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**WEDNESDAY, 17 JANUARY 2024**

**TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL**

I HEREBY SUMMON YOU TO ATTEND THE **MULTI LOCATION MEETING OF CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL** WHICH WILL BE HELD IN THE **CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL, CARMARTHEN. SA31 1JP AND REMOTELY AT 10.00 AM, ON WEDNESDAY, 24TH JANUARY, 2024** FOR THE TRANSACTION OF THE BUSINESS OUTLINED ON THE ATTACHED AGENDA

*Wendy Walters*

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

<b>Democratic Officer:</b>	<b>Julie Owens</b>
<b>Telephone (direct line):</b>	<b>01267 224088</b>
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**THE MEETING CAN BE VIEWED ON THE AUTHORITY'S WEBSITE VIA THE FOLLOWING LINK:-**  
<https://carmarthenshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

Wendy Walters Prif Weithredwr, *Chief Executive*,  
Neuadd y Sir, Caerfyrddin. SA31 1JP  
County Hall, Carmarthen. SA31 1JP

# AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS
3. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY)
4. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE LEADER, CABINET MEMBERS AND THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (IF ANY)
5. TO APPROVE AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THE 6TH DECEMBER 2023 5 - 14
6. POLLING DISTRICT AND POLLING PLACES REVIEW 2023, DRAFT PROPOSALS 15 - 80
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8. TO CONSIDER THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE IN RESPECT OF THE FOLLOWING ITEM:-
  - 8.1 MULTI LOCATION MEETING POLICY 199 - 210
9. TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON THE 11TH DECEMBER 2023 211 - 216
10. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING NOTICE OF MOTION:-
  - 10.1 NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLORS GLYNOG DAVIES AND ALUN LENNY  
"TEACHERS PAY UPLIFT

Carmarthenshire County Council calls on Jeremy Miles, the Minister for Education and Welsh Language, to ensure that the pay uplifts for teachers for Sept 2022 and Sept 2023, of 1.5 % in each year (which equates to £3m for this council), is fully funded by the Welsh Government for future years. This would avoid putting an additional pressure on Local Authorities and the consequential impact on school budgets, which are already extremely tight."

11. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (NONE RECEIVED)
12. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS (NONE RECEIVED)
13. MINUTES FOR INFORMATION (AVAILABLE TO VIEW ON THE WEBSITE)
  - 13 .1 PLACE, SUSTAINABILITY & CLIMATE CHANGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 23RD NOVEMBER 2023
  - 13 .2 HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 28TH NOVEMBER 2023
  - 13 .3 EDUCATION, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE WELSH LANGUAGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 1ST DECEMBER 2023
  - 13 .4 DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE - 5TH DECEMBER 2023
  - 13 .5 PLANNING COMMITTEE - 7TH DECEMBER 2023
  - 13 .6 STANDARDS COMMITTEE - 11TH DECEMBER 2023
  - 13 .7 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE & RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 12TH DECEMBER 2023
  - 13 .8 LICENSING COMMITTEE - 12TH DECEMBER 2023
  - 13 .9 COMMUNITIES, HOMES & REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 13TH DECEMBER 2023
  - 13 .10 PLACE, SUSTAINABILITY & CLIMATE CHANGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 14TH DECEMBER 2023
  - 13 .11 GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE - 15TH DECEMBER 2023
  - 13 .12 HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 18TH DECEMBER 2023
  - 13 .13 PLANNING COMMITTEE - 19TH DECEMBER 2023

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## COUNTY COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY, 6 DECEMBER 2023

**PRESENT:** Councillor B.A.L. Roberts (Chair) (In Person)

**Councillors (In Person):**

S.M. Allen	K.V. Broom	J.M. Charles	P. Cooper
C.A. Davies	W.R.A. Davies	H.L. Davies	L. Davies
S.L. Davies	A. Evans	H.A.L. Evans	L.D. Evans
W.T. Evans	J.P. Hart	J.K. Howell	P. Hughes-Griffiths
J.D. James	M. James	H. Jones	A. Lenny
N. Lewis	K. Madge	A.G. Morgan	M. Palfreman
D. Price	H.B. Shepardson	E. Skinner	D. Thomas
E.G. Thomas	J. Tremlett	A. Vaughan Owen	F. Walters

**Councillors (Virtually):**

L.R. Bowen	M.D. Cranham	A. Davies	T.A.J. Davies
C. Davies	G. Davies	K. Davies	LI.M. Davies
T. Davies	D.C. Evans	A.D. Harries	G.H. John
A.C. Jones	G.R. Jones	M.J.A. Lewis	A. Leyshon
D. Owen	S.L. Rees	E.M.J.G. Schiavone	J. Seward
R. Sparks	G.B. Thomas	P.T. Warlow	D.E. Williams

**Also Present (In Person):**

W. Walters, Chief Executive  
C. Moore, Director of Corporate Services  
G. Morgans, Director of Education & Children's Services  
A. Williams, Director of Place and Infrastructure  
P.R. Thomas, Assistant Chief Executive (People Management & Performance)  
L.R. Jones, Head of Administration and Law  
D.W. John, Head of Environmental Infrastructure  
G. Morgan, Head of Democratic Services  
L. Jenkins, Cabinet Support Officer  
S. Rees, Simultaneous Translator  
E. Bryer, Democratic Services Officer

**Also Present (Virtually):**

J. Morgan, Director of Community Services  
R. Griffiths, Head of Place and Sustainability  
R. Morris, Members Support Officer  
M. Runeckles, Members Support Officer

**Chamber - County Hall, Carmarthen. SA31 1JP and remotely - 10.00 - 11.20 am**

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

## 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D.M. Cundy, S.A. Curry, B. Davies, M. Donoghue, N. Evans, R.E. Evans, S. Godfrey-Coles, T.M. Higgins, P. Hughes, R. James, B.W. Jones, D. Jones, D. Nicholas, B.D.J. Phillips, E. Rees, M. Thomas and J. Williams.

## 2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS.

<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Minute Number</b>	<b>Nature of Interest</b>
C. A. Davies	Agenda Item 10.1 - Question by Councillor Hefin Jones to Councillor Alun Lenny, Cabinet Member for Resources.	Her husband is a tenant farmer.
K. Madge	Agenda Item 6.1 - Statutory Director of Social Care Services Annual Report 2022/23	Daughter works in Social Services.
M. Palfreman	Agenda Item 6.1 - Statutory Director of Social Care Services Annual Report 2022/23	Undertakes work as a consultant for public bodies (including this authority) advising on issues relating to the provision of Health and Social Care services. Cllr Palfreman had been granted dispensation by the Standards Committee allowing him to speak and submit written representation but not vote.
B.A.L. Roberts	Agenda Item 6.1 - Statutory Director of Social Care Services Annual Report 2022/23	Daughter works in Social Care.
P.T. Warlow	Agenda Item 6.1 - Statutory Director of Social Care Services Annual Report 2022/23	Wife works in Social Care.

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

### **3. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY)**

The Chair referred to the recent passing of former Councillor Joy Williams and on behalf of the Council extended her sincere condolences to her family and friends.

The Chair advised that she had attended a number of events since last Council including the White Ribbon day event in Ammanford, the reopening of the recently renovated Parc Howard Museum and the opening of the enhanced sports facilities at Amman Valley Leisure Centre.

At the Chair's invite, the following Councillors addressed the Council:

- Councillor Hazel Evans congratulated the volunteers at Towy Gateway who undertake the gardening work at Parc yr Escob in the museum in Abergwili. The volunteers recently received the Kings Award for voluntary services.
- Councillor Jane Tremlett congratulated the Delta Wellbeing Team who had achieved four out of five awards at the Welsh National Care Awards and the Home Care Team who had also won an award.

### **4. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE LEADER, CABINET MEMBERS AND THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (IF ANY)**

The Council received the following two Cabinet Member announcements:

Cllr Ann Davies, Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs, Community Cohesion & Planning Policy provided Council with an update on two issues.

Following on from the landslide from the old coal heap in Tylorstown back in February 2020, Welsh Government undertook a review and Audit of all 2500 disused coal tips in Wales, 170 of which were in Carmarthenshire. The Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs, Community Cohesion & Planning Policy advised that there were 5 Coal Authority categories assigned by the coal tip safety taskforce and that there was one privately owned site that was assessed to be in Category C based in Pontamman, Ammanford that would be subject to annual inspections to ensure its continued safety.

The Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs, Community Cohesion & Planning Policy then went on to share the news that the Authority had recently been awarded the Sustainable Food Places bronze award in recognition of the County's commitment towards creating a sustainable, inclusive and resilient County-wide food system. She extended her thanks and congratulations to Alex Cook on leading this work and also to Augusta Lewis.

Following on from the Autumn statement made by the Chancellor Jeremy Hunt, Cllr Alun Lenny, Cabinet Member for Resources provided a summary of the Council's revenue position. He advised that as predicted the Chancellor had

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

chosen not to use some the £25b funding to help public services despite the financial pressures on services such as education and social care. This would result in a real term reduction in funding from London to Welsh Government and from Cardiff to local councils. Councillor Lenny added that it would be another fortnight before the Authority would find out how much the Annual Revenue Support Grant (RSG) provisional settlement from Welsh Government would be. This grant equates to around 75% of income towards the day-to-day running of services and every 1% amounts to £3m.

Councillor Lenny stated that Cabinet would meet on the 22nd December, with a view of going out to public consultation immediately afterwards and that a series of seminars would be held with members, and also an Insight meeting with secondary school pupils. It was stated that currently there was a budget gap of £22m before efficiency measures and Council Tax increase.

An all-Wales meeting of council leaders and senior officers in Cardiff heard that the council tax increases being considered at this stage by individual Welsh councils ranged from 5% to over 10% but that the council tax increase in Carmarthenshire should be at the lower end of that range.

**5. TO APPROVE AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THE 8TH NOVEMBER, 2023**

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Council held on the 8th November, 2023 be signed as a correct record.**

**6. TO CONSIDER THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CABINET IN RESPECT OF THE FOLLOWING ITEM:-**

**6.1. STATUTORY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL CARE SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23**

[Note: Councillors K. Madge, M. Palfreman, B.A.L. Roberts, and P.T. Warlow having earlier declared an interest, re-iterated their declaration on this item and remained in the meeting for its consideration].

The Council was informed that the Cabinet, at its meeting held on the 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023 (minute 9 thereof refers) had considered the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services on the performance of social care services in the county for the year 2022/23. The report comprised an overview of performance in 2022/23 as well as an assessment on future provision, together with strategic priorities for 2024/25.

There was a statutory requirement for the Director of Social Services to report annually to Council on the delivery of services and performance as well as plans for the improvement of the whole range of social services. It was noted that the Health & Social Services Scrutiny Committee had endorsed the report at its meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

Council members thanked the Director of Community Services for his dedication to the service and hard work in providing a comprehensive report and paid tribute to the staff working within the portfolio.

The Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health responded accordingly to the queries raised.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the following recommendation of the Cabinet be adopted:

**“that the Annual Report of the Statutory Director of Social Services on the Performance of Social Care Services in Carmarthenshire 2022/23 be approved.”**

**7. TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON THE:-**

**7.1. 30TH OCTOBER, 2023**

In reference to Minute 12, of the Cabinet Meeting held on the 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2023 regarding the Notice of Motion Referred from Council (13th September 2023) on the Shadows Depression Support Group the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Services advised that staff were continuing to work with Shadows and had written to the Health Board who had advised that they were currently undertaking a review of all mental health services across the County.

**RESOLVED** that the report of the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023 be received.

**7.2. 13TH NOVEMBER, 2023**

**RESOLVED** that the report of the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023 be received.

**8. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING NOTICE OF MOTION:-**

**8.1. NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLORS JOHN JAMES AND ANN DAVIES**

Council considered the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor John James and Ann Davies:-

This Council condemns the heinous mass slaughter of innocent people in Israel on October 7<sup>th</sup>. Council is also horrified by the scale and consequences of the ongoing military retaliation in Gaza. We therefore call on the international community to:

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

- i. Unite to deliver the humanitarian response needed to safeguard innocent lives devastated by this conflict, and ensure that access is given to food, water, medicines, and the power source which are all urgently needed.
- ii. Seek an immediate ceasefire to end the current human suffering.
- iii. Support the call from communities throughout the world for **ALL** hostages to be released and returned home to their families.
- iv. Work with Israeli and Palestinian representatives to bring an end to this current conflict and negotiate a permanent peace settlement which delivers security and a peaceful long-term future to this area based on the principle of a two-state solution.

The motion was duly seconded.

The proposer and seconder of the Motion were afforded the opportunity of speaking in support thereof and outlined the reasons for its submission, as set out in the Motion.

The following amendment to the motion was proposed by Councillor Gary Jones and was duly seconded:

- v. “Reaffirms Israel’s and Palestine’s right to exist and recognises that denying Israel’s right to exist is a form of anti semitism, as made clear in the IHRA’s definition of anti semitism. Recognising both Israel’s and Palestine’s right to exist is an essential step towards peace via a two-state solution”

The Proposer and Secunder of the Amendment were afforded the opportunity of speaking in support thereof and outlined the reasons for its submission, as set out in the Amendment.

Prior to opening the debate on the amendment, the proposer and seconder of the motion, confirmed that they were happy to accept the amendment as submitted, and agreed that the substantive motion be put forward for consideration.

A number of statements were made in support of the substantive motion.

Following votes it was

**RESOLVED that the Substantive Motion, be supported.**

## **9. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (NONE RECEIVED).**

The Chair advised that no questions from the public had been received.

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

## 10. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS:-

### 10.1. QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR HEFIN JONES TO COUNCILLOR ALUN LENNY, CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES

[Note: Councillor C. A. Davies, having earlier declared an interest in this item, re-declared her interest and left the meeting during the deliberations. ]

#### Question by Councillor Jones:

“In setting out the likely entry criteria for the future Sustainable Farming Scheme, Welsh Government ministers, and the First Minister himself, recently reaffirmed the likely requirement for farming enterprises to have 10% of their farmed land under tree cover, and a further 10% as habitat land. In addition, there is a strong possibility that farming businesses will need to implement a range of carbon sequestration methods on land they manage to mitigate their own emissions, and /or will look to undertake habitat management work in line with support schemes to ensure sustainability.

Local authorities also have ambitions in relation to afforestation, along with aspirations and targets for emissions reduction and mitigation.

Will the Cabinet Member for Resources provide reassurance that Carmarthenshire County Council will NOT seek to use land that forms part of farmed council holdings for afforestation projects to achieve its own ambitions or meet its own targets, and ensure that farming and primary production enterprises run by tenants on the council’s rural estate have the best possible chance to be sustainable and continue to make a valuable contribution to our rural communities in this county?”

#### Response by Councillor Alun Lenny – Cabinet Member for Resources:-

Thank you Chair and thank you Hefin for the question. Different to the previous matter, this is a matter that we do have complete control over. To provide context and remind members, the Council does own nearly 2,500 acres of land on 23 farms – and that has been for more than a century. In the past there has been a tendency to let farms to new tenants as they become vacant, with little regard for land use.

Now, I grew up on a small farm, working the land until I was 24 years old – back in the age of small bales but agriculture has changed considerably since then and continues to do so. Therefore, the council is now discussing the use of every farm individually as the tenancy comes to an end, by consulting and considering how we can be sustainable to the new tenant and how we can be of benefit to the rural community. There is one, for example, we have started a pilot project with other partners to grow vegetables and fruit – as we’ve heard earlier this morning.

We also want to create woodland on various land owned by the Council to meet the target of mitigating carbon and the effect it has on the environment. Because

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

what's at stake of course is the future of humankind. In a powerful speech at COP28 King Charles warned this: *"The world is dreadfully far off track on addressing climate change and unless we rapidly repair and restore nature's harmony and balance, our economy and survivability will be imperilled."* I never thought I'd be quoting the King in this Chamber!

Planting trees is one small part of restoring nature's harmony, but that is not by destroying entire farms by large companies for commercial profit. To answer Hefin's question plainly, this council that administers 23 farms on behalf of the people of Carmarthenshire, wants to do its utmost to ensure that tenants and their families have every opportunity to make a decent living on sustainable farms. If that means transferring mitigating rights to the tenant like planting a woodland and taking other mitigation measures then that's fine. I hope that answers the question Chair.

There was no supplementary question.

**11. TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING CHANGE TO MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES:-**

**11.1. THE UNAFFILIATED MEMBERS HAVE NOMINATED COUNCILLOR JOHN JAMES TO TAKE THEIR VACANT SEAT ON THE PLACE, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the Unaffiliated Members nomination for Councillor John James to take their vacant seat on the Place, Sustainability and Climate Change Committee be approved.

**12. MINUTES FOR INFORMATION (AVAILABLE TO VIEW ON THE WEBSITE)**

The Chair stated that the minutes outlined on the agenda under 12.1 – 12.8 were available for information on the Council website.

**13. THE REPORT RELATING TO THE FOLLOWING ITEM IS NOT FOR PUBLICATION AS IT CONTAINS EXEMPT INFORMATION AS DEFINED IN PARAGRAPHS 14 OF PART 4 OF SCHEDULE 12A TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) (VARIATION) (WALES) ORDER 2007. IF, FOLLOWING THE APPLICATION OF THE PUBLIC INTEREST TEST, THE COUNCIL RESOLVES PURSUANT TO THE ACT TO CONSIDER THIS ITEM IN PRIVATE, THE PUBLIC WILL BE EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING DURING SUCH CONSIDERATION.**

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED**, pursuant to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007, that the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items as the reports contained exempt information as defined in paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.



**14. CWM ENVIRONMENTAL LTD - RESOURCE RECOVERY FACILITY (RRF)  
REBUILD COSTS AND LOAN REQUEST**

Following the application of the public interest test it was **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED**, pursuant to the Act referred to in Minute Item 13 above, to consider this matter in private, with the public excluded from the meeting as disclosure would be likely to place the business named in the report at an unfair disadvantage in relation to their commercial competitors.

Council considered a detailed report in relation to the establishment of a loan facility to CWM Environmental Ltd to enable the company to rebuild and equip a Resources Recovery Facility following the fire at the site on 24th April 2021.

**RESOLVED:**

- 14.1 To agree to the funding facility as detailed in the report;**
- 14.2 that should the opportunity arise for the company to acquire re-furnished plant, that it submits exception reports to the Council's Director of Corporate Services in accordance with Contract Procurement Rules**

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

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

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

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## COUNTY COUNCIL 24<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2024

### POLLING DISTRICT AND POLLING PLACES REVIEW 2023, DRAFT PROPOSALS

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this report is to report back to Council on the preliminary review that has been carried out with regards this review and ask Council to consider and support the draft proposals.

**Recommendations / key decisions required:**

1. That the draft proposals are considered and supported.
2. That approval is given to move to the next stage of the review – that is consultation on the draft proposals.

**Reasons:**

The Council has commenced as is required under the Representation of the People Act 1983 and the Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places (Parliamentary Elections) Regulations 2006 to conduct a compulsory review every 5 years –The next review must be held within a 16- month period commencing 1 October 2023.

Cabinet Decision Required	NO
Council Decision Required	YES

**CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER: -**  
Cllr. P.M. Hughes, Cabinet Member for Organisation & Workforce

Directorate:  Wendy S. Walters   Name of Head of Service:  Report Author: Amanda Edwards	Designations: Chief Executive/Electoral Registration Officer/Returning Officer   Services and Civil Registration Manager	Tel: 01267 224112  Email addresses: <a href="mailto:WSWalters@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">WSWalters@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a>   01267 228609 <a href="mailto:AmEdwards@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">AmEdwards@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a>
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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
COUNTY COUNCIL  
24<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2024**

**Polling District and Polling Places Review 2023  
Draft Proposals**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT.**

Under the Representation of the People Act 1983, the council has a duty to divide its area into polling districts and to designate a polling place for each district.

The following definitions may be helpful when reading the report:

- “Polling districts” are geographical electoral areas into which wards and constituencies may be sub-divided.
- “Polling places” are the buildings or areas designated by the council where electors in a polling district go to vote in person.
- “Polling stations” are the number of issuing desks in the building or area that is the designated polling place.

It is the responsibility of the relevant authority to designate a polling place for every polling district in the parliamentary constituency unless the size or other circumstances of the polling district are such that the situation of the polling stations do not materially affect the convenience of electors.

The Returning Officer is responsible for ensuring that there are sufficient number of polling stations and allot the electors to those polling stations in such manner as she thinks the most convenient.

The Electoral Administration Act 2006, as amended, introduced a duty on all local authorities in Great Britain to review their polling districts and polling places at least once every five years.

Under section 18C of the Representation of the People Act 1983, the next compulsory review must be undertaken within a 16-month window between 1 October 2023 and 31 January 2025.

The intention of the legislation was reviews would be completed by the January before a UK parliamentary general election. However, since the repeal of the Fixed Term Parliaments Act 2011, there is no longer any certainty as to when the next general election will be.

The Dissolution and Calling of Parliament Act 2022 means:

- the UK Parliament can be dissolved by the King on request of the Prime Minister, at any time within the 5 years of the life of the Parliament
- the next general election must take place before Tuesday 28 January 2025, but it could happen at any point before then
- there is no longer a link between the timing of the compulsory polling district and places review falling in a 16-month period ending 3 months before a scheduled general election.

In addition, the Boundary Commission for Wales has undertaken a review of parliamentary constituency boundaries. The Commission has now published its final recommendations, and Orders for the new parliamentary constituency boundaries will be made by 1 November 2023.

Once the Orders for new parliamentary constituencies have been made, the new boundaries will be used for the next general election.

If a parliamentary by election is called in the meantime, it would be run on existing boundaries.

These issues mean it is important that the polling district and places review is carried out as early as possible, so that Carmarthenshire County Council has agreed polling districts and places to be used for the scheduled Police and Crime Commissioner elections in May 2024 and has a polling scheme in place which reflects the new constituencies relevant to the next Parliamentary election which must be held before end of January 2025.

### **Timing of the polling district and places review:**

As highlighted above, it is important to complete the review as soon as possible, so the polling districts and places for future elections can be agreed in time for the next general election and scheduled elections.

Section 18C of the Representation of the People Act 1983 does not allow the review to commence before 1 October 2023.

It was agreed at Full Council on the 11 October that the compulsory polling district and places review commenced on Thursday 12 October 2023.

It would be desirable for any changes in polling districts to be reflected in the electoral register published on 1 December 2023. However, due to capacity desirability for a 6-week consultation period and the council meeting timetable, it is unlikely that the review will be complete until April 2024.

This would mean that if there was any change to the movement of electors from one polling district to another, then the electoral register would need to be republished to take account of any changes to polling districts.

A reminder of the timetable for this review:

Review of polling districts and places 2023	
Preparatory work	Started 24 July 2023
Resolution from Council providing for commencement of review	11 October 2023
Preliminary review-including informal consultation	July to 11 October 2023
Notice of Review published	12 October 2023
Council proposals published	12 October 2023
Commencement of formal consultation	12 October 2023
End of formal consultation	9 November 2023
Consider responses	By 17 November 2023
Draft Proposals to be taken to Pre-Cabinet	27 November 2023
Publish Electoral Register	1 December 2023
Draft Proposals approved by Full Council	24 January 2024
Commencement of public consultation period-	25 January 2024
End of public consultation	22 February 2024

Final proposals considered by Pre-Cabinet	18 March, 2024
Final Proposal considered by Full Council	10 April, 2024
Scheduled elections on new polling districts, places and stations scheme	2 May 2024

### Legal requirements

The process for a polling district and places review is set out in Schedule A1, Representation of the People Act 1983.

The Council must:

- publish a notice of the holding of a review.
- consult the (Acting) Returning Officer ((A)RO) for every parliamentary constituency which is wholly or partly in its area.
- publish all representations made by an (A)RO within 30 days of receipt by posting a copy of them at the local authority's office and in at least one conspicuous place in their area and, if the authority maintains a website, by placing a copy on the authority's website.
- seek representations from such persons as it thinks have particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability. Such persons must have an opportunity to make representations and to comment on the representations made by the (A)RO(s).

On completion of the review, the council must give reasons for its decisions and publish:

- all correspondence sent to an (A)RO in connection with the review.
- all correspondence sent to any person whom the authority thinks has particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons who have different forms of disability.
- all representations made by any person in connection with the review.
- the minutes of any meeting held by the council to consider any revision to the designation of polling districts or polling places within its area as a result of the review.
- details of the designation of polling districts and polling places within the local authority area as a result of the review.
- details of the places where the results of the review have been published.

### Preparatory work

Even though the formal review could not start before 2 October 2023, there was a range of preparatory activity which Electoral Services carried out.

This included:

- Read the final proposals published by the Boundary Commission.
- Contacted the Returning Officer and his Elections Team in our neighbouring authority area which currently shares our constituency of Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire.
- Liaised with electoral software suppliers about structuring the electoral register to accommodate boundary changes if required.
- Prepared data for the start of the review (electorate figures, turnout from previous elections, information about new housing developments in the next 5 years).
- Identified organisations with a special interest/expertise in disabled access to consult

### Preliminary review

Electoral Services also carried out a preliminary review of the current polling districts and places in the county to assess their suitability.

This involved:

- Compiled details of current polling places with a summary of their suitability
- Checked the continued availability of polling places
- Reviewed feedback from stakeholders at previous elections
- Identified potential alternative buildings where appropriate
- Ensured that polling places can support the requirements of the Elections Act, for example with sufficient space to undertake Voter ID checks, and to accommodate equipment to assist disabled voters.
- Sought advice and guidance from local disability groups and local authority experts around accessibility
- Prepared council proposals and drafted (A)RO comments, including explanations for “no changes”- See Appendix A and B.

### Informal consultation

Electoral Services also carried out informal consultation with interested groups in preparation for the review.

This involved:

- Seeking the views of organisations with a special interest/expertise in disabled access
- Informal consultation with group leaders/local political parties
- Invited comments from polling station inspectors

See Appendix C for list of responses.

***It is recommended that approval is granted to follow the review process described in this report.***

### **Implementing parliamentary boundary changes**

The Boundary Commission for Wales recently undertook a review of parliamentary constituency boundaries. They have published their final recommendations, and Orders for the new parliamentary constituency boundaries will be made in November 2023.

Once the Orders for new parliamentary constituencies have been made, the new boundaries will be used for the next general election.

If a parliamentary by election is called in the meantime, it would be run on existing boundaries.

This means the Register of Electors needs to be able to reflect both the existing and new constituencies.

Work can be done to prepare the register in the background before then, so that once the Order for the new parliamentary constituencies is made, the register can be re-arranged or adapted as necessary to give effect to the Order. This would allow any snap general election in November 2023 to be run on the new constituencies.

This can be achieved by creating future administrative areas within the Election Management system. The Electoral Services Manager, on behalf of the Electoral Registration Officer, will liaise with the software supplier to implement this. This work can be started once the final parliamentary constituency proposals are published.

***It is recommended that the Electoral Registration Officer is authorised to take the necessary measures as soon as possible to give effect to parliamentary constituency changes, ensuring that the register reflects existing and new constituencies, until the boundaries are fully in force.***

### **Implementing polling district changes**

The polling district and places review may result in new polling districts being created or existing polling district boundaries being amended.

If the council makes any alterations to the polling districts in its area, the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) must amend the register of electors accordingly (Section 18A (5) Representation of the People Act 1983).

