

# Document Pack



Mark James LLM, DPA, DCA  
Prif Weithredwr,  
Chief Executive,  
Neuadd y Sir, Caerfyrddin. SA31 1JP  
County Hall, Carmarthen. SA31 1JP

THURSDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2016

TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE **COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

I HEREBY SUMMON YOU TO ATTEND A MEETING OF THE **COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** WHICH WILL BE HELD IN **THE CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, CARMARTHEN AT 10:00AM ON FRIDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2016**, FOR THE TRANSACTION OF THE BUSINESS OUTLINED ON THE ATTACHED AGENDA.

*Mark James*

CHIEF EXECUTIVE



PLEASE RECYCLE

Democratic Officer:	Matthew Hughes
Telephone (Direct Line):	01267 224029
Fax:	01267 224911
E-Mail:	<a href="mailto:mahughes@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">mahughes@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a>
Ref:	AD016-001

# **COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

## **13 MEMBERS**

### **PLAID CYMRU GROUP – 5 MEMBERS**

- |    |                   |                     |
|----|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1. | <b>Councillor</b> | <b>J.M. Charles</b> |
| 2. | <b>Councillor</b> | <b>J.K. Howell</b>  |
| 3. | <b>Councillor</b> | <b>J. Owen</b>      |
| 4. | <b>Councillor</b> | <b>G.B. Thomas</b>  |
| 5. | <b>Councillor</b> | <b>J. Thomas</b>    |

### **INDEPENDENT GROUP – 4 MEMBERS**

- |    |                   |                                 |
|----|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. | <b>Councillor</b> | <b>W.R.A. Davies</b>            |
| 2. | <b>Councillor</b> | <b>H.I. Jones</b>               |
| 3. | <b>Councillor</b> | <b>H.B. Shepardson</b>          |
| 4. | <b>Councillor</b> | <b>E.G. Thomas (Vice-Chair)</b> |

### **LABOUR GROUP – 4 MEMBERS**

- |    |                   |                           |
|----|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. | <b>Councillor</b> | <b>D.M. Cundy (Chair)</b> |
| 2. | <b>Councillor</b> | <b>S.L. Davies</b>        |
| 3. | <b>Councillor</b> | <b>T. Devichand</b>       |
| 4. | <b>Councillor</b> | <b>S. Matthews</b>        |

# AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS
3. DECLARATION OF PROHIBITED PARTY WHIPS
4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (NONE RECEIVED)
5. FORTHCOMING ITEMS 5 - 6
6. THE CARMARTHENSHIRE HOMES STANDARD PLUS (CHS+) 'DELIVERING WHAT MATTERS' 7 - 28
7. AFFORDABLE HOMES DELIVERY PLAN 29 - 58
8. EXPLANATIONS FOR NON-SUBMISSION OF SCRUTINY REPORTS 59 - 60
9. COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ACTIONS AND REFERRALS UPDATE 61 - 66
10. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 15<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2016 67 - 70

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# COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

## 12<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2016

**Forthcoming items for next meeting –  
Thursday 24th March 2016**

Discussion Topic	Background
Leisure Services Division Annual Update and Input into the Business Plan 2016/17	This report will provide details of progress made by and performance of the Leisure Division during 2015/16 and will include Countryside Services, Cultural Services and Sports and Leisure Services. It will also allow the Committee to comment on the Division's key priorities and aims for 2016/17.
Economic Development Update	This report will provide details of progress made within Physical and Community Regeneration, Business Services, Regional Learning Plan, Marketing and Tourism as well as the Swansea Bay City Region.
Supporting People Programme Update	This item, deferred from the February meeting, will be a progress report on the Supporting People Programme for Vulnerable Adults.
Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring 2015/16	This is a standard quarterly item which allows members to undertake their monitoring role of the relevant service budgets.

Please note that a joint meeting with the Planning Committee has been arranged for the 24th March 2016 in order for members to monitor progress in implementing the recommendations made following the Planning Enforcement Task & Finish Group review. The Committee's meeting referred to above will follow on at the conclusion of the joint meeting.

*The latest version of the Community Scrutiny Committee's forward work programme is included on the following page.*

## Community Scrutiny Committee – Forward Work Programme 2015/16 (as at 4th February 2016)

22 June 15	23 July 15	14 September 15	09 November 15	10 December 15	15 January 16	12 February 16	24 March 16
Community Task & Finish Final Report – Empty Properties	Older Persons 10 Year Plan ( <i>Jointly with the SC&amp;H Committee</i> )	T&F Monitoring Report – Planning Enforcement ( <i>Jointly with Planning</i> )	Half-Yearly Performance Monitoring 2015/16	Non-HRA Revenue Budget Consultation 2016/17 -2018/19	HRA Budget, Service Charges and Rent Setting 2016/17	Carmarthenshire Home Standards Plus Business Plan 2016 – 2019	T&F Monitoring Report – Planning Enforcement ( <i>Jointly with Planning</i> )
Draft CCC Annual Report 14/15 and Improvement Plan 15/16	Affordable Housing Plan ( <i>Jointly with the SC&amp;H Committee</i> )	Alternative Management Options for Leisure	Communities Performance Management Framework	Non-HRA Capital Budget Consultation 2016/17 – 2020/21	Review of the Access to Social Housing Policy	Affordable Housing Delivery Plan	Leisure Services Division Annual Update and Input into the Business Plan 2016/17
WG Home Improvement Loan Scheme		Budget Monitoring 2015/16	Community Levy Infrastructure Viability Report			Actions & Referrals Update	Economic Development Update
Community Scrutiny Annual Report 2014/15			Performance Management Referral (P&R)				Supporting People Prog. Update
Community Scrutiny FWP 2015/16			Planning Annual Performance Report				Budget Monitoring 2015/16
EOY Budget Monitoring 2014/15			Pre-application Planning Fees				
EOY Performance Monitoring 2014/15			Budget Monitoring 2015/16				
Actions & Referrals Update			Actions & Referrals Update				

# COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

## 12<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2016

### The Carmarthenshire Homes Standard PLUS (CHS+) 'Delivering What Matters'

#### To consider and comment on the following issues:

The Scrutiny Committee is requested to recommend to Executive Board that it:

- Confirm the vision of CHS+ and the financial and delivery programme over the next three years.
- Confirm submission of the plan to the Welsh Government.

#### Reasons:

- To ensure we support tenants and residents through improving our services, supporting them through changes to welfare, and providing training and employment opportunities.
- To meet our commitment of maintaining the CHS at a cost of over £23 Million over the next three years.
- To deliver our Affordable Homes Commitment of increasing the supply of affordable homes at a cost of over £19 Million over the next three years.
- To clarify that the delivery of the Plan is dependent on an average rent increase of 2.97%.
- To enable submission to the WG to access £6.1m of MRA for 2016/17.
- To formulate views for submission to the Executive Board.

**To be referred to the Executive Board / Council for decision: YES**

**Executive Board: 22nd February 2016**  
**County Council: 10th March 2016**

**Executive Board Member Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Linda Evans (Housing)**

<b>Directorate:</b> Communities	<b>Designations:</b>	<b>Tel Nos. / E-Mail Addresses:</b>
<b>Name of Head of Service:</b> Robin Staines	Head of Housing & Public Protection	01267 228960 <a href="mailto:rstaines@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">rstaines@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a>
<b>Report Author:</b> Kevin Evans	Service Improvement Officer	01554 899292 <a href="mailto:kdevans@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">kdevans@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a>



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 12<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2016

## The Carmarthenshire Homes Standard PLUS (CHS+) 'Delivering What Matters'

### Purpose:

The purpose of this plan is:

- To explain the vision and detail of the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard Plus, and what it means for tenants.
- To confirm the financial profile, based on current assumptions, for the delivery of CHS+ over the next three years.
- To produce a business plan for the annual application to Welsh Government for Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) for 2016/17, equating to £6.1m.

### Context:

Since 2006, we have been working to deliver the published work programmes to our tenants' homes.

These programmes were completed at the end of 2015.

As part of the CHS+, which has been developed with tenants and partners, we have made a commitment to:

- Support tenants and residents around things like Welfare Reform, getting services right, saving tenants money in the home, digital inclusion and active ageing
- Keep investing in homes to maintain standards
- Provide more homes to increase supply of affordable housing

This year's plan builds on this by and provides the detail on the actions we will deliver as well as how we will pay for it.

## What will we deliver?

The following provides a brief summary:

<b>Supporting Tenants and Residents</b>	<b>We will:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure all homes receive an annual home “MOT”</li><li>• Implement, in conjunction with tenants, the findings of the review of housing repairs</li><li>• Continue to support community initiatives in sheltered housing, fuel clubs and credit unions</li></ul>
<b>Investing in existing homes</b>	<b>We will:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Complete CHS work to homes where tenants have previously refused work</li><li>• Maintain homes that have had CHS work, replacing components based on condition</li><li>• Identify improvements to the CHS, particularly around energy efficiency</li><li>• Look at changing/converting homes that are not suitable</li><li>• Continue to look at future options for garage sites and land we currently own</li></ul>
<b>Providing more homes</b>	<b>We will:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide resources to enable the delivery of the Affordable Homes Delivery Plan (Over £19 million over the next three years, and £31 million over the next five years).</li></ul>

## Recommendation

That the Committee recommend to Executive Board that it:

- Confirm the vision of CHS+ and the financial and delivery programme over the next three years.
- Confirm submission of the plan to the Welsh Government.

<b>DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?</b>	<b>YES – The Carmarthenshire Homes Standard PLUS (CHS+): Delivering What Matters</b>
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## IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report.

**Signed: Robin Staines      Head of Housing & Public Protection**

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>YES</b>

### 1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities

The CHS+ will act as the framework for policy development across housing services delivery and will contribute to wider agendas.

### 2. Legal

The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 sets out our statutory duty to maintain the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (our version is the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard) in our existing stock.

### 3. Finance

Delivering the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard Plus will continue to present significant financial challenges and risks to the County Council.

We have spent over £231 Million to achieve the Standard. Over £117 Million of this spend has been funded through a prudential borrow programme.

Through careful management, the financial model remains viable, which enables us to maintain the CHS. A summary of costs to do this over the next three years is included in the Plan.

### 5. Risk Management Issues

The Carmarthenshire Homes Standard Programme is identified as high risk in the Council's Risk Management Plan. A risk management plan has been developed in conjunction with colleagues in risk management to mitigate and review all risks associated with the programme.

## 7. Physical Assets

The Carmarthenshire Homes Standard Plus will involve the management, maintenance and improvement of the Council's housing stock. This will be carried out within the context of our asset management principles which are defined within the plan. Any decision to acquire, convert or dispose of land or homes will be considered in line with these principles.

## CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below:

Signed: Robin Staines      Head of Housing & Public Protection

**1. Local Member(s) – N/A**

**2. Community / Town Council –** All Town and Community Councils were engaged in the development of this plan.

**3. Relevant Partners – N/A**

**4. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations –** Substantial engagement was carried out with tenants and other partners in the development of this plan. This included stakeholder events, 1-2-1 interviews, visits to communities and attendance at various meetings.

**Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information  
List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

**THESE ARE DETAILED BELOW:**

Title of Document	File Ref No. / Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
The Carmarthenshire Homes Standard PLUS (CHS+) 'Delivering What Matters' 2015/18	<b>Cymraeg</b> <a href="http://www.sirgar.llyw.cymru/media/1035257/CHS_Business_Plan_CYM.pdf">http://www.sirgar.llyw.cymru/media/1035257/CHS_Business_Plan_CYM.pdf</a>  <b>English</b> <a href="http://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/media/1035260/CHS_Business_Plan_ENG.pdf">http://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/media/1035260/CHS_Business_Plan_ENG.pdf</a>

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Carmarthenshire  
Homes Standard  
Plus: Delivering  
What Matters  
2016-2019

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January 2016

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DRAFT

## Contents

Cllr Linda Davies – Evans - Executive Board Member for Housing.....	2
Developing THE CHS <i>plus</i> - The story so far .....	3
What matters.....	4
The CHS <i>plus</i> .....	6
Supporting tenants and residents .....	7
Investing in tenants’ homes.....	9
Improving, maintaining and managing 9,000 homes .....	9
How we will pay for this.....	13
Planning Assumptions.....	13

### The Carmarthenshire Homes Standard *Plus* (CHS+) means....

- A standard that continues to evolve; improving the quality of housing and services for tenants and residents in Carmarthenshire. This will be done by focusing on what matters, within available resources.
- A flexibility to deliver our vision around affordable housing and exploit opportunities as they arise.
- Delivering as many wider benefits as possible to get the biggest impact from investments.

#### Did you know...

- We manage nearly 9,000 homes
- There are over 7,000 households on the Housing Choice Register
- We get about 1,100 empty homes a year between ourselves and Housing Associations
- We carried out over 24,000 repairs to tenants’ homes during 2015/16
- We have engaged with over 1000 tenants in our community
- Tenants pay over £35m every year in rent
- We have spent over £200m since 2005 improving council homes

## **Cllr Linda Davies – Evans - Executive Board Member for Housing**

In 2006 the Council started its ambitious programme to achieve the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard (CHS) by the end of 2015.

I am pleased to say that we have delivered the programme, on time, to homes where tenants have agreed to have work. I am really proud of this significant achievement.

Even though the programmes have been delivered, this does not mean the end of the CHS. There remains much more to do.

Last year, we introduced the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard Plus, building on the success of the CHS and extending to ensure we maintain and improve on what we've achieved.

Supporting tenants and residents is a key theme within the plan. Here, we set out how we will deliver what matters in terms of improving services, preparing for welfare reform and saving them money in their home.

We have agreed to maintain homes to the CHS. Over the next three years we will be investing over £44 million improving homes, delivering the CHS to those where tenants have previously declined, as well as maintaining the standard. Last year we agreed that we would replace components such as kitchens and bathrooms based on condition, not time.

There are also opportunities to improve the standard. Improving the energy efficiency of homes is an area where further work is required.

Finally, we have made a commitment to increase the supply of affordable homes. We know that we need to provide 2,000 affordable homes by 2020 for those in greatest need. Over the next five years, we will spend over £30 million of HRA funding to help us achieve this target.

We will only be able to achieve the above by continuing to work together, focusing on what really matters to make the difference in our communities.

I look forward to your support.

**Cllr. Linda Evans**

Executive Board Member for Housing

## Developing THE CHS *plus* - The story so far

By the end of 2015, we have completed the CHS to all homes that wanted work carried out.

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>CHS/WHQS</b>	6%	7%	8%	8%	9%	37%	52%	70%	88%	😊
<b>Roofs &amp; Associated Components</b>	100%	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊
<b>Windows &amp; Doors</b>	58%	65%	74%	86%	95%	100%	😊	😊	😊	😊
<b>Loft</b>	0	0	19%	67%	89%	100%	😊	😊	😊	😊
<b>Cavity</b>	44%	53%	77%	78%	96%	100%	😊	😊	😊	😊
<b>Hard Wired Smoke Detectors</b>	37%	38%	51%	57%	63%	74%	80%	86%	90%	😊
<b>Electrical Systems</b>	28%	28%	36%	44%	53%	65%	74%	81%	90%	😊
<b>Full Central Heating</b>	73%	78%	79%	83%	86%	91%	94%	95%	97%	😊
<b>Energy Efficient Central Heating</b>	3%	6%	8%	22%	30%	52%	64%	76%	88%	😊
<b>Kitchens</b>	7%	7%	12%	20%	29%	46%	58%	71%	88%	😊
<b>Bathrooms</b>	7%	7%	12%	24%	34%	52%	64%	74%	88%	😊
<b>Security Lighting</b>	10%	10%	16%	26%	36%	48%	63%	74%	88%	😊
<b>CO Detectors</b>	10%	10%	16%	26%	36%	53%	64%	74%	88%	😊
<b>Power Points</b>	4%	7%	14%	24%	35%	51%	63%	74%	88%	😊
<b>Energy Rating (SAP &gt;65)</b>	22%	30%	40%	55%	60%	67%	68%	69%	85%	😊

## Tenant Satisfaction

During 2014 we asked all our tenants a number of questions about the services we provide. Over 2,000 tenants responded.

- 74% of tenants were very/fairly satisfied with the overall service provided by Carmarthenshire Housing Service
- 74% of tenants were very/fairly satisfied with the current state of repair of their home (up from 62% in 2009)
- Over 90% were very/fairly satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live

We will continue to work with tenants to improve these satisfaction rates, ensuring that we not only focus on what really matters to them, but being open in terms of what can and can't be achieved. Updated satisfaction results will be available during the spring of 2016

## Health improvements

We are continuing with our Health Impact Study. The annual perception survey, which was last completed in 2014, showed that:



- 90% of tenants now feel that their home suits their needs, this is up from 73% in 2009.
- 60% of tenants now find it very/fairly easy to meet the costs of living in their home, this is up from 34% in 2009.
- 27% of tenants did not visit their GP in the previous 3 months, this is up from 17% in 2009.

In February 2016, we will be completing our final perception survey to understand, from a tenants' perspective, what impact the CHS has had on them.

In October 2016, we will also be producing the results of the major academic study that has been tracking the improvement work with tenants' actual health over the last five years. This will hopefully show the positive impact this major housing investment is not only having on tenants' actual health but also the local health service.

#### **Valerie's story: Internal work to a home in Cynwyl Elfed**

Over the last nine years, we have provided tenants with new kitchens, bathrooms and heating systems as part of the internal work programmes.

In 2015, Valerie from Cynwyl Elfed had work done to her home. Valerie said,

"I have a fantastic new kitchen and I am very pleased. I found the contractors very accommodating, and I was informed daily of what was going to happen next. They were very clean and tidy"

### **Job and training opportunities**

The improvement work has helped create training and employment opportunities. Since the start of the programme, over 200 apprenticeships have been delivered.

The Framework used to deliver the CHS comes to an end in 2016, and we are currently completing the procurement process for its replacement. As part of the new framework, we will continue to ask contractors to maximize the benefit of our investment through creating training and employment opportunities.

### **What matters....?**

As we talk to people about the housing service, they tell us what matters to them.

### **Tenants' lives**

General feedback from tenants this year continues to tell us that our current priorities are still really important. Tenants wanted us to ensure that we continue to support them in their home. We also need to ensure we need to maintain standards and are proactive in the

day to day repair service. Tenants also talked about providing more homes as this was important to their own families.

Older tenants talked about social isolation, loneliness and opportunities to remain active through community based activities that give them more confidence and build relationships.

Younger tenants told us of the need for work and training opportunities through delivering the CHS+ as well as things to do to keep active.

### Enabling tenants to pay their rent

Rent arrears have reduced over the last 12 months. This has been achieved through focusing our efforts on supporting and trying to engage with tenants. It is likely that we will have to maintain this focus over the coming months to prevent them from rising again. We will focus on distinguishing between those who want to pay, but are finding difficulty and those who can pay, but simply won't.

We also have to do more to help our tenants including opportunities to find work, training or help start their own businesses.

Experience tells us that Universal Credit will have a significant impact, especially the demand for on line claims and access to bank accounts. While welfare reform affects some, the general rise in the cost of living and control on wages affects all.

### Maintaining tenants' homes

Tenants regularly tell us that getting repairs done on time and maintaining homes to a good standard is important to them. In addition, maintaining the CHS is now a statutory duty.

In August, staff and tenants took part in a review of the Repairs service. Part of the work involved establishing what good looks like. Comments received are set out below.

From our tenants' point of view, good is:

- Having an appointment at a time that suits them
- Keeping them informed of what's happening with their repair
- Respecting their personal needs
- Knowing who to contact and be advised when they change
- Having confidence that jobs logged are being addressed
- Listening to them and their opinions
- Completing work to a good standard

From our staff's point of view, good is:

- Having more time to communicate with tenants
- Being empowered to make the right decisions
- Having access to full accurate and consistent information (IT)
- Treated as an equal and with respect

- Feeling safe when in tenants homes
- Having multi skills to be more productive on a job
- Feeling part of a single joined up team working together

In November, a small pilot was launched in the Seaside area. Officers from the Communities, Environment and Chief Executives Department set up a multi skilled team to deal with responsive and preventative maintenance. The outcome of the pilot is due in the spring of 2016.

### Tenant Involvement

Our tenants have also developed their own involvement plan “Creating Better Communities Together”. We plan to review this with tenants over the next 12 months in line with their aspirations.

### Housing and Regeneration

This partnership will continue with this plan and we are firmly aligning with the new regeneration frameworks in Wales, and in particular the Swansea Bay City Region. We are currently working with regeneration colleagues on schemes in Llanelli Town Centre and are also starting to look at the possibility of changing the housing stock in certain areas to better meet future housing need.

### The CHS *plus*

CHS+ will make sure:

- Homes remain in a good state of repair
- Free from damp and significant condensation
- Structurally safe
- In safe and attractive environments
- Suitable for the household
- Well managed

CHS+ will also

- Have regular property MOTs; and
- Base replacement programmes on condition not time e.g. kitchens and bathrooms

AND

- Be flexible enough to meet tenants’ different expectations e.g. older people to remain active
- Ensure the right types of homes are in the right area
- Develop and deliver an ambitious vision to increase affordable housing supply
- Focus on saving money in the home through smarter and more sustainable living
- Promote the use of digital technology in the home
- Change thinking to improve the quality of services provided

- Explore opportunities for CHS+ for other tenures (social housing, private renters and owner occupiers)

## Supporting tenants and residents

### Welfare reform

We do not underestimate the impact welfare reforms are having on tenants. **We will:**

- Continue to provide as much support and advice to tenants who are impacted by the changes and work closely with other advice providers to ensure this is delivered as efficiently as possible
- Increase the training and employment opportunities for tenants, prospective tenants and the homeless
- Encourage our tenants to use us as a first point of contact for advice and practical help to maintain their tenancies and prevent them from getting in to debt. This will be even more important with the potential introduction of Universal Credit
- Continue to promote a range of measures to support tenants in tackling Welfare Reform (e.g. help to downsize, hardship fund for tenants that are most affected, and links in with Credit Unions and Fuel Clubs)
- Increase our provision to write off bad debts to £705,000 in 2016/17 (up from £652,000 in 2015/16), with a further rise to £708,000 starting in 2017/18 and £709,000 in 2018/19

### Getting services right

Tenants have been telling us that the repair service continues to really matter to them. **We will:**

- Continue to check homes to ensure they are in a good state of repair through an annual “MOT”.
- Implement the replacement programme for components (kitchens, bathrooms, central heating etc) based on condition not time.
- Review our approach to maintaining homes following a pilot of the locality based repairs service.
- Carry out improvements to sheltered schemes to ensure they continue to meet the needs of their tenants.
- Look at the way we assist with community activities for residents to deliver things that they want. We will further use Time Credits to do this.

