28 includes information on how we have engaged with Gypsy and Traveller communities. We continue to facilitate a Traveller, and Roma Communication Group, holding quarterly meetings in venues close to the sites to ensure accessibility for the community.
- We use a variety of communication methods including surveys, forums, leaflets, postcards, QR codes/ videos, social media, events, home visits, phone calls and emails and alternative formats to engage in a way that suits our residents. We have used fliers with QR codes that link to audio after a suggestion from the particular group of residents to ensure accessibility.
- We gather user satisfaction insights for our digital services through our user research panel, which includes 146 members made up of both internal and external stakeholders. This panel supports us with usability testing across our digital projects, helping ensure our services are easy to use, accessible and valuable to the user based on their feedback.
- To ensure users can effectively access and engage with our corporate website, we present information in an accessible format aligned with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2.

Evidence – how do we know?

- Have Your Say Consultation web page
<https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/have-your-say/consultations>
- [Participation Strategy 2022-27](#)
- [Participation Strategy 2022-27 Democratic Services Committee November 2024](#)
- [Participation Strategy 2022-27 Policy and Pre-Decision Committee November 2024](#)
- Notes of the Participation Strategy 2022-27 group (internal document)
- Tenant participation section of the Pembrokeshire County Council website
<https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/tenant-participation>

Improvement actions – what can we do better and how?

- Ensure the new internally managed consultation system meets the needs of services and participants and conduct an appraisal of the new system for the period 2024-25. Ongoing review and monitoring of the new system will continue throughout 2025-26 and beyond.
- Undertake the Data Cymru Residents' survey "Let's Talk About Life in Pembrokeshire" during 2025-26. Resident responses will help to inform and shape local service delivery.
- Foster a positive work culture that will support continuous improvement by conducting a staff survey in 2025.
- Aligned with the Public Participation Strategy 2022-27, to have a better understanding of how Members engage with their communities, in 2025-26, we will be conducting a Members Survey on their engagement with the public. The survey will also ask what they think the Authority can do to increase diversity amongst its membership as we approach the Elections in 2026.
- The Democratic Services Committee has set up a Working Group comprised of all Members of the Committee to review democracy work in preparation for the 2027 election, this will include a review of the induction process and programme; considering feedback from new Members in 2022 on their experiences; pre-election planning and access to democracy; equality and diversity initiatives; promoting the role of a Councillor; and engaging with prospective candidates. Officers and non-Committee Members will be invited to participate in the work of the Group as necessary.

Theme: SA2.4 Corporate planning, performance and working with others

Sub-theme: Complaints and Compliments

Assessment of current performance – how well are we doing?

- Complaints and compliments provide vital information for the Council as the interface between the delivery of services and the feedback it receives from residents on the quality and effectiveness of those services. Complaints help to identify potential shortcomings and are used as a tool to drive improvement, while compliments are always welcomed as a means of recognising where a service or an individual officer has done something particularly well.
- The Complaints, Concerns and Compliments team have during the period April 2024 to March 2025 helped facilitate 971 complaints (965 in 2023-24, 819 in 2022-23), with 97% (98% in 2023-24, 96% in 2022-23) of complaints being resolved at Stage 1 (Informal). The remaining 3% (2% in 2023-24, 4% in 2022-23) of cases advanced to the formal Stage 2 level which requires an independent review of the complaint.
- 85% (65% in 2023-24, 80% in 2022-23) of the complaints were resolved within the national timescales, with 15% (34% in 2023-24, 19% in 2022-23) of the complaints falling outside of this period being extended in agreement with the complainant.
- As at end of March 2025, 47 complaints had been referred to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (40 in 2024-25, 44 in 2022-23), with six of these complaints requiring early intervention by the Ombudsman (6 in 2023-24, 3 in 2022-23). A breakdown of the complaints received by the Ombudsman was presented to the Governance & Audit Committee and Cabinet during 2024-25 for review.
- Both the Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Policy and the Managing Customer Contact Policy, were approved by Cabinet at their April 2024 meeting.
- A service level agreement was agreed with 57 of the 60 Pembrokeshire Schools to strengthen arrangements in place, which has generated income to support the Audit, Risk & Information Service budget.
- The Authority has continued to participate in all Wales complaints meetings and engage with the Complaints Standards Authority to share and promote best practice in complaint handling.
- The Council likes to understand what we do well and what our customer's value, with compliments being fed back to the respective services which can strengthen morale. In 2024-25, the Council received 309 compliments on services provided (285 in 2023-24, 299 in 2022-23).

