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Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol  
**MERTHYR TYDFIL**  
**MERTHYR TYDFIL**  
County Borough Council

## SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT

Date Written	Friday, 18 August 2017
Accountable for Delivery	<b>Dorothy Haines</b> Project leads
Wellbeing Champion	Steve Jones
Committee Date	Monday, 04 September 2017

*To: Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen*

### **Best Start to Life - Children get the best start to life**

#### **1. SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1. We have set Wellbeing Objectives for Merthyr Tydfil CBC, and how we intend to achieve these objectives is set out in our plan Focus on the Future: Wellbeing in our Community. The focus of this report is how we will ensure children get the best start to life and how they have a positive early experience to ensure they are ready to learn, ready for school and have good life chances
- 1.2. The Council is committed to ensuring excellent educational achievement through the Learning Strategy and through joint strategies developed with a range of partners. In addition, there are specific projects that the Council will undertake to deliver the Merthyr Tydfil CBC wellbeing objectives and contribute to the national wellbeing goals.
- 1.3. There are four wellbeing projects:
  - Supporting Child Development
  - Improving Family Literacy and Numeracy
  - Achieving Excellence in Schools
  - Active Merthyr Tydfil

1.4. This report establishes the baseline for the projects and progress against the projects will be reported to scrutiny at future meetings

## 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

2.1. the content of this report be discussed and noted.

## 3. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

3.1. In our plan [**Focus on the Future: Wellbeing in our Community**], we set out how we intend to achieve the Wellbeing Objectives. The focus of this report is the performance and project information against our Wellbeing Objective "Children get the best start to life".

### Legislative Context

3.2. <sup>1</sup>The [Wellbeing of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) specifies that we must work to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales by maximising our contribution to the Wellbeing Goals. We must do this in accordance with the sustainable development principle, which means that we act in a manner that seeks to ensure the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

3.3. In order to apply the sustainable development principle, we are using the five ways of working things:

- Long Term - Thinking far enough ahead so that today's solutions are not tomorrow's problems
- Preventative - Acting to stop problems happening in the first place, or getting worse
- Involvement - The importance of involving people in what we do
- Collaboration - Acting together with others
- Integration - Considering how our actions may impact on others

3.4. We will work towards the achievement of seven national well-being goals:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities

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<sup>1</sup> Read the [essential guide](#) to the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A globally responsible Wales

## 4. WHERE WE WERE

4.1. An overview of the state of wellbeing in Cwm Taf was prepared in an assessment of wellbeing<sup>2</sup>, which provides background information on wellbeing in Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf. In addition, a population assessment<sup>3</sup> was prepared to provide an overview of care and support needs of the people of Cwm Taf and the range of services required to meet those needs. The findings from the wellbeing and population assessment contributed to the development of the statement of wellbeing for Merthyr Tydfil.

### Wellbeing Statement

4.2. In our wellbeing statement we set out the scope of each wellbeing objective and outline why we consider that meeting the objective will maximise our contribution to the achievement of the seven wellbeing goals. The focus of this report is on the wellbeing objective:

#### **Children get the best start to life**

*Children have a positive early experience to ensure they are ready to learn, ready for school and have good life chances*

4.3. What happens to children in their earliest years is key to positive outcomes in adult life. This is supported by a wide range of research evidence from education, health, justice and economic experts. This wellbeing objective is about giving our children the best start in life, to set them off on a path that leads to positive outcomes later in life.

4.4. In Merthyr Tydfil CBC, we will focus on the following components and their related outcomes in order to achieve our wellbeing objective:

- Children having a nurturing and stimulating home environment
- Children having access to high quality pre-school and school education
- Helping mothers to have good maternal health
- Helping parents and carers enhance their ability to support their children's learning

## 5. OUR CONTRIBUTION

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<sup>2</sup> Information on the assessment of wellbeing is published on the [Cwm Taf Portal](#).

<sup>3</sup> Information on the population assessment is published on the [Cwm Taf Portal](#).

See Appendices 1 and 2 for the projects and measures

5.1. The Council is committed to ensuring excellent educational achievement through the Learning Strategy and through joint strategies developed with a range of partners. In addition, there are specific projects that the Council will undertake to deliver the Merthyr Tydfil CBC wellbeing objectives and contribute to the national wellbeing goals.