### Saving tenants money

Over the last 7 years we have made improvements to our tenants’ homes that will help to reduce their carbon emissions and save them money. Fuel poverty (where people spend more than 10% of their income on fuel bills) remains a major issue for many families. It is estimated that as many as 30% of households in the County are experiencing fuel poverty.

One of the key things we can do is to raise awareness about how things work in the home and how they can be used differently e.g. central heating boilers.

We have already completed (2009) the cavity and loft insulation programme and our window upgrades. Since then our focus has very much been on the delivery of the remaining components e.g. central heating systems and work to non-traditional type homes.

People have been telling us that we can do more to introduce initiatives that save residents money in the home. **We will:**

- Deliver a trial project on the use of LED lighting in homes
- Continue to increase the number of Fuel Clubs where there is no mains gas supply

#### **Len's story – Wireless internet in sheltered housing**

In 2015, we completed the installation of wireless internet into the communal lounges in our sheltered housing schemes.

Len from Capel Hendre is one of the tenants actively using the internet. He says:

“Having the wireless internet available has allowed me to use my tablet at home. There are a few of us here who use it. I hope that other tenants start to see the benefits and possibly use it to keep in touch with friends and relatives and even start using it for their shopping”.

#### **Digital services**

People have also been telling us that there is more we can do to help them use, and have access to, digital services, e.g. using phones, TVs or computer to access information and services.

During 2014 and 2015 we installed WiFi facilities to all our sheltered schemes.

People who have access to digital technology can:

- Access training and employment opportunities that will increase chances of getting a job.
- Access Government websites to apply for welfare benefits, maximising income.
- Access cost comparison sites, which can help reduce living costs.
- Interact with others through social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter that will reduce potential isolation.
- Access things like health and well-being services that can prevent ill-health.

**To enable this, we will:**

- Identify opportunities to make the purchasing of broadband more affordable.

- Work with tenants to confirm what services they would like to access through the internet.

## Investing in tenants' homes

### Improving, maintaining and managing 9,000 homes

In 2015, we have completed the work programmes to achieve the CHS. The programmes, which were developed by tenants, have delivered many improvements, and include:

- Internal works to replace kitchens and bathrooms, upgrade central heating and electrics.
- Installing double glazed uPVC windows and doors.
- Improving energy efficiency through installing cavity, loft, and where necessary, external wall insulation; and
- External work to paint, render and ensure paths and gardens are free from health and safety issues e.g. trip hazards

Even though we have achieved the Standard to homes where tenants have agreed to have work, there remains work to do.

### Homes where tenants have declined all or part of the work

Some tenants have declined part, or all of the CHS work. This equates to around 9% of all tenants. These declines have been for a number of reasons, which include:

- Tenants were happy with their homes, or they have made their own improvements
- Some, particularly the elderly, did not want the disruption of having work done

Our approach to complete work which has previously been refused is:

- Existing tenants can request that the work is included in a future work programme, based on condition; and
- Empty homes have any remaining CHS work completed before they're re-let

#### We will:

- Continue with this approach to maintain the CHS, with funding included in the CHS+ Business Plan based on need.

#### David's story - External Wall Insulation in Llangennech

David and his family have had external wall insulation applied to her home. The work, as part of the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard, is designed to improve the energy efficiency of her home and reduce heating costs.

External wall insulation is applied to the outside of homes which don't have cavity walls, or are not suitable for cavity wall insulation.

David has said “My home is much warmer since having work done. It has also made a big difference to the appearance of the estate”.

## Maintain homes which meet the CHS

As part of CHS+, components such as kitchens and bathrooms will be replaced when they need replacing.

Based on the information we have, we know that some work will be required over the next three years to maintain the Standard. This includes:

- Surveying the condition of nearly 600 kitchens and over 360 bathrooms; replacing ones that no longer meet the Standard
- Upgrading the electrics at nearly 230 homes
- Servicing heating appliances at 8,910 homes, 225 of which will be nearing 15 years old
- Rendering nearly 1,100 homes
- Re-roofing nearly 450 homes

Information on the condition of components will be gathered through the annual property MOTs. The MOTs, which were introduced in the autumn, allow us to:

- Check the condition of components and identify any planned work such as kitchen replacement or rendering that may be needed;
- Ensure tenants’ details are correct. This is important as the information can be used to contact tenants when needed, and also, helps identify tenants that may be affected by changes to benefits etc;
- Identify repairs that may be required and ensure tenants are looking after their homes. This allows us to raise jobs for any repairs, and to update tenants on any outstanding repairs;
- Identify environmental improvements in communities.

By the end of December, over 200 MOTs have been completed.

### We will:

- Continue to roll out these surveys, and aim to visit all our tenants by the end of October 2016;
- Review information gathered to plan future work programmes;
- Inform tenants, through publishing a planned programme of work, what work is due to be completed to their homes.

## Identify ways we can improve the standard of homes

To continue maintaining the CHS, there are additional improvements that we recognise are needed to tenants' homes. Energy efficiency is one area where we know more work is needed.

### We will:

- Survey a sample of homes that do not have an Energy Performance Certificate of 65 by the end of September 2016;
- Engage with tenants of these homes to identify which improvements we can make;
- Develop a work programme to deliver cost effective improvements to these homes.

Tenants have also told us that homes which have previously been painted are due to have re-painting completed over the next few years.

We only paint homes where the rendering is in a good condition. Homes which need rendering are included in the relevant programme.

### We will:

- Survey homes which have previously been painted to establish their condition;
- Plan the necessary work and inform tenants when it will be completed.

## Providing homes suitable to tenants needs'

One of the key priorities of CHS+ from the engagement carried out was how could we ensure we had the right type of homes in the right area.

There is no doubt there is a significant shortage of affordable housing in the County, but we sometimes have difficulty allocating some of our existing homes. Whilst we will do everything we can to match suitable households to these homes, we believe that it would be sensible to change these homes into ones that better meet future housing need.

### We will continue to:

- Complete options appraisals on sites which may need changing / converting into homes that can help meet housing need
- Consider demolishing homes, or disposing of them, if they are no longer fit for purpose including if it does not make financial sense in keeping them or if they are no longer desirable. The site can be recycled for new, more appropriate uses or sold.



## Selling land where there is no purpose holding on to it

We have housing land located across the County. Some of this land has been identified as being suitable for providing more affordable homes. These areas of land are included in our Affordable Homes Delivery Plan.

We also have other land.

### **We will:**

- Dispose of land that we no longer need

## Garage sites

Garage areas continue to be a concern in terms of perception. In some instances, the costs of repairs and maintenance far outweigh what we will get back in as income.

We have already demolished 14 garage sites and there are another 12 due to be demolished before the end of the year. We will continue with this approach, in consultation with the local community. In each instance we will consider whether to:

- Continue to use as garage site
- Sell sites on for development
- Demolish or convert to general car parking areas or other community benefits
- Transfer site for residents to manage if they want to do so

We are required by law to ensure that we achieve market rent for garages or land that we let or sell. During 2015, we will:

- Complete an exercise benchmarking our rents to those charged by other private and public sector organisations.

## Providing more homes

### Increasing the supply of affordable homes

In 2015, we launched our Affordable Housing Commitment.

The Commitment brings together the results of our consultation and research and sets out our vision on how we can maximise the supply of affordable homes over the next 5 years.

The result of our consultation has allowed us to develop 5 key principles that commit us to:

- Targeting help on where the need is highest, in both urban and rural areas, by delivering more affordable homes for rent
- Being more flexible - whether by bringing wasted homes back into use, buying existing homes or building new ones.

- Doing whatever it takes by developing innovative and creative ways to deliver more
- Using our resources in the best possible way to ensure as many new homes as possible
- Using the expertise, skills and resources of those we work with

Our research into housing need tells us that to meet the highest housing need we would have to provide at least 2,000 homes by 2020, an average of 400 every year.

To allow us to deliver against our commitment and meet housing need, over the next five years we will spend over £60 million which we have allocated to provide over 1,000 homes. £31 million of this funding comes from the Housing Revenue Account.

This funding will be used to fund the solutions we've identified. **We will:**

- Increase the number of tenancies managed by our Social Lettings Agency
- Bring empty homes back into use
- Buy back private homes
- Use developers' contributions to affordable homes in more creative ways

The Plan also identifies opportunities that could allow us to provide even more affordable homes.

**We will:**

- Consider the use of alternative delivery models that will allow us to better meet housing need

Further information on our approach to maximise the availability of affordable housing can be found in the Affordable Housing Commitment and the Delivery Plan.

## How we will pay for this

### Planning Assumptions

To help us plan our investments, we must make certain assumptions. At the time of writing this plan, we are still awaiting confirmation of rent increase for 2016/17 from Welsh Government. The assumptions made below are in line with the modelling data requested by Welsh Government during autumn 2015.

Changes to our assumptions may mean that we have to re-visit the objectives included in this plan.