The changes to the register take effect on the date the ERO publishes a notice stating that the adaptations have been made.

Where polling districts have been created to support the implementation of boundary changes, the register will need to be constructed in a way that is capable of reflecting the existing and new boundaries. This is to ensure that any parliamentary by elections can be run on the existing boundaries, until the new boundaries come into force.

This can be achieved by making any parts of existing electoral areas that will be split when the new boundaries come into effect into separate polling districts.

Publishing the register to reflect existing and new boundaries will also help to enable current councillors and MPs to receive the parts of the register that they are entitled to, while allowing individuals to be supplied with the relevant parts of the register once they become a candidate for an election.

This may mean that, for administrative purposes, there are two versions of the polling scheme. Once the boundaries are in fully in force, any polling districts which have been split simply to allow elections to be run on either set of boundaries, can be re-merged.

***It is recommended that the Electoral Registration Officer is authorised to take the necessary measures to give effect to any new or amended polling districts on completion of the polling district review, ensuring that the register reflects existing and new boundaries where appropriate, until the boundaries are fully in force.***

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?	No
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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: Wendy Walters**

**Chief Executive**



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

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

There are no direct implications arising from this report.

### 2. Legal

The Electoral Administration Act 2006, as amended, introduced a duty on all local authorities in Great Britain to review their polling districts and polling places at least once every five years.

Under section 18C of the Representation of the People Act 1983, the next compulsory review must be undertaken within a 16-month window between 1 October 2023 and 31 January 2025.

### 2. Finance

The only costs expected as a result of conducting this review relate mainly to advertising and copying. These are not expected to be significant and will be absorbed from within existing budgets within Electoral Services.

Without pre-empting the outcome of the review, it might be that proposals come forward resulting in the removal or adding of polling places which could reduce/increase the costs to the authority associated with local elections moving forwards.

### 4. ICT

There are no direct implications arising from this report.

### 5. Risk Management Issues

The Council is required to designate polling districts and polling places to effectively conduct elections. By agreeing the recommendations in this report, the Council will be meeting its statutory duties.

### 6. Physical Assets

There are no direct implications arising from this report.

### 7. Staffing Implications

There are no direct implications arising from this report.

# CONSULTATIONS

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

Signed: Wendy Walters

Chief Executive

**(Please specify the outcomes of consultations undertaken where they arise against the following headings)**

<b>1. Scrutiny Committee request for pre-determination</b>	NO
<b>If yes include the following information: -</b>	
<b>Scrutiny Committee</b>	
<b>Date the report was considered: -</b>	
<b>Scrutiny Committee Outcome/Recommendations: -</b>	

**2. Local Member(s)**

N/A

**3. Community / Town Council**

N/A

**4. Relevant Partners**

N/A

**5. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations**

N/A

**CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S)**  
**AWARE/CONSULTED**      YES

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

Title of Document	File Ref No.	Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
Acting Returning Officer's report - ● Carmarthenshire- Appendix A ● Acting Returning Officer's report Pembrokeshire- Appendix B ● List of responses received – Appendix C		



**Carmarthenshire County Council**  
**Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places**  
**Report of (Acting) Returning Officer for Carmarthenshire County Council**  
**October 2023**

## **Polling Districts & Polling Places Review**

### **Introduction**

The Electoral Administration Act 2006 as amended, introduced a duty on all local authorities in Great Britain to review their polling districts and polling places at least once every five years.

Under section 18C of the Representation of the People Act 1983, the next compulsory review must be undertaken within a 16-month window between 1 October 2023 and 31 January 2025.

The Act requires that the local authority consults widely before reaching a decision on its preferred electoral arrangements. In addition, the Acting Returning Officer for each constituency is required to submit his or her own proposals for future electoral arrangements. What follows are the proposals for Carmarthenshire County Council.

## **The Review in Carmarthenshire**

Carmarthenshire is divided into 196 polling districts, with one or more polling districts making up a ward, with a polling place being an area or building within a polling district in which a polling station is situated. Consequently, it is inevitable that polling stations are also considered as part of these reviews.

These reviews are based on council areas or parliamentary constituencies and, consequently, it is imperative that the views of the (Acting) Returning Officer are sought and considered.

Polling districts, polling places and polling stations will be considered, and this Review will take into account the following: -

- The position and size of the polling place and whether it is appropriate for the polling district and provides sufficient flexibility.
- The availability of postal votes on demand; and
- The suitability of a polling station with regard to: -
  - Accessibility and effectiveness for the majority of the voters in the polling district; -
  - Facilities for voters and, in particular, for those with a disability; and
  - Whether the premises provide economic efficiency with regard to the number of personal voters allocated at a polling station, in particular if they have less than 100 electors voting in person.

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Abergwili</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Caerfyrddin</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>2023</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
<b>AA</b>	<b>Abergwili</b>	<b>567</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>446</b>	<b>Abergwili Recreational Hall, Abergwili</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>AB</b>	<b>Abergwili</b>	<b>565</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>Peniel Community Room, Peniel</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>AC</b>	<b>Abergwili</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>Abergwili Recreational Hall, Abergwili</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>CG</b>	<b>Llanllawddog</b>	<b>679</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>469</b>	<b>Llanllawddog Church Hall</b>	<b>Yes</b>

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No changes proposed</li> </ul>

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Ammanford</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Caerfyrddin</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>4372</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>Ammanford (Wernddu)</b>	<b>1090</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>815</b>	<b>Gellimanwydd Hall, Hall Street</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>Ammanford (Pantyffynnon)</b>	<b>979</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>718</b>	<b>Pensioners Hall, Ammanford</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>Ammanford (Myddynfych)</b>	<b>1129</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>888</b>	<b>The Hall, Nantlais</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>Ammanford (Iscennen Ward)</b>	<b>1174</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>947</b>	<b>Dinefwr Indoor Bowls Centre, Manor Road</b>	<b>Yes</b>

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
● No changes proposed

\*\* Polling District letters A- polling station is not in the polling district, however no alternative facility within polling place.

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Betws</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Caerfyrddin</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>1906</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
<b>E</b>	<b>Betws</b>	<b>1906</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>1487</b>	<b>Betws Rugby Club, Heol Y Felin</b>	<b>Yes</b>

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No changes proposed.</li> </ul>

\*\*Large function room on first floor, however it is more accessible to use the ground floor. Additional lightning to be sourced.



<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Carmarthen Town North and South</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Caerfyrddin</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>6965</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
<b>AF</b>	<b>Carmarthen (North)</b>	<b>2458</b>	<b>644</b>	<b>1814</b>	<b>Carmarthen Bowling Club St Peter's St, Carmarthen SA31 1LN,</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>AG</b>	<b>Carmarthen (North)</b>	<b>1549</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>1168</b>	<b>Special Needs Unit, Myrddin C P School</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>AH</b>	<b>Carmarthen (South)</b>	<b>1220</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>927</b>	<b>Carmarthen Town AFC Clubhouse, Richmond Park, Priory Street</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>AI</b>	<b>Carmarthen (South)</b>	<b>397</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>Parish Hall, Christ Church, Lammas Street</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>AJ</b>	<b>Carmarthen (South)</b>	<b>1341</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>978</b>	<b>Carmarthen Athletic Club, Alltynap Road</b>	<b>Yes</b>

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● AF-Move from Carmarthen Library to Carmarthen Bowling Club, St Peter's Street</li> </ul>

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Carmarthen Town West</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Caerfyrddin</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>4018</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
<b>AK</b>	<b>Carmarthen (West)</b>	<b>2185</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>1648</b>	<b>Double Station at St. Mary's Catholic Church Hall, Union Street</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>AL</b>	<b>Carmarthen (West)</b>	<b>1833</b>	<b>429</b>	<b>1404</b>	<b>Y Calon, Yr Egin, College Road</b>	<b>Yes</b>

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No changes proposed</li> </ul>

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Cenarth and Llangeler</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Caerfyrddin</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>4619</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
<b>AM</b>	<b>Cenarth (Cenarth)</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>Tŷ Te Cenarth Tea Rooms</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>AN</b>	<b>Cenarth (Cilrhedyn)</b>	<b>477</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>Capel Iwan Community Centre</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>BU</b>	<b>Llangeler (Drefach)</b>	<b>761</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>534</b>	<b>Saron Chapel Vestry, Saron</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>BV</b>	<b>Llangeler (Llangeler)</b>	<b>1069</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>775</b>	<b>Pentrecwrt Village Hall, Pentrecwrt</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>BW</b>	<b>Llangeler (Penboyr)</b>	<b>1024</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>805</b>	<b>Red Dragon Hall, Felindre</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>CQ</b>	<b>Newcastle Emlyn</b>	<b>913</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>662</b>	<b>Holy Trinity Church Community Hall</b>	<b>Yes</b>

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To relocate the polling station for AM to Tŷ Te Cenarth Tea Rooms</li> </ul>

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Cilycwm</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Caerfyrddin</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>2231</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
CO	Llanycrwys	188	45	143	Chapel Vestry, Ffaldybrenin	Yes
EJ	Cynwyl Gaeo (Cynwyl Gaeo)	419	79	340	Village Hall, Crugybar	Yes
EK	Cynwyl Gaeo (Farmers)	369	86	283	Farmers Village Hall, Farmers	Yes
EL	Llanwrda	411	79	332	Llanwrda Public Hall, Llanwrda	Yes
EP	Cilycwm (South)	170	52	118	Site visit required	
EQ	Cilycwm (North)	244	53	191	Site visit required	
FN	Llansadwrn	430	88	342	Reading Room, Llansadwrn	Yes

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to find a polling station for EP and EQ- Neuadd Arms, Cil Y Cwm has now closed.</li> </ul>

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Cwarter Bach</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Caerfyrddin</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>2272</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
FS	Cwarter Bach (Cwarter Bach)	845	159	686	Black Mountain Centre, Brynamman	Yes
FT	Cwarter Bach (Llynfell)	272	61	211	Ystradown Community Centre, New Road	Yes
FU	Cwarter Bach (Llynfell)	417	96	321	Ystradowen Community Centre, New Road	Yes
FV	Cwarter Bach (Brynamman)	738	171	567	Black Mountain Centre, Brynamman	Yes

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To withdraw polling place/polling station-Training Room, Cefnbrynbrain and to define the polling place/polling station as Ystradowen Community Centre, New Road. Training Room, (Cefnbrynbrain no longer available).</li> </ul>

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Cynwyl Elfed</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Caerfyrddin</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>1998</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
<b>AE</b>	<b>Bronwydd</b>	<b>484</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>Bronwydd Memorial Hall, Bronwydd</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>AT</b>	<b>Cynwyl Elfed</b>	<b>871</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>672</b>	<b>Cynwyl Elfed Community Centre</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>CI</b>	<b>Llanpumsaint</b>	<b>643</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>516</b>	<b>Llanpumsaint Memorial Hall</b>	<b>Yes</b>

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
• No changes proposed

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Garnant</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Caerfyrddin</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>1664</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
EF	Cwmamman (Pistyllwyd)	1069	232	837	Garnant Club Lounge, Cwmamman Road	Yes
EG	Cwmamman (Twyn)	595	133	462	Ysgol Y Bedol, Folland Road	Yes

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
• No changes proposed

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Glanamman</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Caerfyrddin</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>1892</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
<b>ED</b>	<b>Cwmamman (Grenig)</b>	<b>1207</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>949</b>	<b>Community Centre, Glanamman</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>EE</b>	<b>Cwmamman (Tircoed)</b>	<b>685</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>527</b>	<b>Tabernacle Vestry, Glanmman</b>	<b>Yes</b>

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No changes proposed</li> </ul>



<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Laugharne</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Caerfyrddin</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>2195</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
<b>AU</b>	<b>Eglwyscummin (Ciffig)</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>Eglwyscummin Community Hall</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>AV</b>	<b>Eglwyscummin (Ciffig)</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>Whitland Memorial Hall, Market Street</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>AW</b>	<b>Eglwyscummin (Eglwyscummin)</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>Eglwyscummin Community Hall</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>AX</b>	<b>Eglwyscummin (Marros)</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>Eglwyscummin Community Hall</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>BD</b>	<b>Laugharne Township</b>	<b>938</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>724</b>	<b>Laugharne Millenium Memorial Hall</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>BK</b>	<b>Llanddowror and Llanmiloe (North)</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>Llanddowror Community Meeting Room</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>BL</b>	<b>Llanddowror and Llanmiloe (South)</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>Site visit required</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>CW</b>	<b>Pendine</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>Site Visit required</b>	<b>Yes</b>

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Redefine the polling place and polling station of polling district AV to Eglwyscummin Community Hall</li> </ul>

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Llanboidy</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Caerfyrddin</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>1767</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
<b>AO</b>	<b>Cilymaenllwyd (North)</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>Caffi Beca, Clynderwen</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>AP</b>	<b>Cilymaenllwyd (South)</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>Caffi Beca, Clynderwen</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>BF</b>	<b>Llanboidy (Llanboidy)</b>	<b>703</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>548</b>	<b>Market Hall, Llanboidy</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>BG</b>	<b>Llanboidy (Pontyfenni)</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>Whitland Memorial Hall, Market Street</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>CE</b>	<b>Llangynin</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>Bryn Chapel Hall, Llangynin</b>	<b>Yes</b>

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re define the polling place and polling stations for polling districts AO and AP to Market Hall, Llanboidy</li> <li>• Re define the polling place and polling station for polling district BG to Market Hall, Llanboidy</li> </ul>

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Llanddarog</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Caerfyrddin</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>1758</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
BE	Llanarthney	719	189	530	Llanarthney Village Hall, Llanarthne	Yes
BH	Llanddarog	824	200	624	Y Neuadd Fach, Porthyrhyd	Yes
BI	Llanddarog	215	42	173	Mynyddcerrig Workingmen's Club	Yes

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
• No changes proposed

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Llandeilo</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Caerfyrddin</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>2459</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
EH	Llandeilo (Tywi)	712	141	571	Llandeilo Civic Hall	Yes
EI	Llandeilo (Castle)	750	172	578	Llandeilo Civic Hall	Yes
ER	Dyffryn Cennen (Ffairfach)	731	150	581	Young Farmers's Hall, Ffairfach	Yes
ES	Dyffryn Cennen (Trapp)	266	57	209	Village Hall, Trapp	Yes

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
• No changes proposed

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Llandovery</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Caerfyrddin</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>2087</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
EA	Llandovery (South)	435	86	349	Rhys Pritchard Memorial Hall, Llandovery	Yes
EB	Llandovery (West)	647	138	509	Rhys Pritchard Memorial Hall	Yes
EC	Llandovery (North)	496	111	385	Rhys Pritchard Memorial Hall	Yes
EM	Llanfair-ar-y-Bryn (Pentre Ty Gwyn)	112	33	79	Babel Hall, Pentre-Ty-Gwyn	Yes
EN	Llanfair-ar-y-Bryn (Cynghordy)	241	47	194	Bethel Chapel Cynghordy	Yes
EO	Llanfair-ar-y-Bryn (Rhandirmwyn)	156	43	113	The Lounge/Royal oak Inn, Rhandirmwyn	Yes

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No changes proposed</li> </ul>

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Llandybie</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Caerfyrddin</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>3531</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
<b>FB</b>	<b>Llandybie (Llandybie)</b>	<b>2543</b>	<b>561</b>	<b>1982</b>	<b>Double Station-Llandybie Public Memorial Hall</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>FC</b>	<b>Llandybie (Heolddu)</b>	<b>492</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>Gellimanwydd Hall, Heol Wallasey, Ammanford</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>FW</b>	<b>Llandybie (Llandybie)</b>	<b>496</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>The Hall, Nantlais</b>	<b>Yes</b>

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No changes proposed</li> </ul>

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Llanegwad</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Caerfyrddin</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>2068</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
BQ	Llanfihangel Rhos-y-corn	79	26	53	Brechfa Church Hall, Brechfa	Yes
BR	Llanfihangel Rhos-y-corn	202	56	146	Brechfa Church Hall, Brechfa	Yes
BS	Llanfihangel Rhos-y-corn	121	51	70	Brechfa Church Hall, Brechfa	Yes
FD	Llanfynydd	435	98	337	C M Chapel Vestry, Llanfynydd	Yes
FE	Llanegwad (Brechfa)	70	18	52	Brechfa Church Hall, Brechfa	Yes
FF	Llanegwad (Elvet)	639	176	463	Village Hall, Felingwm	Yes
FG	Llanegwad (Cathynog)	522	155	367	Memorial Hall, Pontargothi	Yes

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No changes proposed</li> </ul>

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Llanfihangel Aberbythych</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Caerfyrddin</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>1588</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
FH	Llanfihangel Aberbythych (North)	229	32	197	Church Hall, Golden Grove	Yes
FI	Llanfihangel Aberbythych (South)	924	229	695	Welfare Hall, Gate Road	Yes
FJN	Llangathen (North)	262	50	212	Village Hall, Llangathen	Yes
FJS	Llangathen (South)	173	35	138	Village Hall, Llangathen	Yes

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
• No changes proposed



<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Llanfihangel-ar-Arth</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Caerfyrddin</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>2289</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
<b>BO</b>	<b>Llanfihangel-ar-Arth (North)</b>	<b>582</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>417</b>	<b>Llanfihangel Ar Arth School Hall</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>BP</b>	<b>Llanfihangel-ar-Arth (South)</b>	<b>1140</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>861</b>	<b>Pencader Pavilion</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>CH</b>	<b>Llanllwni</b>	<b>567</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>435</b>	<b>Nonni Chapel Vestry, Llanllwni</b>	<b>Yes</b>

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No changes proposed</li> </ul>

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Llangadog</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Caerfyrddin</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>1669</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
FK	Llangadog (Dyffryn Ceidrych)	461	80	381	Community Centre, Llangadog	Yes
FL	Llangadog (Llangadog)	434	100	334	Community Centre, Llangadog	Yes
FM	Llangadog (Gwynfe)	239	44	195	Community Hall, Gwynfe	Yes
FQ	Myddfai	321	59	262	Myddfai Community Hall	Yes
FR	Llanddeusant	214	48	166	The Old School, Llanddeusant	Yes

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
• No changes proposed

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Llangunnor</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Caerfyrddin</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>2157</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
<b>BX</b>	<b>Llangunnor (East)</b>	<b>882</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>584</b>	<b>Llangunnor Primary School</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>BY</b>	<b>Llangunnor (West)</b>	<b>1275</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>902</b>	<b>Llangunnor Primary School</b>	<b>Yes</b>

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No changes proposed</li> </ul>

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Llanybydder</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Caerfyrddin</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>2205</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
<b>CM</b>	<b>Llanybydder (North)</b>	<b>1060</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>857</b>	<b>Aberduar Chapel Vestry, Llanybydder</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>CN</b>	<b>Llanybydder (South)</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>Aberduar Chapel Vestry, Llanybydder</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>CT</b>	<b>Pencarreg</b>	<b>1001</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>755</b>	<b>St. James Hall, Cwmann</b>	<b>Yes</b>

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
• No changes proposed

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Manordeilo and Salem</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Caerfyrddin</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>2287</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
ET	Manordeilo and Salem (Salem)	594	112	482	Memorial Hall, Salem	Yes
EU	Manordeilo and Salem (Cwmifor)	845	184	661	Village Hall, Cwmifor	Yes
FO	Llansawel	371	90	281	Neuadd Llansawel	Yes
FP	Talley	477	87	390	Church Hall, Talley	Yes

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
• No changes proposed

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Penygroes</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Caerfyrddin</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>2492</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
<b>EV</b>	<b>Llandybie (Penygroes)</b>	<b>2137</b>	<b>435</b>	<b>1702</b>	<b>Double Station-Penygroes Memorial Hall</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>EW</b>	<b>Llandybie (Penygroes)</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>Welfare Hall, Caerbryn</b>	<b>Yes</b>

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To re define the polling place and Polling station for polling district EW to: Penygroes Memorial Hall.</li> </ul>

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Saron</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Caerfyrddin</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>3502</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
<b>EXC</b>	<b>Llandybie (Saron)</b>	<b>1105</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>809</b>	<b>Capel Hendre Chapel Vestry</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>EXS</b>	<b>Llandybie (Saron)</b>	<b>813</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>596</b>	<b>Saron Welfare Hall, Saron</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>EY</b>	<b>Llandybie (Saron)</b>	<b>506</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>The Hall, Gwynfryn Estate</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>EZ</b>	<b>Llandybie (Saron)</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>Capel Hendre Chapel Vestry</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>FA</b>	<b>Llandybie (Saron)</b>	<b>755</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>584</b>	<b>Penybanc Welfare Hall, Penybanc</b>	<b>Yes</b>

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To redefine the polling place/polling station for EY to Saron Welfare Hall, Saron</li> </ul>

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>St. Clears and Llansteffan</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Caerfyrddin</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>4338</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
<b>BT</b>	<b>Llangain</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>Llangain Memorial Hall</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>CF</b>	<b>Llangynog</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>Llangynog Village Hall</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>CJ</b>	<b>Llansteffan &amp; Llanybri (Llansteffan)</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>Llansteffan Memorial Hall</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>CK</b>	<b>Llansteffan &amp; Llanybri (Llanybri)</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>Llanybri Community Hall</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>CX</b>	<b>St. Clears (Llanfihangel Abercowin)</b>	<b>1028</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>811</b>	<b>St. Clears Leisure Centre</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>CY</b>	<b>St. Clears (Llanfihangel Abercowin)</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>Banyfelin Village Hall</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>CZ</b>	<b>St. Clears (St. Clears)</b>	<b>1311</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>995</b>	<b>St. Clears Boating Club, The Quay, Bridge Street</b>	<b>Yes</b>

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No changes proposed.</li> </ul>



<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Trelech</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Caerfyrddin</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>2400</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
<b>AD</b>	<b>Abernant</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>Talog Village Hall, Talog</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>CL</b>	<b>Llanwinio</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>Llanwinio Community Hall</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>CP</b>	<b>Meidrim</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>Meidrim Youth Hall</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>CR</b>	<b>Newchurch &amp; Merthyr</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>Merthyr Community Hall</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>CS</b>	<b>Newchurch &amp; Merthyr</b>	<b>387</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>Newchurch Schoolroom</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>DEC</b>	<b>Trelech a'r Betws</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>Trelech Community Centre</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>DFC</b>	<b>Trelech a'r Betws</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>Alma Community Centre</b>	<b>Yes</b>

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to the unavailability of Merthyr community hall, re define this polling place as Newchurch Schoolroom</li> </ul>

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Whitland</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Caerfyrddin</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>1057</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
<b>BC</b>	<b>Henllanfallteg</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>Henllanfallteg Millennium Hall</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>DGC</b>	<b>Whitland</b>	<b>632</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>Whitland Memorial Hall, Market Street</b>	<b>Yes</b>

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No changes proposed</li> </ul>

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Bigyn</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Llanelli</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>4926</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
<b>BIGA</b>	<b>Llanelli Town (Bigyn)</b>	<b>1130</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>871</b>	<b>Glenalla Community Hall, Alban Road</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>BIGB</b>	<b>Llanelli Town (Bigyn)</b>	<b>788</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>671</b>	<b>Glenalla Community Hall, Alban Road</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>BIGC</b>	<b>Llanelli Town (Bigyn)</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>Site visit required</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>BIGD</b>	<b>Llanelli Town (Bigyn)</b>	<b>1305</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>1042</b>	<b>Portacabin at R/O 65 Firth Road</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>BIGE</b>	<b>Llanelli Town (Bigyn)</b>	<b>542</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>435</b>	<b>Site visit required</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>BIGF</b>	<b>Llanelli Town (Bigyn)</b>	<b>821</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>621</b>	<b>Church Hall, Bryngwyn Road, Dafen</b>	<b>Yes</b>

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to define a polling station for BIGC and BIGE due to Myrtle House no longer being available</li> </ul>

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Burry Port</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Llanelli</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>3459</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
<b>BURA</b>	<b>Pembrey and Burry Port (Burry Port)</b>	<b>3165</b>	<b>777</b>	<b>2388</b>	<b>Three Stations-Memorial Hall, Burry Port</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>BURB</b>	<b>Pembrey and Burry Port (Burry Port)</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>Memorial Hall, Burry Port</b>	<b>Yes</b>

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No changes proposed</li> </ul>

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Bynea</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Llanelli</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>3656</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
<b>BYNA</b>	<b>Llanelli Rural (Bynea)</b>	<b>1577</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>1289</b>	<b>Saron Hall, Bynea</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>BYNB</b>	<b>Llanelli Rural (Bynea)</b>	<b>1199</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>901</b>	<b>Community Hall, Trallwm</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>BYNC</b>	<b>Llanelli Rural (Bynea)</b>	<b>880</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>653</b>	<b>Community Hall, Trallwm</b>	<b>Yes</b>

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No changes proposed</li> </ul>

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Dafen and Felinfoel</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Llanelli</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>4065</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
DAFA	Llanelli Rural (Dafen)	1198	284	914	Dafen Park Rural Hall, Maescanner Road	Yes
DAFB	Llanelli Rural (Dafen)	881	184	697	Church Hall, Bryngwyn Road, Dafen	Yes
DAFC	Llanelli Rural (Dafen)	554	119	435	Church Hall, Bryngwyn Road, Dafen	Yes
FELA	Llanelli Rural (Felinfoel)	888	213	675	Ysgol Y Felin, Ynyswen, Felinfoel	Yes
FELB	Llanelli Rural (Felinfoel)	544	94	450	Ysgol Y Felin, Ynyswen, Felinfoel	Yes

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No changes proposed</li> </ul>

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Elli</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Llanelli</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>1746</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
<b>ELLA</b>	<b>Llanelli Town (Elli)</b>	<b>541</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>The Lantern Centre, Hall Street</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>ELLB</b>	<b>Llanelli Town (Elli)</b>	<b>1205</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>919</b>	<b>The Lantern Centre, Hall Street</b>	<b>Yes</b>

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No changes proposed</li> </ul>

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Glanymor</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Llanelli</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>4702</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
<b>GLAA</b>	<b>Llanelli Town (Glanymor)</b>	<b>1428</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>1206</b>	<b>Bethel Schoolroom, Marine Street</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>GLAB</b>	<b>Llanelli Town (Glanymor)</b>	<b>1282</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>1011</b>	<b>Trinity Schoolroom, New Dock Road</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>GLAC</b>	<b>Llanelli Town (Glanymor)</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>1588</b>	<b>Wesleyan Hall, Campbell Street</b>	<b>Yes</b>

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No changes proposed</li> </ul>



<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Glyn</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Llanelli</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>1769</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
GLYA	Llanelli Rural (Glyn)	682	167	515	Community Hall, Five Roads	Yes
GLYB	Llanelli Rural (Glyn)	685	159	526	Community Hall, Ponthenri	Yes
GLYC	Llanelli Rural (Glyn)	402	75	327	Welfare Hall, Pontyates	Yes

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No changes proposed</li> </ul>

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Gorslas</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Llanelli</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>4174</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
<b>GORA (formerly AY)</b>	<b>Gorslas (Cefneithin)</b>	<b>1461</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>1168</b>	<b>Cefneithin/Foelgastell Welfare Hall</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>GORB (formerly AZ)</b>	<b>Gorslas (Drefach)</b>	<b>1093</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>818</b>	<b>Neuadd Y Gwendraeth, Heol Cwmmawr, DrefachPoll</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>GORC (formerly BA)</b>	<b>Gorslas (Gorslas)</b>	<b>1620</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>1234</b>	<b>Gorslas Church Hall, Gorslas</b>	<b>Yes</b>