5.2. For *Children Get the Best Start* there are four wellbeing projects:

- Supporting Child Development
- Improving Family Literacy and Numeracy
- Achieving Excellence in Schools
- Active Merthyr Tydfil

5.3. We will judge how well these projects improve the wellbeing of children, young people and their families using the following key indicators.

<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	<b>2016/17 Achieved</b>	<b>2017/18 Target</b>	<b>2018/19 Target</b>
Eligible children from Flying Start areas taking up full or reduced offer of childcare	94%	95%	96%
Flying Start children living in high resilient families	NEW	To be agreed*	To be agreed*
Eligible children from Flying Start areas screened using WellComm Speech and Language tool, as being within normal limits on Exit of Pre-school at 3 years	NEW	To be agreed*	To be agreed*
Flying Start Children achieving Outcome 1 in all 4 areas within the Foundation Phase Compact on exit from childcare setting	NEW	To be agreed*	To be agreed*
Pupils achieving the expected level in the Foundation Phase Outcome Indicator	88.1%	93%	94%
Pregnant women in Flying Start areas who give up smoking during pregnancy	NEW	To be agreed*	To be agreed*

\*Once the baseline data has been collated and analysed, targets will be set

## 6. WHERE WE WANT TO BE

- 6.1. Achieving the wellbeing objective **Children get the best start to life** means we will see improvements in the following areas:
- Outcomes and educational standards for learners and groups of learners
  - Early language development of children
  - The health and wellbeing of children and young people
  - The resilience among families in receipt of support improves
  - The maternal health of mothers in receipt of support

## 7. WHAT WE NEED TO DO NEXT

- 7.1. For each of the projects there is a delivery plan which sets out the planned actions and who is responsible for their delivery, as well as the milestones and the deadlines for those actions. The actions take into account the identified issues and risks.
- 7.2. The implementation of the delivery plans will be monitored by the Education Services Leadership Team in monthly meetings and progress reported to Scrutiny at the meeting on 4th December 2017

**DOROTHY HAINES**  
**CHIEF OFFICER - LEARNING**

**LISA MYTTON**  
**CABINET MEMBER FOR LEARNING**

Does the report contain any issues that may affect the Council's Constitution?

NO

## APPENDIX 1: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- Supporting Child Development
- Improving Family Literacy and Numeracy
- Achieving Excellence in Schools
- Active Merthyr Tydfil

Project Title	<b>Supporting Child Development</b>		
Project Manager	Chris Hole		
Report Period From	01/04/2017	Report Period To	31/03/2018
Accountable for Delivery	<b>Chris Hole</b>		
Services	Flying Start		
Wellbeing objective	Children get the best start to life		
Component	Children having a nurturing and stimulating home environment		

Project Description	<p>The purpose is to improve the outcomes achieved by children in Flying Start settings at identified stages in their lives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will improve the early language skills of children to make certain they achieve the expected level on entry into school.</li> <li>• We will support families with low resilience to help them adapt and cope when things do not go as planned</li> </ul>
Expected Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective transition into school</li> <li>• Improved learning outcomes for children</li> <li>• Early identification of children with additional needs</li> <li>• Improved health and wellbeing of children</li> <li>• Parental/carer involvement in child learning</li> </ul>
Evaluation	<p>Assessment of language skills of young children in Flying start areas shows that many are below age expected levels.</p> <p>Repeat referrals show that families supported through the council and health services are often unable to sustain improvements when support ceases.</p>
Start Date	01/04/2017
Finish Date	31/03/2018
Highlight Report Author	Sarah Davies

## **Project Information**

### **Flying Start**

Flying Start is an early intervention, geographically targeted programme aimed at children 0-47 months and their families. There are 4 core entitlements including: free part time childcare for 2-3 year olds; an enhanced health visiting service, access to parenting support and access to Early Language Development support. Flying Start locally offers a number of other elements in response to identified need and these include family support and targeted midwifery services.