#### Income

Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) <i>i.e. the amount of capital funding we get from the Welsh Government</i>	£6M each year. This is on the basis that we receive £673 for each home.
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Rent increase 2015/16	1.6%, in-line with autumn modelling for Welsh Government.
Future rent increase levels <i>Based on Welsh Government Policy</i>	Welsh Government CPI estimates plus 1.5% along with progression towards harmonisation of rents.
Borrowing <i>i.e. the amount we need to borrow to support our investment</i>	TBC

### Expenditure

Assumed Borrowing costs <i>i.e. the amount it costs to borrow money</i>	Cost of existing and new debt: 2016/17: 4.89% 2017/18: 4.77% 2018/19: 4.71%	Cost of exiting HRAS: Average of 4.19%
Provision for Bad debt <i>i.e. debt that we will be unable to recover</i>	2016/17: £702,000 2017/18: £705,000 2018/19: £708,000	

### OTHER

Expenditure/income inflation	Employees' pay at 1% per year for the next three years. As per assumptions for Council Fund.
Right to Buy receipts <i>i.e. Money we get from tenants' buying their home</i>	No receipts from 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2015 following suspension of Right to Buy
Balances on the revenue account <i>i.e. the amount of money we need to keep in reserve</i>	Minimum of £900,000 (based on £100 per property)

### CAPITAL SPENDING

SCHEME	Budget 2016/17 (£000s')	Budget 2017/18 (£000s')	Budget 2018/19 (£000s')
Improving / Upgrading kitchens, bathrooms, heating and electrical	1,733	4,208	2,187
Environmental works, including garage sites	380	395	401
Rendering	1,652	1,316	1,285
Energy efficiency works	40	526	632
Adaptations	926	506	514
Affordable Housing Delivery	6,498	6,480	6,480
Re-roofing	706	759	771
Empty homes needing major work	300	304	308
Planned replacement programme i.e. Boiler replacements	782	356	343
Sheltered Scheme Improvements	100	354	360
Structural works on estates i.e. Boundary walls	501	304	308
Programme management	167	169	172
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13,785</b>	<b>15,677</b>	<b>13,761</b>

**FUNDING SOURCE**

	Budget 2015/16 (£000s')	Budget 2016/17 (£000s')	Budget 2017/18 (£000s')
Major Repairs Allowance	6,025	6,025	6,025
Useable receipts	0	620	0
External income	0	0	0
Direct revenue financing	463	445	445
Borrowing	7,297	8,587	7,291
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13,785</b>	<b>15,677</b>	<b>13,761</b>

**REVENUE SPENDING**

	Budget 2016/17 (£000s')	Budget 2017/18 (£000s')	Budget 2018/19 (£000s')
Repairs and maintenance	8,692	8,962	9,284
Supervision and management	6,202	6,303	6,396
Central support charges / Recharges	3,034	3,054	3,080
Direct revenue financing of work	463	445	445
Provision for bad debt	705	708	709
Capital financing cost	13,981	14,353	14,613
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>33,078</b>	<b>33,825</b>	<b>34,488</b>

**REVENUE FUNDING**

	Budget 2016/17 (£000s')	Budget 2017/18 (£000s')	Budget 2018/19 (£000s')
Rents	-35,816	-37,035	-38,500
Service charges	- 659	-672	-690
Interest	- 48	-72	-100
Recharges from other departments)	-366	-370	-375
Grants / other income	-1,031	-707	-721
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>-37,920</b>	<b>-38,857</b>	<b>-40,385</b>

**HRA END OF YEAR POSITION**

	Budget 2016/17 (£000s')	Budget 2017/18 (£000s')	Budget 2018/19 (£000s')
Balance Brought Forward	-7,916	-12,804	-17,880
HRA Budgeted Surplus (-) / Deficit (+)	-4,888	-5,076	-5,905
<b>BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD</b>	<b>-12,804</b>	<b>-17,879</b>	<b>-23,785</b>

# COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

## 12<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2016

### Affordable Homes Delivery Plan

#### To consider and comment on the following issues:

The Scrutiny Committee is requested to recommend to Executive Board that it:

- Confirm the strategy to utilise our existing options to maximise the supply of affordable homes over the next five years.
- Look at options to maximise the number of new build homes that could be delivered and provide recommendations by September 2016.
- Confirm the action area approach for delivering more affordable homes in different parts of the County.

#### Reasons:

- The purpose of this plan is to explain how we will deliver over 1000 additional affordable homes over the next five years, with a total investment exceeding £60m. We will also explain how we can nearly double the number of additional homes by developing delivery options for new build schemes.
- The plan also explains where these homes will be, what resources are currently available and how we could potentially deliver more affordable homes in the future.
- To enable the delivery of over 1000 affordable homes by being flexible in terms of current options and delivering what people have asked for as part of the 'Affordable Housing Commitment'.
- To utilise a variety of solutions to maximise the supply of affordable homes across the County.
- To look at further increasing the supply of affordable homes by using our land asset creatively and working in partnership with the private sector to ensure that more new build homes are delivered.
- To ensure that the supply of affordable homes reflects housing need across the County.
- To formulate views for submission to the Executive Board.

**To be referred to the Executive Board / Council for decision: YES**

**Executive Board: 22nd February 2016**

**County Council: 10th March 2016**

**Executive Board Member Portfolio Holders:**

- Cllr. Linda Evans (Housing)
- Cllr. David Jenkins (Resources)

<b>Directorate:</b> Communities	<b>Designations:</b>	<b>Tel Nos. / E-Mail Addresses:</b>
<b>Name of Head of Service:</b> Robin Staines	Head of Housing & Public Protection	01267 228960 <a href="mailto:rstaines@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">rstaines@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a>
<b>Report Author:</b> Jonathan Morgan	Housing Services Manager	01554 899285 <a href="mailto:jmorgan@sirgar.gov.uk">jmorgan@sirgar.gov.uk</a>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 12<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2016

## Affordable Homes Delivery Plan

### Purpose:

We have recently published our five year vision<sup>1</sup> for maximising the supply of affordable homes. The purpose of this plan is to provide the detail on how and where we will deliver more homes. It will also outline what resources will be used and how more could potentially be accessed if we are flexible and creative.

The initial programme will deliver over **1000** additional affordable homes over the next five years, with a total investment exceeding **£60m**.

The plan will also explain how we could deliver an ambitious new build programme by looking at our delivery options. This will further increase the number of homes delivered and provide additional investment.

The plan will be reviewed on an annual basis to take advantage of further opportunities.

### What is needed?

People told us that there is a need for smaller type homes, mainly for rent and for local people. People also told us that we need to maximise the use of existing under used homes to meet the need for affordable homes.

Our assessment of need told us that to meet the highest housing need we would have to provide at least 2,000 homes by 2020, an average of 400 every year. Historically, we have provided around 70 additional homes each year for the last five years. In 2015/16, however, we will deliver in excess of 200 additional affordable homes. This plan sets out how we will deliver even better performance.

This represents a huge challenge for our delivery plan, but is something that we will approach pro-actively to maximise the number of additional homes delivered. This will mean maximising the delivery and being flexible in the options we already use, as well as looking at creative solutions for new build in utilising our land asset. We need to make sure that the funding available goes as far as it can.

<sup>1</sup> 'Our commitment to Affordable Homes' 2015-2020

Our approach to delivery will be in line with the principles that were agreed as part of our Affordable Housing Commitment.

### **What solutions are available to us?**

A variety of solutions have been looked at as part of the development of the delivery plan. Each solution will deliver more homes, but some are more cost effective than others.

In general terms, the delivery plan looks at the following solutions to deliver more affordable homes:

1. Managing additional tenancies in the private sector.
2. Bringing empty homes back into use.
3. Buying homes sold under the Right to Buy scheme (RTB) and buying private homes.

These options are the most cost effective; however, the plan does allow us to look at other solutions. These will be:

- Using our own land to initially deliver a limited number of new build homes ourselves.
- Making land available to build new homes in partnership with housing associations and the private sector.

### **So, how many affordable homes will be delivered over the next five years?**

We know we will be able to deliver over 1000 additional affordable homes across the county over the next five years. This equates to a total investment in housing exceeding £60m.

This strategy shows how we will use our existing options to maximise delivery. This is based on getting better at what we do as well as providing additional resources. This approach is relatively straight forward and quick to deliver.

Funding such as Social Housing Grant will be targeted on the more expensive schemes in rural areas. We will use it to support wider regeneration initiatives and specialist type housing for people with disabilities. It makes more sense to use grant money for more expensive schemes.



The figures below highlight/confirm what will be delivered and forms the first part of our approach.

Solution	No. of homes	Funding Source	HRA investment (£millions)	Total Investment (£millions)
Managing homes in the private sector (including the Social Letting Agency)	242	HRA	1.1	1.1
Bringing empty houses back into homes	280	WG "Houses into Homes"/HRA	4.0	5.6
Buy existing private sector homes	187	HRA	20.2	20.2
Housing Association development – <b>committed schemes</b>	59	SHG		0.5 <sup>2</sup>
Housing Association Development – <b>future priorities</b>				
• Rural Areas	6	SHG	0.1	1.0
• Regeneration Initiatives	43			5.3
• Unallocated Grant	77			10.3
Council New Build and Land Acquisition	45	HRA	5.6	5.6
• <b>New Build</b> Amman & the Amman Valley Llanelli & District				
• <b>Land Acquisition</b> Carmarthen & the West Carmarthenshire Rural and Market Towns				
Developers contributions to homes in the areas	88	Private Finance		11.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1027</b>		<b>£31.0m</b>	<b>£60.6m</b>

### What are the assumptions?

- Being able to maintain the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard as our first priority. Current projections are £415m over the next 30 years.
- Council house rents increasing by inflation plus 1.5% over the next five years.
- Being able to remain within our borrowing limits set by Welsh Government.
- Continuing to receive over £6m every year from Welsh Government for major repairs to existing Council homes.
- Additional revenue expenditure (£172k per year) being available to increase capacity to deliver some of the solutions, e.g. bringing empty homes back into use or understanding rural housing needs better.

<sup>2</sup> £7.2m of grant already drawn down in previous years

- There is more than enough scope to deliver the number of social lettings, empty homes and buying homes in the private sector.
- Enough capacity is developed with Housing Associations to deliver affordable housing solutions where they are needed.

***Recommendation 1: To confirm the strategy to utilise our existing options to maximise the supply of affordable homes.***

**What can we do to deliver even more homes?**

We believe, however, that we could start to meet this gap by being flexible and looking at **alternative delivery vehicles**. This approach could offer the potential to further develop our council land as a valuable asset and help us to consider a far more ambitious new build programme across all tenures. This will also significantly contribute to the Council’s long term vision of creating more jobs, stimulate economic growth and help wider scale regeneration activities.

Examples of alternative delivery models are shown below:

We have also estimated what additional funding would be needed to deliver 900 more homes through new build (the “gap”) for each of the models.

<b>Model</b>	<b>Description</b>
Development by the Council themselves	Council builds and receives a direct return through rental income and capital appreciation.  Funding required estimated at <b>£126m</b>
Developments with registered providers (e.g. housing association)	Direct grant/loan or bond provided by Council to housing association. Land assets may also be used with the housing association providing the finance.  Funding required estimated at <b>£81m</b> (based on 58% grant)
Developments through a Local Housing Company /Special purpose vehicle/ Local Asset backed vehicle/Joint Venture <sup>3</sup>	Council invests land, partner provides funding and house building/marketing expertise.  Funding required estimated at <b>£99m</b>

Options on the preferred delivery model will be provided to members by September 2016.

***Recommendation 2: To look at options to maximise the number of new build homes that could be delivered and provide recommendations to members by September 2016.***

<sup>3</sup> Will offer different approaches to tax, on or off balance sheet, borrowing, protecting public interests and visibility of council involvement

## How many homes will be delivered in different areas of the County?

Areas of highest housing need are distributed across the county and it will be important that our overall delivery strategy reflects this.

As a result, we have developed four 'Action Areas'. These areas have been developed by building up the wards in the county into distinct areas, which link to a degree of cultural identity which people can relate to.

These are:

1. Ammanford & the Amman Valley
2. Carmarthen & the West
3. Carmarthenshire Rural & Market Towns
4. Llanelli & District

**Appendix B** confirms our approach to carrying out the housing needs surveys in the Carmarthenshire Rural and Market Towns area.

***Recommendation 3: To confirm the action area approach for delivering more affordable homes in different parts of the County.***

**DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?**

**YES – Affordable Housing Delivery Plan**

# IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report.

Signed: **Robin Staines**      **Head of Housing & Public Protection**

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>

## 1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities

This plan aligns with our previous Affordable Housing Commitment 2015-20 that sets out our clear principles in terms of delivery.