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No changes proposed</li> </ul>

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Hendy</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Llanelli</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>1295</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
<b>HEDA</b>	<b>Llanedi (Hendy)</b>	<b>1295</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>985</b>	<b>Hendy C P School, Iscoed Road</b>	<b>Yes</b>

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No changes proposed</li> </ul>

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Hengoed</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Llanelli</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>3541</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
HENA	Llanelli Rural (Hengoed)	1662	315	1347	Community Hall, Sandy Road	Yes
HENB	Llanelli Rural (Hengoed)	604	120	484	Village Hall (New), Stradey Road	Yes
HENC	Llanelli Rural (Hengoed)	138	21	117	Village Hall (New), Stradey Road	Yes
HEND	Llanelli Rural (Hengoed)	1137	258	879	Pwll Pavilion, King George's Playing Fields	Yes

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
●Need to define a polling station for HEND as Pwll Centre no longer available

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Kidwelly and St. Ishmael</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Llanelli</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>4208</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
ISHA (formerly DA)	St. Ishmael (Ferryside)	763	185	578	Ferryside Village Hall	Yes
ISHB (formerly DB)	St. Ishmael (Llansaint)	216	45	171	Llansaint Welfare Hall	Yes
ISHC (formerly DC)	St. Ishmael (Picton)	59	11	48	Llansaint Welfare Hall	Yes
ISHD (formerly DD)	St. Ishmael (Picton)	164	45	119	Ferryside Village Hall	Yes
CASA	Kidwelly (Castle)	1307	333	974	Princess Gwenllian Centre, Hillfield Villas	Yes
MYNA	Kidwelly (Mynydd Y Garreg)	995	268	727	Princess Gwenllian Centre, Hillfield Villas	Yes
MYNB	Kidwelly (Mynydd Y Garreg)	704	145	559	Welfare Hall, Mynyddgarreg	Yes

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
• No changes proposed

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Llangennech</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Llanelli</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>4176</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
<b>LLAA</b>	<b>Llangennech</b>	<b>3268</b>	<b>775</b>	<b>2493</b>	<b>Double Station-Community Centre, Llangennech</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>LLAB</b>	<b>Llangennech</b>	<b>908</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>732</b>	<b>Bryn Village Hall, Heol Tabor</b>	<b>Yes</b>

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No changes proposed</li> </ul>

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Llangydeyrn</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Llanelli</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>4359</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
<b>GYNA (formerly BM)</b>	<b>Llandyfaelog</b>	<b>899</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>676</b>	<b>St. Anne's Church Hall, Cwmffwrdd</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>GYNB (formerly BN)</b>	<b>Llandyfaelog</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>Llandyfaelog Welfare Hall</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>GYNC (formerly BZ)</b>	<b>Llangydeyrn (Carway)</b>	<b>1164</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>928</b>	<b>Carway Welfare Hall, Carway</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>GYND (formerly CB)</b>	<b>Llangydeyrn (Llangydeyrn)</b>	<b>640</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>Church Hall, Llangydeyrn</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>GYNE (formerly CC)</b>	<b>Llangydeyrn (Pontyates)</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>Salem Vestry, Four Roads</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>GYNF (formerly CD)</b>	<b>Llangydeyrn (Pontyates)</b>	<b>1186</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>884</b>	<b>Welfare Hall, Pontyates</b>	<b>Yes</b>

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Redefine the polling place and polling station for polling district CC to Welfare Hall, Pontyates</li> </ul>

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Llannon</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Llanelli</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>4374</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
<b>CROA</b>	<b>Llannon (Cross Hands)</b>	<b>1005</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>St. Annes Church, Bryngwili Road</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>CROB</b>	<b>Llannon (Cross Hands)</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>St. Annes Church, Bryngwili Road</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>TUMA</b>	<b>Llannon (Tumble)</b>	<b>1073</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>822</b>	<b>Bethania Vestry, Llechyfedach</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>TUMB</b>	<b>Llannon (Tumble)</b>	<b>775</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>623</b>	<b>Hermon Chapel, Llannon</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>TUMC</b>	<b>Llannon (Tumble)</b>	<b>1385</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>1071</b>	<b>Tumble Hall, Heol Y Neuadd</b>	<b>Yes</b>

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
• No changes proposed



<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Lliedi</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Llanelli</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>4031</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
LLIA	Llanelli Town (Lliedi)	888	168	720	Llanelli Bowls Club, Old Road	Yes
LLIB	Llanelli Town (Lliedi)	1279	236	1043	Scout Hall, R/O Andrew Street	Yes
LLIC	Llanelli Town (Lliedi)	1097	214	883	Llanerch Community Hall, Heol Nantfelin	Yes
LLID	Llanelli Town (Lliedi)	559	116	443	Llanerch Community Hall, Heol Nantfelin	Yes
LLIE	Llanelli Town (Lliedi)	208	38	170	Llanerch Community Hall, Heol Nantfelin	Yes

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
• No changes proposed

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Llwynhendy</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Llanelli</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>3293</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
PEMA	Llanelli Rural (Pemberton)	810	179	631	The Library, Llwynhendy	Yes
PEMB	Llanelli Rural (Pemberton)	935	201	734	The Library, Llwynhendy	Yes
PEMC	Llanelli Rural (Pemberton)	1164	314	850	Bryn & Trallwm Club, Gelli House, Gelli Road	Yes
PEMD	Llanelli Rural (Pemberton)	384	119	265	Bryn & Trallwm Club, Gelli House, Gelli Road	Yes

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
• No changes proposed

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Pembrey</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Llanelli</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>3543</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
REYA	Pembrey and Burry Port (Pembrey)	1376	321	1055	The Library, Burry Port	Yes
REYB	Pembrey and Burry Port (Pembrey)	2167	491	1676	Double Station-Pembrey Memorial Hall, Pembrey	Yes

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
• No changes proposed

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Pontyberem</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Llanelli</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>2288</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
<b>PONA</b>	<b>Pontyberem</b>	<b>1860</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>1386</b>	<b>Double Station-Memorial Hall, Coalbrook Road</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>PONB</b>	<b>Pontyberem</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>Bancffosfelen &amp; Crwbin Hall</b>	<b>Yes</b>

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No changes proposed</li> </ul>

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Swiss Valley</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Llanelli</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>1087</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
SWIA	Llanelli Rural(Swiss Valley)	1087	294	793	Community Centre, Heol Nant	Yes

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
• No changes proposed

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Trimsaran</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Llanelli</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>2016</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
TRIA	Trimsaran	2016	448	1568	Double Station-Leisure Centre, Trimsaran	Yes

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
• No changes proposed

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Tycroes</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Llanelli</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>2325</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
TYCA	Llanedi (Tycroes)	2082	493	1589	Double Station-Scouts Hall, Heol Brown	Yes
TYCB	Llanedi (Llanedi)	243	52	191	Church Hall, Llanedi	Yes

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
• No changes proposed

<b>Electoral Ward</b>	<b>Tyisha</b>
<b>Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Llanelli</b>
<b>Electorate</b>	<b>3600</b>

<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Community/Town Council and Ward</b>	<b>No. of Electors</b>	<b>Current No. of Postal Voters</b>	<b>Current No. of Voting in Person</b>	<b>Polling Place and Polling Station</b>	<b>Disabled Access</b>
TYIA	Llanelli Town (Tyisha)	965	161	804	St. Barnabas Hall, Llewellyn Street	Yes
TYIB	Llanelli Town (Tyisha)	832	142	690	Community Centre, Lakefield Road	Yes
TYIC	Llanelli Town (Tyisha)	369	69	300	Community Centre, Lakefield Road	Yes
TYID	Llanelli Town (Tyisha)	266	61	205	Community Centre, Lakefield Road	Yes
TYIE	Llanelli Town (Tyisha)	167	47	120	Bigyn Primary School Nursery, Penybigyn	Yes
TYIF	Llanelli Town (Tyisha)	176	46	130	Bigyn Primary School Nursery, Penybigyn	Yes
TYIG	Llanelli Town (Tyisha)	825	141	684	Disabled Drivers Centre, Albert Street	Yes

<b>Acting Returning Officer's Proposals or comments</b>
● No changes proposed



### Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations October 2023

Comments of (Acting) Returning Officer for the Constituency of Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire (South Pembrokeshire)

PREMISES	ELECTORATE	COMMENTS
TALOG VILLAGE HALL	234	No issues.
BRONWYDD MEMORIAL HALL	477	No issues.
CARMARTHEN LIBRARY	2,257 (2 stations)	No known issues.
SPECIAL NEEDS UNIT MYRDDIN C P SCHOOL	1,423	No issues
CARMARTHEN TOWN A F C CLUBHOUSE		No known issues.
PARISH HALL, CHRIST CHURCH	362	No known issues.
ST MARYS CATHOLIC CHURCH HALL, UNION STREET	1024	No known issues.
ST MARYS CATHOLIC CHURCH HALL, UNION STREET	1020	No known issues.
CARMARTHEN ATHLETIC CLUB	1,304	No known issues.
Y CALON, YR EGIN	1,641	No known issues.
CAFFI BECA	643	No known issues.
CYNWYL ELFED COMMUNITY CENTRE	844	No known issues.
EGLWYSCUMMIN COMMUNITY HALL	257	No known issues.
HENLLANFALLTEG MILLENNIUM HALL	418	Good new refurbished hall. On street parking
LAUGHARNE MILLENNIUM MEMORIAL HALL	930	No known issues.
LLANBOIDY MARKET HALL	680	Limited parking.
WHITLAND MEMORIAL HALL	1,671 (2 stations)	No known issues.
LLANDDOWROR COMMUNITY MEETING ROOM	291	No known issues.
ST BARBARAS CHURCH HALL	589	No issues
LLANGAIN MEMORIAL HALL	457	On street parking only
BRYN CHAPEL HALL	240	No issues
LLANGYNOG VILLAGE HALL	389	No known issues.
LLANPUMSAINT MEMORIAL HALL	615	No known issues.
LLANSTEFFAN MEMORIAL HALL	374	No known issues.
LLANYBRI COMMUNITY HALL	415	No known issues.
LLANWINIO COMMUNITY HALL	363	No known issues.
MEIDRIM YOUTH HALL	503	No issues
MERTHYR COMMUNITY HALL	190	Unsuitable building for polling station but no other option in small community area.
NEWCHURCH SCHOOLROOM	374	No known issues.
ST CLEARS LEISURE CENTRE	953	No issues
BANCYFELIN VILLAGE HALL	251	No known issues.
ST CLEARS BOATING CLUB	1,257	No known issues.
TRELECH COMMUNITY CENTRE	380	Limited parking.
ALMA COMMUNITY CENTRE	265	Good refurbished village hall with parking no issues.

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### Interim Polling District Review Responses

<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Connection to the Polling District</b>	<b>Polling District Letters</b>	<b>Submission Comments</b>
Carmarthen East and Dinefwr (new Constituency name Caerfyrddin)	Resident/Local Community Group	EP & EQ	In light of the closure of Neuadd Arms, We would suggest that you utilise Capel Y Groes as the polling station venue.
Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire (new Constituency name Caerfyrddin)	Local Community Group	AV	Support the relocation of this polling district to vote at Eglwyscummin Community Hall
Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire (new Constituency name Caerfyrddin)	Local Community Group	BL and CW	Propose using Llanmiloe Resource Centre in light of the unavailability of St. Barbaras.
Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire (new Constituency name Caerfyrddin)	Local Community Group	CJ and CK	Would like to retain the status quo and object to any changes to current polling arrangements
Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire (new Constituency name Caerfyrddin)	Local Councillor	CJ and CK	Would like to retain the status quo and object to any changes to current polling arrangements
Carmarthen East and Dinefwr (new Constituency name Caerfyrddin)	Local Councillor	AF	Propose moving voting facilities from Carmarthen Library to Carmarthen Bowling Club, St. Peters Street, where there is better accessibility access.

Carmarthen East and Dinefwr (new Constituency name Caerfyrddin)	Local Community Group	CG	Support the current arrangements.
Carmarthen East and Dinefwr (new Constituency name Caerfyrddin)	Local Community Group	CH	Happy with current arrangements
Llanelli	Local Councillor	BIGC and BIGE	Suggest using Waddles Court as Myrtle House no longer available
Llanelli	Local Community Group	TYIA, TYIE and TYIF	TYIA – venue needs relocating due to closure of St. Barnabas Community Centre in summer of 2024. TYIE and TYIF- suggest Waddles Court due to the unavailability of Myrtle House.
Llanelli	Local Community Group	HEND	Support the use of Pwll Pavilion in light of the unavailability of Pwll Centre
Llanelli (formerly Carmarthen East and Dinefwr)	Local Community Group	BM and BN	Happy with current polling station arrangements

**COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**24<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2024**

**HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT AND HOUSING RENT SETTING**  
**2024/25**

**Purpose:**

To bring together the latest proposals for the Revenue and Capital Budgets for the Housing Revenue Account 2024/2027. It has been prepared in conjunction with officers from the Communities Department

To reflect the latest proposals contained in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan, which is the primary financial planning tool for delivering the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard Plus (CHS+) for the future. The proposed investment within the current business plan delivered the CHS by 2015 (to those homes where tenants agreed to have work undertaken), provides investment to maintain CHS+ and continues investment for our Housing Regeneration and Development Delivery Plan.

The report also details how rents will increase for 2024/25.

Appendix A provides the proposed Revenue Account Budget for 2024/25.

Appendix B of this report provides the proposed Capital Programme for 2024/27.

Appendix C of this report provides service charge policy cap amendment.

Appendix D of this report provides an extract from Communities, Homes & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee meeting 13/12/23.

The HRA budget for 2024/25 is being set to reflect:

- Social Housing Rent Policy (set by WG)
- Proposals contained in the Carmarthenshire Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.
- Housing Regeneration and Development Delivery Plan.

**Cabinet Recommendations:****“UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL:**

1. to increase the average housing rent by 6.5% (£6.47) per dwelling per week within the parameters of the WG Social Housing Rents Policy (inclusive of progression for tenants below target rents)
  - properties at target rents will increase by 6.39% and
  - properties where rent is below target rent will increase by 6.39% plus a maximum progression of £1.00
  - those rents above target are frozen until such time that they meet the target which will produce a sustainable Business Plan, maintain the CHS+ and deliver the Authority's Housing Regeneration and Development Delivery Plan;
2. to continue with a maximum progression of £1 for rents below the proposed rent for each stock type;
3. to increase garage rents by 6.5% from £9.00 to £9.60 and garage bases from £2.08 to £2.22;
4. to apply the amended Service Charge Policy to ensure tenants who receive the benefit from specific services pay for those services (Appendix C of the report);

5. to increase charges for using our sewerage treatment works in line with the rent increase;
6. to approve the Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2024/27 (2025/26 & 2026/27 being soft budgets) as set out in Appendix A of the report;
7. to approve the proposed Capital Programme and applicable funding for 2024/25 and the indicative spends for 2025/26 to 2026/27, as set out in Appendix B of the report.”

**Reasons:**

To enable the Authority to set its Housing Revenue Account Budget

To set the Housing Rent levels for 2024/25

<b>Cabinet Decision Required</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Council Decision Required</b>	<b>Yes – 24<sup>th</sup> January 2024</b>

**CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S):-**

Cllr Alun Lenny (Resources Portfolio Holder)  
 Cllr. Linda Evans (Deputy Leader and Homes Portfolio Holder)

<p><b>Directorate: Corporate Resources</b></p> <p><b>Name of Head of Service:</b></p> <p><b>Randal Hemingway</b></p> <p><b>Report Author: Stephen Williams</b></p>	<p><b>Designations:</b></p> <p><b>Head of Finance</b></p> <p><b>Senior Accountant</b></p>	<p><b>Tel Nos.01267 224120</b></p> <p><b>E Mail Addresses:</b></p> <p><a href="mailto:RHemingway@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">RHemingway@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a></p> <p><a href="mailto:stewilliams@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">stewilliams@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a></p>
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY COUNTY COUNCIL 24<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2024

## HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT AND HOUSING RENT SETTING 2024/25

### 1. Purpose of the Rent Setting Report

- 1.1.** This report explains the proposed 2024/25 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for both revenue and capital. It has been prepared in conjunction with officers from the Communities Department and is presented to Cabinet 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025. This report was presented to Community & Regeneration Scrutiny committee on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023 as part of the budget consultation process, action notes from that meeting attached as Appendix D.
- 1.2.** The HRA budget for 2024/25 is being set to reflect:
- Welsh Government’s Policy for Social Housing Rents (Rent Policy) issued 27/10/23, which this year is governed by the Welsh Government’s Minister for Climate Change instruction that the maximum increases in the rent envelope for any local authority does not exceed 6.7%
  - Proposals contained in the Carmarthenshire Housing Revenue Account Business Plan
  - Housing Regeneration and Development Delivery Plan
- 1.3.** Implementing the 6.5% overall increase for Carmarthenshire and implementing rental progression of £1, has the following impact:
- For those properties at target rent the increase will be: -  
Consumer Price Index (CPI for Sept 2023) @6.7%-0.31% = 6.39%
  - For those properties where rent is below target rent, the increase can be:  
Consumer Price Index (CPI for Sept 2022) @6.7%-0.31% = 6.39%  
plus a maximum of £1 progression in order to achieve an average rent increase of 6.5%.
  - Those rents above target are frozen until such time that they meet the target, there is only 1 property remaining. When a property becomes empty it is placed at the appropriate rent.
  - Based on applying the above for 2024/25 at 6.5% rent increase this would produce an average rent of £105.90 (increase of £6.47).

**DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?**

**YES – HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT AND HOUSING RENT SETTING 2024/25**

# 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: Randal Hemingway

Head of Finance

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

## 2. FINANCE

The report details the HRA proposals to be considered by pre-cabinet. If the proposals are agreed the budget for the HRA will be set for 2024/25 with an expenditure level of £53M.

The average rent will increase from £99.43 to £105.90 (6.5%).

The proposed Capital Programme will be £36.2M for 2024/25, £38.1M for 2025/26 and £38.9M for 2026/27.

## 6. PHYSICAL ASSETS

The capital programme continues the works to maintain the Carmarthenshire Home Standard+ and deliver the Housing Regeneration and Development Delivery Plan as per the 30-year business plan.



# CONSULTATIONS

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

Signed: Randal Hemingway

Head of Finance

<b>1. Scrutiny Committee request for pre-determination</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Scrutiny Committee</b>	<b>Communities, Homes &amp; Regeneration</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>13<sup>th</sup> December, 2023</b>
<b>Scrutiny Committee Outcome/Recommendations:- as detailed in extract from minutes in Appendix D.</b>	
<b>2. Local Member(s) – N/A</b>	
<b>3. Relevant Partners – N/A</b>	
<b>4. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations</b>	
<b>Engagement with Welsh Government on rent modelling</b>	
<b>CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S) AWARE/CONSULTED</b>	<b>Yes</b>

**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
<b>Social Housing Rents Policy</b>		<b>Financial Services, County Hall, Carmarthen</b>
<b>30 year Housing Business Plan</b>		<b>Financial Services , County Hall, Carmarthen</b>

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# REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

## COUNTY COUNCIL

24<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2024

### HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT AND HOUSING RENT SETTING 2024/25

#### - REVENUE AND CAPITAL

DIRECTOR & DESIGNATION.	DIRECTORATE	TELEPHONE NO.
C Moore Director of Corporate Services	Corporate Services	01267 224120
AUTHOR & DESIGNATION	DIRECTORATE	TELEPHONE NO
S Williams Senior Accountant	Corporate Services	01267 228836

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. This report explains the proposed 2024/25 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for both revenue and capital. It has been prepared in conjunction with officers from the Communities Department. The Communities, Homes and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee considered the HRA budget on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023 as part of the budget consultation process. The views expressed by that committee are attached to this report (Appendix D) for Cabinet's consideration when they set the 2024/25 HRA budget and Housing Rents.

1.2. The HRA budget for 2024/25 is being set to reflect:

- Welsh Government's Policy for Social Housing Rents (Rent Policy) issued 27/10/23, which this year is governed by the Welsh Government's Minister for Climate Change instruction that the maximum increases in the rent envelope for any local authority does not exceed 6.7%
- Proposals contained in the Carmarthenshire Housing Revenue Account Business Plan
- Housing Regeneration and Development Delivery Plan

**1.3.** The HRA budget is prepared to maintain the HRA Business Plan, deliver our affordable homes aspirations and manage and maintain our homes on a daily basis. As a ring-fenced account this expenditure is balanced by income primarily generated through rents charged to tenants. Supporting the HRA Business Plan is a 30 year financial model which is submitted to and scrutinised/approved by WG annually (as part of the Major Repairs Allowance application).

Carmarthenshire County Council along with the other 10 local authorities (LAs) in Wales who retained their Housing Stock, exited the Housing Revenue Account Subsidy (HRAS) system on 1/4/15, which allows Local Authorities more flexibility in the management of their stock going forward.

Part of the agreement to exit included LAs with retained stock were required to adopt the new Social Housing Rents Policy set by the Welsh Government (WG). It aimed to develop a coherent and consistent rent policy framework that would apply to all social landlords, reflect local variations in affordability and housing market values, providing for a more equitable distribution of rents for social sector tenants across Wales, while at the same time ensuring the viability of individual social landlords. County Council approved the implementation of the policy on 24/02/15. This policy provided consistency for 4 years from 2015/16 to 2018/19. WG provided an interim policy for 2019/20 while they await the results of the Affordable Housing Supply Review. The result of this review was to retain the existing policy for a further 5 years which was implemented in 2020/21 with some additional/amended requirements. Below are the main points detailed in Social Housing Rents Policy and WG letter dated 27/10/23:-

- An annual rent uplift (total rent envelope) of up to CPI+1%, each year for 5 years from 2020-21 to 2024-25 using the level of CPI from the previous September each year. September 2023 was 6.7%.
- CPI+1% will be the maximum increase allowable in any one year but CPI+1% must not be regarded as an automatic uplift to be applied by social landlords. Landlords' decisions on rent should take into account the affordability of rents for tenants as set out below.
- The level of rents for individual tenants can be reduced or frozen or can rise by up to an additional £2 over and above CPI+1%, on condition that total rental income collected by the social landlord increases by no more than CPI+1%. This provision is designed to enable social landlords to restructure rents payable where necessary.
- Should CPI fall outside the range of 0% to 3%, the Minister with responsibility for housing will determine the appropriate change to rent levels to be applied for that year only. **As CPI was 6.7% in September 2023 this clause was activated** and the Government Minister for Climate Change has instructed that the maximum

increase in the rent envelope for any local authority does not exceed 6.7%. The Minister also commented that affordability remains at the heart of the rent settlement and excessive financial burdens should not be placed upon tenants in these very challenging times.

- Social landlords should advise the Welsh Government where they have concerns about the impact that rent policy has upon their business plan or financial viability, or on their ability to meet their obligations to tenants and lenders.
- As an intrinsic part of the five-year rent policy, social landlords will be expected to set a rent and service charge policy which ensures that social housing remains affordable for current and future tenants. As part of their annual decision on the level of rent uplift/reduction to be applied they should make an assessment of cost efficiencies, value for money and affordability for tenants which should be discussed at the Cabinet/Council.
- During the pandemic, governmental resources have been re-prioritised meaning this year's rent data-set collection was suspended. Therefore there is no up to date, robust data available to generate Target Rent Bands for the year ahead. WG have therefore considered the role of the Target Rent Bands in conjunction with representative bodies and individual stakeholders. Discussions revealed that whilst Target Rent Bands played a valuable role when they were introduced, the landscape today is very different and for most landlords they do not play a significant role in local rent setting. WG have therefore taken the decision to suspend them again for this year. The impact of this decision in next year's rent setting, and if there are unexpected and unintended matters arising from this decision, will be re-considered. This results in setting the 2024/25 rents without Target Rent Bands.

Additional commitments and initiatives introduced previously should continue with some further developments:-

- Balance the needs of tenants together with the ability of social landlords to continue to provide the additional non-core services and wider package of support that have proved vital for many tenants as the cost-of-living crisis continues.
- No evictions due to financial hardship for the term of the settlement, (financial year 2024-25), where tenants engage with landlords.
- Provide targeted support to those experiencing financial hardship to access support.
- Maximise the use of all suitable social housing stock, with a focus on helping those in the poorest quality transitional accommodation move into longer term homes that meet their needs.

- Continue focused communication to encourage tenants to talk to their landlord if they are experiencing financial difficulties and access support available.
- Build on existing engagement with tenants in rent setting decisions, including explaining how income from rent is invested and spent.
- Continued commitment to invest in existing homes to keep them safe, warm and affordable to live in.
- Work in partnership with tenants, Welsh Government, funders and other partners to develop a consistent approach to assessing affordability across the social housing sector in Wales.
- Continue to strengthen approaches designed to ensure you minimise all evictions and work effectively with partners to deliver on the commitment not to evict into homelessness.
- Undertake a standardised tenant satisfaction survey and provide the data for publication on a central website to assist tenants in scrutinising and comparing landlord performance. The next submission date, based on the revised core questions, is 28 February 2024 for publication in April.

WG want LA's to consider the "whole cost of living in a property", looking at not only rent and service charges but energy costs also in order to reduce the financial burden on tenants. In recognition of the greater stability and certainty due to the rent policy WG also want to strengthen joint working with LA's in a wider rental agreement. WG also want LA's to produce annual assessments of affordability, value for money and demonstrate finding efficiencies as part of monitoring compliance.

All local authority budgets have been put under increased pressure due to the cost of living crisis, which has followed the difficult covid period and the ongoing war in Europe.

Social housing has not been sheltered from the impacts of the above. Below is a schedule of the main budget components to be impacted significantly (items with \* impacted positively):-

1. Capital Financing Charges\*
2. Payaward 2023/24
3. Payaward 2024/25
4. Interest on cash balances\*
5. Void loss assumption\*
6. Revenue R&M
7. Central Support Costs
8. Additional staffing costs for R&M delivery
9. Energy costs relating to Service Charges
10. Additional cost of in year ODR's
11. Rents\*

## 1.4 Capital investment

A capital investment of £231M was undertaken to deliver the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard+(CHS+) by 2015. This included £117M of unsupported borrowing. This investment was being funded by Major Repairs Allowance received from the WG, capital receipts from the sales of land and dwellings, HRA revenue funding, external grants and borrowing. This ensured the delivery of work programmes to all our tenants' homes (with the exception of where the work was declined by tenants). Since achieving the CHS+, a further £115M will have been spent on maintaining the standard and £80M on providing additional affordable homes in the HRA by the end of 2023/24.

The HRA Business Plan 2024-27 highlights the approach that will be taken over the next three years and will be presented by the Head of Homes and Safer Communities in this meeting. It includes further investment over the next 3 years of £61M to maintain the CHS+ and £52M for our Affordable Homes programme. This will be supported by an on-going cost certainty exercise to ensure our investment is targeted to maintain the CHS+ and deliver our Affordable Homes targets.

The timing and method of potential sale of HRA land is being kept under review to ensure that receipts are maximised to support the Business Plan however there are no anticipated sales in current plan and current land is retained for development of housing. Land sales are scrutinised on an individual basis, decisions on sale/retention depend on housing demand within that area.

The profile of capital expenditure required to maintain the CHS+ and invest in affordable homes is detailed in appendix B. The plan is extremely sensitive to change and is currently being fully reviewed every 6 months, with ongoing monthly monitoring to identify any potential issues.