Evidence – how do we know?

- Revised Compliments, Concerns & Complaints Policy and Managing Customer Contact Policy, Cabinet, 22 April 2024:
[Agenda for Cabinet on Monday 22nd April. 2024 10.00a.m. – Pembrokeshire County Council](#)
- Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Letter 2023-24, Standards Committee, 14 October 2024:

[Agenda for Standards Committee on Monday 14th October. 2024 14.00p.m. – Pembrokeshire County Council](#)

- Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Letter 2023-24, Cabinet, 4 November 2024

[Agenda for Cabinet on Monday 04th November. 2024 10.00a.m. – Pembrokeshire County Council](#)

- Compliments, Concerns & Complaints Annual Report 2023-24, Governance and Audit Committee, 25 November 2024 (incl. Public Services for Wales Ombudsman Letter.

[Agenda for Governance & Audit Committee on Monday 25th November. 2024 10.00a.m. – Pembrokeshire County Council](#)

Improvement actions – what can we do better and how?

- We will continue to develop the iCasework Complaints System to improve the data reported to Corporate Managers, Heads of Service and Directors so that the nature, status, outcome and lessons learned are clearly captured and evidenced. This will hopefully improve the timescales in responding to and addressing complaints received.
- One of the key themes in the number of complaints that the Council received related to communication. Analysis of the number of complaints reported highlighted that communication could be improved. This was specifically prevalent with complaints that were reported to Building Maintenance. To address this, Building Maintenance appointed a Complaints and Compliance Officer early in 2024 to resolve complaints that were made. The Corporate Complaints Team will continue to work with all link Complaint Officers within the Council to ensure that complainants are kept up to date on the progress of their complaint.
- We have engaged with the Complaint Standards Agency to provide both complaint handling training and investigative training to all link Complaint Officers, which will be undertaken in March 2025. This is with the aim of improving both the handling of complaints and the consistency in which investigations are conducted.
- In addition to the above point, whilst the relevant policy documents have been updated, an easy-to-read factsheet as well as internal guidance will be provided to Officers so that a clearly documented process will be in place for Complaint Officers to follow. This will also support new staff who become link officers. Advice and support will continue to be provided by the Corporate Complaints Team on a regular basis.
- We will aim to improve the level of complaints responded to within timeframes. The data provided in this report shows that the number of complaints responded to within timescales has decreased. Currently it is a challenge in appointing individuals to undertake Stage 2 investigations due to existing workload, which is having a negative impact on performance.

Theme: SA2.5 Corporate planning, performance and working with others

Sub-theme: Equalities

Assessment of current performance – how well are we doing?

- The strategic context of our work on equalities is the Equality Act 2010 and associated Welsh Government Regulations for public bodies. The Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28 is monitored by the Strategic Equality Action Plan Group which meets quarterly.
- In March 2024, a Pembrokeshire Anti-racist Action Plan sub-group was formed to provide a more focussed approach in progressing this agenda in line with an agreed Notice of Motion from Council. In November 2024, the Welsh Government Anti-racist Wales Action Plan was refreshed placing emphasis on delivery of measurable impact and change to support Wales to be an anti-racist nation by 2030.
- Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process is the vehicle through which we assess the impact of key decisions and proposals. The Council's IIA process has been reviewed during 2024 to strengthen and support decision-making processes by making the IIA process more straightforward, easier to follow and by expanding the range of legislation/policy commitments covered. Broadly, these areas cover economic, environmental, and societal considerations, as well as impacts on particular groups of people. A pilot of the new process is underway to ensure that the framework is robust.
- Equality monitoring continues to be undertaken as part of Engagement and Consultation. See SA2.3 Consultation and Engagement.
- The Council continues to publish Gender Pay Gap data with the report for 2024-25 published in April 2025. The report provides information on pay for men and women as well as people from different ethnic origins. In 2024-25 based on median hourly pay, women for the Council earned the same as men.
- The Equality in Employment Report 2023-24 was published in April 2025, the 2024-25 report is being developed and will be published in due course. The report aims to provide the wider public and stakeholders with information on the Authority's employment practices, as well as allowing the Authority to establish how it was meeting its employment objectives in its Strategic Equality Action Plan.
- 'insport' is a Disability Sport Wales programme delivered with the support of Sport Wales, which aims to support the physical activity, sport, and leisure sectors delivering inclusively of disabled people. Sport Pembrokeshire and Pembrokeshire Leisure are the first local authority partner nationally to achieve the insport Partnerships Gold standard (December 2024). Achievement of the Gold standard means that an inclusive approach is embedded within strategies, programmes, and thinking. The achievement recognises the efforts in creating opportunities that ensure everyone, regardless of ability, can participate and thrive in physical activity and sport at a level of their choosing.
- Throughout 2024-25, we continued to provide practical support to refugees and asylum seekers through the Migration Partnership Team. The team organise a range of events throughout the year to support community integration. In the