The delivery plan will be based on housing need across the County and the solutions will be based on that need.

## 2. Legal

The Housing (Wales) Act 2015 sets out our statutory duty to maintain the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (our version is the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard) in our existing stock. This must be our first priority.

There will be legal agreements associated with bringing empty homes back into use, buying homes as well as the Social Lettings agency leasehold/tenancy agreements. These delivery solutions are proposed to be delivered and funded through the HRA. However detailed legal consideration will be carried out on the implementation of these solutions.

Should alternative delivery models be set up, there will be significant legal implications for the Council and recommended model. These implications will be set out in a separate report should there be agreement to further explore options.

## 3. Finance

The current affordable housing delivery plan has been developed based on some significant financial assumptions, which are noted below. It is proposed that these delivery solutions will be supported by funding through the HRA. The funding model and its assumptions which supports the delivery of the homes proposed within this plan will be extremely sensitive to any change, both positively and negatively and will need to be monitored regularly.

The financial assumptions contained within this current plan are:

- Maintaining the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard in line with current projections over the next 30 years i.e. £415m
- Being allowed, through the Social Housing Rents Policy, to increase Council house rents by at least inflation plus 1.5% over the next five years. The level of additional borrowing will be around £5m every year over the next five years based on this rental increase.
- Remaining within the borrowing cap at the levels set by the Welsh Government.
- Continuing to receive over £6m every year for major repairs to council homes from Welsh Government.
- Revenue savings required from inflation plus 1.5% increase in rent from April 2016 will be firstly met by our net gain from exiting the HRAS system in April 2016.
- Additional revenue required to deliver some of the solutions being funded from further efficiencies within our current plan and the increased rental income that would be received over time.

Any change in these assumptions will impact on the funding available to support the delivery plan.

The delivery plan requires a total investment of £60.6million. This is a combination of HRA, Welsh Government grant funding and private finance. The total level of HRA investment equates to £31million. This will be used to fund housing needs assessments in rural areas (£0.1m) and the following delivery solutions:

- manage more homes in the private sector (£1.1m)
- bring empty homes back into use (£4.0m)
- buying existing homes in the private sector (£20.2m)
- building new homes and land acquisition (£5.6m)

The grant funding expected from Welsh Government will be Social Housing Grant and Houses to Homes funding. Social Housing grant will fund up to 58% of the development costs, the remaining 42% of the development costs must be funded by the Housing Association. The grant allocated to Carmarthenshire equates to £2m per annum but will generate a total investment of £17.2m throughout the life of the plan. Houses to Homes grant funding equates to £1.6m.

The level of private finance identified in the plan equates to £11m. This will be in the form of commuted sums from private developments through the planning system.

## 5. Risk Management Issues

Failure to deliver the plan will mean the gap between what is needed to meet affordable housing need will get wider. A greater number of households will be in a position where they are unable to afford a home and in a place where they do not want to live.

There will be risks associated with the delivery of the solutions should any of the assumptions within the plan change. These assumptions and associated risks will be reviewed on a regular basis by the CHS+ Steering Group. Any significant variations will be reported immediately through the monitoring and review process.

## 6. Staffing Implications

Additional staffing resources will be required to deliver the plan, particularly around the further development of the Social Lettings Agency and bringing empty homes back into use.

A further assessment will also be undertaken of what skills and capacity will be needed should we decide to implement more creative delivery structures.

## 7. Physical Assets

The delivery plan will result in an increase in homes owned and managed through the Housing Revenue Account.

# CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below:

Signed: Robin Staines      Head of Housing & Public Protection

**1. Local Member(s)** – Local members were fully involved as part of the development of the Affordable Housing Commitment and were supportive of our key principles. Local Members will be fully involved as part of the implementation of the plan.

**2. Community / Town Council** – Community and Town Councils were fully involved as part of the development of the Affordable Housing Commitment and were supportive of our key principles. Community and Town Councils will be fully involved as part of the implementation of the plan.

**3. Relevant Partners** – Partners were fully involved as part of the development of the Affordable Housing Commitment and were supportive of our key principles. Relevant partners will be key players in the implementation of the plan.

**4. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations** – Staff were fully involved as part of the development of the Affordable Housing Commitment and were supportive of our key principles. Relevant staff will be key players in the implementation of the plan.

**Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information  
List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

**THESE ARE DETAILED BELOW:**

Title of Document	File Ref No. / Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
Our Commitment to Affordable Homes – County Council (14th October 2015)	<a href="http://democracy.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=155&amp;MId=116&amp;Ver=4">http://democracy.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=155&amp;MId=116&amp;Ver=4</a>
Our Commitment to Affordable Homes – Joint Community And Social Care & Health Scrutiny Committee (23rd July 2015)	<p><b>Summary:</b>  <a href="http://online.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/agendas/eng/COMM20150723/SUM06.HTM">http://online.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/agendas/eng/COMM20150723/SUM06.HTM</a></p> <p><b>Report:</b>  <a href="http://online.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/agendas/eng/COMM20150723/REP06.HTM">http://online.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/agendas/eng/COMM20150723/REP06.HTM</a></p>

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# Affordable Homes



## Delivery Plan

2016-20



## Contents

Foreword by Cllr Linda Davies Evans	3
Purpose	4
What is needed?	4
What will be our approach to delivery?	4
What solutions are available to us?	5
What standards will apply?	6
So, how many affordable homes will be delivered over the next five years?	6
What are our assumptions to support the delivery plan?	7
What can we do to deliver even more homes?	7
How many homes will be delivered in different areas of the county?	9
Additional affordable homes by action area	10
Ammanford & the Amman Valley	12
Carmarthen & the West	13
Llanelli & District	15
Appendix A	16
Appendix B	18

## Foreword by Cllr Linda Davies Evans

I have great pleasure in introducing our plan to provide over 1,000 affordable homes over the next five years. This reflects the affordable housing commitment and principles adopted by our Council in October 2015. These were developed following wide ranging public consultation. We committed to deliver these new homes on the following principles:

- ✓ Targeting help where the need is highest, in both urban and rural areas, by delivering more affordable homes for rent
- ✓ Being more flexible - whether by bringing wasted homes back into use, buying existing homes or building new ones.
- ✓ Doing whatever it takes by developing innovative and creative ways to deliver more
- ✓ Using our resources in the best possible way to ensure as many new homes as possible
- ✓ Using the expertise, skills and resources of those we work with

This plan is based on realistic financial forecasts and deliverable targets. It sets out what type of new homes we will provide (either directly or with our partners). It is a truly county-wide plan which will deliver the much needed new affordable homes across our county.

While the focus will be on rented homes, we also recognise our communities' ambitions and aspirations. Hence we will also enable and deliver low cost home ownership where it is appropriate to do so.

However, it does not stop here. We are busily looking at new ways of providing even more new affordable housing, working with existing and potentially new partners. Our ambition is great, but it is recognised these ambitions have to be affordable, deliverable and sustainable. We are also fully committed to ensuring our existing homes are kept to the standard demanded by our tenants.

We will review the plan regularly and carefully manage its delivery to ensure our targets are met. I am also anxious that we build into future plans actions to meet the needs of vulnerable people. Work is underway to identify these needs and ensure this plan goes some way to meet all the diverse needs in our communities.

My belief is that good quality, affordable homes are the bed rock of healthy and sustainable communities. We know that in many places and for many people these homes are just not available. This plan will go some way towards rectifying this unacceptable situation. I ask you to work with us to deliver this plan and close this gap.

Councillor Linda Davies Evans  
Executive Board Member for Housing

## Purpose

We have recently published our five year vision<sup>1</sup> for increasing the supply of affordable homes in Carmarthenshire. The purpose of this plan is to provide the detail on how and where we will deliver more homes. It will also outline what resources will be used and how more could potentially be accessed if we are flexible and creative.

The initial programme will deliver over **1,000** additional affordable homes over the next five years, with a total investment exceeding **£60m**.

The plan will also explain how we could deliver an ambitious new build programme by looking at the delivery options. This will further increase the number of homes delivered and provide additional investment.

The plan will align with the recently published Regeneration Master Plan and will be reviewed at least annually to take advantage of new opportunities and the changing housing market.

## What is needed?

People told us that there is a need for smaller type homes, mainly for rent and for local people. People also told us that we need to maximise the use of existing homes when meeting affordable housing need, especially bringing empty homes back into use.

Our assessment of need told us that to meet the highest housing need we would have to provide at least 2,000 new homes by 2020, an average of 400 every year. This does represent a huge challenge for our delivery plan, but we will build on the work we have already done. Historically, we have provided around 70 additional homes each year for the last five years. In 2015/16, however, we will deliver in excess of 200 additional affordable homes. This plan sets out how we will deliver more in the future.

This will mean an innovative approach and by making the best use of our skills and resources. In doing so, we will also ensure that the programme for delivery takes account of the wider benefits of the investment. This will include the economic, social, health and well-being, environmental improvements and promoting the Welsh language benefits.

Above all, we want to ensure as many people as possible live in a home they can afford and in an area they want.

## What will be our approach to delivery?

Our approach will be based on the key principles that were developed as part of our affordable housing commitment which is based on what the public told us. They are:

- Targeting help where the need is highest, in both urban and rural areas, by delivering more affordable homes for rent.
- Being flexible, whether bringing empty homes back into use or buying existing homes.

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<sup>1</sup> Our Commitment to Affordable Homes 2015-2020

- Doing whatever it takes by developing innovative and creative ways to deliver more e.g. utilising our land to deliver more homes.
- Using our resources in the best possible way to ensure value for money.
- Using the expertise, skills and resources of others.

### **What solutions are available to us?**

A variety of solutions have been looked at as part of the development of this plan. Detailed work has been undertaken on each of the solutions and what they can deliver over the next five years.

Each solution will deliver more homes, but some are more cost effective than others. Appendix A highlights the various solutions that could be delivered. Not all of the solutions, however, will be available in the highest housing need areas. As a result, the delivery programme also provides a clear strategy for different parts of the county.

In general terms, the delivery programme looks at the following solutions to deliver more affordable homes:

1. Managing additional tenancies in the private sector.
2. Bringing empty homes back into use.
3. Buying existing homes.

The above provide the most cost effective options. However the plan includes other provisions. These include:

- Using our land to deliver a number of new council owned homes.
- Making land available to build homes in partnership with housing associations and the private sector.

Our known funding sources over the next five years will be:

- £31m available through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).
- Nearly £2m investment from Welsh Government to bring empty homes back into use.
- £17m of investment by housing associations (including £10m we administer for the Welsh Government to support housing association development - this is called Social Housing Grant or SHG).
- £11m investment using developers' contributions (sometimes known as section 106 agreements).

We will be creative in the use of developers' contributions. An action group has been formed with planning and corporate property colleagues to determine how best to both maximise and use the resources available. We believe there is a need to move away from direct affordable housing provision on site. The aim is to make the system simpler and make the best use of the funding available. Appendix B confirms what the group will be looking at.

## What standards will apply?

We will be reviewing the standards that apply to the delivery programme, making sure these standards are the most cost effective and sustainable in terms of design and specification.