## 1.5 Decarbonisation

### **Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) 2023 driving towards a Net Zero Wales**

WHQS sets out Standards relating to the decarbonisation of social homes and aims to reduce carbon emissions from the Welsh housing stock. This Standard contributes towards governmental climate change goals expressed through the Net Zero Wales plan published in 2021 and updated in 2022. In time, it is anticipated that the Standard will apply to other types and tenures of housing, and this will be kept under regular review.

This will have a significant impact on future investment plans.

The HRA Business Plan details our proposed approach to decarbonisation of our HRA stock, headlines include:-

- Promoting Affordable Warmth
- Improving Energy Performance
- Alignment with Council's net zero principles

## 2. BUSINESS PLAN ASSUMPTIONS

2.1. There are many assumptions within the Business Plan, including future rental levels, interest rates, inflation, pay awards etc. Business Plan guidance from the WG hasn't been received yet (last year 12/12/22) and requires a submission of a viable plan by 31/03/2024.

Underpinning the HRA Business Plan is the 30 year financial model which has many assumptions including:

- **Rents** The WG Social Housing rents policy allows local authorities to increase rent by CPI plus 1%. As September 2023 CPI fell outside the 0%-3% parameters in the policy, the Minister for Climate Change set a maximum increase of 6.7%. It is proposed in this report that the rent envelope is increased by 6.5%.
- **Major Repairs Allowance (MRA)** is a grant from WG which is provided to support our works in maintaining the standard and is audited annually. This has not been increased for future years but has been varied for changing stock numbers. Our MRA is estimated to be £6.2million for 2024/25.
- **Capital Receipts** We have suspended our Right to Buy for tenants (WG has also subsequently suspended RTBs) so there are no planned receipts from sales of houses. There are planned receipts from 2026/27 in the current plan.
- **Grants** This is an increasingly important element of our financing. We are likely to receive over £9.3M in 2024/25 and £33M in total over the next 3 years. These include Social Housing Grant, Housing with Care Fund, Optimised Retrofit Programme plus others.
- **Void Loss** incurred on dwellings currently set on long term basis at 2%. Current performance has improved at 2.5% from 3.5% previously. We have assumed this will continue for 2024/25.
- **Central Support Costs** are based on services received by departments, these have been validated accordingly.
- **Stock Numbers** have been updated based on affordable homes delivery plan.
- **Interest on Balances** is estimated to be circa £600k based on an interest rate of 5% (average interest earned).

## 2.2.



Members will be aware that as part of the HRAS exit agreement in 2015 Local Authorities were required to agree a Borrowing Cap, which was a requirement put in place by the UK Government. This restricted what a Local Authority could borrow in respect of the HRA, for this Authority the limit was set at £228M. The minister for Housing and Regeneration wrote to LA's 29/10/2018 detailing that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had confirmed that the removal of HRA borrowing caps applied to Wales as well as England. This was a significant change in policy designed to encourage LA's to build at pace and scale and to deliver their affordable homes ambitions. This places a responsibility on LA's to develop Business Plans which are financially sustainable as well as ambitious. This has led to a review of how we fund our capital investment programme to release additional resources in a prudent manner. We are therefore now developing the New Build programme with a greater number of schemes being commissioned and developed by the Council internally.

However, although the borrowing cap has been released, it should be noted that there is a significant responsibility on the County Council to ensure any borrowing for the HRA is sustainable, prudent and affordable within the HRA financial Business Plan. An officer working group has been developed with WG to establish some key ratios to help manage these plans. Work is currently ongoing.

As most of the schemes delivering Housing projects have a significant lead-in time, there will be an ongoing review of what is needed to maintain CHS+, meet the requirements of WHQS 2023 and deliver our affordable housing ambitions, which will utilise the borrowing available as we develop our plans.

### **3. EXPENDITURE**

The expenditure levels in the Business Plan have been set in line with the anticipated Business Planning guidance.

#### **Maintenance and Stock Improvement**

Revenue repairs and maintenance expenditure is forecast to be £18million in 2024/25. This is an increase on the 2023/24 budget (£17.2million) which reflects local building costs, forecast outturn for 2023/24 and changes in stock numbers.

The capital programme provides resources to: -

- maintain our stock to the CHS+ (including carrying out improvements to previously declined properties)
- deliver our Housing Regeneration and Development Delivery Plan commitments.

## **Maintain our Stock**

For 2024/25 the capital programme to maintain the CHS+ is £18.8M. This gives an overall spend of £36.1M on stock improvement and maintenance (the total for 2023/24 was £38.3million). This will be further informed by stock condition data which will be gathered in 2024/25.

## **Affordable Housing Commitment**

Housing Finance Grant 2 (HFG2) funding for new affordable housing ended in 2019/20. This funding was provided as a revenue source, requiring the authority to borrow the money and WG repaying the capital charges. It effectively supported £7million of capital expenditure, the revenue consequence of this is generating £246k annually.

We have been successful in securing other additional grants totalling £33M over 3 years to support our Affordable Homes delivery.

We have set aside £52million over the next three years as part of the capital programme to increase the supply of affordable homes. Within 2024/25 £17.4M has been identified for the housing development programme (including development costs).

The capital programme and funding sources for this programme up to 2026/27 are detailed in Appendix B.

## **Validation**

The proposed Business Plan includes the following validations for 2024/25, which is in line with the proposed budget strategy:

- general payroll costs are +5% (average). It is recognised that the Chancellor of Exchequer has expressed a view regarding a pay freeze but currently impact of this is unclear and therefore not to allow for pay award would be imprudent.
- general inflation has been accommodated at +4%
- efficiency savings programme to be introduced delivering £330k over 3 years.

## **Capital Financing and Subsidy**

The capital financing costs reflect the borrowing requirement inclusive of the exit from HRAS.

Details of the budget for Housing Revenue Account for the period up to 2026/27 is shown in Appendix A.

#### 4. INCOME

4.1. As outlined in Paragraph 1.3 above, WG have confirmed the policy up to 2024/25 increases in rent being CPI plus 1%.

Carmarthenshire’s current average rent for 2023/24 is £99.43. In the private sector median rents are currently for 2 bedrooms are £155, 3 bedrooms are £183 and 4 bedrooms are £230.

#### 4.2. Target Rents

Target rents bands have been removed for 2024/25 (as detailed in 1.3), actual rents including a 6.39% increase are detailed below: -

	Houses and Bungalows (£)					Flats (£)				Bedsits (£)
	1Bed	2Bed	3Bed	4Bed	5+Bed	1Bed	2Bed	3Bed	4+Bed	
<b>Actual Rent 2024/25 with 6.39% increase for 53 weeks</b>	94.97	105.52	116.06	126.60	137.18	85.90	95.49	105.01	114.58	76.37

This produces average rent of £105.90 for 2024/25

WG have advised LA’s that a 6.7% increase should be the maximum applied in 2024/25.

#### 4.3.

Implementing the 6.5% overall increase for Carmarthenshire and implementing rental progression of £1, has the following impact:

For those properties at target rent the increase will be: -

**Consumer Price Index (CPI for Sept 2023) @6.7%-0.31% = 6.39%**

For those properties where rent is below target rent, the increase can be:

**Consumer Price Index (CPI for Sept 2023) @6.7%-0.31% = 6.39%**

**plus a maximum of £1 progression in order to achieve an average rent increase of 6.5%.**

Those rents above target are frozen until such time that they meet the target, there is only 1 property remaining. When a property becomes empty it is placed at the appropriate rent.

**Based on applying the above for 2024/25 at 6.5% rent increase this would produce an average rent of £105.90 (increase of £6.47).**

Details of the rent increases on individual households are below:-

Receive an increase of :-	6.5% increase
No increase	1
£4.00 to £4.99	70
£5.00 to £5.99	2,280
£6.00 to £6.99	5,920
£7.00 to £7.99	1,040
£8.00 to £8.99	15
	9,326

Table : No .of Householders affected by average increases.

34% of tenants are now in receipt of universal credit, 24% of tenants are on full Housing Benefit (HB), 15% are on partial HB and 27% receive no HB. Of those receiving no assistance in the form of universal credit or housing benefit there are approximately 817 of pensionable age.

The proportion of dwellings below the rent they should be paying is 12% as a result of the £1 progression implemented last year and the rent being changed as a result of properties becoming vacant. This was over 85% when we began the harmonisation process.

#### 4.4. Garage Rental Income

The HRA currently receives a net rental income of £126k per annum. This equates to a weekly charge of £9.00 per week. Garage bases are £2.25 per week. It is proposed to increase these in 2024/25 by the same average increase as dwelling rents of 6.5%.

#### 4.5. Service and Heating charges

Service charges are calculated in line with the policy adopted in 2011. Service charges are payments made by tenants that share communal areas or facilities within our blocks of flats, sheltered schemes, or supported housing projects. It is where we as the landlord provide additional services that are over and above the general rent, therefore Service Charges **will not** be subject to our general rent increase and are **excluded** as part of the rent setting policy.

The way that we determine Service Charges for the forthcoming year is to calculate this on the actual expenditure in the previous year. Therefore, no assumptions are made and again the tenants only pay for what they have received. These charges will vary annually as they are based on actual expenditure. We are directed by the Welsh Government Rent and Service Charge Standard 2020-2025 to set service charges which are reasonable and affordable. We are required to review service charges on an annual basis, ensure they provide value for money for our contract holders and are affordable. We are required to list their service charges separately to the rent to allow for transparency. It is necessary that tenants can clearly identify the rent charge and any services charges separately in their bills. Therefore, we make it clear that £X is rent and (a separate sum of) £Y is being charged for (specific) services, which amounts to £X+Y.

The current policy allows for a maximum increase of £3 per tenant per week and is applicable to approximately 1250 tenants. We are proposing an amendment to the maximum increase by introducing a gradual incremental removal of the Cap over a 3-year period to bring all service charges in line with full cost recovery. The cap will only come into effect where charges exceed the agreed weekly cap. This will be reviewed in year 2 to ensure the policy is delivering as intended. Service charge policy cap amendment is attached as appendix C.

#### 4.6. Sewerage Treatment Works

We have 15 pumping stations serving approx. 154 properties, the cost of running and maintaining the stations falls on the HRA. We also have 8 cesspits. It is proposed for 2024/25 that current charges are increased as per our rent increase.

#### **4.7. Commission on Collection of Water Rates**

Dwr Cymru served notice of their intention to repatriate this service from April 2023 not only for Carmarthenshire but all the local authority and Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) in Wales which has resulted in losing an income stream of £350k.

#### **4.8. Universal Credit**

Universal Credit (UC) is a new monthly payment for people who are either unemployed, or working but on a low income. It will eventually replace six legacy benefits, including Housing Benefit. For Carmarthenshire, it was introduced in December 2018. We currently have approx. 3,171 tenants on Universal Credit.

We anticipate, unless things change, that a further 4,000 tenants could transfer over the next year. From a business point of view, evidence from other social housing providers has shown that rent arrears will increase in the short to medium term and we have allowed for this within this plan in terms of our bad debt provision.

To date, there has only been a slight increase in rent arrears overall. This is lower than we had been expecting and certainly compares very favourably with the experience of other social housing providers.

The CHS+ Business Plan presents more detail on this, including the actions that are being undertaken to mitigate the impact for Council tenants.

### **5. BALANCES**

**5.1.** If a rental increase is set at 6.5%, the overall proposed budget will result in a surplus on the Housing Revenue Account of £293K for the year, this has been accommodated in the long-term plan leaving £12.6M in balances at the end of 2024/25. It should also be noted in Appendix A that balances are required to support the current strategy of funding our capital expenditure and continue to make our business plan affordable over a 30-year period.

## 6. PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET

- **To increase average housing rent by 6.5% (£6.47) per dwelling per week as per WG Social Housing Rents Policy.**
  - Properties at target rents will increase by 6.39% and
  - Properties where rent is below target rent, rent will increase by 6.39% plus a maximum progression of £1.00
  - Those rents above target are frozen until such time that they meet the target.
- **This will produce a sustainable Business Plan, maintain CHS+, resource our Housing Regeneration and Development Delivery Plan and is supported by Housing and Regeneration Strategic Team.**
- **To increase garage rents by 6.5% from £9.00 to £9.60 and garage bases from £2.25 to £2.40.**
- **Apply the Service Charge Policy to ensure tenants who receive the benefit from specific services pay for those services. Inclusive of amendments in Appendix C.**
- **To increase charges for using our sewerage treatment works in line with rent increase.**
- **To approve the Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2024/27 (2025/26 & 2026/27 being soft budgets) as set out in Appendix A.**
- **To approve the proposed Capital Programme and applicable funding for 2024/25 and the indicative spends for 2025/26 to 2026/27 as set out in Appendix B.**

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<b>APPENDIX A - HRA REVENUE</b>	<b>Budget 2024/25</b>	<b>Budget 2025/26</b>	<b>Budget 2026/27</b>
<b>REVENUE SPENDING TO:</b>	<b>(£'000s)</b>	<b>(£'000s)</b>	<b>(£'000s)</b>
Repair and maintain homes	17,979	18,728	19,524
Supervision and management	12,532	12,793	13,067
Support services e.g. legal and finance	1,866	1,903	1,941
Provision for Bad debts	350	357	364
Direct Revenue financing	5,000	5,000	5,000
Capital charges	15,266	16,144	16,536
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>52,992</b>	<b>54,924</b>	<b>56,432</b>
	<b>Budget 2024/25</b>	<b>Budget 2025/26</b>	<b>Budget 2026/27</b>
<b>REVENUE FUNDING FROM:</b>	<b>(£'000s)</b>	<b>(£'000s)</b>	<b>(£'000s)</b>
Tenant rents	50,242	51,601	54,499
Service charges	1,051	1,293	1,318
Interest received	611	121	122
Housing Finance Grant 2	246	246	246
Revenue Efficiencies	80	100	150
Grants / Other	1,055	1,076	1,098
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>53,285</b>	<b>54,437</b>	<b>57,433</b>
<b>Surplus/(Deficit in year)</b>	<b>293 -</b>	<b>487</b>	<b>1,001</b>
<b>HRA end of year position</b>			
<b>Balance brought forward from last year</b>	<b>12,319</b>	<b>12,612</b>	<b>12,124</b>
<b>HRA Budgeted surplus(+) / deficit (-)</b>	<b>293 -</b>	<b>487</b>	<b>1,001</b>
<b>Balance carried forward</b>	<b>12,612</b>	<b>12,124</b>	<b>13,126</b>

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APPENDIX B - HRA CAPITAL	Budget	Budget	Budget
	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	(£'000s)	(£'000s)	(£'000s)
<b>Supporting Tenant and Residents:</b>			
Improving the Estate Environment	650	700	700
Adaptations	2,000	2,000	2,000
Sheltered Housing Investment	270	300	650
<b>Investing in Homes:</b>			
Internal & External Works	2,170	2,220	2,220
Void Programme & Major Works to Homes	6,250	5,850	5,750
Estate Based Refurbishment	850	1,817	2,117
Risk Reduction Measures	820	820	820
<b>Affordable Warmth &amp; Decarbonisation</b>			
Works to deliver Affordable Warmth & Decarbonisation	5,788	6,542	7,818
<b>Delivering More Homes</b>			
Council New Build Programme	9,160	10,762	10,240
Land Acquisition	1,600	2,500	2,800
Buying Private Sector Homes	3,000	2,000	1,750
Specialist Housing Projects	2,998	1,950	1,350
Programme Management	648	674	700
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>36,204</b>	<b>38,135</b>	<b>38,915</b>
<b>SOURCE OF CAPITAL FUNDING</b>			
	Budget	Budget	Budget
	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	(£'000s)	(£'000s)	(£'000s)
Welsh Government Grant - MRA	6,225	6,225	6,225
External Grant Funding – IHP, SHG, ICF & Other Grants	9,308	10,970	12,334
Direct Revenue Financing	5,000	5,000	5,000
External Borrowing	15,671	15,940	3,731
Capital Receipts	0	0	11,625
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>36,204</b>	<b>38,135</b>	<b>38,915</b>

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## Appendix C – Service Charge Policy Cap Amendment

### Scrutiny Committee Outcome/Recommendations:-

- to recommend to the Cabinet that **Option 2** be adopted as the Councils future Service Charge Policy but that it be subject to regular review.
- That the Committee’s concerns on the potential impact the current economic climate, cost of living crisis and the new policy could have on tenants’ ability to pay/fall into arrears be conveyed to Cabinet and that officers provide assistance /support to tenants to manage their budgets where necessary.

The below table outlines the recommended option available to consider for amendment in the existing Policy.

<b>Option 2: Gradual incremental removal of the cap</b>	
<b>Summary</b>	<p>Review and amend the existing policy with a view to introducing incremental increases to bring us up to full cost recovery and to ensure we are recovering all eligible service charges.</p> <p>The option could propose an increase of the cap over a 3-year period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Raise the cap yearly over 3 years by a third = £1 per year</li> <li>* Remove the cap completely in the fourth year</li> </ul> <p><b>Rent &amp; service charges financial years</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* 2025/2026 = maximum increase of £4.40 per week (£4 +40p admin fee of 10% (amended policy)</li> <li>* 2026/2027 = maximum increase of £5.50 per week (£5 +50p admin fee of 10% (amended policy)</li> <li>* 2027/2028 = maximum increase of £6.60 per week (£6 +60p admin fee of 10% (amended policy)</li> <li>* 2028/2027 = Remove cap (amended policy)</li> </ul> <p>The cap will only come into effect where charges exceed the agreed weekly cap amount.</p>
<b>Benefits</b>	<p>The contract-holders will remain protected with an incremental increase in the cap gradually increasing by a third over 3 years.</p> <p>Inflation has hit almost every sector, and with overheads and supply costs increasing, everyone can expect last year’s charges to be higher this time around, however with the cap remaining in place for 3 years this will soften the impact.</p> <p>The benefit to the wider tenants is that charges are applied equally across the board based on usage.</p> <p>Further education of Contract holders to understand usage and billing through our Tenancy Support and Pre-Accommodation Teams.</p>

<b>Disadvantages</b>	Some contract holders may see increased charges over and above the current £3 per week cap
<b>Risks</b>	<p>All increases must be “reasonable”. Price rises linked to inflation may be considered fair, as the costs of delivering these services have gone up.</p> <p>The average UK service charge is £1,500 a year according to the Home Owners Alliance. Inflation has hit almost every sector, and with overheads and supply costs increasing, everyone can expect last year’s charges to be higher this time around.</p> <p>Having an incremental arrangement will reduce the gap gradually and help maintain the HRA Business Plan income and expenditure. This is similar to how we close the gap for tenancies that are below target rent and up to a £2 progression can be applied.</p>
<b>Timeline</b>	Review the Policy to assess the current economic climate (potentially full removal of the cap by 28/27)

We also considered the following the options for the application or level of a service charge cap moving forward for council tenants.

- Option 1: Do Nothing - Keep the existing Service Charge Policy in place with a cap of any possible annual increase in its overall rental charge (including Service Charges) to a maximum rise of £3 per week.
- Option 3: Remove the Cap - Remove the cap completely from the existing policy with contract holders meeting the full cost of usage from 2024/25.

All policy documents will be explicit and reflect clear guidelines as to how we calculate rent and service charges. The service charge policy reflects what is utilised by our contract holders. All policies will align with one another.

- Rent Setting Policy
- HRA Business Plan
- Service Charge Policy

## APPENDIX D

### EXTRACT FROM MINUTES

#### COMMUNITIES, HOMES & REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 13 DECEMBER 2023

#### 4. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT AND HOUSING RENT SETTING 2024/25

The Committee considered a report on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget and Housing Rent Setting for 2024/25, being presented as part of the budget consultation process, that brought together the latest proposals for the Revenue and Capital budgets for the Housing Revenue Account to be presented to the Cabinet and Council for determination.

The Committee was advised that the report had been prepared reflecting the latest proposals contained within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan, being the primary financial planning tool for delivering and maintaining the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard *Plus* (CHS+) for the future. The proposed investment within the current business plan delivered the CHS by 2015 (to those homes where the tenants agreed to have work undertaken) provided investment to maintain CHS+ and continued investment for the Housing Regeneration and Development Delivery Plan.

The report also detailed how rents would increase for 2024/25 with the HRA budget being set to reflect:-

- Social Housing Rent Policy (set by Welsh Government)
- Proposals contained in the Carmarthenshire Housing Revenue Account Business Plan
- Housing Regeneration and Development Delivery Plan

The Committee was reminded that with regard to the setting of the Housing Rents, the Authority on the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2015 had adopted the Welsh Government's Social Housing Rent Policy for the four year period ending in 2018/19 providing consistency over that period. For 2019/20, the Welsh Government had provided an interim policy while it awaited the results of the Affordable Housing Supply Review. Following that review, the Welsh Government had decided to retain the policy for a further 5year period from 2020/21 with some additional/amended requirements, as detailed within the report.

This policy allowed local authorities to uplift the total rent envelope by CPI + 1% for each of the 5 years running from 2020/21 to 2024/25. It also allowed for the level of rent for individual tenants to rise by up to an additional £2 over and above CPI+1% for the rent harmonisation, on condition that the total rental income collected by the social landlord increased by no more than CPI+1%.

However, should CPI fall outside the range of 0% to 3%, the policy provides for the Minister with responsibility for Housing to determine the appropriate change to rent levels to be applied for that year only. As CPI was 6.7% in September 2023, that clause had been activated this year and the Welsh Government Minister for Climate Change had instructed the maximum increase in the rent envelope for any local authority should not exceed 6.7%

Having regard to the above, the report recommended an average housing rent increase of 6.5% (£6.47) per dwelling per week. If the Committee endorsed that increase, it would result in a £293k surplus on the Housing Revenue Account. However, that had been accommodated for within the long-term plan leaving £12.6m in balances at the end of 2024/25. It was also noted that, as Detailed in Appendix A, balances were required to support the current strategy of funding capital expenditure and continuing to make the business plan affordable over a 30year period.

The following issues / questions were raised on the report:

- Reference was made to the potential affect the proposed increases could have on some tenants in the current economic climate.

The Committee was advised that had been recognised as part of the budget preparations. Currently 34% of tenants were in receipt of Universal Credit, 24% received full housing benefit, 15% partial Housing Benefit and 27% received no benefits. It was also acknowledged that the levels of benefits would increase in April 2024 but that the UK Government had yet to announce the level of increase. However, that normally increased by the rate of CPI in the pre-ceding September which had stood at 6.7%

The Committee was further advised that the Council had processes and procedures in place to assist tenants facing financial difficulties from a range of different grant regimes to helping them access benefits payment to which they were entitled but not claiming. In that regard, the housing department's pre-accommodation team had assisted over 1,000 tenants' access over £800k of benefits. It was stressed though that the Council had a no eviction policy in respect of tenants who were unable to pay their rent. The department would also be employing estate managers who would be able to provide help and assistance to tenants. Most importantly, if tenants were facing financial difficulties, they should contact the department at an early stage to access the help and advice available to them.

## **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO THE CABINET/COUNCIL:**

- 5.1 to increase the average housing rent by 6.5% (£6.47) per dwelling per week as per the Welsh Government's Social Housing Rents Policy i.e.**
- **Properties at target rents will increase by 6.39%**
  - **Properties where rent is below target rent will increase by 6.39% plus a maximum progression of £1.00**



- **Those rents above target are frozen until such time as they meet the target.**

**thereby producing a sustainable Business Plan, maintain CHS+ and resource the Housing Regeneration and Development Delivery Plan, as supported by the Housing and Regeneration Strategic Team;**

- 5.2 To increase garage rents by 6.5% from £9.00 to £9.60 and garage bases from £2.25 to £2.40;**
- 5.3 To apply the service charge policy to ensure tenants who received the benefit from specific services paid for those services;**
- 5.4 To increase charges for using the Council's sewerage treatment works in line with the rent increase;**
- 5.5 To approve the Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2024/27 (2025/26 & 2026/27 being soft budgets) as detailed in Appendix A;**
- 5.6 To approve the proposed Capital Programme and applicable funding for 2024/25 and the indicative spends for 2025/26 to 2026/27, as set out in Appendix B to the report.**

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## COUNTY COUNCIL 24<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 2024

### HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLAN 2024-27 CARMARTHENSHIRE'S HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

#### **Purpose:**

At the start of each year, we develop a business plan which explains our vision and the three-year housing investment programmes to maintain our stock and deliver more affordable homes.

It is important that the plan is clear and that all readers, including our tenants, understand its contents.

The income that we receive from tenants' rents and other funding sources enables us to build an investment programme exceeding **£277m** (Capital - £113m and Revenue - £164m) to run our services over the next three years. The plan reflects on previous years achievements and confirms the financial investment plans (based on current assumptions) for delivering more affordable homes, improving and maintaining our existing stock as well as developing new standards to meet our net zero carbon principles.

To maintain this level of investment through careful financial planning we have managed to keep the projected rent increase to 6.5%, which is below the September inflation rate of 6.7% and the maximum rental increase specified by the Housing Minister for 2024/25. In this plan most tenants will receive a 6.39% average rent increase which is significantly below the level set by WG and current inflation values.

We have also incorporated £330k of revenue efficiencies into our financial planning assumptions over the next three years.

To help maintain our housing stock investment programme, each year we apply for Welsh Government's Major Repair Allowance (MRA) grant. We access this funding by having a detailed business plan and compliance policy. The MRA application for 2024/25 will equate to **£6.2m**.

#### **Cabinet Recommendations**

##### **“UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL:**

- 1. to confirm the vision for the housing investment programmes over the next three years;**
- 2. to agree that the 2024/25 Business Plan be submitted to Welsh Government;**

- 3. to note the new estate and tenancy management offer that will ensure our housing officers are more visible and accessible, balancing the support required by tenants and the need to take enforcement action when required;**
- 4. to agree the implementation of a new pilot “handyperson” scheme on priority estates;**
- 5. to note the Authority’s commitment to keeping the number of void properties as low as possible;**
- 6. to confirm the Authority’s commitment to reduce the number of back-logged day to day repairs by rebalancing the split between internal and external contractors, and developing a new small works framework;**
- 7. to confirm the Authority’s priority to purchase additional land and develop large sites exclusively for Council housing and to note the contribution this plan makes to increasing the supply of affordable homes;**
- 8. to note the Authority’s commitment to make all our homes more energy efficient for tenants, achieving a minimum Band C energy performance rating (EPC C), installing rooftop solar panels as part of our re-roofing programme and developing a business case for the wider installation of solar panels to tenants’ homes and supporting the Council’s net zero carbon principles;**
- 9. to confirm the Authority’s commitment to continue to increase the supply of specialist housing in the county;**
- 10. to note the importance of the investment included in this plan and its role in stimulating the local economy and creating local jobs and training opportunities.”**

**Reasons:**

- To continue our housing investment vision, supporting tenants through the cost-of-living crisis, investing in existing homes and increasing the supply of affordable homes to meet the unprecedented levels of housing need and homelessness in the county;
- To implement the new estate and tenancy management offer that will deliver a balanced approach of supporting tenants and taking enforcement action when required;
- To continue to support tenants by investing in their homes, maintaining the standard, and making our homes more energy efficient (achieving a minimum Band C energy performance rating EPC), helping to promote affordable warmth and mitigating the effects of fuel poverty. An overall investment of £121m is planned for the existing housing stock over the next three years, including over £20m on energy efficiency and decarbonisation measures;
- To reduce the number of backlogged repairs and keep the number of void Council homes as low as possible;
- To continue to increase the supply of affordable and specialist homes in the county, with over £52m being invested into increasing the supply of homes through this plan;
- To link our housing investment programme with wider regeneration initiatives with a real focus on developments in the Tyisha ward, Pentre Awel, town centres and rural towns and villages.
- To make members aware that the delivery of the Business Plan is dependent on an overall average rent increase of 6.5% with a maximum progression of £1 for those tenancies below target rent.
- To access MRA grant from WG (£6.2m) for 2024/25 to help maintain our existing homes.

