



24 Cathedral Road / Heol y Gadeirián  
Cardiff / Caerdydd  
CF11 9LJ  
Tel / Ffôn: 029 20 320500  
Fax / Ffacs: 029 20 320600  
Email / Epost: [wales@wao.gov.uk](mailto:wales@wao.gov.uk)  
[www.wao.gov.uk](http://www.wao.gov.uk)

Mr Gareth Chapman  
Chief Executive  
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council  
Civic Centre  
Merthyr Tydfil  
CF47 8AN

Reference	641A2013
Date	29 November 2013
Pages	1 of 2

Dear Gareth

## Improvement Assessment

In my letter of 15 November 2013, I gave my opinion on whether Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (the Council) had discharged its statutory duties in respect of improvement planning.

I am also required, under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (the Measure) to give an opinion on whether the Council has discharged its duties in respect of improvement reporting and met the requirements of the Measure.

**In my opinion, and based on audit work undertaken to date the Council has discharged its improvement reporting duties under the Measure although there is potential to strengthen its arrangements further.**

I have reached this conclusion because:

- the Council published an assessment of its performance during 2012-13 in its *Annual Performance Report 2012-13* (the Report) before 31 October 2013;
- the Report assesses the Council's performance in the preceding financial year (2012-13) and sets out how the Council has sought to discharge its duties under the Measure;
- the Report evaluates the Council's success in achieving its improvement objectives drawing upon a wider evidence base than in prior years to do so, and presents its performance in a fair and balanced way;
- the Report includes relevant information for citizens who want to provide feedback or want to make comments on the Council's performance;

- the Report includes details of performance and comparisons as measured by the national statutory performance indicators although there is scope to articulate more clearly what this information means and what the Council has done in light of it; and
- the Report includes details of the ways in which the Council has sought to collaborate but it could be strengthened by explaining more consistently the outcomes and benefits achieved from these collaborations.

### **Further proposals for improvement**

I am making no new proposals for improvement in this letter. I will continue to monitor and report on the progress made by the Council in implementing the proposals and recommendations set out in my previous reports and letters.

I will undertake more detailed work on the arrangements that support the Council's performance management and reporting over the following months and report this, as well as summarising all of my work and that of relevant regulators during 2013-14, in an Annual Improvement Report for the Council that I will publish by the end of March 2014.

Yours sincerely,



**HUW VAUGHAN THOMAS**  
**Auditor General for Wales**

cc: Lesley Griffiths, Minister for Local Government and Government Business