## So, how many affordable homes will be delivered over the next five years?

Table 1 (below) highlights what we can deliver, based on maximising the number of affordable homes.

**From this information we know we will be able to deliver over 1,000 additional affordable homes across the county over the next five years. This will be a total investment exceeding £60m.**

Funding such as Social Housing Grant will be targeted on the more expensive schemes in rural areas. We will also use it to support wider regeneration initiatives and specialist type housing for people with disabilities.

*Table 1: Affordable housing delivery over the next five years*

Solution	Est. No. of homes	Funding source	HRA investment (£millions)	Total investment (£millions)
Managing homes in the private sector (including the Social Letting Agency)	242	HRA	1.1	1.1
Bringing empty houses back into homes	280	WG "Houses into Homes" fund/HRA	4.0	5.6
Buy existing homes in private sector	187	HRA	20.2	20.2
Housing Association development- <b>committed schemes</b>	59	SHG		0.5 <sup>2</sup>
Housing Association development- <b>future priorities</b>				
• Rural Areas	6	SHG	0.1	1.0
• Regeneration initiatives	43			5.3
• Unallocated Grant	77			10.3
Council New Build and Land Acquisition				
• New Build: Ammanford & Amman Valley Llanelli & District	45	HRA	5.6	5.6
• Land Acquisition Carmarthen & the West Carmarthenshire Rural & Market Towns				
Developers contribution to homes in the area <sup>3</sup>	88	Private Finance		11.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1027</b>		<b>£31.0</b>	<b>£60.6</b>

### Recommendation 1:

**To confirm the strategy to utilise our existing options to maximise the supply of affordable homes.**

<sup>2</sup> £7.2m of grant already invested in starting 59 homes. £500k will complete these homes in 2016/17

<sup>3</sup> Further work to be carried out with Planning and Corporate Property

## What are our assumptions to support the delivery plan?

The total investment of over £60m is based on:

- Being able to maintain the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard (CHS+) as our first priority. Current projections are to invest £415m over the next 30 years.
- Council house rents increasing by inflation plus 1.5% over the next five years.
- Being able to remain within our borrowing limits set by Welsh Government.
- Continuing to receive over £6m every year from Welsh Government for major repairs to existing council homes.
- Continuation of the Social Housing Grant programme and housing associations partners can raise the private match funding

***RISK: Costs associated with maintaining the CHS increase and/or income from rents and Welsh Government decrease. Each of these circumstances will lead to less money being available to increase the supply of affordable homes.***

- Additional revenue expenditure (£172k per year) being available to increase capacity to deliver some of the solutions, e.g. bringing empty homes back into use or understanding rural housing needs better.
- It would appear there is more than enough scope to deliver the number of social lettings, empty homes and buying existing homes.

***RISK: The availability of the solutions being restricted by housing market changes and/or changes to the willingness of landlords/homeowners to participate in the schemes.***

- Enough capacity is developed with Housing Associations to deliver affordable housing solutions where they are needed.

***RISK: Housing Associations being unable to deliver what is required***

A full risk management plan will be part of the monitoring and review process.

The plan will be monitored and reviewed by the Housing Development Group. This group will feed directly into the well established CHS+ Steering Group and onto the Executive Board and Council.

## What can we do to deliver even more homes?

This plan will deliver over 1,000 additional homes over the next five years, but it still leaves us over 900 homes short on what is needed.

We believe, however, that we could start to meet this gap by being flexible and looking at **alternative delivery vehicles**.

This approach could offer the potential to further develop our council land as a valuable asset and help us to consider a far more ambitious new-build programme across all tenures. This will also significantly contribute to the council’s long term vision of creating more jobs, stimulate economic growth and help wider scale regeneration activities. Examples of alternative delivery models are shown in Table 2 below:

We have also estimated what additional funding would be needed to deliver 900 more homes through new build (the “gap”) for each of the models.

Table 2: Summary of various Delivery Models

Model	Description
Further development by us	We build new homes on our land. We benefit from rental income and any increase in capital value. <b>Advantage:</b> low borrowing rates from Public Works Loans Board <b>Disadvantage:</b> very limited scope for further borrowing due to limits imposed by Welsh Government. Funding required estimated at <b>£126m</b> .
Development by a housing association	Direct grant/loan or bond provided by us to housing associations. Land assets may also be used with a housing association providing the finance. <b>Advantage:</b> a housing association could borrow privately on top of the finance provided by us, potentially doubling the investment. <b>Disadvantages:</b> National housing standards could increase scheme costs therefore reducing the number of new homes available. Could be potential state aid issues. Housing associations would need the capacity to borrow. Funding required estimated at <b>£81m</b> (based on 58% grant/loan).
Developments through local housing trading company / special purpose vehicle/ local asset-backed vehicle / joint venture <sup>4</sup>	Council invests land and potentially a small amount of initial investment, partner provides funding and house-building expertise. <b>Advantages:</b> we can take advantage of industry expertise, efficiencies and cost control. This is a good way of producing mixed tenure, socially-inclusive developments. It may also help to unlock sites where the private sector is unable to proceed because of up-front infrastructure costs. We can set the rents on any new homes outside centrally-imposed controls. One variant would be to share profits with the private partner that can then be reinvested in future schemes. <b>Disadvantages:</b> takes longer to set up. Not suitable for smaller sites unless these can be aggregated. Funding required estimated at <b>£99m</b> .

When developing the land assets, there will obviously be a range of issues to consider including capital receipts, the Local Development Plan (LDP), achieving best value, reducing development risks and increasing the viability of the development.

Options on the preferred delivery model will be provided to members by September 2016.

<sup>4</sup> Will offer different approaches to tax, on or off balance sheet, borrowing, protecting public interests and visibility of council involvement



## Recommendation 2:

To look at options to maximise the number of new build homes that could be delivered and provide recommendations to members by September 2016.

### How many homes will be delivered in different areas of the county?

Areas of highest housing need are distributed across the county and it will be important that our overall delivery strategy reflects this.

As a result, we have developed four 'Action Areas'. These areas have been developed by building up the wards in the county into distinct areas, which link to a degree of cultural identity which people can relate to.

These are:

1. Ammanford & the Amman Valley
2. Carmarthen & the West
3. Carmarthenshire Rural & Market Towns
4. Llanelli & District

In order to come up with a relatively simple approach on how we should deliver the additional homes by area we have compared the relative housing need with the total population in each action area<sup>5</sup>. Table 3 shows us how the split will look based on housing need and population

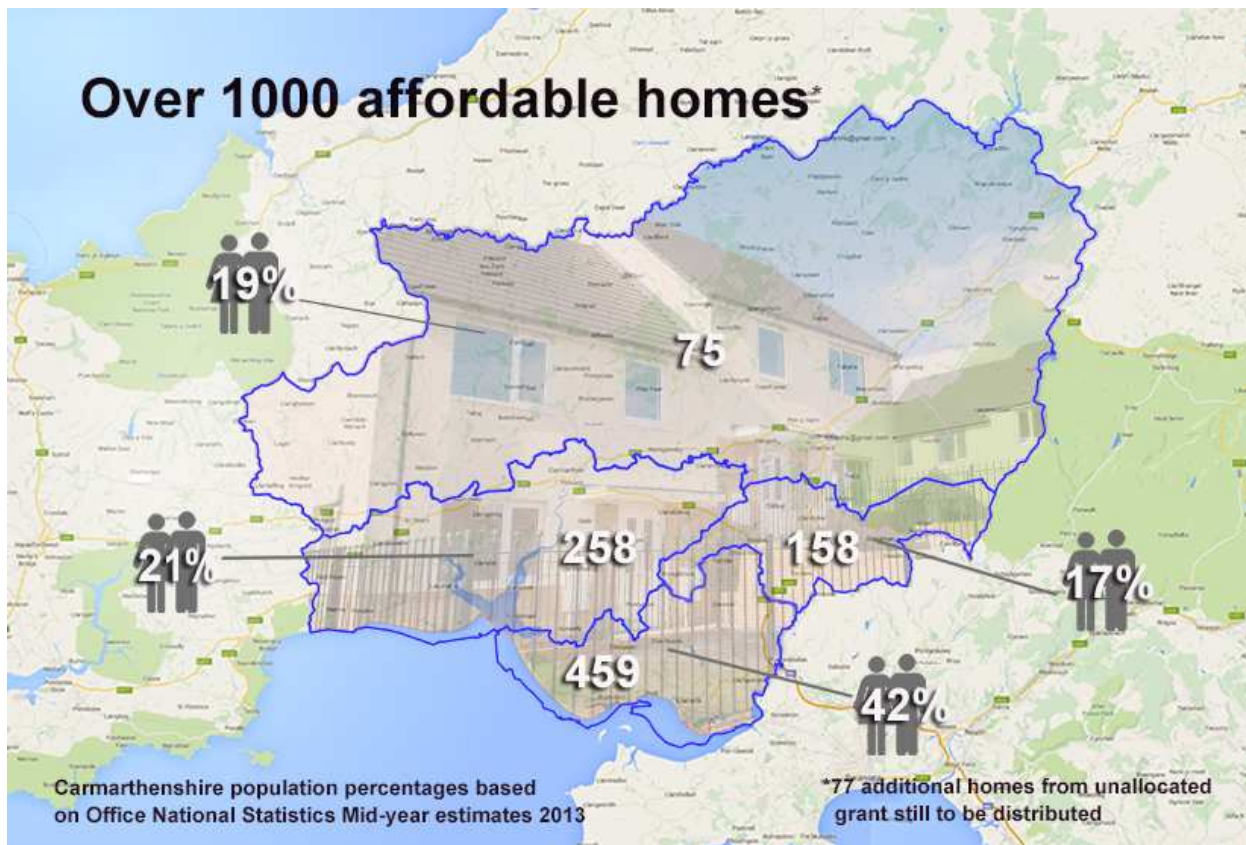
*Table 3: Division of affordable homes by area based on need and population (Total numbers of areas chosen by highest need applicants- Bands A and B)*

Action Area	Need (No. households asking for area) <sup>6</sup>	%	Total pop. in action area	%
Ammanford & Amman Valley	1,510	17	32,168	17
Carmarthen & the West	1,958	22	38,348	21
Carms. Rural & Market Towns	643	8	35,977	19
Llanelli & District	4,716	53	78,188	42
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,827<sup>7</sup></b>		<b>184,681</b>	

<sup>5</sup> Based on Office for National Statistics Mid-Year estimates 2013

<sup>6</sup> Based on those households in highest housing need (August 2015)

<sup>7</sup> Some households may request more than one Action Area



What does this tell us?

- *Carmarthen & the West and Ammanford & the Amman Valley* have similar percentages for housing need and population.
- There may be under reporting of housing need in the more rural areas. The evidence shown above tends to support this.

As a result, the action group mentioned earlier will also be looking at carrying out specific work in **rural areas** to understand the need better and resources will be allocated to do so. Appendix B confirms what the group will be looking at.

The action area map above highlights how the initial 1,000 homes are divided between the action areas.