Cabinet Decision Required

YES – 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2024

Council Decision Required

YES – 24<sup>th</sup> January, 2024**CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S):-**

Cllr. Linda Evans (Deputy Leader and Homes Portfolio Holder)

Cllr Alun Lenny (Resources Portfolio Holder)

**Directorate****Communities****Name of Head of Service:**

Jonathan Morgan

**Report Author:**

Rachel Davies

Nathan Hartley

**Designations:****Head of Housing and Public Protection****Investment and Development Service Manager****Innovation Partnership Officer****E Mail Addresses & Tel Nos:**[JMorgan@carmarthenshire.gov.uk](mailto:JMorgan@carmarthenshire.gov.uk)

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## COUNTY COUNCIL

### 24<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 2024

#### HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLAN 2024-27

#### CARMARTHENSHIRE HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

### 1. Purpose of the Business Plan

At the start of each year, we develop a business plan which explains our vision and the three-year housing investment programmes to maintain our stock and deliver more affordable homes.

It is important that the plan is clear and that all readers, including our tenants, understand its contents.

The income that we receive from tenants' rents and other funding sources enables us to build an investment programme exceeding **£277m** (Capital - £113m and Revenue - £164m) to run our services over the next three years. The plan reflects on previous years achievements and confirms the financial investment plans (based on current assumptions) for delivering more affordable homes, improving and maintaining our existing stock as well as developing new standards to meet our net zero carbon principles.

To maintain this level of investment through careful financial planning we have managed to keep the projected rent increase to 6.5%, which is below the September inflation rate of 6.7% and the maximum rental increase specified by the Housing Minister for 2024/25. In this plan most tenants will receive a 6.39% average rent increase which is significantly below level set by WG and current inflation values.

We have also incorporated £330k of revenue efficiencies into our financial planning assumptions over the next three years.

To help maintain our housing stock investment programme, each year we apply for Welsh Government's Major Repair Allowance (MRA) grant. We access this funding by having a detailed business plan and compliance policy. The MRA application for 2024/25 will equate to **£6.2m**.

### 2. Our priorities and direction of travel

The plan is set within the context of continuing cost of living issues that will require further support for our tenants, high inflation, increased costs associated with investment in homes (both construction and repair and maintenance). In addition, there is an unprecedented housing need and homelessness demand due to making sure "no one is left out", a changing private rented market that is affecting supply and that we take our proportionate share to meet our responsibilities around resettlement schemes.

This year's plan has been developed around five key themes and the following actions are the priorities which will define our direction of travel over the next three years.

We will:

- Introduce a new estate and tenancy management “offer” that will ensure housing officers are more visible and accessible on our estates. This “offer” will balance support for our tenants with enforcement activity where it is appropriate to do so. This will also be aligned to the implementation of a new pilot “handyperson” scheme on priority estates in Carmarthen, Ammanford, Llanelli and rural areas;
- Continue to keep the number of void properties at a low level and reduce the current backlog of day to day repairs. We plan to increase our in-house provision around day to day repairs and re-balance the current split between internal and external contractors;
- Continue to invest in making sure homes are cheaper to run for our tenants and in addition to installing solar panels as we replace roofs, we will develop a business case for the introduction of a wider programme of rooftop solar panels on estates;
- Due to the significant demand for new build homes, we will proactively acquire more land. This will include larger sites where there will be exclusive use for Council housing. This will put further pace and scale into our development programme;
- Further invest in specialist type housing (e.g. learning disability, older people and young person supported housing) to ensure needs are met in the most appropriate way. This will include smaller, more dispersed accommodation in different wards. This investment will also ensure a move away from expensive and inappropriate out of county placements for certain client groups; and
- Procure a new minor works framework for day-to-day repairs and wider improvement projects to ensure a quicker response and to support smaller local contractors across the County.

### **3. Business Plan Themes**

The five key themes that will drive our business forward over the next three years, include:

- Theme 1 – Our Estate and Tenancy Management Offer;
- Theme 2 – Investing in Homes;
- Theme 3 – Promoting Affordable Warmth and Decarbonising our Housing Stock;
- Theme 4 – Delivering More Homes; and
- Theme 5 – Local Economy, Community Benefits and Procurement.

### **4. Recommendations**

#### **General**

1. To confirm the vision for our housing investment programmes over the next three years;
2. To agree that the 2024/25 Business Plan can be submitted to Welsh Government;

#### **Specific**

3. To note our new estate and tenancy management offer that will ensure our housing officers are more visible and accessible, balancing the support required by tenants and the need to take enforcement action when required;
4. To agree the implementation of a new pilot “handyperson” scheme on priority estates;
5. To note our commitment to keeping the number of void properties as low as possible;
6. To confirm our commitment to reduce the number of back-logged day to day repairs by

rebalancing the split between internal and external contractors, and developing a new small works framework;

7. To confirm our priority to purchase additional land and develop large sites exclusively for Council housing and to note the contribution this plan makes to increasing the supply of affordable homes;
8. To note our commitment to make all our homes more energy efficient for tenants, achieving a minimum Band C energy performance rating (EPC C), installing rooftop solar panels as part of our re-roofing programme and developing a business case for the wider installation of solar panels to tenants homes and supporting the Council's net zero carbon principles;
9. To confirm our commitment to continue to increase the supply of specialist housing in the county; and
10. To note the importance of the investment included in this plan and its role in stimulating the local economy and creating local jobs and training opportunities.

**DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?**

**YES – HRA Business Plan 2024/2027**

## 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: Jonathan Morgan 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 HRA Business Plan will act as the framework for policy development across Housing and Public Protection and will contribute to wider agendas and programmes.

### 2. Legal

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



### 3. Finance

Maintaining and investing in our housing stock will continue to present significant financial challenges and risks to the County Council.

A capital investment of £231m has been undertaken to deliver the WHQS by 2015. This included £117m of unsupported borrowing. Since achieving the WHQS, a further £115m will have been spent on maintaining the standard and £80m on providing additional affordable homes in the HRA by the end of 2023/24.

Through careful management, the financial model remains viable to not only maintain the housing stock and evolve the current standard but also delivers more affordable homes. A summary of investment over the next three years is included in the plan.

An overall rent increase of 6.5% with a maximum £1 progression for those below target rent for 2024/25 is also assumed in the plan.

### 4. Risk Management

The housing investment programme is identified as a moderate risk in the Council's Risk Management Plan. A risk management plan has been developed to mitigate and review all risks associated with the programme.

**Failure to deliver a viable Business Plan to Welsh Government by the end of March 2024 will mean the MRA of £6.2m for 2024/25 being withdrawn.**

### 5. Physical Assets

The housing investment programme 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 homes, land and/or garage areas will be considered in line with these principles.

**This plan will also result in an increase in the number of homes in the Council's housing stock through the Council new build and purchasing private sector homes programmes.**

# CONSULTATIONS

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

Signed: Jonathan Morgan Head of Housing & Public Protection

<b>1. Scrutiny Committee request for pre-determination</b>	YES
<b>Scrutiny Committee</b>	<b>Communities, Homes &amp; Regeneration</b>
<b>Date the report was considered:-</b>	<b>13<sup>th</sup> December, 2023</b>
<b>Scrutiny Committee Outcome/Recommendations:-</b>	
UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to recommend to Cabinet that the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2024-27 Carmarthenshire's Housing Investment Programme be approved.	

**2. Local Member(s) - N/A**

**3. Community / Town Council – N/A**

**4. Relevant Partners**

Engagement with stakeholders and partners has taken place in order to develop this Plan through digital interaction.

**5. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations**

Ongoing engagement with tenants, has taken place in order to develop this Plan.

<b>CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S) AWARE/CONSULTED</b>	<b>Yes</b>
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**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
<b>HRA Business Plan 2024/2027</b>	<b>Housing General Files</b>	<b>Council website- Democratic Services</b>

# Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2024-27

Carmarthenshire's Housing Investment Programme



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Cyngor Sir Gâr  
Carmarthenshire  
County Council



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## Foreword by our Cabinet Members

This Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan for 2024-2027 sets out our clear direction of travel and priorities to support tenants and estates and to provide significant investment in existing and new Council homes for the next three years.

Our plans are exciting and ambitious that will continue to help stimulate economic growth, improve health and well-being, and build strong sustainable communities.

We are fully aware of the continued difficulties many of our existing and prospective tenants are facing. As a result, we have tried to balance additional income received through the rent increase by making sure we continue to invest in existing homes to make them cheaper to run, including new decarbonisation and energy efficiency technologies, as well as delivering additional new homes for our tenants of the future. This balance is a huge challenge but is one we must all face together and in a positive, pro-active way, as is set out in this plan.

Our new estate and tenancy management offer will ensure that our officers are more visible and accessible on our estates and are carrying out regular wellbeing visits. This will provide help, support and assistance to tenants to ensure that they feel safe and secure in their homes, increasing income levels where possible and ensuring that they are in receipt of all the grants and benefits that they are entitled to. We will continue to provide advice and financial support to help tenants pay their rent and utility bills, buy food and other essential items for their families. No one will be evicted from our homes as a result of financial hardship.

We will also continue to keep the number of void properties at a low level and reduce the current back-log of day to day repairs. We plan to increase our in-house provision around day-to-day repairs and re-balance the current split between internal and external contractors. A new small works framework will also be procured in the summer of 2024 to support local contractors. Furthermore, we will be introducing a new pilot handyperson scheme in targeted estates initially to further support tenants.

We will continue with our ambitious new build programme. In addition we will proactively acquire more land. This will include larger sites where there will be exclusive use for council housing. This will put further pace and scale into our development programme. We will also further invest in specialist type housing (e.g. learning disability, older people, supported housing) to ensure needs are met in the most appropriate way.

This plan shows a firm commitment to supporting the investment required for decarbonising our homes and will make a significant contribution to the Council's net zero carbon agenda. We also will try to implement solar panels at greater scale through the development of a detailed business case.

This plan continues to deliver a comprehensive programme of works to our homes and maintain services to all of our tenants. During the three period of this plan, we will invest over £277m into social housing in Carmarthenshire (Capital £113m and Revenue £164m).

Finally, we would like to thank tenants, staff and members for their continued support in driving our ambitious plans forward. The details within this plan clearly lay out our priorities and how this will benefit tenants and prospective tenants.

We fully appreciate there are challenges ahead on a number of fronts. We will ensure through this plan, however, that each of these challenges are met positively and results in opportunity for all tenants.



**Cllr. Linda Davies Evans**  
**Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Housing**



**Cllr. Alun Lenny**  
**Cabinet Member for Resources**

## Purpose of the HRA Business Plan

At the start of each year, we develop a business plan which explains our vision and the three-year housing investment programmes to maintain our stock and deliver more affordable homes.

It is important that the plan is clear and that all readers, including our tenants, understand its contents.

The income that we receive from tenants' rents and other funding sources enables us to build an investment programme exceeding **£277m** (Capital - £113m and Revenue - £164m) to run our services over the next three years. The plan reflects on previous years achievements and confirms the financial investment plans (based on current assumptions) for delivering more affordable homes, improving and maintaining our existing stock as well as developing new standards to meet our net zero carbon principles.

To help maintain our housing stock investment programme, each year we apply for Welsh Government's Major Repair Allowance (MRA) grant. We access this funding by having a detailed business plan and compliance policy. The MRA application for 2024/25 will equate to **£6.2m**.

## Priorities and direction of travel

The plan is again set within the context of continuing cost of living issues that will require further support for our tenants, high inflation, increased costs associated with investment in homes (both construction and repair and maintenance). In addition, there is an unprecedented housing need and homelessness demand due to making sure "no one is left out", a changing private rented market that is affecting supply and that we take our proportionate share to meet our responsibilities around resettlement schemes.

As a result, we have identified the following actions as priority areas for our direction of travel within the themes for this year's plan. We will:

1. Introduce a new estate and tenancy management "offer" that will ensure housing officers are more visible and accessible on our estates. This "offer" will balance support for our tenants with enforcement activity where it is appropriate to do so. This will also be aligned to the implementation of a new pilot "handyperson" scheme on priority estates in Carmarthen, Ammanford, Llanelli and rural areas.
2. Continue to keep the number of void properties at a low level and reduce the current backlog of day to day repairs. We plan to increase our in-house provision around managing and implementing repairs and re-balance the current split between internal and external contractors.
3. Continue to invest in making sure homes are cheaper to run for our tenants and in addition to installing solar panels as we replace roofs, we will develop a business case for the introduction of a wider programme of rooftop solar panels on estates.

4. Due to the significant demand for new build homes, we will proactively acquire more land. This will include larger sites where there will be exclusive use for council housing. This will put further pace and scale into our development programme.
5. Further invest in specialist type housing (e.g. learning disability, older people and young person supported housing) to ensure needs are met in the most appropriate way. This will include smaller, more dispersed accommodation in different wards. This investment will also ensure a move away from expensive and inappropriate out of county placements for certain client groups.
6. Procure a new minor works framework for day to day repairs and wider improvement projects to ensure a quicker response and to support smaller local contractors across the County.

Through careful financial management we have also managed to keep the projected rent increase to 6.5%, which is below the September inflation rate of 6.7%. We have also incorporated £330k revenue efficiencies into the financial planning over the three year period.

## Advancing the HRA Business Plan

This Plan is updated annually considering the views of tenants and stakeholders, the latest stock condition information, updated financial information, WG guidance and any revised Council policies.

The plan acknowledges the link between good quality housing and estate management with the seven goals in the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

Progress against the actions within the plan, associated budgets and strategic direction will be monitored regularly through the governance arrangements set out in **Appendix A**.

## 2023/2024 Achievements

Providing help and support for our tenants to ensure that they can continue to live comfortably in their homes, provide food and other essential items for their family has become more important than ever.

### *Over the last 12 months we have:*



- supported almost 800 tenants to maximise their income levels through unclaimed grants and benefits, generating over £820k of additional income. This is the equivalent of approximately £1000 of additional income for each home we have supported;
- developed a robust plan to help tenants and the Council mitigate the financial impact of the roll out of the second phase of Universal Credit.
- based on the success of the MJ Award for Best Social Housing Initiative in 2022/23, we've continued to develop new supported housing schemes by working closely with youth services to help young people live independently and sustain their tenancy;
- continued to implement the actions in the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, helping people experiencing homelessness find secure, settled self-contained accommodation as quickly as possible;





- continued to deliver affordable homes across the county, exceeding our targets and delivering in excess of 2,000 additional homes since the start of the programme;
- completed an additional 20 new build Council homes by converting the former Council offices in Spilman Street into 12 apartments and converting the upper floors of the former YMCA building in Llanelli into 8 apartments;
- purchased over 45 homes on the open market, increasing our housing stock quickly;
- been nominated for the Chartered Institute of Housing Welsh Housing Awards 2023 in the Excellence in Housing Innovation category for our supported living project for individuals with learning disabilities and mental health at Coleshill Terrace, Llanelli;
- continued to provide alternative temporary accommodation solutions to individuals and families threatened with homelessness, moving away from the use of bed and breakfast type accommodation;
- reduced the number of Council empty homes (voids) to below 200 which has led to an increase in the number of homes available for letting;
- started the journey of recruiting additional maintenance operatives to deliver more services in-house;
- installed super-fast wi-fi to our sheltered schemes;
- achieved a EPC Band C energy rating for nearly 50% of our housing stock;
- issued new contracts to all our tenants in line with the provisions of the Renting Homes (Wales) Act;
- procured up to date CCTV equipment for our sites and estates; and
- surveyed over 1,360 homes which has allowed us to model stock condition and energy performance in over 55% of our housing stock.



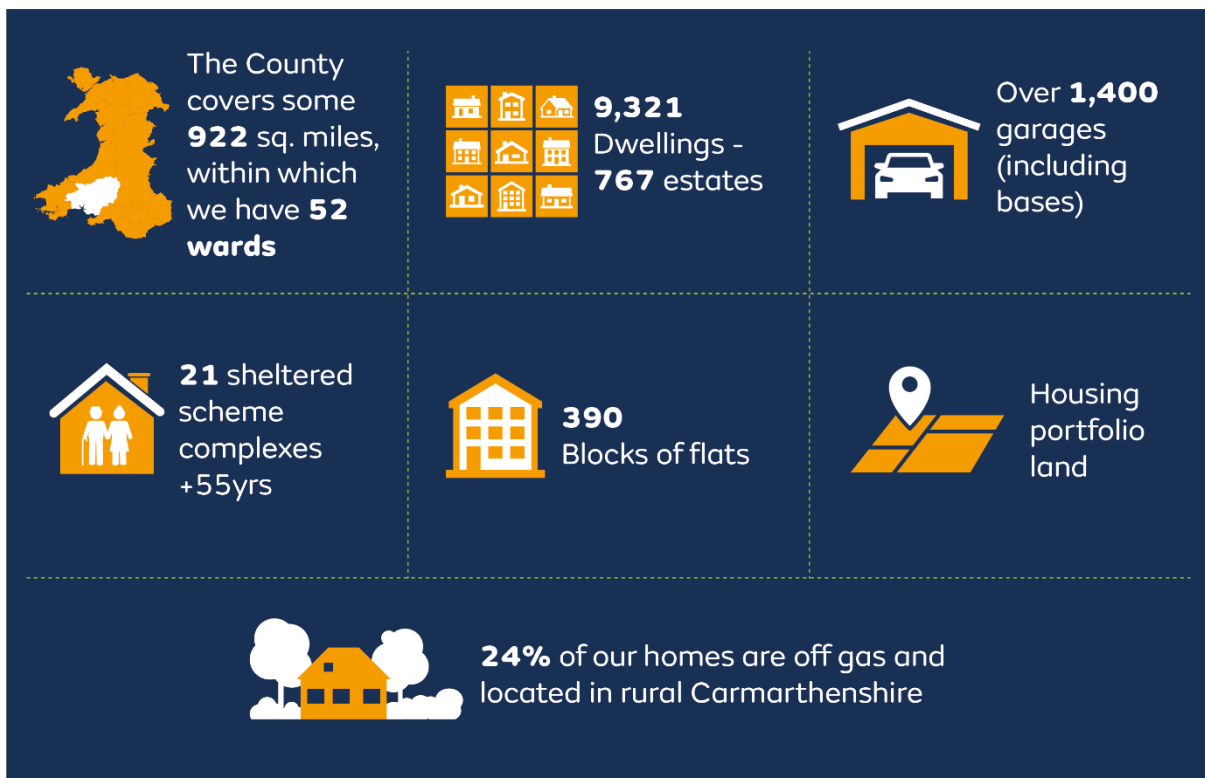
The following sections will provide the context and detail of what we plan to deliver over the next three years. This includes how we intend paying for it and the wider benefits of the investment programme. We will cover five key themes that will drive our business.

# Context

## The HRA Business Plan

This plan covers all housing services and assets in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). It sets out our objectives and what this means for tenants and leaseholders across a range of housing activities. The plan relates to policies that affect how we deliver our services and looks at wider on-going events that may impact our tenants and how we plan to resolve/mitigate them whilst still delivering our everyday services.

## Our county



Further details of our housing assets and the profile of our tenants and applicants are set out in **Appendix B**.

## Recognising the effects of the cost-of-living crisis

The cost-of-living crisis has created difficulties for many tenants and vulnerable families in our communities and this situation is unfortunately likely to continue throughout 2024/25.

We know that poverty and deprivation is already a real issue affecting many households across the County and the cost-of-living crisis has exacerbated this for many families. To ensure that our rents are affordable to our tenants we will regularly review this by participating in assurance exercises and engaging with charitable organisations and foundations. In a recent tenant affordability survey 69% of our tenants told us that our rents were affordable.

Poverty rates are also highest in social rented and private rented households, many of whom are in poverty after paying their housing costs alone. At these difficult times it is more important than ever that we support tenants wherever possible, be sympathetic to those that face financial hardship and give them the reassurance that they will always have a safe and secure home to live in. Our new tenancy and estate management offer will further support this.



### The Joseph Rowntree Foundation describes poverty as -

“Not being able to heat your home, pay your rent, or buy the essentials for your children. It means waking up every day facing insecurity, uncertainty and impossible decisions about money. It means facing marginalisation and even discrimination because of your financial circumstances.”

### We know that...

- **34.5% (over 28,000)** of all households in Carmarthenshire are living in poverty. The household income in these homes is less than £22,020 per annum;
- The number of households living in poverty in Carmarthenshire is **1.1%** higher than the Welsh national average;
- **34.6%** of children in Carmarthenshire are living in poverty;
- The average weekly wage for full time workers in Carmarthenshire is **£623.40**, which is higher than the Wales average of £603.50, but lower than the average for Great Britain at £642.20.
- **18%** of pensioners in Wales are living in poverty, equating to nearly 1 in 5 people; and
- **11%** of adults who live in households where all adults are in work are in poverty.



To ensure our tenants maximise their income and provide financial security for their families, we will continue working with tenants to enable them to claim grants and benefits they are entitled to and help them through the cost of living crisis.

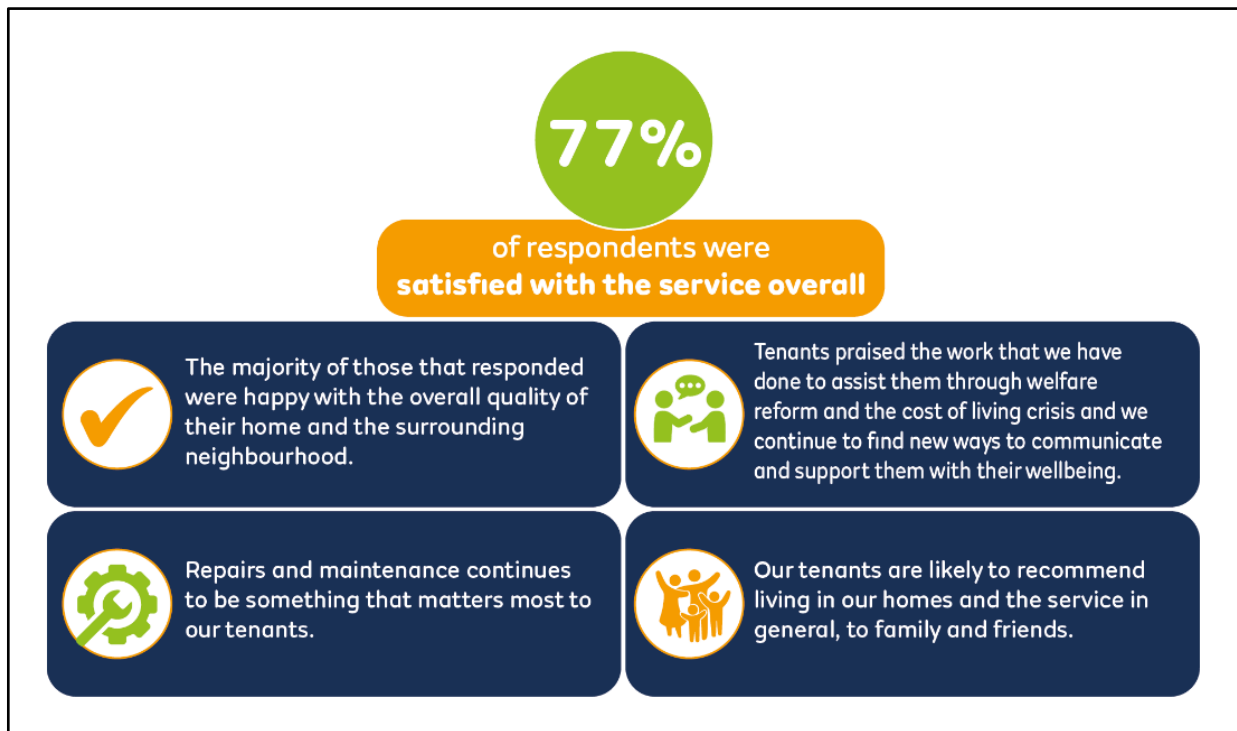
### Helping our tenants we have...

provided support to over **800** tenants to ensure that they claim all benefits and grants that they are entitled to. This has already generated over **£820k** of additional income for tenants which equates to approximately **£1,000** per household.

## What our tenants tell us

The commitment and support of tenants and members is important to us. It helps us maintain, improve and expand our housing stock and our services for the future. Tenant and community engagement has always underpinned the delivery of our services and will continue to do so.

1,938 tenants took part in our latest tenant satisfaction survey, which represented a 26% response rate overall. A third of the total number of responses were collected online (660) compared to a quarter of responses received in the last survey and 47 surveys were completed in Welsh (2%).



The table below shows how our survey results compare against other retained Council stock landlords in Wales.

<b>Tenant Satisfaction retained Council Stock Landlords- 11 (STAR survey results from 2021)</b>				
	Quartile	Rank-retained Councils (out of 11)	Average satisfaction	CCC
<b>Overall Satisfaction</b>	Mid	6	77%	<b>77%</b>
<b>Repairs and Maintenance</b>	Mid	6	71%	<b>66%</b>
<b>Listening and acting on tenants' views</b>	Top	2	60%	<b>63%</b>
<b>I trust my Landlord</b>	Top	2	75%	<b>80%</b>

Generally, our satisfaction rates were greater than the average for other stock retaining authorities. Satisfaction in responding to repairs and carrying out works was also comparable even though delays are still affecting our capacity to carry out responsive repairs.

## Managing our assets

The Compliance Policy set out in **Appendix F**, shows how we will continue to manage our assets by allocating adequate resources to maintain our housing standards. This is done by using a robust asset management system, verifying and validating our data to ensure cost certainty over the 30 year financial model.

## Theme 1 – Our Estate and Tenancy Management offer

We have developed a new estate and tenancy management offer which ensures that the needs of our tenants and residents are at the centre of the services that we deliver in our communities.

Our offer recognises the key drivers and challenges that we face in an ever-changing environment, set within the context that everyone deserves to have a safe, secure and affordable home, in a nice estate environment.

We know that the cost-of-living crisis continues to create hardship for many of our tenants and paying rent has become increasingly challenging for many. Officers must focus their time supporting and working with tenants to help maximise their income levels and ensuring that they budget properly to avoid going into debt. As a service, however, maintaining our rental income is critical for delivering our revenue and capital investment programmes. We must ensure that our tenants feel that their rent is invested in services that will benefit them and the estates they live in.

The role of the Estate and Tenancy Management Team goes far wider than just a rent collection service. They also:

- manage occupation contracts (tenancies), legal processes, disrepair claims and court actions;
- manage former tenant debt, mutual exchanges, abandonments and re-charges;
- provide the link between the tenant and other services- repairs and maintenance revenue programmes, capital programmes, social care, children services and other key statutory services as well as utility providers etc.
- manage property condition, decants, hoarding, grounds maintenance contracts and estate surveys;
- co-ordinate tenant and local member engagement;
- manage estate Environmental Works projects and ecology projects and the strategic approach to garage sites; and
- manage anti-social behaviour, nuisance, fire safety, community safety and cohesion on council housing estates.