community, the Migration Team events, and integration programmes support this action. The team works closely with multiple services, particularly colleagues in Education, to ensure successful pupil integration. Youth services provide both 16+ and 11+ days out, as well as activities and residentials helping to settle and forge friendships and the DWP, Future Works, Employability and Maximus help families find work. We also work with volunteers, family support and the police and are working on a programme of wellness events.

- During 2024-25 we directly employed 75 disabled people with 56 being on the supported employment programme. The programme assists people to achieve greater independence in supported work-based settings that include our factory (Norman Industries), craft workshop, shop, saw mill and cafes.
- Considerable work has been undertaken to identify potential additional pitches to meet the needs of the Gypsy Traveller community. This work is ongoing and a number of sites have been put forward for consideration in conjunction with review of the Local Development Plan.
- The Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG) continues to fund targeted interventions, support and activities across Pembrokeshire schools to reduce the impact of poverty. Targeted interventions include literacy and numeracy support and speech and language interventions for pupils. Pastoral and emotional support includes Counselling, drama therapy and play therapy, dedicated pastoral and well-being staff and ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants) interventions. Enrichment and extracurricular activities include increased access to sports and arts events (e.g. tennis, music lessons) trips and residential visits. Family and community engagement (FACE) includes adult education courses, family support and parent workshops. Access and equality measures include support in accessing uniforms, revision guides, hygiene packs, breakfast and after-school clubs, mini-bus access to increase take-up in off-site activities and proportional representation in pupil leadership/learner voice groups & wider school activities/clubs.
- See SA1.1 Education for details of implementing the Raising Attainment for Disadvantaged Youngsters as a consistent framework for closing the attainment gap and proactive approaches to exclusions including providing Additional Learning Needs (ALN) support.
- We continue to monitor community tensions with regional colleagues including preparing training and awareness events and practical early intervention tools with local authorities. A range of targeted training was developed and delivered regionally, including Victim Support-led sessions in March in response to online hate targeting the third sector.

Evidence – how do we know?

- Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28:
<https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/Strategic-Equality-Plan-2024-28>
- Individual Cabinet Member Decision (Leader) Pembrokeshire County Council: Equalities Report
<https://mgenglish.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/documents/s74519/Appendix%20A.pdf?LL=0>
- Notes of the Strategic Equality Action Plan Group and Sub-group (internal document)

- Pembrokeshire County Council 2024-25 Gender pay gap report <https://gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk/employers/17855/reporting-year-2024>
- [Equality in Employment Report 2023-24](#)
- [Golden performance from Sport Pembrokeshire | PembrokeshireCC News](#)
- [Pembrokeshire County Council Achieve Gold](#)
- Pembrokeshire Supported Employment Programme
- <https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/community-services>
- Gypsy Traveller Accommodation
[Cabinet 20 May 2024 Delivery of Gypsy Traveller Accommodation](#)
[Cabinet 11 July 2024 Local Development Plan 2, Deposit Plan 2 - Item No. 14](#)
[Cabinet 11 July 2024. Delivery of Gypsy Traveller Accommodation](#)
[Extraordinary Council 13 September 2024 – Local Development Plan 2, Deposit Plan 2](#)
- Resident and business feedback on broadband scheme.
- [Getting Better Broadband, Dale on Vimeo](#)
- Digital Connectivity updates are provided through the Council
[50% Completion of Regional Full Fibre Infrastructure Build | PembrokeshireCC News](#)

Improvement actions – what can we do better and how?