- ***In order to improve outcomes in Early Language Development***

Pilot the new early communication pathway and support programmes across the Flying Start communities and evaluate the impact of the programme using the Welcomm screening tool to measure the effectiveness of the interventions.

- ***In order to identify families with low resilience: Health Visiting FRAIT Assessments***

The health service (UHB) is required through the Healthy Child Wales Programme to assess the resilience of all family's with a child of 0-5. This approach will better target interventions for flying start families. Health Board employees are currently being trained to implement this process from September 2017

The local authority will utilise the assessment process to target resources appropriately

- ***In order to improve maternal health***

The local authority will commission Cwm Taff Health Board to deliver a smoking cessation programme to pregnant women to improve the maternal health of those taking part

- ***In order to ensure strategic commissioning of evidenced based Parenting***

The local authority will strategically commission evidenced based parenting programmes jointly with Families First using the outcomes for the child as the measurement tool of success as identified in the national Families First guidance based on the review

### **Key actions**

In the delivery plans, the key activities are identified that establish the targeted groups, their needs and success criteria

Project Title	<b>Improving family involvement in learning</b>		
Project Manager	Chris Hole and Sarah Bowen		
Report Period From	01/09/2017	Report Period To	31/03/2018
Accountable for Delivery	<b>Chris Hole and Sarah Bowen</b>		
Services	Adult Community Learning and Inclusion		
Wellbeing objective	Children get the best start to life		
Component/s	Helping parents and carers enhance their ability to support their children's learning		

Project Description	<p>The purpose is to work with schools to develop greater parental involvement in their children's learning</p> <p>1. Family learning programme The purpose is to improve skills among parents and carers with school age children in order to improve their ability to support their children's learning. This is undertaken in partnership with schools.</p> <p>The key skills are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading</li> <li>• Writing</li> <li>• Speaking and listening</li> <li>• Using numbers</li> </ul> <p>2. The focus to build capacity within schools to involving parents in their child's learning and school</p>
Expected Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve literacy, numeracy and language skills of families</li> <li>• Increase parental/carer involvement in the learning and development of their children in the home environment</li> <li>• Improvements in individual wellbeing of participants</li> <li>• Improve pupil attendance</li> <li>• Improve knowledge of how children learn</li> </ul>
Evaluation	<p><u>Family learning programme</u></p> <p>The qualifications profile of Merthyr Tydfil's adult population is below the Welsh Average and this places some families at a disadvantage in supporting their children's education. Parents play a vital role in supporting their child's education through creating a language rich and supportive home learning environment. However, for some parents this can be challenging especially if they are not confident in their own skills. Increasing</p>



	<p>the confidence and skills of parents will also contribute to raising aspirations amongst families involved in the project.</p> <p><u>Parental involvement with schools</u>  Evidence shows that where parents/carers are involved in their child's learning and school, wellbeing and outcomes improve. Across schools parental engagement varies between and within schools.</p>
Start Date	01/04/2017
Finish Date	31/03/2018
Highlight Report Author	Diane Jones and Sarah Bowen

## Project Information

### 1. Family Programmes

In order to improve outcomes, Family Programmes extend learning opportunities in a fun and innovative way for all children and families and create an atmosphere where learning is encouraged, valued and part of everyday life.

***The local authority will*** in partnership with primary schools improve parents/carers literacy and numeracy skills in order to:

- Improve maths and literacy outcomes for children in the Foundation Phase
- Improve parents/carers understanding of the approaches used to teach children maths and English in schools
- Improve parents'/carers' ability to support their children's learning outside of school
- Enable parents and children to become motivated and independent learners
- Encourage parents/carers to build closer links with schools as well as take a more active part in their children's education

The programme is developed in partnership with schools and parents and is part of the LA's wider early years and adult community learning approach to preventing poor attainment amongst children. The programme also supports parents/carers to improve skills that will enable them to consider further opportunities for learning or employment as their child has entered school.