It should be noted that 77 additional homes will be delivered using Social Housing Grant and working in partnership with the housing associations (identified as part of the £10m investment). This grant funding will be allocated to meet housing need in rural areas, the provision of specialist housing for people with disabilities and contributing to regeneration initiatives. We have an excellent track record of using the grant funding allocated to us each year. We are therefore well placed to attract any additional funding that comes available.

### Additional affordable homes by action area

Each area has a specific set of circumstances based on the housing needs of the area and the availability of opportunities in that area.

The following sections provide a summary for each action area based on these circumstances, confirming the strategic approach in each area, and in what ways we will deliver more affordable homes.

As a further safeguard to ensure that we are delivering the right homes in the right areas we will always consider existing demand for our own housing in each area.

**Recommendation 3:  
To confirm the action area approach for delivering more affordable homes in different parts of the county.**

# Ammanford & the Amman Valley



## Delivery Strategy

- Mainly two and four bedroom homes
- Significant opportunity to maximise the number of affordable homes through Social Lettings Agency and buying private sector homes
- Plenty of opportunity for bringing empty homes back into use due to relatively large numbers
- New build opportunities at Maespiode, Llandybie
- Housing Association scheme planned for Wind Street, Ammanford

## Solutions

### Additional Homes

### Investment (£m)

Managing homes in the private sector (Social Letting Agency)	41	0.2
Empty houses back into homes	51	1.0
Buy ex RTB/private sector homes	33	3.3
Housing Association development	10	1.3
Land /New build	8	1.0
Developers' contributions to homes in the area	15	1.9

\* 17% of the total population of Carmarthenshire live in this area

# Carmarthen & the West



## Delivery Strategy

- Shortage of all types of accommodation
- Social lets, bringing empty homes back into use and buying private sector homes are the most cost effective options
- Buying private sector homes will be more expensive, but still represents good value for money
- May need to incentivise landlords to get them involved in Social Lets in Carmarthen Town as a result of strong demand for rental accommodation
- Housing Association schemes planned for Cae Bryn Drain, Pentrefelin Street, Priory Street and Job's Well Road
- Limited land availability in areas of high housing need

\* 21% of the total population of Carmarthenshire live in this area

## Solutions

## Additional Homes

## Investment (£m)

Managing homes in the private sector (Social Letting Agency)	53	0.2
Empty houses back into homes	62	1.3
Buy ex RTB/private sector homes	30	4.1
Housing Association development	84	3.3
Land /New build	10	1.2
Developers' contributions to homes in the area	19	2.4

# Carmarthenshire Rural & Market Towns



## Delivery Strategy

- Increase in supply of two bedroom homes with a small number of three and four bedroom homes
- Small number by bringing empty homes back into use and social lets
- More significant affordability issues so low cost home ownership to be considered in certain circumstances
- May need to incentivise landlords to get them involved in Social Lets in Whitland, Llandovery, Llandeilo and Newcastle Emlyn
- Very limited land availability
- Little delivery of new homes in private sector therefore may need to intervene to “un-stick” sites
- Housing Association scheme planned for Llandeilo

## Solutions

### Additional Homes

### Investment (£m)

Managing homes in the private sector (Social Letting Agency)	20	0.1
Empty houses back into homes	32	0.8
Buy ex RTB/private sector homes	6	0.8
Housing Association development	6	1.0
Land /New build	4	0.4
Developers' contributions to homes in the area	7	0.9
Needs Assessment in rural areas		0.1

\* 19% of the total population of Carmarthenshire live in this area

# Llanelli & District



## Delivery Strategy

- Focus on smaller homes
- Any low cost home ownership homes should be focussed in Llangennech, Pwll and Burry Port
- Social lets, bringing empty homes back into use and buying private sector homes most cost effective options
- Existing Housing Association scheme planned for Buckley Maltings, Llanelli
- Potential opportunity for mixed tenure partnership working in Burry Port
- New build opportunities in Y Waun and Dylan
- Wider opportunities to support regeneration of town through alternative delivery models

## Solutions

## Additional Homes

## Investment (£m)

Solutions	Additional Homes	Investment (£m)
Managing homes in the private sector (Social Letting Agency)	128	0.6
Empty houses back into homes	135	2.5
Buy ex RTB/private sector homes	118	12.0
Housing Association development	8	1.2
Land /New build	23	3.0
Developers' contributions to homes in the area	47	5.8

\* 42% of the total population of Carmarthenshire live in this area

## Appendix A: SOLUTIONS TO MAXIMISE THE SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN CARMARTHENSHIRE

### Managing homes in the private rented sector including the Social Lettings Agency (SLA)

This is a highly successful and cost effective way of getting more families into affordable homes. We currently manage over 150 homes. The scheme benefits from little capital outlay. We will now look to significantly expand the Agency through additional staffing resources and working in partnership with existing letting agents and landlords. There may also be a need, where appropriate, to incentivise landlords in certain areas to make homes available. The management of social lets will play a significant role across all areas of the county as our research indicates that there is scope for expansion.

### Bringing empty homes back into use

Bringing empty homes back into use to meet affordable housing need will be a key part of our approach. Whilst the present “Houses to Homes” scheme doesn’t prioritise specifically by housing need, we will provide additional housing capital money to support the scheme as well as additional staffing support. Our research indicates that there are significant opportunities across the county. There are a number of models and ways that can be used to bring homes back into use e.g. becomes part of Social Lettings Agency, Housing buys the home and refurbishes, or we buy and then sell to a local family on a low cost home ownership basis. We will initially focus on bringing them back into use for rent. Costs will vary but based on experience will be up to £25,000 per home.

### Buying existing homes

For a typical 2 bed home this will be in the region of £90,000 (including any work to bring it up to the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard). This may be slightly higher in Carmarthen and the more rural parts of the county. Again, this is seen as a key part of the delivery plan as a relatively straightforward and easy way to increase the number of affordable homes

### Housing association developments

Each year the council administers Social Housing Grant (SHG) on behalf of the Welsh government to facilitate housing association developments. The SHG funding equates to a maximum of 58% of the development costs. The housing association must fund the remaining 42% of the costs themselves. The amount of SHG funding allocated to Carmarthenshire is approximately £2.0m per year. This generates a total investment programme of £3.5m per annum. The figures shown in Table 1 represent the total investment generated from the grant. There will be further opportunities to take up national slippage and we will ensure we have schemes “on the shelf” ready to go. We will also use the plan to drive down the levels of subsidy given to housing associations.

### Committed schemes

59 new affordable homes will be delivered in 2016 from three schemes that have already been committed to. These schemes are in Cae Bryn Drain, Carmarthen, Pentrefelin Street, Carmarthen and the housing co-operative scheme in Job’s Well Road, Carmarthen. These schemes are in the *Carmarthen & the West* action area and equate to a total investment of £7.7m. Most SHG has, however, already been drawn down in previous years with only £0.5m required during the life of the plan.



### Future priorities

The future use of SHG will be prioritised around three themes. It will be used to fund more expensive schemes in rural areas, support wider regeneration initiatives and develop specialist housing schemes to support people with disabilities. The following schemes have already been prioritised in the plan:

#### Schemes in rural Areas

- Thomas Terrace, Llandeilo

#### Schemes that support wider regeneration initiatives

- Wind Street, Ammanford
- Priory Street, Carmarthen
- Buckleys Maltings, Llanelli

### Unallocated SHG and Specialist Housing Schemes

The plan currently has £8m of SHG which is not allocated to any individual schemes. £2m of this has been initially allocated in the plan to deliver specialist housing to support people with disabilities. The individual specialist housing schemes will be identified throughout the life of the plan and will be based on need.

### Council new build and land acquisition

The plan has currently identified £5.6m for new build and land acquisition. This funding has been distributed throughout the four action areas based on housing need. There is land currently available in the HRA to develop new homes in both the *Ammanford & the Amman Valley* and the *Llanelli & District* action areas. Land will, however, need to be sourced in the *Carmarthen & the West* and *Carmarthenshire Rural & Market Towns* action areas. Progressing these sites will require innovative solutions and partnership working to maximise both public and private sector investment. HRA funding alone will not be enough to complete these developments. As an example we plan to put the following schemes forward for the Housing Finance Grant Phase 2 initiative:

#### Sites being considered for new build in the Amman & Amman Valley action area:

- Maespode, Llandybie

#### Sites being considered for new build in the Llanelli & District action area:

- Y Waun, Llwynhendy
- Dylan, Bynea

### Developer contributions to affordable housing

The assumptions for developer contributions in the plan have been allocated to building new homes. The funding is based on the commuted sums we are likely to get from private developments. We will be reviewing the way we utilise this funding through the Affordable Rural Housing and Section 106 Agreements Action Group. This group will ensure that we are innovative and maximise the supply of affordable homes in the best ways in all areas of the county. This could involve utilising some or all the funding to increase the supply of private sector homes we manage, the number of empty homes brought back into use or the number of homes sold under right to buy that we buy. The options agreed by the Action Group could deliver more affordable homes than the 88 homes stated currently in the plan.

## Appendix B:

### Rural Housing and use of developers' contributions- Action Group

#### What will be our approach?

We will set up a time bound Action group to challenge what we currently do in the following areas:

- Affordable housing delivery in rural areas
- The delivery of affordable housing through developers' contributions (known as section 106 agreements)

The group's work will focus on:

1. Further developing our needs evidence base in rural areas. We will target surveys in a range of communities in the first 12 months. This will reflect communities that we think are currently in the highest housing need, in moderate housing need and the lowest housing need.
  - Highest housing need- **Abergwili and Llandeilo**
  - Moderate housing need- **Llandovery**
  - Lowest housing need- **Cilycwm and Cynwyl Gaeo**
2. Developing specific measures in understanding current delivery. This will include the number of planning applications approved which include affordable housing, the number of affordable homes completed and the number of affordable homes which have been approved but not delivered.
3. Identifying further opportunities for affordable housing initiatives.
4. Challenging the current Rural Exceptions policy.
5. Understanding why some sites are currently "stuck" and coming up with solutions.
6. Challenging the current requirements of section 106 agreements, both in terms of the use and promotion of developer contribution and the process for amending existing signed agreements.
7. Exploring opportunities for further regional delivery around affordable housing.

This work will be complete by Autumn 2016 and will feed into any revisions of this Plan for 2017 onwards.

# COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

## 12<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2016

### Explanations for non-submission of scrutiny reports

#### 1 Carmarthenshire's approach to the National Licensing Scheme for Private Landlords

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**Responsible Officer(s):** Robin Staines, Head of Housing & Public Protection

**Explanation:** Welsh Government launched the new scheme in November 2016. Landlords will have 12 months to register and obtain a licence. Rent Smart Wales are the national body set up to administer the scheme and it is intended that local authorities will undertake local enforcement. Rent Smart Wales, Welsh Local Government Association in conjunction with Welsh Government are developing a memorandum of understanding which will clarify roles and responsibilities. When that is in place we will be better placed to report on Carmarthenshire's approach.

**Revised Submission Date:** 20th June 2016

#### 2 Supporting People Programme Update

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**Responsible Officer(s):** Neil Edwards, Commissioning Manager

**Explanation:** The reporting lines for Supporting People have recently changed within the Department. It would therefore be more appropriate to provide an update on the Programme to the Scrutiny Committee at its next meeting in March.

