

29 April 2026

Dear

ATISN 26746: OUTCOME OF INTERNAL REVIEW

You wrote to the Welsh Government Freedom of Information Officer on 8 April 2026 seeking an internal review of the response provided to your Freedom of Information request ATISN 26746 which was issued on 20 March 2026. That request sought the following information relating to governance oversight and monitoring of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.

1. Any risk assessments, risk ratings, concern logs, intervention trackers, or monitoring frameworks used to assess the governance, capacity, or performance of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.
2. Any documents which define or describe the thresholds, criteria, or triggers that would lead officials to:
 - escalate concerns internally,
 - consider statutory intervention,
 - recommend ministerial involvement,
 - increase monitoring or supervision of the authority.
3. Any records showing whether Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council has met or exceeded any escalation thresholds or concern categories during this period, including summaries or status indicators (for example: RAG ratings, assurance levels, risk bands or equivalent classifications).
4. Any internal guidance, policies, or procedural documents used by Welsh Government officials when deciding whether a local authority requires enhanced monitoring, support arrangements, or potential intervention.
5. Any periodic review summaries, assurance reports, or governance health assessments produced about the authority.

The request was limited to the period 1 January 2023 to present specifically for Merthyr Tydfil County Council.

You specifically asked that the internal review should cover:

1. Adequacy and Scope of Searches

To confirm:

- which directorates, teams, and individuals were consulted;

- the specific search terms used;
- whether searches included emails, briefing materials, Ministerial submissions, and informal records.

2. Interpretation of “Information Not Held”

To clarify whether:

- any information is held on a non-routine, ad hoc, or case-specific basis;
- any material exists outside of formal monitoring frameworks but within internal communications or briefings.

3. Section 16 Duty (Advice and Assistance)

Please clarify:

- whether any part of the requested information is likely to be held by the WLGA or any other body;
- why the request was not transferred or signposted more explicitly where appropriate.

4. Partial Disclosure Consideration

Even if full datasets or structured frameworks are not held, the request also clearly encompasses:

- individual documents;
- summaries;
- internal guidance;
- records of discussions or considerations.

Please confirm whether any partial information is held within scope that could be disclosed.

You also requested that the Welsh Government:

- reconsiders its position that no information is held;
- undertakes a broader and more comprehensive search of relevant records;
- provides clarification on search methodology and scope;
- releases any information held within the scope of the request, including partial or informal records.

My Review

Considering the issues you raise above in identifying the requested information, I spoke with members of the team responsible for local authority support and intervention and engaged with the officer undertaking the document searches along with their line manager. I reviewed the search methodology, including the criteria for locating the requested material in the specific categories and the time period you outlined. I am satisfied that the search was extensive, thorough and included all the document types set out in the original request for the time period. In response to your points:

1. **Adequacy and Scope of Searches.** All files were searched using a range of keywords involving relevant policy official leads and departments. The searches sought to confirm the existence of records relevant to your request and covered all documents including emails, briefing materials, Ministerial submissions, and informal records.
2. **Interpretation of “Information Not Held”.** On receipt of a request, staff search all records unless the requesters specifies where they want searches to be focused. For example, by specifying they are looking for information within sets of minutes, correspondence, etc. All information was within scope of the search. The search included material considered non-routine, ad hoc and case specific.
3. **Section 16 Duty (Advice and Assistance).** Your request focused on information which would have been generated by the Welsh Government, e.g. risk assessments, monitoring frameworks, advice, etc in assessing the governance, capacity, or performance of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council. None have been generated. Our search would not have picked unpublished information generated by other bodies. The only statutory requirements lie with Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council. Further information not already published should be requested from the Council. We do not know what information other organisations may or may not hold. We do not transfer a request to another public body without the explicit consent of the requester.
4. **Partial Disclosure Consideration.** No information was withheld, partially or otherwise from the searches.

There is no evidence that Ministers or officials considered the status of intervention, support, monitoring or supervision arrangements relating to Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council within the requested timeframe. This is consistent with the fact that the intervention and support package for Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council ended in March 2022 and no published evidence or specific request from the Council has identified the need for further support or intervention.

Outcome

I am satisfied that the response to ATISN 26746 was correct and that there are no relevant records for the time period you specified. I therefore uphold the original response. We do not hold the information that you requested.

I have considered your complaint in accordance with the procedure outlined in the Welsh Government's Practical Guide for Making Requests for Information which is available by post on request or via the internet at: <https://www.gov.wales/requesting-information-welsh-government-html>.

Further explanation

Principal councils are democratic bodies with statutory responsibilities for governance and decision-making. They do not report to Welsh Ministers.

As noted in previous correspondence, the [Local Government and Elections \(Wales\) Act 2021](#) (“The 2021 Act”) sets out the arrangements for performance and governance of Welsh principal councils. It is designed on the principle that councils should identify and improve issues themselves, with Welsh Ministers stepping in only where asked by the council or where an independent auditor, inspector or regulator has specifically recommended support and or intervention. Any such recommendations would be made in the public domain. The Act is supported by [statutory guidance](#) which explains how councils should assess their own performance and governance.

Under the 2021 Act, councils are required to:

- Regularly carry out, and publish self-assessments of their performance; and
- Participate in, and publish, peer panel assessments, involving experienced individuals from local government and related bodies reviewing how the council is functioning.

Therefore, no assessment or record of concern has been made by the Welsh Government in relation to the corporate performance and governance of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council since the conclusion of the previous support package in 2022.

Next steps

If you remain dissatisfied with this response you have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner’s Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely

Lisa James/Reg Kilpatrick
Job Share Director,
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