### Key actions

In the delivery plans, the key activities are identified that establish the targeted groups, their needs and success criteria

## **2. Support schools with involving parents in their children's learning**

The local authority will:

- Make sure the message about parental involvement in learning is promoted across and through all the Council departments
- Work with Families First to shape programmes across the borough
- Review school's self-evaluation of parental engagement against the Estyn inspection framework in order to evaluate capacity
- Hold schools to account through case conferences

Schools will:

- Carry out a self-evaluation of parental engagement to identify next steps
- Undertake key actions to improve parental engagement

### **Key actions**

In the delivery plans, the key activities are identified that establish the targeted groups, their needs and success criteria

Project Title	<b>Achieving excellence in schools</b>		
Project Manager	Joe Colsey		
Report Period From	1 09 2017	Report Period To	31 08 2017
Accountable for Delivery	<b>Dorothy Haines</b>		
Services	Learning		
Wellbeing objective	Children get the best start to life		
Component/s	Children having access to high quality pre-school and school education		
Wellbeing objective	Children and young people are equipped with the skills they need to be successful learners and confident individuals		
Component/s	Schools equipping pupils with high levels of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills		

Project Description	<p>The purpose of the project is to achieve excellence in schools in leadership and provision in order to achieve the highest standards for increasing numbers of pupils. The focus is on developing schools to drive school improvement for themselves and each other.</p> <p>The local authority has two key areas of work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support leaders to evaluate the impact of how they work together to provide the best quality learning in schools for all pupils.</li> <li>• Support governors to evaluate the impact of how they work together so they are highly skilled and make the best decisions in the interests of the pupils.</li> </ul>
Expected Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High standards for all pupils and groups of pupils</li> <li>• Good leadership skills</li> </ul>
Evaluation	<p>The data shows we have fewer schools categorised as having A or B capacity to improve (as in the National Framework) and a green level of support than in other local authorities. These schools are judged to have the capacity to support other schools across the system.</p> <p>We have evaluated the different models used to bring about improvements in a self-improving school led system and some models have been successful <i>for example</i>, Pathfinder pairs. Other models have not evidenced the same success and are currently</p>

	<p>under review by the Central South Consortium. One model which has evidenced success across the region is the Peer Enquiry model. This will be developed in schools across MTCBC.</p> <p>Governing bodies across the borough, the region and nationally have not been completing a systematic self-review and using the self-evaluation audit to support this process.</p>
Start Date	July 2017
Finish Date	July 2018
Highlight Report Author	Joe Colsey

## Project Information

### 1. Support leaders to evaluate the impact of how they work together to provide the best quality learning in schools for all pupils.

The local authority will:

- Promote the Central South Consortium Peer Enquiry model and ensure schools participate in the peer review programme.
- Promote schools working together through the Hub schools process to develop the Peer Enquiry model and to evaluate the impact of the Peer Reviews that are undertaken.

Schools will:

- Take part in peer reviews and identify areas of provision and leadership which need improvement in order to become excellent.
- Liaise with the Senior Challenge Adviser brokered via Central South Consortium to commission and broker relevant support and training in relation to provision and leadership.

### 2. Support governors to evaluate the impact of how they work together so they are highly skilled and make the best decisions in the interests of all pupils.

The local authority will:

- Promote governing bodies working together through local Governor Improvement Groups (GIGs).
- Share good practise identified with the local Governor Improvement Groups (GIGs) as part of the termly Headteacher and Chair of Governor forums and Merthyr Tydfil Governor Association forums.

- Evaluate the impact of the work of the local Governor Improvement Groups (GIGs).

Governing bodies will:

- Join local Governor Improvement Groups supported by local authority and central south consortium Governor Support Officers.
- Undertake the self-evaluation audit tool.
- Identify areas for improvement following the completion of the self-evaluation audit tool, complete a relevant action plan and plan training accordingly.
- Identify areas for sharing good practice within the Local Authority and across the region.