To ensure that we are able to deliver a comprehensive estate and tenancy management service to our tenants and residents, our housing stock is split up into 12 patches across the County. There is more dispersed management in rural areas compared with more dense management in and around the three main towns of Llanelli, Carmarthen and Ammanford. Each patch is covered by one Tenancy Support Officer and one Estate Management Officer.

Our patch sizes vary and are dependent on geography, but the challenges continue to get greater. Cases are becoming more complex and complicated which is linked to the increased economic, social and health pressures faced by tenants and residents. We are reaching out further to tenants on estates to provide them with the support they need.

The key priority in our new estate and tenancy management offer is ensuring that our Housing Officers are more visible and accessible on our estates. This will:

- improve communication with tenants, residents and members, helping to respond to their concerns and service requests faster;
- increase our focus on planned and prevention activities, taking action/providing support early and addressing issues before they reach crisis point. This is particularly important in helping tenants with affordability issues, including heating their homes, feeding their families and paying their rent;
- ensure that we carry out home-checker visits to all homes. This will help us identify concerns or vulnerability issues that we would otherwise be unaware of. It will also help develop a more proactive and preventative service around repairs and maintenance, helping to reduce future expenditure on responsive repairs and reduce the number of disrepair claims received; and
- help us identify the more complex tenancies issues that need intense bespoke support.

## What is our new vision?

### Our vision:

*We want to provide a service that is more accessible and visible on housing estates, where support is provided when needed to resolve issues, but where we also take firm, decisive action against those who choose not to conform.*

*We want to listen to tenants needs, act promptly and effectively, ensuring our homes and estates are well maintained and people like living there.*

### For residents this will mean...

- good services, tailored to meet their needs, preferences and helping to sustain tenancies;
- high levels of satisfaction, more opportunities to give feedback and confidence, listening and acting on concerns, using their comments to shape decisions; and
- they know what to expect from us, are clear what we expect from them and are assured that they will receive best value for money.

### For staff this will mean...

- a productive working environment, which enables joined-up, agile working (including hybrid ways of working) in a consistent way;
- that they are environmentally conscious and lower our carbon footprint;
- they have the right numbers, tools and skills to do the job well; and
- they feel engaged and empowered to shape decisions.

### For the future this will mean...

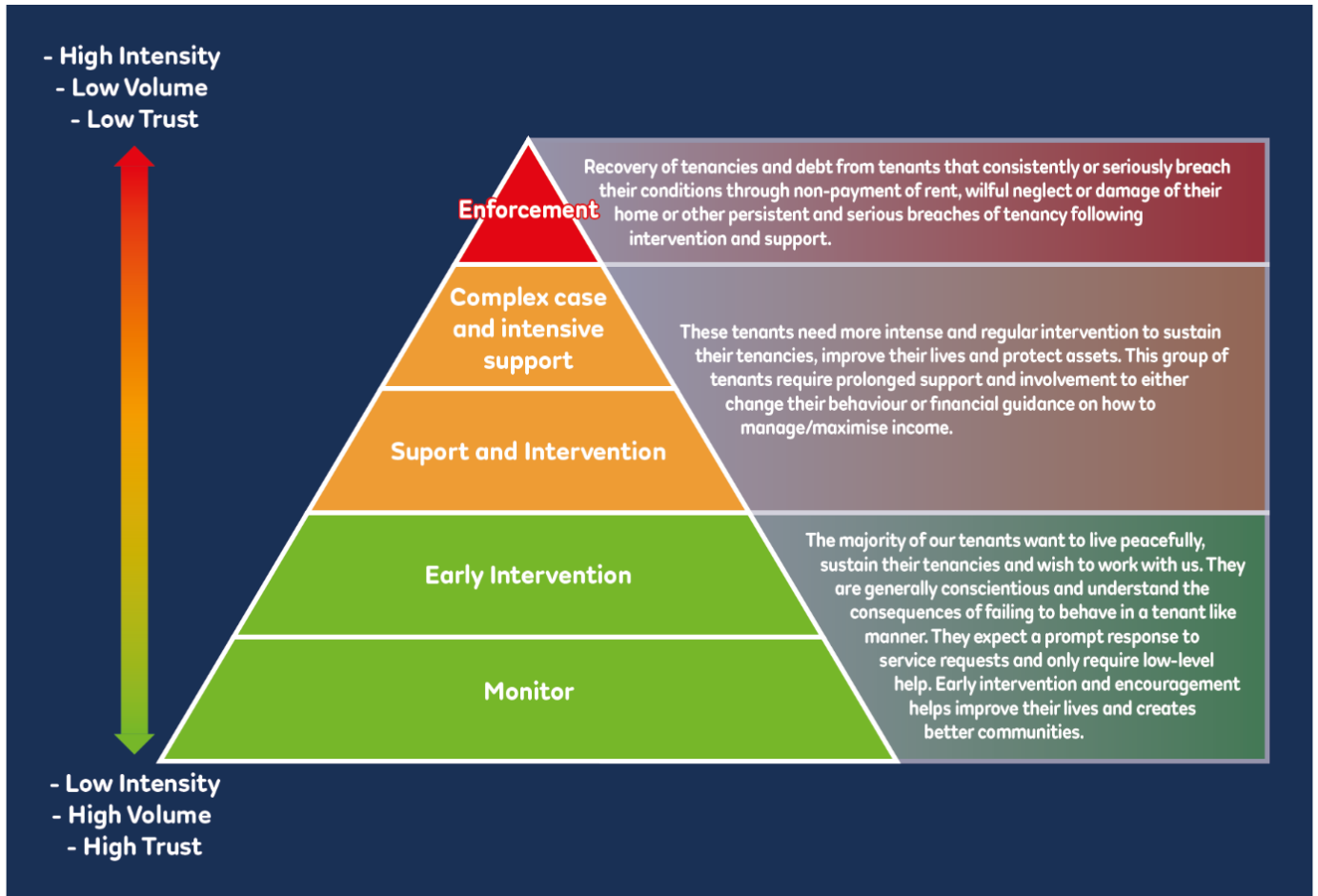
- we make the best use of our assets and have a robust service offer, have a flexible approach to managing our homes, reflecting the priorities of local communities, and managing homes owned by others;
- we have estates where people want to live for many years and we have greater influence with our partners to make a positive impact on community assets and spaces;



- we protect, maintain and enhance ecology and biodiversity within the greenspaces on our estates; and
- we are more resilient in our service delivery.

## How will we deliver our vision?

Our approach to estate and tenancy management must be balanced. It must allow us to support and help our tenants maintain their tenancy whilst also allowing us to take enforcement action against those who breach their tenancy agreement. Our approach to estate and tenancy management is summarised below.



We are committed to keeping evictions to a minimum and there will be no evictions from incidences where a tenant is suffering financial hardship and are doing all they can to work with officers. The most successful enforcement action is dependent on the provision of good support and assistance for tenants to help change their behaviour.

Each stage of our approach is interdependent on one another, and our interventions can be increased or decreased depending on how well or how poorly a tenant responds to our officers.

There is a strong correlation between a pro-active front line housing management service and the positive impact this has on other service areas, including housing repairs, voids and social care (including Childrens Services). For example, a handyperson service will have a positive impact, over time, on day to day repairs, the condition of void properties and the general appearance of our estates. This pro-active approach will reduce long term revenue expenditure by addressing small issues and will avoid them becoming more serious and costly if ignored.



Key to the success of our estate and tenancy management service is the visibility of our officers on our estates. Their ability to work flexibly using technology which helps them work remotely and become more mobile and agile on our estates will be central to the approach. This will be further enhanced as we introduce our new housing management system, which will speed up our work, avoid duplication and improve the customer experience.

Improving the customer experience also includes helping tenants do things for themselves. Developing our front facing systems where people can interact and access information easily, report problems, pay their rent without officer involvement will allow staff more time to monitor, react and deal with more intense support and complex issues.

## Our key estate and tenancy management commitments

<b>Our Estate and Tenancy Management Commitments:</b>	
<p><b><u>Commitment 1</u></b></p> <p>Direct tenant management</p>	<p>We are aiming to achieve a balanced approach to allow us to support and help our tenants maintain their tenancy while allowing us to take enforcement action against those who breach their tenancy agreement. This approach will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>help prevent evictions and reduce the number of homeless cases as more tenants are able to sustain their tenancies;</li> <li>improve the end of tenancy process;</li> <li>provide more support on wellbeing and social care issues;</li> <li>help maintain and increase rental income levels;</li> <li>maintain bad debt provision at £300k well below the historical budget provision of £600k;</li> <li>help deal with former tenant debt and the more complicated financial difficulties experienced by tenants; and</li> <li>ensure that we deal with low-level neighbour problems.</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Commitment 2</u></b></p> <p>Helping tenants maintain their homes and estates</p>	<p>How our tenants look after and live in their homes has an impact on the appearance, the condition of our homes and estates. We need to deliver a service more focused on the condition of homes, providing a link between front facing officers, housing repairs and social care. This approach will help maintain the condition of our homes and estates for longer.</p> <p>In 2024/25 we will introduce a new handy person service which will give our officers more “tools” to do their job and have direct access to preventative services on our estates. The handy person service will focus on carrying out low level repairs on tenant’s homes, ground maintenance and general improvement works on priority estates in the Carmarthen, Ammanford and Llanelli areas.</p>
<p><b><u>Commitment 3</u></b></p>	<p>We must provide a greater focus and investment on improving our estate environment.</p> <p>We will deliver a targeted and co-ordinated approach, delivering capital estate improvements that will improve the appearance of our estates, make them feel better for tenants and ensure that they are safe places to live in.</p>

<b>Improving the estate environment</b>	<p>Tenant and community engagement has always underpinned the delivery of our services, but developing a programme of estate improvements with tenants will help us ensure that our tenants shape our future estates and priorities.</p> <p>Our future estate improvement programme will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• estate entrances;</li> <li>• boundary walls and fencing;</li> <li>• capital works to gardens that are not sustainable to look after; and</li> <li>• general communal area improvements that will ensure we make the best use of the land we have available.</li> </ul>
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To achieve these commitments we have re-directed some of the expenditure in this year's plan to ensure that we are able to increase our investment on supporting and helping our tenants sustain their tenancies. This will mean:

- Reducing our bad debt provision by **£250k** and investing that funding into increasing housing officer capacity on the ground;
- Top slicing **£250k** from the repairs and maintenance budget and developing a proactive pilot "handyperson" service, initially on priority estates in Carmarthen, Ammanford, Llanelli and rural areas;
- Increasing our capital expenditure on improving our estate environments from £300k per year to over **£650k**; and
- Continued investment in home adaptations and sheltered housing improvements.

The investment included in this plan for supporting our tenants and residents is summarised in the table below.

Funding	Investment	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000
<b>Capital</b>	Improving the estate environment including ecology and biodiversity on greenspaces	650	700	700
	Adaptations to tenants' homes	2,000	2,000	2,000
	Sheltered housing investment	270	300	650
<b>Revenue</b>	Supervision and management	12,467	12,727	13,002
	Handy-person service	250	250	250
	Bad debt provision	350	357	364
	Grounds maintenance, unadopted roads etc.	1,265	1,317	1,373
<b>Total</b>		<b>17,252</b>	<b>17,651</b>	<b>18,339</b>

## Theme 2 – Investing in Homes

In 2015, we completed the WHQS programme of works to all homes where tenants had agreed to the work- well before WG's target of December 2020. This was in line with our previously agreed assumptions that all our homes will achieve the standard and future replacement programmes will be based on condition, not time.

### Maintaining the condition of our housing stock

Maintaining the WHQS standard is a statutory duty, and the Council has made a commitment to achieve and maintain the standard. The standard is contained in the **Compliance Policy in Appendix F**. Critical to this work is our ongoing stock condition survey for all housing assets. Surveys have now been completed for 1,350 of our homes which has enabled us to model a further 5,200 homes with the same architype, representing more than 55% of our stock.

This robust stock condition data has enabled us to plan our future programmes for the replacement of elements and components when they fail rather than on the time from when they were first installed. We have also identified key estates for investment, which are reflected in our capital programme. As further homes are surveyed and modelled, this will provide more detailed information to inform our investment plans year-on year.

### Carrying out repairs and letting empty Council homes

Tenants tell us that getting repairs done on time and maintaining homes to a good standard is important to them. Both the pandemic and Brexit have had a significant and lasting effect on the local construction market, adversely affecting available skills, capacity, and materials. In addition to this, costs have escalated. Many of our framework contractors have declined housing repair and maintenance works choosing to prioritise higher paid private sector work or larger projects instead. This has seriously affected our ability to carry out responsive repairs and maintenance works on our homes and has caused a significant backlog in the number of repairs we have outstanding.

On average we continue to respond to all emergency work within the day and urgent work within the week, but the backlog of non-urgent repairs is ongoing.

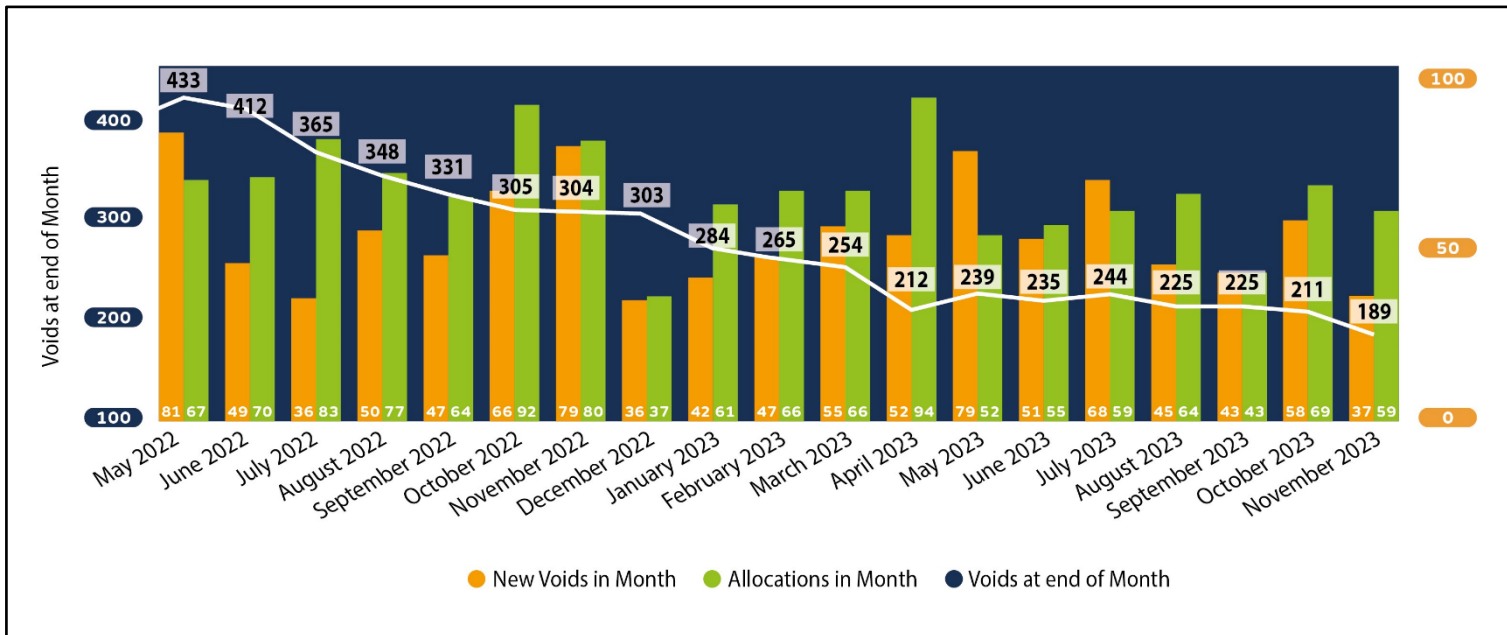
To address this backlog of repairs we must expand our capacity and contractor availability. We have invested in a new Housing Contract & Commissioning Team to develop a new Property Works Framework. We have undertaken extensive engagement with roadshows across the County to encourage a range of local contractors to apply for the opportunity to work on our Council homes. The Framework will cover a range of property maintenance and improvement activity, from day-to-day repairs and servicing to significant improvement programmes across our estates and also covers non-housing property work across the Council. The Framework will start in August 2024 and run for three years, with an option for an additional year.

The contractor capacity issues have also until recently, impacted on the number of empty Council homes that have not been let. Over the last three years we have focused on improving our processes for dealing with and refurbishing empty homes. The following graph shows the number of empty Council homes each month, between the peak of May 2022 (433 homes) and November 2023 (189

homes). One key change has been the recruitment of a new team of maintenance technicians dedicated to dealing with our empty homes, to reduce our reliance on external contractors, with the potential to increase further.

Our focussed approach has enabled an additional 220 homes being available for families in housing need compared with May 2022.

### The number of empty Council homes each month



### Reducing complaints and improving our repairs service

Over the last year we have expanded our call handling and repairs scheduling team to improve communication with tenants and to help with following up on outstanding works. This has seen a significant reduction in complaints (from over 100 to a handful) and an increase in compliments. We are also piloting weekend appointments to see whether this will help in reducing the backlog of works and provide more flexibility for tenants.

To continue improving the service we are planning to further expand our in-house teams from the current staffing resource of 80, increasing to 200/300 members of staff, developing our capacity and skills so that we become less reliant on external contractors. To support this, we are now implementing a new repairs scheduling system (Total Connect) which will enable tenants to request and track their repairs and help us ensure that the works carried out on tenants' homes meet their needs and are done at a time that is convenient and suitable for our tenants. The system will also help us to better manage and deploy our in-house operatives and continuously improve efficiency of the service. We will review the outputs from this in the Autumn / Winter period of 2024 to inform our in-house growth plan.

## Our on-going consultation with tenants has identified seven key areas of work

Work Area	Context	Action
<b>Repairs and Maintenance</b>	Effective and timely maintenance service, maintaining homes to a high standard and continuing to improve the housing stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeping in touch with tenants and advising tenants how quickly we can carry out the works when they report minor repairs;</li> <li>• Clearing the backlog of non-urgent repairs that have built up;</li> <li>• Carrying out repairs in the timescales we have agreed or at a time that is more convenient for the tenant;</li> <li>• Introducing an appointments system for our responsive repairs service, using mobile technology;</li> <li>• Introducing automatic scheduling of repairs;</li> <li>• Developing and implementing a new Property Works Framework that will help widen the availability of contractors; and</li> <li>• Developing our in-house teams so that we have the skills and capacity to deliver repairs, adaptations and refurbishments ourselves and reduce our reliance on the private market.</li> </ul>
<b>Internal Works</b>	For internal components such as kitchens, bathrooms, electrical upgrading, and central heating, we replace components when they are in disrepair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contacting tenants who have previously declined works;</li> <li>• Ensuring homes have the appropriate smoke alarms, heat detectors or carbon monoxide detectors, and agree with tenants how we can upgrade these components to protect their safety; and</li> <li>• Developing planned programmes of works informed by our ongoing condition surveys.</li> </ul>
<b>Damp and Mould</b>	Prolonged exposure to dampness and mould can affect health and wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continually reviewing and improving our processes for dealing with damp and mould to mitigate risks;</li> <li>• Taking a preventative approach to identifying any issues early, through home checker visits and programmed inspections;</li> <li>• Providing advice to tenants on what they can do to reduce damp and mould in their homes; and</li> <li>• Reviewing the introduction of new technology that will allow us to monitor and intervene early to prevent mould and damp from occurring in tenants' homes.</li> </ul>
<b>Servicing</b>	We assess the condition of our gas, oil, electric and solid fuel appliances and meet our statutory servicing obligations. Protecting the health and well-being of our tenants by ensuring that all homes are fitted with fully compliant electrical systems, including hard-wired smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) detectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing our annual programme of safety checks on gas fires, and gas or oil boilers, and replacing or upgrading where necessary with energy-efficient appliances;</li> <li>• Continuing our five year electrical inspection programme and upgrading where necessary;</li> <li>• Inspecting smoke, heat and carbon monoxide detectors installed in homes and upgrading where necessary;</li> <li>• Gaining access to ensure that the necessary works are completed; and</li> <li>• Installing servicing timers when we gain access (where a tenant repeatedly refuses access), to help protect lives.</li> </ul>

<b>External Works and the Environment</b>	Our homes are in a good condition, and we aim to achieve economies of scale by replacing components in disrepair; including the rendering and roofing upgrading or replacement programmes and improving the estate environment around our tenants homes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing to review and update our annual roof and rendering programmes to include external wall insulation and solar panels where appropriate;</li> <li>• Working with a range of partners to identify opportunities to install low carbon technologies to our homes;</li> <li>• Continuing our programme of replacing structural boundary and retaining walls;</li> <li>• Ensuring sheds/outhouses, gardens, paths and fencing meet our standards; and</li> <li>• Specific investment is planned in a number of estates over the next three years.</li> </ul>
<b>Empty Council Homes (Voids)</b>	Our aim is to let empty Council homes as quickly as possible, reducing rent loss and reducing the pressure on front line homelessness services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make empty properties available for letting as quickly as possible and reducing the number of empty homes in the Council’s housing stock;</li> <li>• Completing individual options appraisals if homes are no longer fit for purpose or require significant investment; and</li> <li>• Ensuring every new tenant receives relevant information and certification about their new home.</li> </ul>
<b>Improving Standards</b>	Tenants have told us they want a standard that continues to evolve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Giving tenants a say through single-issue meetings, digital participation and challenge panels;</li> <li>• Using the data gathered by the Stock Condition and Verification Team to determine the most sensible route for improving our standards;</li> <li>• Continuing to implement new IT systems for asset management, repair scheduling and tenancy management for our housing stock that can be used to store data on our homes and conduct our own modelling for improving the energy efficiency performance of our homes.;</li> <li>• Maximising funding opportunities that allow us to test new innovative technologies that can reduce our carbon footprint and fuel bills for tenants;</li> <li>• Providing adaptations for our tenants to meet their needs and maintain their independence; and</li> <li>• Meeting the needs of households on the Accessible Housing Register (AHR) through conversion or where an empty Council property with existing adaptations is matched to a new household.</li> </ul>

## Specific estate improvement works

In addition to individual investment, where required in specific properties across the county, our ongoing programme of stock condition surveys has identified wider investment requirements that have been built into our next 3-year programme (and beyond). These include:

- **Fencing Enhancement Programme** – ongoing investment targeted at replacing fencing in estates where wholesale improvements are required;
- **Maes Glas, Llandoverly** – three-year investment programme to upgrade ten homes built using non-traditional construction that are hard to heat;
- **Danybanc & Llundain Fach, Llanelli** – a significant site-wide investment programme to address long-term drainage and other issues across the estates;



- **Woods Row Court, Carmarthen** – significant investment to remodel this prominent town centre estate and overcome site-wide roofing and repair issues; and
- **Pen y Fan and Clos St Paul, Llanelli** – reroofing of the estate to overcome water ingress issues and to improved thermal insulation.

## Risk reduction measures

**Approach to fire management** – We have an ongoing review of fire risk assessments to our purpose-built blocks of flats and sheltered schemes. We have identified improvements to be made and an action plan has been developed. This provides a record of present risks, defects identified and the remedial action to be taken in a defined period which are monitored through our governance arrangements as set out in **Appendix A**. A work programme has been developed to improve the detection systems within these blocks of flats, the means of escape and the compartmentalisation of flats in the event of a fire.

**Radon testing programme** - Following guidance issued by Welsh Government and Public Health Wales, we have an ongoing programme of radon testing in all our homes located in areas where there is a greater probability of high radon levels. The highest risk areas have already been tested and measures to disperse radon are installed, where needed to reduce levels to acceptable levels. Officers from the Council are continuing to install radon detectors for three months to gather data in specific, discreet locations within homes. Remedial action is taken if levels are higher than recommended.

**Surge protection upgrade** - The demand on the electrical systems and consumer units in our homes has increased over time. The introduction of other renewable energy components and electric vehicle charging points in future will place further strain on the systems installed. Surge protection devices (SPD) are being installed which significantly reduce the risk associated with transient over-voltages.

The investment included in this plan for investing in our homes is summarised in the table below.

Funding	Investment	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000
<b>Capital</b>	Internal & external works	2,170	2,220	2,220
	Void programme & major works to homes	6,250	5,850	5,750
	Estate based refurbishment	850	1,817	2,117
	Risk reduction measures	820	820	820
<b>Revenue</b>	Responsive repairs & maintenance	2,437	2,537	2,645
	Void works	4,421	4,602	4,798
	Servicing	2,282	2,376	2,477
	Minor works	4,088	4,256	4,437
	Supervision & management	3,485	3,639	3,794
<b>Total</b>		<b>26,803</b>	<b>28,117</b>	<b>29,058</b>

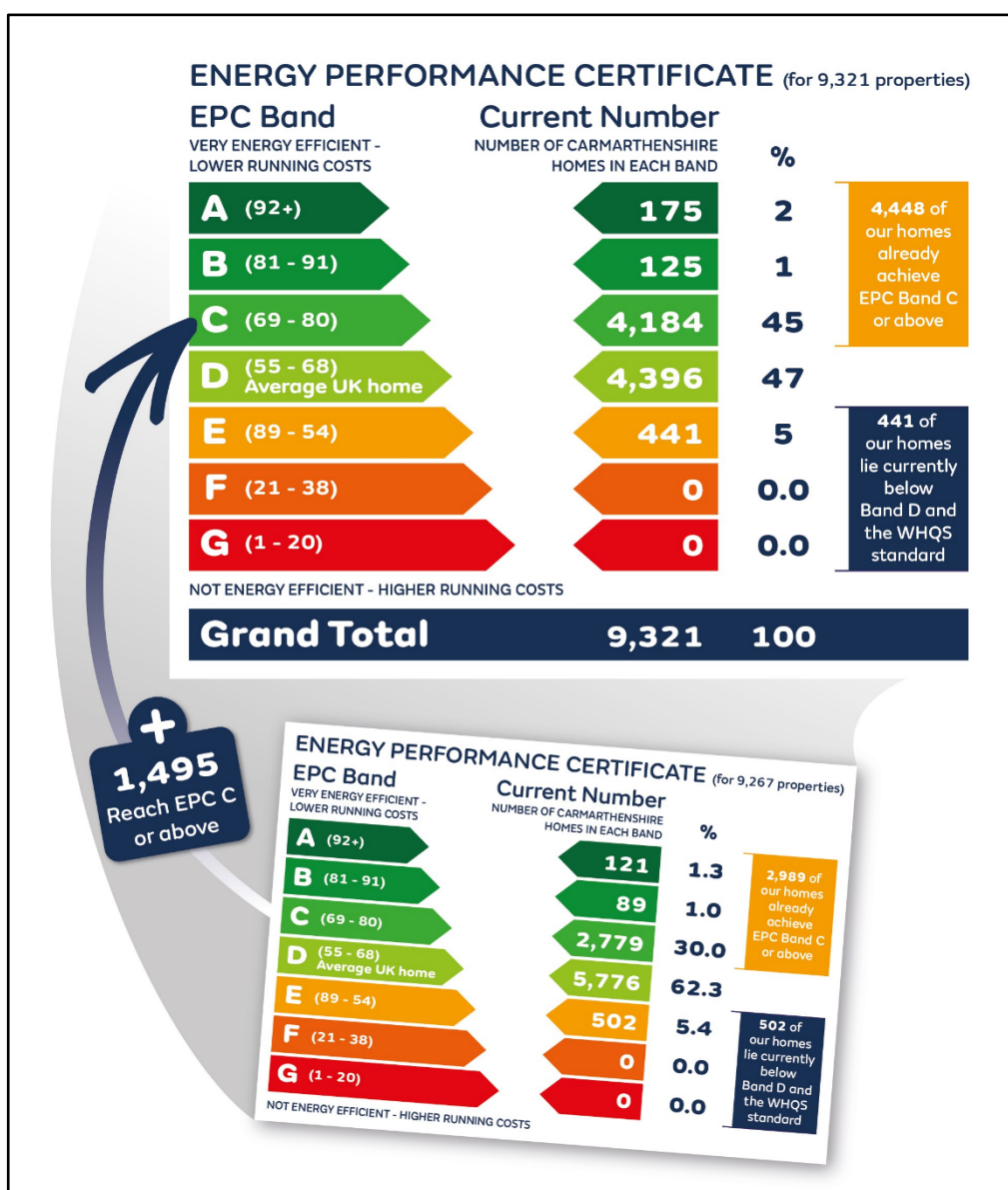
# Theme 3 – Promoting Affordable Warmth and Decarbonising our Housing Stock

Promoting affordable warmth, improving the energy performance and decarbonising our housing stock is a key strategic priority for the Council which aligns directly with the Council’s net zero carbon principles.