**Revised Submission Date:** 24th March 2016

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# COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

## 12<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2016

### Community Scrutiny Committee Actions and Referrals Update

**To consider and comment on the following issues:**

- To scrutinise the progress made in relation to actions, requests or referrals recorded during previous meetings of the Committee.

**Reasons:**

- To enable members to exercise their scrutiny role in relation to monitoring performance.

**To be referred to the Executive Board / Council for decision: NO**

**Executive Board Member Portfolio Holder: NOT APPLICABLE**

<p><b>Directorate:</b> Chief Executive's</p> <p><b>Name of Head of Service:</b> Linda Rees-Jones</p> <p><b>Report Author:</b> Matthew Hughes</p>	<p><b>Designations:</b></p> <p>Head of Administration &amp; Law</p> <p>Assistant Consultant</p>	<p><b>Tel Nos. / E-Mail Addresses:</b></p> <p>01267 224010 <a href="mailto:lrjones@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">lrjones@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a></p> <p>01267 224029 <a href="mailto:mahughes@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">mahughes@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a></p>
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 12<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2016

## Community Scrutiny Committee Actions and Referrals Update

During the course of a municipal year, several requests for additional information are made by the Committee in order to assist it in discharging its scrutiny role.

The attached report provides members of the Committee with an update on the progress made in relation to these requests.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?	YES
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## IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report.

Signed: Linda Rees-Jones                      Head of Administration & Law

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE

## CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below:

Signed: Linda Rees-Jones                      Head of Administration & Law

1. Local Member(s) – N/A
2. Community / Town Council – N/A
3. Relevant Partners – N/A
4. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations – N/A

**Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information  
List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

**THESE ARE DETAILED BELOW:**

Title of Document	File Ref No. / Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
Community Scrutiny Committee Reports and Minutes	<p><b>Meetings held up to July 2015:</b>  <a href="http://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/home/council-democracy/committees-meetings/agendas-minutes-(archive)/">http://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/home/council-democracy/committees-meetings/agendas-minutes-(archive)/</a></p> <p><b>Meetings from September 2015 onwards:</b>  <a href="http://democracy.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeed=186">http://democracy.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeed=186</a></p>

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**Pwyllgor Craffu Cymunedau - Diweddaraŷ am Weithrediadau ac Atgyfeiriadau**  
**Community Scrutiny Committee - Actions and Referrals Update**

Meeting Date	Minuted Action / Referral / Request	Progress Update	Officer	Target / Completion Date	Completed / On-going
9th November 2015	<i>No actions or referrals</i>				
10th December 2015	<b>Revenue Budget Strategy Consultation 2016/17 to 2018/19</b> - Resolved to receive the report and endorse the charging digests.	At its meeting on the 1st February 2016, the Executive Board considered the latest proposals for the Revenue Budget 2016/2017 with indicative figures for the 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 financial years and summarised the latest budgetary position giving an update on the budget validation, spending pressures, the Welsh Government final settlement and the responses from the budget consultation. The Executive Board Member - Resources advised that following the consultation period the Executive Board had considered amendments to a number of proposals detailed within the report and it was hoped that this would demonstrate that the Authority had listened to the views expressed as part of the consultation exercise. The Board unanimously resolved to recommend to Council that the Budget Strategy for 2016/17, be approved subject to amendments and proposals detailed at the meeting.	David Eldred / Owen Bowen / Chris Moore	1st February 2016	Completed

**Pwyllgor Craffu Cymunedau - Diweddraf am Weithrediadau ac Atgyfeiriadau**  
**Community Scrutiny Committee - Actions and Referrals Update**

15th January 2016	<p><b>Housing Revenue Account and Housing Rent Setting 2016/17 (Revenue and Capital) -</b>          Unanimously resolved to endorse the report and the following proposals to the Executive Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To increase the average housing rent by 2.97% (£2.27) per dwelling per week as per WG Social Housing Rents Policy. This will produce a sustainable Business Plan and continue to achieve &amp; maintain CHS+ and is supported by DCHS Steering Group;</li> <li>• To continue with maximum progression of £2, for rents below target, until target rents are achieved;</li> <li>• To increase garage rents to £8.75 per week (from £8.50 in 2015/16) and garage bases to £2.20 per week (from £2.15 in 2015/16);</li> <li>• Apply the service charge policy to ensure tenants who receive the benefit from specific services pay for those services;</li> <li>• To increase charges for using our sewerage treatment works by 2.97%.</li> </ul>	<p>At its meeting on the 1st February 2016, the Executive Board considered a report which brought together the latest proposals for the Revenue and Capital Budgets for the Housing Revenue Account 2016/2019. The Board was advised that the report had been prepared reflecting the latest proposals contained in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan which was the primary financial planning tool for delivering the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard Plus (CHS+) for the future. The report was unanimously received by the Board and the recommendations contained within it were recommended to Council for approval.</p>	Chris Moore / Robin Staines	1st February 2016	Completed
	<p><b>Review of the Access to Social Housing Policy -</b>          Unanimously resolved that the report be endorsed as the basis for consultation subject to the term 'Homeless but not in priority need' being amended to 'Homeless with special requirements';</p>	<p>The report will be considered by the Executive Board at a future meeting.</p>	Robin Staines / Jonathan Willis	11th April 2016	On-going
	<p>Unanimously resolved that a further review of the lettings process be commissioned as part of the consultation process to investigate ways to ensure lettings are conducted in a timely and efficient way.</p>	<p>The report will be considered by the Executive Board at a future meeting.</p>	Robin Staines / Jonathan Willis	11th April 2016	On-going

## COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 15<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2016

**Present:** Councillor D.M. Cundy (Chair)

**Councillors:** J.M. Charles, J.K. Howell, J. Owen, G.B. Thomas, J. Thomas, S.L. Davies, T. Devichand, W.R.A. Davies, H.I. Jones, H.B. Shepardson, E.G. Thomas

**Councillor D.J.R. Bartlett – Substitute for Councillor S. Matthews**

**Also present:**

**Councillor L.D. Evans – Executive Board Member (EBM) Housing**

**The following officers were in attendance:**

Mr. C. Moore – Director of Corporate Services;  
Mr. R. Staines – Head of Housing and Public Protection;  
Mr. J. Willis – Housing Services Manager (Advice & Options)  
Ms. R. Parkinson – Team Leader (Housing Advice)  
Mr. S. Williams – Senior Accountant  
Mr. M.S. Davies – Democratic Services Officer

Chamber, County Hall, Carmarthen (10:00 – 11:45am)

### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor S. Matthews.

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS

Councillor	Minute Item(s)	Nature of Interest
Councillor T. Devichand	Item 7 – Review of the Access to Social Housing Policy	Landlord
Councillor G.B. Thomas	Item 7 – Review of the Access to Social Housing Policy	Landlord

### 3. DECLARATION OF PROHIBITED PARTY WHIPS

There were no declarations of prohibited party whips.

#### 4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (NONE RECEIVED)

None were received.

#### 5. FORTHCOMING ITEMS

The Committee was provided with a list of forthcoming items to be considered at its next meeting scheduled for the 12<sup>th</sup> February 2016.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the list of forthcoming items be noted.**

#### 6. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT AND HOUSING RENT SETTING 2016/17 (REVENUE AND CAPITAL)

The Committee considered the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget and Housing Rent Setting for 2016/17 which was being presented as part of the budget consultation process. The report, a revised version of which was circulated, reflected the latest proposals contained in the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan, which was the primary financial planning tool for delivering the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard *Plus* (CHS+).

The following issues were raised in relation to the report and its appendices:

- The Committee was advised that under the original Carmarthenshire Homes Standard programme all work requested by tenants had been completed;
- In terms of sewage charges it was pointed out that where properties were not connected to the mains sewage, and this was particularly the case in rural areas, tenants could apply for assistance to ensure appropriate arrangements were in place. The Head of Housing and Public Protection agreed to check that no tenants were paying Welsh Water excessively for any arrangement;
- It was clarified that service charges primarily related to sheltered housing schemes and flats and the Head of Housing and Public Protection agreed to circulate Members with a breakdown of the service charges. Tenants automatically received a breakdown;
- Concerns were expressed over the possible impact of the rent increases proposed particularly where tenants were not in full time employment and/or had to pay for school transport;
- Rents charged by Housing Associations were currently in the region of £8.00-10.00 per week above the Council's charges but the Welsh Government wished to see a move towards one level charge over about 5 years;
- The Director of Corporate Services, in response to a query, agreed to circulate members with details of the long term loans raised to fund the exit from the HRAS [Housing Revenue Account Subsidy];
- It was agreed that a more appropriate description of Table 2 in the report would

be 'Properties achieving target rents per year'. Officers agreed to circulate Members with a more detailed explanation of Table 2;

- The Committee was advised that income from the sale of any Council houses was crucial in meeting the need for housing throughout the County.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to endorse the report and the following proposals to the Executive Board:**

- **To increase the average housing rent by 2.97% (£2.27) per dwelling per week as per WG Social Housing Rents Policy. This will produce a sustainable Business Plan and continue to achieve & maintain CHS+ and is supported by DCHS Steering Group;**
- **To continue with maximum progression of £2, for rents below target, until target rents are achieved;**
- **To increase garage rents to £8.75 per week (from £8.50 in 2015/16) and garage bases to £2.20 per week (from £2.15 in 2015/16);**
- **Apply the service charge policy to ensure tenants who receive the benefit from specific services pay for those services;**
- **To increase charges for using our sewerage treatment works by 2.97%.**

## **7. REVIEW OF THE ACCESS TO SOCIAL HOUSING POLICY**

The Committee considered a report which:

- outlined the results of the members' consultation sessions with relation to the Access to Social Housing policy[commonly known as 'The Allocations Policy'];
- outlined the results of the operational review of the Access to Social Housing policy;
- sought views and comments on an amended draft Access to Social Housing policy;
- outlined proposals for a full consultation exercise.

The following issues were raised in relation to the report and its appendices:

- The Head of Housing and Public Protection commented that the consultation would be well publicised, including local radio, to ensure the widest possible response, including from people outside;
- It was acknowledged that out of county applicants for social housing were only likely to be considered for hard to let properties;
- The view was expressed that when letting such properties the knock on effect for established local communities should be considered;
- The Head of Housing and Public Protection commented that a system would

be put in place to ensure members were made aware of empty council properties.

Officers were thanked for all their work in connection with the Review.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:**

- 7.1 That the report be endorsed as the basis for consultation subject to the term 'Homeless but not in priority need' being amended to 'Homeless with special requirements';**
- 7.2 That a further review of the lettings process be commissioned as part of the consultation process to investigate ways to ensure lettings are conducted in a timely and efficient way.**

**8. EXPLANATION FOR NON-SUBMISSION OF SCRUTINY REPORT**

The Committee considered the explanation for the non submission of a report on EU and externally funded programmes.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the explanation for the non-submission be noted.**

**9. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10th DECEMBER 2015**

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 10<sup>th</sup> December 2015 be signed as a correct record.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**CHAIR**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**DATE**