### **Key actions**

In the delivery plans, the key activities are identified that establish the targeted groups, their needs and success criteria

Project Title	<b>Active Merthyr Plan</b>		
Project Manager	John Sellwood		
Report Period From	1 09 2017	Report Period To	31 03 2018
Accountable for Delivery	<b>Mark Thomas</b>		
Services	Community		
Wellbeing objective	Children get the best start to life		
Component/s	Helping mothers to have good maternal health		

Project Description	<p>The purpose of the Merthyr Active plan is to encourage different groups of people to engage in physical activity on a regular basis. To achieve this, the plan focuses on providing the right type of physical activities, in the right places and at the right times.</p> <p>The Merthyr Active plan has several projects that contribute to a number of wellbeing objectives; this update focuses on the wellbeing objective <b><i>Children get the best start.</i></b></p> <p>The project provides mums and mums-to-be the opportunity to be physically active by offering appropriately designed activities suitable for their needs.</p> <p>Working in partnership with health, we will make certain that these activities are offered to mums as part of the wider program of support promoted by health.</p>
Expected Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the wellbeing of mums</li> <li>• Increase physical activity rates of mums</li> </ul>
Evaluation	<p>Levels of physical activity are generally lower among women than men. Within women those living in in the most deprived areas are less likely to be active. In pregnancy, low levels of physical activity can contribute to a range of health problems.</p> <p>Evidence shows that moderate or gentle physical activity during pregnancy can have many benefits for the mother and the developing baby. Physical activity during the postpartum period is also beneficial. Physical activity can help improve mental and</p>

	physical wellbeing.
Start Date	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2017
Finish Date	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2018
Highlight Report Author	John Sellwood

## Project Information

### 1. Physical activity for pre and post-natal mothers

Working with health professionals the authority will:

- Consult with stakeholders and new mums to design suitable physical activities to meet need
- Develop a time table of physical activity opportunities for pre and post-natal mothers
- Ensure physical activity opportunities are offered as part of health programmes to support new mums

The consultation work with the key stakeholders resulted in two projects as follows

#### Bump fit

Bump fit is a pre-natal intervention that encourages expectant mums to physical active during pregnancy. The program supports the mothers to continue the activity after the birth and to be a positive role model and advocate physical activity with the child.

#### Key actions are:

- Consult with stakeholders and expectant mums to design suitable physical activities to meet need
- Deliver 2 ten week blocks of suitable physical activity, one being within the swimming pool and the other delivered on the dry side of the centre.
- Evaluate the impact of the project.

#### Buggy Running

Buggy running is a post-natal project that encourages mothers to be physically active. The project will provide the opportunity for new mums to take part active with their baby. The project will provide an opportunity for children to be part of their mothers regular activity promoting physical activity as a normal behaviour.

#### Key actions are:

- Consult with stakeholders and new mums to design suitable physical activities to meet need.
- Commission a pilot buggy running project with one session a week.
- Evaluate the impact of the project.

## APPENDIX 2: PERFORMANCE DATA REPORT

Data against the key performance indicators will be reviewed quarterly.

Additional measures will be included

		Percentage of eligible children in Flying Start areas taking up full or reduced offer of childcare						
		Annual Performance Data				LA Rank	LA Rank	LA Rank
		2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Merthyr Tydfil		89	100	100	94			4 <sup>th</sup>
Wales		86	84	86	88			

		Percentage of children in flying Start areas living in high resilient families						
		Annual Performance Data				LA Rank	LA Rank	LA Rank
		2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Merthyr Tydfil	<b>NEW</b>							
Wales								

		Percentage of eligible children living in Flying Start areas screened, using the WellComm Speech & Language Screening tool, as being within normal limits on Exit out of Pre-School at 3 years						
		Annual Performance Data				LA Rank	LA Rank	LA Rank
		2017/18	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Merthyr Tydfil	<b>NEW</b>							

		Percentage of Flying Start Children achieving Outcome 1 in all 4 areas within the Foundation Phase Compact on exit from childcare settings						
		Annual Performance Data				LA Rank	LA Rank	LA Rank
		2017/18	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Merthyr Tydfil	<b>NEW</b>							



		Percentage of children achieving the Foundation Phase Outcome Indicator						
		Annual Performance Data				LA Rank	LA Rank	LA Rank
		2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2015/16	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
All pupils		81.2	86.2	89.1	88.1	16	5	12

		Percentage of pregnant women in Flying Start areas who gave up smoking during pregnancy						
		Annual Performance Data				LA Rank	LA Rank	LA Rank
		2017/18	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Merthyr Tydfil	<b>NEW</b>							