In last year’s Business Plan, we made a clear commitment to ensure that all of our homes are energy efficient and affordable for tenants. We will achieve this by bringing all our homes up to a minimum Band C Energy Performance Rating (EPC) as quickly as possible and already nearly 50% of our homes achieve this standard.

The energy performance of our housing stock is shown below, this is inclusive of the improvements made since 2022/23.

## Current housing stock energy performance rating





In 2023/24, 1,495 additional homes increased from an energy performance rating of Band D and below, to Band C and above, increasing from 32% of our stock to 48%.

Our approach to improving the energy efficiency of our homes is based on using a fabric first approach which improves the thermal efficiency of our homes. This results in our homes staying warmer for longer, meaning tenants use less energy to heat their homes. Continuing to improve the energy performance of our housing stock will help:

- reduce fuel bills for tenants helping to mitigating fuel poverty, this is particularly important today with the current cost of living crisis affecting so many of our tenants;
- grow the local economy by providing long term investment programmes;
- upskill the local supply chain and provide more training and work opportunities for local people; and
- ensure our tenants homes are fit for purpose now and for generations to come.

During 2024/25 we will continue to invest in making sure homes are cheaper to run for our tenants..

## How have we achieved an energy performance rating of band C and above in nearly 50% of our homes?

The work done to our homes to achieve the WHQS by 2015, had a significant effect on the energy performance of our homes. Through this investment programme we upgraded the thermal performance of our homes by:

- installing cavity wall insulation;
- increasing the levels of loft insulation;
- lagging pipes and hot water cylinders; and
- replacing inefficient heating system with 'A' rated condensing boilers.

The work done to our homes in 2023/24, however, has had a significant effect on improving the energy performance of our housing stock beyond WHQS levels, these works include:

- improving the fabric performance (loft and/or external wall insulation) of over 130 homes across the county as part of our roofing and rendering programmes. This has ensured that more homes are warmer for longer and need less energy to heat the home in the winter;
- carrying out a pilot solar PV programme linked to the re-roofing programme;
- completing a deep retrofit to 18 homes across the county, bringing older homes to the same standard as a modern new build home with added features such as battery storage and non-fossil fuel heating systems, as well as improving the thermal performance of the homes;
- installing LED lighting to existing homes, providing cheaper energy efficient lighting for tenants; and
- installing hybrid heat pumps to 141 homes as a solution to moving towards low carbon heating for homes without putting tenants at risk of paying more for their fuel bills.

In addition to the works carried out on our existing homes over 1,350 stock condition surveys have been completed on our homes, which has not only produced updated energy performance data for the homes surveyed. It has also enabled us to model the stock condition and energy performance of over 5,200 of homes with the same archetype. This has then enabled us to update the stock condition data held in our asset management system and produce more accurate energy performance data for the stock.

The new work programmes listed above represents a change in the way we are upgrading the energy performance of our housing stock. We are looking at both the long term aims of decarbonising our homes through deep retrofit and installing fabric performance upgrades as part of our step by step approach to decarbonising homes. This allows us to reach more tenants homes each year and ensuring that no one gets left behind in our bid to combat fuel poverty and provide a greener Carmarthenshire. A summary of the works typically carried out on our homes through the retrofit programmes is shown in **Appendix E**.

## Our approach to affordable warmth and decarbonisation in our new build Council homes

Our Council new build standards embrace decarbonisation. Our homes are highly efficient and already achieve a EPC Band A with SAP levels between 92 and 105. We have developed a housing performance matrix that allows us to build to different energy standards depending on the development. A breakdown of the different energy standards we currently use on our new build developments can be seen in **Appendix E**.

Our ambitious plans to support the delivery of more affordable homes will include developing innovative energy efficient homes with low levels of carbon emissions that can produce and store energy. We will continue to focus on using a fabric first approach, renewable technology, maximising the use of local products and where possible we will encourage the use of modern methods of construction (MMC).

## The new Welsh Housing Quality Standard 2023 (WHQS 2023)

In 2023/24 the new WHQS 2023 was launched by WG, placing a greater emphasis on social landlords to improve the energy performance of their housing stock.

We have already placed ourselves in a strong position to meet the key milestones of WHQS 2023. We have continued to improve our housing standards from 2015 levels and are already working within the guidelines set by WG. The key milestones of WHQS 2023 for decarbonisation are:

- completing a whole stock assessment and developing individual targeted energy pathways for each home by March 2027, identifying the measures required to achieve EPC Band C initially, and also the additional measures needed to achieve EPC Band A; and
- achieving an EPC Band C rating on all homes by March 2030 using a fabric first approach.

It is, however, recognised by WG that a significant amount of funding will be required to achieve EPC Band A in the social housing stock in Wales, when budgets are already stretched. The main financial challenges include the additional cost associated with renewable technologies required to increase EPC levels from band C to band A. In addition to the financial challenges there are other key issues that also need to be addressed which include:

- supply chain shortages with the availability of renewable technologies both locally and nationally;
- the lack of local skills and trades available to install renewable technologies;
- the limited capacity of the national grid to accept the increased energy demands of additional electrical equipment including heat pumps, solar panels and batteries as they are installed in more homes; and
- an outdated SAP methodology which does not recognise some key decarbonisation measures and the improvements they make to the energy performance of our homes, this

includes electric heating sources and battery storage. These crucial gaps in the current SAP methodology limits the energy performance scores of some of our homes.

Due to the constraints outlined above, achieving EPC Band A is a long term WG commitment, with no prescribed timescale at this time. Each local authority is, however, required to develop a plan identifying what measures are required in their homes to achieve this standard.

Our approach to making our homes more energy efficient already embraces the key milestones set out in WHQS 2023. Our stock condition surveys are already underway and nearly 50% of our stock already achieves EPC Band C using a fabric first approach.

We will continue to work towards meeting our own decarbonisation targets whilst ensuring we comply with criteria of WHQS 2023.

During 2024/25 we will also look in detail at the business case to expand the programme of installing solar panels on Council homes.

## Swansea Bay City Deal – Homes as Power Stations (HAPS)

The HAPS City Deal will facilitate the adoption of the Homes as Power Stations approach to integrate energy efficient design and renewable technologies into the development of new build homes and retrofit programmes carried out by the public, private and third sectors. This will tackle fuel poverty while helping residents save money on their energy bills.

The City Deal also focuses on developing a sustainable regional supply chain for renewable technology. It aims to leave a legacy of skilled jobs in the Swansea Bay City Region, ensuring that local businesses are able to grow from the increased demand for renewable technologies. It also aims to ensure that at least one technology is manufactured in the region.

In 2023, the HAPS project released the Financial Incentive Fund (FIF) to increase the level of renewable technology being installed in homes. £5.5m of funding was made available (maximum of £300k per bid) for social landlords and the private sector in the City Deal region (Neath, Swansea, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire).

Ten bids were received for the Carmarthenshire region with the Council securing £616k of HAPS funding to support the development of our Council new build programme. The FIF bids directly support our aim to continue to provide low carbon, non-fossil fuel homes for tenants.

## Our investment priorities for 2024/25

Over the next 12 months, we will remain focused on making all of our homes energy efficient and affordable for tenants.

The work planned for 2024/25 is outlined in the table on page 26.

Work Programme	Outcome	Action
<b>Fabric Improvement Programme</b>	Increasing the fabric performance of our homes that currently fall below EPC Band C.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>External walls</b> - Improving the thermal efficiency of the external walls to our homes by installing measures such as External Wall Insulation (EWI) and Cavity Wall Insulation (CWI). The performance of any current insulation installed on our homes will be surveyed to measure its efficiency and improved or replace as required.</li> <li>• <b>Loft insulation</b> – Increasing loft insulation to 400mm in roof spaces. The outcome of our energy modelling research has identified that increasing loft insulation has a significant impact on increasing SAP levels and EPC ratings.</li> </ul>
<b>Installing hybrid heat pumps</b>	Replacing fossil-fuel heating systems with hybrid heat pumps, reducing carbon emissions without increasing tenants fuel bills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Boiler replacement</b> – Replacing e-grade boilers and boilers that are no longer economical to repair with hybrid heat pumps. These heating systems use a combination of both electric and gas to provide tenants with affordable heating throughout the year.</li> </ul>
<b>Installing LED lighting</b>	Replacing traditional lighting with LED lightbulbs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Installing LED lighting to all our homes. This is a quick and effective way to reduce tenants' energy bills. It also has a positive impact on the SAP score and EPC rating.</li> </ul>
<b>Stock condition and verification programme</b>	Producing robust stock investment programmes to ensure that all our homes achieve a minimum EPC Band C as quickly as possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing the programme of stock condition and verification surveys to increase the level of detailed data we hold on our housing stock and enabling us to produce robust investment programmes for the future.</li> <li>• Developing energy pathways for our homes using the modelling system in SAVA and our own stock condition data, clearly identifying the measures required to achieve EPC Band C and the further measures required to achieve EPC Band A.</li> <li>• Completing new EPC surveys for homes where the current EPC's are now out of date or where additional investment works have been carried out.</li> </ul>
<b>Rooftop solar panels on Council homes and community Electric Vehicle charging points</b>	Increasing the level of renewable technology on tenants' homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Solar panels and planned roofing upgrading works</b> – we will install solar panels as part of our roofing upgrading programme to all roofs that are suitable.</li> <li>• <b>Business case development</b> – we will develop a business case outlining the investment required and the benefits of installing a wider programme of</li> </ul>

		rooftop solar panels to tenants' homes and installing community electrical vehicle charging points on our estates. The business cases will consider installation costs, the financial benefits for tenants and the potential reduction in carbon emissions.
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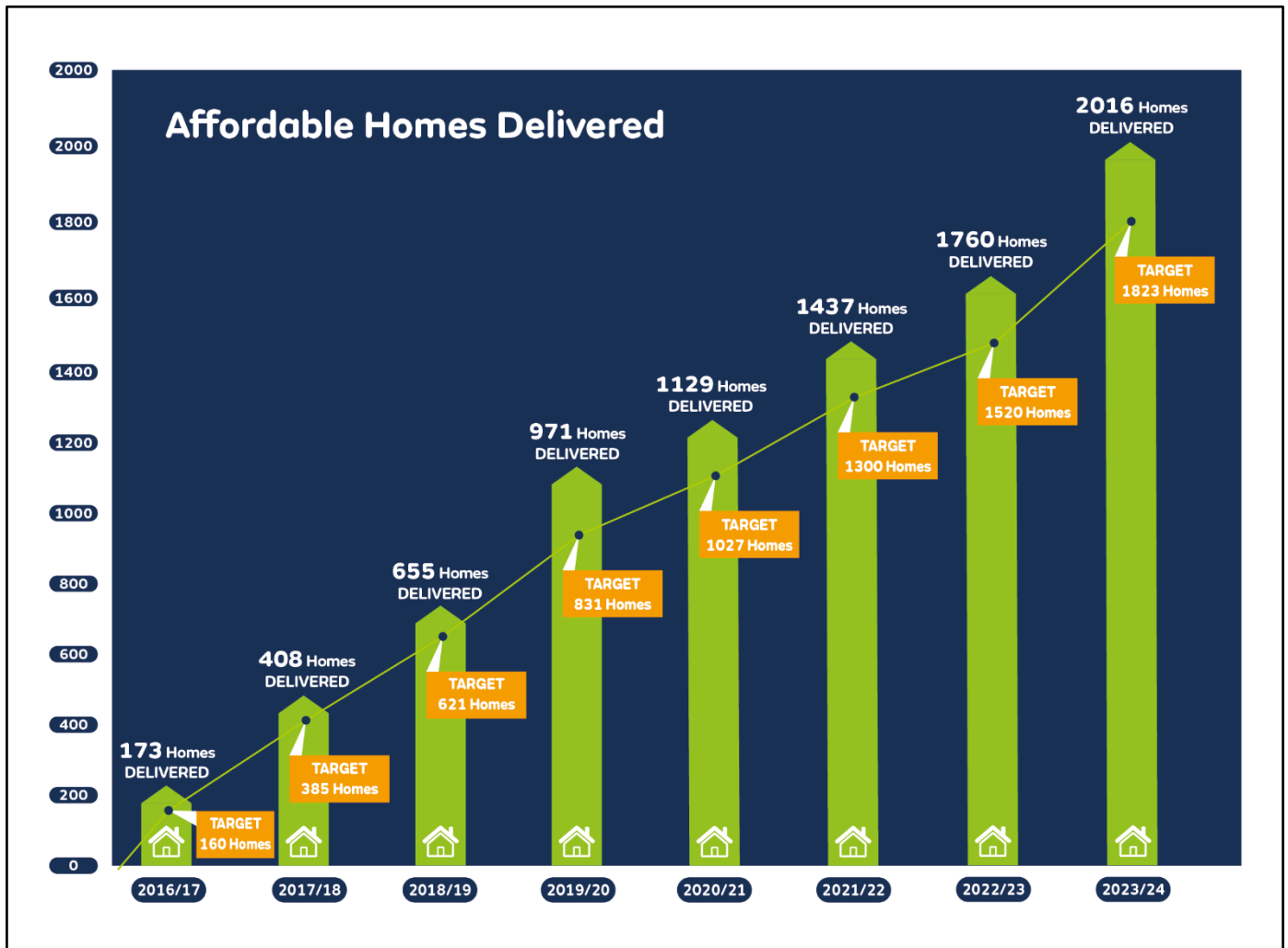
The investment included in this plan for promoting affordable warmth and decarbonising our housing stock is summarised in the table below.

	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000
Rendering, external works & increased thermal insulation	1,000	1,000	1,000
Re-roofing, increased thermal insulation and the installation of solar panels	1,525	1,679	2,205
Window & door Replacement	500	200	200
Retrofit programme (improving the energy efficiency of homes including installing renewable technology)	850	500	500
Rooftop solar panels	328	828	828
Community electric vehicle charging points	50	50	50
Increased fabric insulation to achieve EPC Band C and above	500	1,000	1,500
Installation of LED light bulbs	35	35	35
Hybrid Heating Systems	1,000	1,250	1,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,788</b>	<b>6,542</b>	<b>7,818</b>

## Theme 4 – Delivering More Homes

We began our ambitious journey to increase the supply of affordable homes in all areas of the county in 2016. So far, we have delivered over 2,000 additional homes exceeding our delivery targets every year, helping to grow the local economy, meeting housing need and helping some of the most vulnerable people and families in our communities.

*Our journey so far.....over 2,000 additional homes delivered*



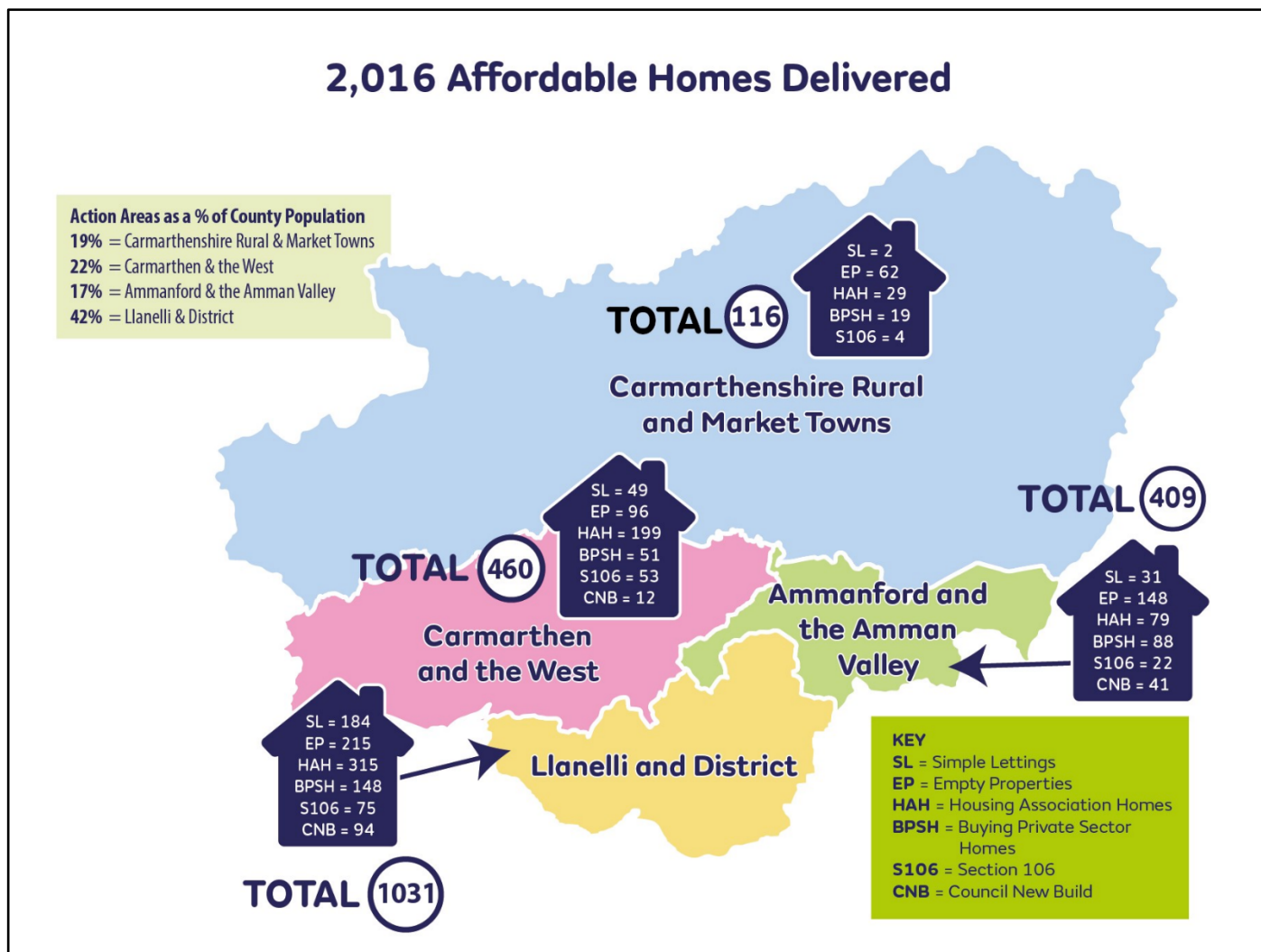
Our current Council new build programme plays a key role in increasing the supply of homes and growing the economy, but we also use a range of other delivery solutions to ensure that the programme is delivered in a cost-effective way and maximises all external funding opportunities, this includes:

- working collaboratively with our Housing Association partners to ensure that their investment programmes align with our strategic housing priorities;
- bringing empty homes back into use in all areas of the County;
- managing private sector rentals through our in-house Simple Lettings Agency;
- delivering affordable homes for low-cost home ownership through the section 106 provisions of the planning system; and
- buying private sector homes to increase our housing stock.



The buying private sector programme has played a key part in our programme. This has helped us increase supply of homes quickly with over 300 properties already purchased.

The map below shows where in the county and how the 2,016 additional affordable homes have been delivered.



## Meeting housing need

Meeting housing need has always been our main reason for providing more homes.

Housing need can be met in a variety of different ways, according to the needs of the household, their financial position and the opportunities available. Our plans help address housing need in a number of different ways including:

- providing more homes for social rent, including homes for general needs households (single people and families), specialist supported housing for individuals with complex needs and accommodation for older people;
- providing a choice of mixed tenure assisted living options for older people, including our offer at the innovative Pentre Awel Wellness Village;

- providing more homes for low cost home ownership helping individuals and families own their own home;
- providing mixed tenure developments consisting of social rented, low-cost home ownership and open market homes, offering a real choice of tenures for local people and key workers depending on their individual circumstances;
- providing more affordable homes for rent and sale in rural towns and villages, helping local people stay in their communities, helping to protect the Welsh language and culture; and
- increasing the residential offer in the primary towns of Ammanford, Carmarthen and Llanelli, increasing footfall through housing-based regeneration and helping to make our town centres vibrant once more.

Over the last two years the Council has seen an unprecedented rise in homelessness cases which has had a significant impact on the demand for affordable housing in the county. This has been caused by additional legislative requirements being imposed since the pandemic, including the “no-one left out” approach. It has also been caused by external market conditions having a direct effect on the private rented sector, which is reducing the supply of homes available for rent, because of:

- private landlords leaving the market due to increasing interest rates and the longer possession timescales imposed by the Renting Homes Act; and
- increasing market rental levels due to the demand for private rented accommodation far exceeding supply. This has made the private rented market unaffordable for many local people, who are now reliant on social housing to meet their housing needs.

Meeting our responsibilities around our proportionate share of resettlement schemes has also created further demand.

These actions have had a significant effect on the supply of affordable homes. Many single person and family households by no fault of their own have become homeless. It has also had a direct effect on the Council being able to discharge its homelessness duty through the private rented sector.

Based on the current levels of housing need in the county it is more important than ever that we invest in delivering more affordable homes at pace.

## Our investment priorities for the next three years (2024/25-2026/27)

Our plans for the next three years, will continue to increase the supply of homes for both general and specialist housing need. We will also continue to use the social housing direct allocations policy developed by the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group in 2023. This policy helps manage the social housing demand and supply issues, ensuring that our homes are allocated and let to those households in greatest need.

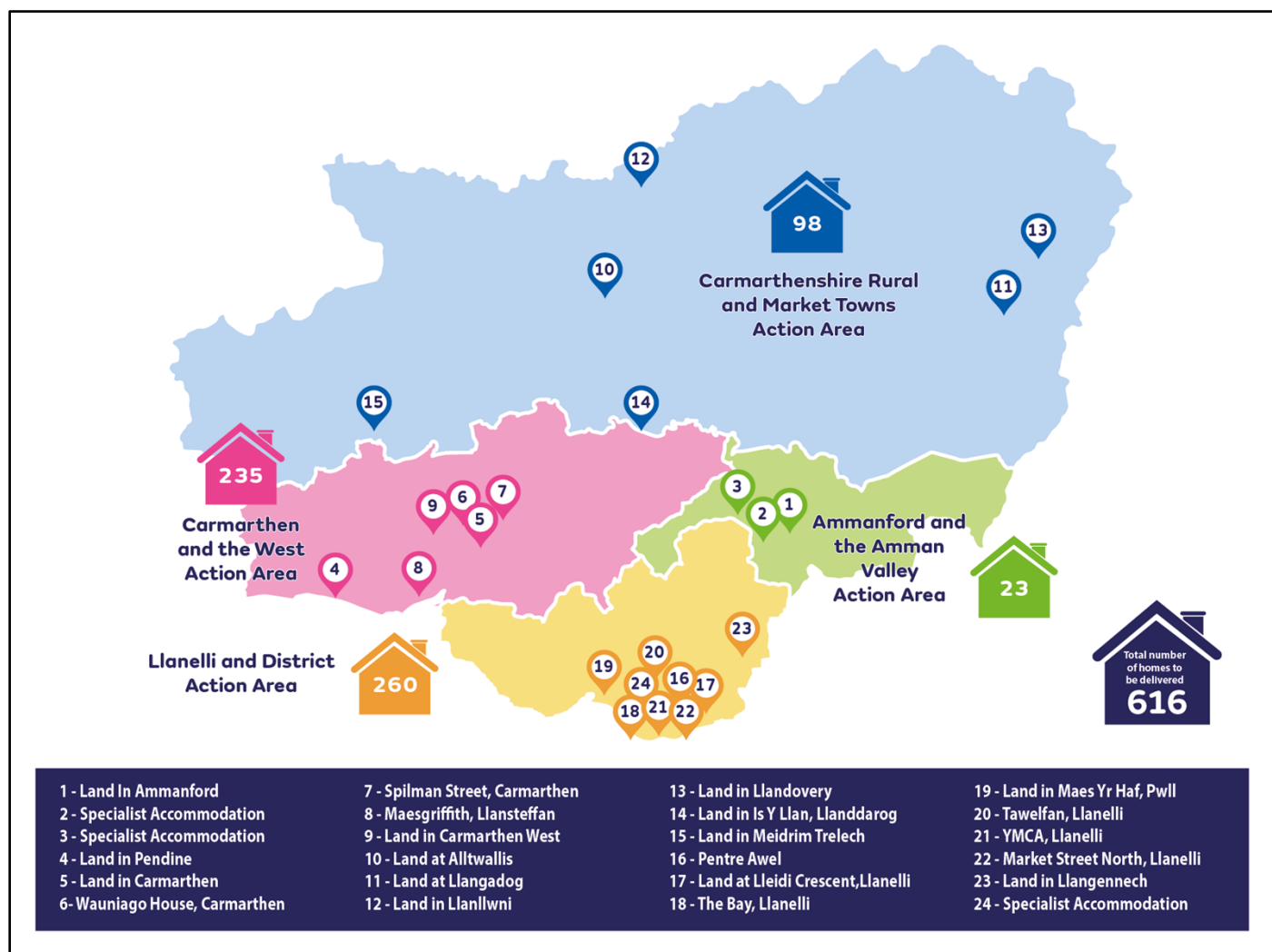
Over the next three years, our current pipeline of Council new build developments will deliver over 600 homes.

Our new build homes will meet the individual needs of our communities and include houses, bungalows and apartments for both individuals and families. All our new build developments follow a clear set of design principles, that create new communities that are sustainable, with a real sense of place.



Our programme will also continue to deliver more homes through other solutions, including buying over 60 private sector homes and bringing empty homes back into use.

The map below shows our current pipeline of Council new build homes.



## Specialist accommodation

Our current new build programme includes increasing the supply of specialist accommodation units. These units will be provided as temporary accommodation and accommodation that promotes independent living for individuals with learning disabilities and mental health (LD&MH).

We have already significantly increased the number of specialist accommodation units provided for individuals with LD&MH, creating over 40 units directly within our housing stock. This helps to promote independence, reducing our reliance on costly private sector residential placements, and making significant savings to the Council's care and support services.

## Land acquisition

The current Council new build programme has focused on utilising land assets already in Council ownership. These sites have been relatively small and limited our development programme to smaller sites of between 8 and 32 homes.