- Continue monitoring of the Strategic Equality Plan 2024 – 2028 including work being progressed by the sub-group.
- Complete the pilot of the Integrated Impact Assessment guidance and template including feedback from users from across the authority to ensure that the framework is robust.
- Continue to monitor pay gaps and ensure that our recruitment practices enable the council's workforce to reflect the communities it serves.
- Progress our revised Local Development Plan (LDP 2) including site-specific allocations that can meet the unmet need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation and a policy to allow the evaluation of proposals for such accommodation coming forward on unallocated sites (which will mostly be for private sites). This will include going out to consultation on focused changes made in response to the representations received providing an opportunity for representations to be made to support or object to these specific changes only.

Conclusions

This section concludes the annual self-assessment report and draws together actions for the organisation as a whole. These are our provisional conclusions and will be further considered and developed in response to our consultation on the draft document.

We have continued to manage our challenging financial situation and while these pressures are expected to remain an issue, there are early signs that the Council is making progress in its quest to place itself on a more sustainable footing over the medium to longer term. However, this is in the context of unknown future pressures at a macro level which may put further strain on Council resources. In positive news, the Council ended the financial year with an underspend of £2.0m.

While there has been significant transformational activity in several service areas, there has been a gap in programme management arrangements at an authority-wide level that can provide co-ordinated and strategic direction and oversight. In view of this, and given the importance of transformation and the role it can play in delivering financial savings and efficiencies, as well as improving services for customers, in April 2025 Cabinet agreed to a re-purposed Transformation and Innovation Board. The new Board will provide renewed energy and focus around the key thematics of Digital & AI, Preventions (0-25 year olds), Vanguard/Target Operating Model, and Decarbonisation & Climate Adaptation and 2025-2026 will be a crucial year to drive this agenda forward.

Demand pressures in adult social has been a consistent theme in previous versions of this report, and while these remain a significant challenge, proactive work particularly around preventions and demand management suggest that the pressure is easing, albeit remains at very high levels. We have made good progress through the adult care improvement and recovery board to address issues previously raised by regulators, improving processes through the Vanguard methodology, and this work will continue for the foreseeable future. There is a similar story with regards to children's services, though perhaps at an earlier phase of recovery, with an increase in demand in early part of 2024-25 before stabilising, with early signs of reduction towards the end of the financial year. Continued monitoring of progress in 2025-2026 will be essential to provide assurance that this improvement is sustainable, and further investment in capital schemes, particularly in relation to children's residential provision, will be an important factor as part of this.

In terms of economic development and regeneration, we continue to encourage private sector investment in new energy industries. We are a key partner of the Celtic Freeport which will help realise ambitions around green and blue energy, supporting local businesses and creating jobs. Projects to regenerate our town centres are continuing but perhaps more slowly than anticipated, and this is also contributing to capital underspends (and consequential revenue underspends).

In housing, we have made good progress in addressing the issue of homelessness, with a significant decrease in the numbers of people presenting, though clearly there is always room for improvement. We have also increased the numbers of our own stock through our

housing development scheme and through acquisitions. Issues with affordable housing will be targeted through our new Homebuy scheme, which will be launched during 2025-2026.

We remain one of the best performing local authorities not just in Wales, but the UK, in terms of waste and recycling. Our new Environmental Services Strategy developed this year, sets the direction of travel for maintaining our strong performance in this area. A highlight this year was the opening of the Eco Park, which provides enhanced recycling segregation facilities, and will support us to meet challenging environmental targets.

We have reported on progress to deliver our Corporate Governance Improvement Plan over the past couple of years and have made good progress in this regard. Audit Wales Phase 2 follow-up report which was produced during the year made no further recommendations. While this is positive, it is important not to be complacent, and as such, the Council has requested that governance and decision-making is a specific focus of our Panel Performance Assessment in October 2025 to gain further independent assurance and perspectives on how improvements can be sustained.