The Council's land reserves are now exhausted. Our current strategy will limit our ability to continue to increase the supply of homes quickly. In addition to the developments highlighted above, we now need a new pipeline of developments which will enable us to develop large sites. This will include sites exclusively for Council housing.

Our land acquisition programme aims to pro-actively purchase land and focus our future delivery on larger sites. This will include sites that the Council will develop itself as well as working directly with landowners and developers to bring forward sites through package deals. Utilising package deals will enable the Council to accelerate its development programme, increasing supply quickly to meet local demand.

This overarching approach will ensure that our future investment plans deliver more affordable homes at scale and pace.

The investment included in this plan for the delivery of more homes is summarised in the table below.

	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000
Council new build	9,160	10,762	10,240
Land acquisition	1,600	2,500	2,800
Specialist accommodation	2,998	1,950	1,350
Buying private sector homes	3,000	2,000	1,750
Programme management	648	674	700
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,406</b>	<b>17,886</b>	<b>16,840</b>

## Theme 5 – Local Economy, Community Benefits and Procurement

We recognise the importance of this plan and its role across the wider capital investment programme to stimulate, support and develop the local economy. To support economic growth, we will continue to look further to develop the Council's approach to procurement to maximise our contribution to local economic growth, focusing on social value and building sustainable communities. Our aim is to grow different economy sectors within the housing and building industry so that they and other local business benefit and thrive. It is therefore important that our investment plans:

- contribute to long term economic growth across the County;
- are sustainable in future years as we continue to invest and maintain our homes;
- enable local businesses, construction and manufacturing industries to develop, grow and lay down strong roots;
- keep the pound local, benefiting our economy and contributing directly to the prosperity of our county and its residents; and
- create new jobs and training opportunities for local people.

The housing stock investment and the Council new build programmes will provide sustained periods of trade and benefit to local contractors and builders. This will create more jobs, training opportunities and other community benefits. Our affordable housing plans have a direct focus on providing more homes in town centres and rural areas, having a direct impact on business and commerce in these areas.

The decarbonisation of our homes is also a fundamental part of our future stock investment programmes, making our homes energy efficient and achieving a minimum EPC Band C. Rolling this out across our entire housing stock will result in increased job opportunities and further training opportunities as we explore new ways of providing low carbon, energy efficient homes for our tenants. A significant proportion of the Council's housing stock is in rural market towns and in rural areas. Encouraging small to medium enterprises (SMEs) to participate in those areas will help with local employment and allow young people to stay in the community where they want to live.

Our procurement strategy aims to develop our programmes using local contractors and suppliers to stimulate the local economy. Where this is not possible initially, because of limitations on the supply and availability of local skills (e.g. homes built using Modern Methods of Construction (MMC)), we will learn from these projects and put measures in place to ensure that the skills and work force needed is available locally. We will also influence this through the Regional Skills and Partnerships workstream and through expanding our own direct employment of staff to deliver work programmes alongside the private sector, including appointment of apprentices and supporting local shared apprentice programmes.

### Community benefits directly delivered through housing investment

The capital investment programme exceeds £30m per annum. This level of investment will safeguard over 200 jobs every year. Our procurement approach ensures that community benefits are delivered through the capital programme. The table below demonstrates the community benefits already delivered through the Council's first seven new build developments in Llandybie,

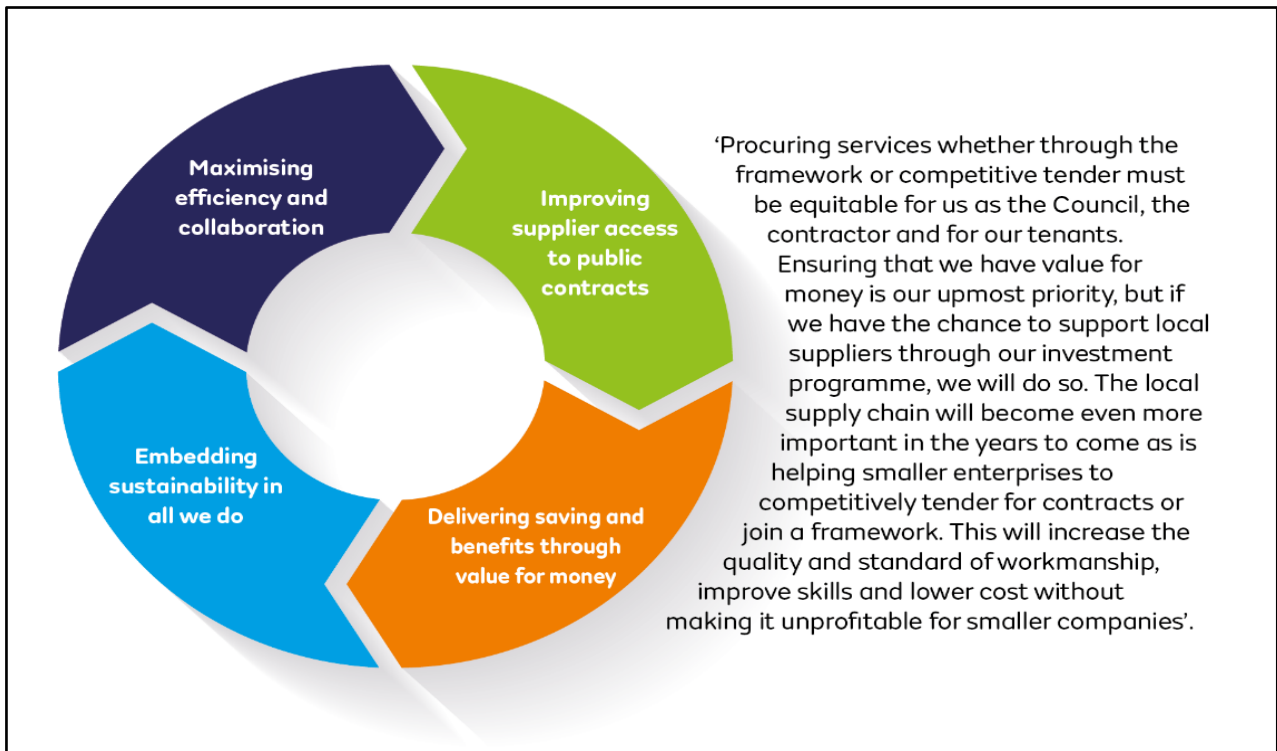
Saron, Llanelli, Burry Port, Pembrey and Carmarthen. It also shows the projected level of community benefits that will be delivered through our future housing investment programmes

Community Benefits Delivered on our First 7 New Build Developments	Projected Community Benefits for Future Housing Investment Schemes
 <p><b>1577</b> Waged training weeks have been provided</p>	 <p><b>600</b> Waged training weeks will be delivered</p>
 <p><b>51</b> Work experience placements (5 days per student) were created</p>	 <p><b>43</b> Work experience placements (5 days per student) will be delivered</p>
 <p><b>29</b> New entrant jobs were created</p>	 <p><b>29</b> New entrant jobs will be created</p>
 <p><b>28</b> Construction careers advice and guidance events delivered</p>	 <p><b>12</b> Construction careers advice and guidance events proposed</p>
 <p><b>73</b> Existing workforce employees were upskilled and provided with additional training</p>	 <p><b>29</b> Existing workforce employees will be upskilled and provided with additional training</p>
 <p><b>250</b> Targeted apprenticeships, work experience and jobs (52 weeks per £1m)</p>	 <p><b>1142</b> Targeted apprenticeships, work experience and jobs (52 weeks per £1m)</p>

During construction, contractors will also contribute to the wider local economy by increasing footfall into town centres and spending money in rural market towns/villages by accessing local amenities such as shops, supermarkets, restaurants and cafés.

It is, however, extremely important that all contracts demonstrate good value for money and through the West Wales Regional Contractor Partnering Framework and the new Property Works Frameworks, we will challenge their costs, the principles and methods of construction to make ensure that we achieve this. We will also look to keep the workforce as local as possible and benefit

the local economy by including 'environmental benefits' in a tender or contract and insisting that contractors demonstrate how they will reduce their carbon emissions.



# Funding and Risk Management

## Major Repairs Allowance

Every year we receive over £6 million from WG to support our capital investment. The grant comes with clear guidance on what it can and cannot be used for. The main condition is that it must be spent on property within the HRA. It cannot be used for revenue repairs or maintenance, demolition costs, repayment of borrowing etc. A full breakdown can be found in our MRA acceptance letter issued by WG.

The MRA makes a significant contribution towards achieving and maintaining our housing stock. A reduction in MRA levels would be detrimental to future investment plans.

## Planning assumptions

To help us plan our investments, we must make certain assumptions. Changes to our assumptions may mean re-visiting the objectives included in this plan.

**The current financial assumptions in the plan are based on a rental increase of 6.5%**

### To note

- an annual rental increase of 1% will make an additional £470k in revenue income. This additional revenue will generate an additional £6m in capital expenditure every year; and
- this is plan is also based on making £330k of revenue efficiencies over the next three years. This will help to further maximise the investment available to deliver our capital programmes.

INCOME	
Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) (capital funding we get from the WG to maintain our existing stock) and other grants e.g. Social Housing Grant, Housing for Care Funding etc.	£6.2m (MRA) each year. This is on the basis that we receive an average of £682 per home.  We assume the receipt of other WG grants totalling £33m over 3 years.
Rent increase 2024/25	WG have set the maximum rent increase for 24/25 at 6.7% because the Consumer Price Index(CPI) sat outside the 3% threshold (6.7% September 2023).  We have limited the rental increase to <b>6.5%</b> overall with a maximum £1 progression for those tenancies below target rent. Most tenants will receive a <b>6.39%</b> average rent increase which is below the level set by WG and current inflation values.
Future rent increase levels based on WG Policy	2.3% for 25/26, 2.5% for 26/27, 2.5% for 27/28, then increased by 0.5% above CPI pending revised rent policy from WG.
Borrowing and direct revenue financing (DRF)	Borrowing £32m and utilising £15m DRF over next 3 years to maintain our housing stock and develop new homes.
Expenditure/income inflation	Employees' pay at 5% for 2024/25 as per the Council Fund and general inflation at 4%.

<b>Right to Buy receipts i.e. money we get from tenants' buying their home</b> <b>Other receipts from developments</b>	No receipts from 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2015 following suspension of Right to Buy	
	Some schemes will generate capital receipts. In this plan we assume £11m in year 3.	
<b>Balances on the revenue account</b> <b>i.e. the amount of money we need to keep in reserve</b>	Minimum of £4.5m (based on £500 per property)	
<b>SPENDING</b>		
<b>Assumed Borrowing costs i.e. the amount it costs to borrow money</b>	Cost of existing and new debt: 2024/25: 4.36% Then 4.4% in future years	Cost of exiting HRAS:  Average of 4.15%
<b>Provision for Bad debt i.e. debt that we will be unable to recover</b>	2024/25: £350K 2025/26: £357K 2026/27: £364K	

<b>CAPITAL PROGRAMME</b>	<b>Budget 2024/25</b> (£'000s)	<b>Budget 2025/26</b> (£'000s)	<b>Budget 2026/27</b> (£'000s)
<b>Supporting Tenant and Residents:</b>			
Improving the Estate Environment	650	700	700
Adaptations	2,000	2,000	2,000
Sheltered Housing Investment	270	300	650
<b>Investing in Homes:</b>			
Internal & External Works	2,170	2,220	2,220
Void Programme & Major Works to Homes	6,250	5,850	5,750
Estate Based Refurbishment	850	1,817	2,117
Risk Reduction Measures	820	820	820
<b>Affordable Warmth &amp; Decarbonisation</b>			
Works to deliver Affordable Warmth & Decarbonisation	5,788	6,542	7,818
<b>Delivering More Homes</b>			
Council New Build Programme	9,160	10,762	10,240
Land Acquisition	1,600	2,500	2,800
Buying Private Sector Homes	3,000	2,000	1,750
Specialist Housing Projects	2,998	1,950	1,350
Programme Management	648	674	700
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>36,204</b>	<b>38,135</b>	<b>38,915</b>
<b>SOURCE OF CAPITAL FUNDING</b>	<b>Budget 2024/25</b> (£'000s)	<b>Budget 2025/26</b> (£'000s)	<b>Budget 2026/27</b> (£'000s)
Welsh Government Grant - MRA	6,225	6,225	6,225
External Grant Funding – IHP, SHG, ICF & Other Grants	9,308	10,970	12,334
Direct Revenue Financing	5,000	5,000	5,000
External Borrowing	15,671	15,940	3,731



Capital Receipts	0	0	11,625
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>36,204</b>	<b>38,135</b>	<b>38,915</b>
<b>REVENUE PROGRAMME</b>	<b>Budget 2024/25 (£'000s)</b>	<b>Budget 2025/26 (£'000s)</b>	<b>Budget 2026/27 (£'000s)</b>
Repair and Maintenance of Homes	17,979	18,728	19,524
Supervision and Management	12,532	12,793	13,067
Support Services e.g. Legal and Finance	1,866	1,903	1,941
Provision for Bad debts	350	357	364
Direct Revenue Financing	5,000	5,000	5,000
Capital Charges	15,266	16,144	16,536
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>52,992</b>	<b>54,924</b>	<b>56,432</b>
<b>SOURCE OF REVENUE FUNDING</b>	<b>Budget 2024/25 (£'000s)</b>	<b>Budget 2025/26 (£'000s)</b>	<b>Budget 2026/27 (£'000s)</b>
Tenant Rents	50,242	51,601	54,499
Service Charges	1,051	1,293	1,318
Interest Received	611	121	122
Housing Finance Grant 2	246	246	246
Revenue Efficiencies	80	100	150
Grants / Other	1,055	1,076	1,098
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>53,285</b>	<b>54,437</b>	<b>57,433</b>
<b>Difference between 'Revenue Funding' and 'Revenue Spending'</b> *	<b>293</b>	<b>-487</b>	<b>1,001</b>

<b>HRA END OF YEAR POSITION:</b>	<b>Budget 2024/25 (£'000s)</b>	<b>Budget 2025/26 (£'000s)</b>	<b>Budget 2026/27 (£'000s)</b>
Balance brought forward from last year	12,319	12,612	12,124
HRA budgeted difference *	293	-487	1,001
<b>BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD**</b>	<b>12,612</b>	<b>12,124</b>	<b>13,126</b>

\*N.B. + is a surplus in revenue funding over spending and – is a deficit/ shortfall in revenue funding over spending

\*\*The balances carried forward in the plan are fully committed to funding our borrowing requirements in future years.

## Risk management

Each year, as part of the HRA business planning process, we identify, assess and prioritise potential risks and consider the likelihood and impact of each. This exercise is carried out by each service delivery area. Once this has been done, we identify ways in which we can reduce or manage the potential risk and impact. These are recorded corporately and monitored regularly.

The greatest risks identified in delivering this plan are:

- maintaining up to date asset information about our stock;
- ensuring sufficient staff resources to manage and deliver our housing investment programmes;
- uncertainty of the impact of market conditions about inflation, pricing and availability of workforce to inform the 30-year cost certainty exercise; and
- the impact of balancing investment in maintaining the existing standard, introducing new measures to support decarbonisation and continuing to deliver our ambitious housing regeneration and development programme.



# Compliance, Verification and Monitoring

## Compliance and acceptable fails

Recording compliance and acceptable fails is not a simple collection of condition information for things like kitchens, bathrooms, electrics and so on. It is a combination of occupancy and property condition information. Surveying of homes, collating of information, how we manage our data, and the ability to report 100% accurate information, are all data-hungry activities.

An acceptable failure occurs when an individual component e.g. a kitchen or bathroom, has not been completed for one or more of the following reasons:

- cost of remedy;
- timing of remedy;
- resident's choice; and
- physical constraint.

The details of our acceptable fails and compliance are set out in **Appendix D**, and our full Housing Standards compliance document is set out in **Appendix F**.

## Energy efficiency

We have had several different programmes running to improve the energy efficiency of homes. These programmes have helped save tenants money on their heating costs and improve the energy performance ratings of their homes. The average SAP level across our whole housing stock is 67, however, nearly 50% of our existing housing stock already achieve an EPC Band C or above (SAP 69-80).

## Independent verification

We believe that we report compliance accurately in achieving and maintaining our Housing Stock, and we will continue to do so. We will also back this up with further verification by:

- demonstrating compliance by ensuring there is a clear separation of duties between CCC staff reporting compliance and those staff responsible for improving stock condition;
- using internal staff in conjunction with external support, where necessary, to undertake desktop reviews;
- continuing to carry out a sample programme of stock condition visits every year;
- asking tenants how they would like to be part of the process of verification;
- continuing to use a range of methods to assess compliance. Some data is already independently collected, e.g. boiler inspections, EPCs and electrical tests; and
- providing Home Information packs for all new tenants, informing them of boiler inspections, asbestos advice, Energy Performance Certificates, electrical tests and when any outstanding investment works will be carried out.

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# Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2024-27

Carmarthenshire's Housing Investment Programme

Appendix A - E



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# Appendix A: Well-being Priorities & Governance Structure

A more prosperous Wales
1
A resilient Wales
2
A healthier Wales
3
A more equal Wales
4
A Wales of cohesive communities
5
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
6
A globally responsible Wales
7

**We will:**

Ensuring long-term economic and social benefits for Carmarthenshire through the Swansea Bay City Region and future external funding avenues.

**We are committed to:**

- Contributing to the social, economic and environmental well-being of the wider community.
- Asking tenderers to deliver community benefits in our tendering activities through the delivery of the contracts or frameworks awarded.
- Maximising the value for every pound we spend, applying a community benefits approach to any tender valued over £1million.
- Capturing and recording community benefits utilising WG’s community benefits measurement tool.

**We will focus on:**

- Increasing the availability of rented and affordable homes to support the needs of local people by building new homes, bringing empty homes back into use and ensuring an allocation of affordable homes on new developments.
- Supporting tenants through the cost of living crisis, providing help and advice, maximising income levels and where possible ensuring that they are in receipt of all the grants and benefits they are entitled to.
- Providing homes better suited to tenants needs by investing in adapting homes and understanding the future investment needs for our sheltered housing stock.
- Reducing anti-social behaviour by working in partnership with other agencies and communities to tackle local problems.
- We want to get better by engaging as widely as possible and maximising opportunities to help build stronger communities.

**We believe we should:**

- Give our tenants the opportunity to influence decisions about their homes, the area they live in and ensure the services they receive achieve value for money.

**• We will focus on what our tenants are telling us:**

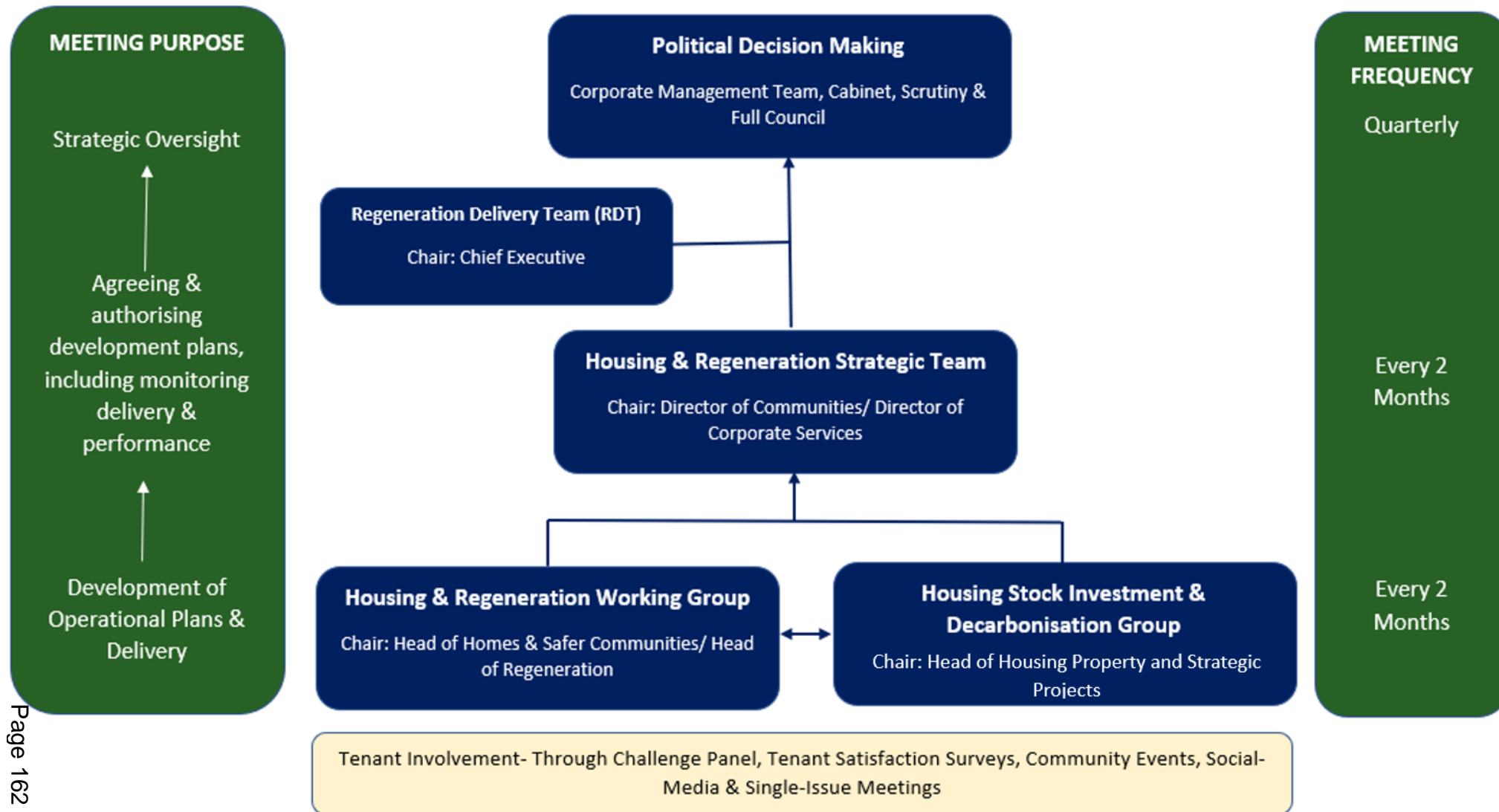
- We recently undertook a tenant satisfaction survey. In total, 1,938 tenants took part in the survey. This represented a 26% response rate overall. 47 surveys were completed in Welsh (2%).
- We will carry out an in-depth analysis of results to get a better understanding of the differences in satisfaction rates by age, by ward and property type; and revamp our approach to the way we listen and act on tenant’s views.

**We will ensure that:**

- Our homes are energy efficient and achieve a minimum EPC Band C energy performance rating as quickly as possible using a fabric first approach, supporting the Councils net zero carbon principles.

# Governance Structure

All actions in this Plan will be monitored on a bi-monthly basis by the Housing and Regeneration Strategic Team. This group provides strategic direction and corporate leadership to ensure appropriate progression on the initiatives included.

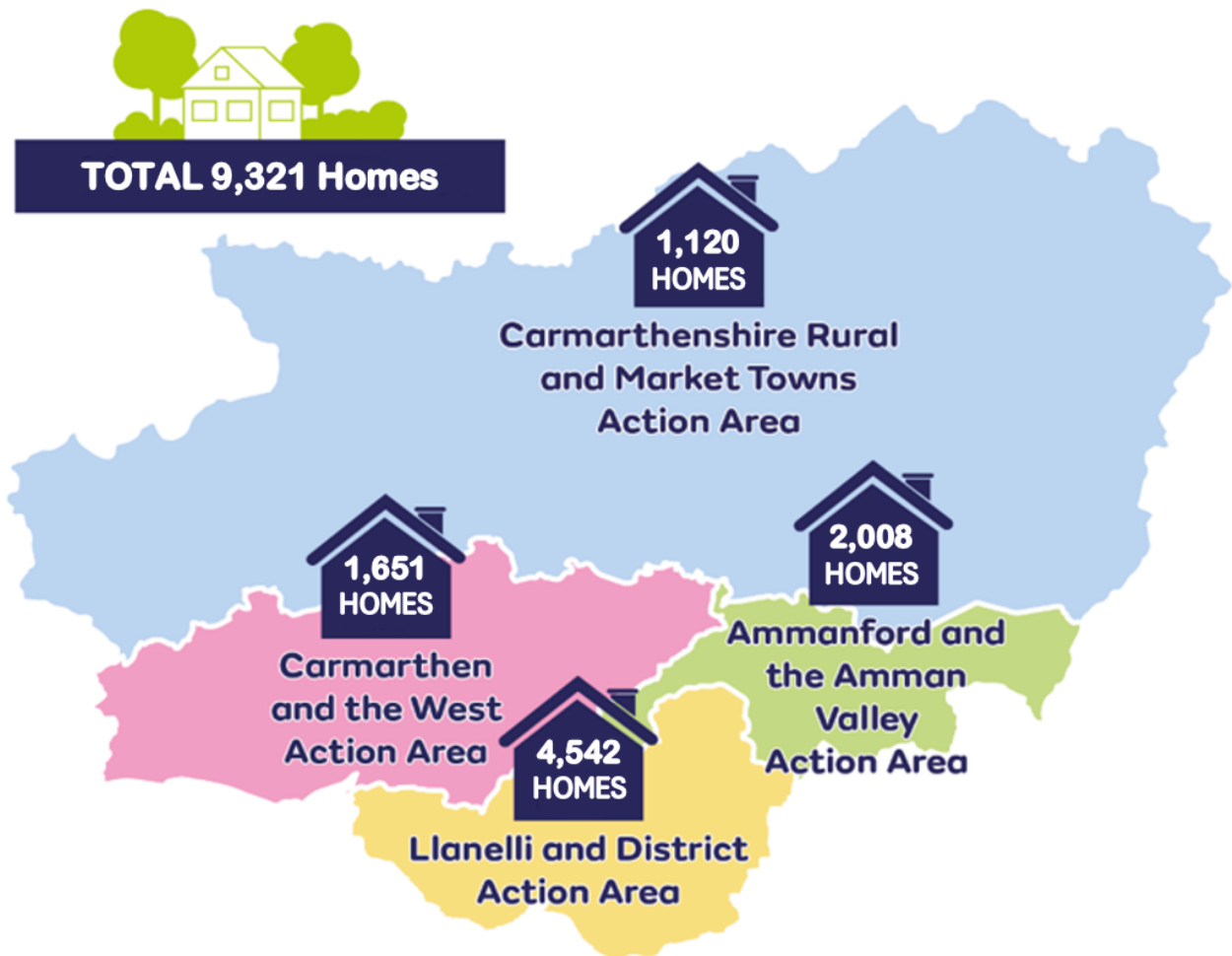


# Appendix B: Stock, Tenant and Housing Choice Register Profile

## Stock Make Up

Carmarthenshire County Council's HRA stock (as set out below) comprises 9,321 homes.

The housing stock comprises 5,152 houses and 2,180 bungalows, with the remainder made up of 1,981 flats (including sheltered), bedsits and maisonettes. The majority of the stock is 2 and 3 bedroom homes. A breakdown of how our housing mix looks across the county can be seen below.



Property Type	Carmarthenshire Rural & MKT Town	Carmarthen & The West	Ammanford & the Amman Valley	Llanelli & District
Bedsit	0	5	0	3
Bungalow	540	499	504	637
Flats (Inc Sheltered)	181	342	512	925
House	399	785	991	2977
Maisonette	0	20	1	0

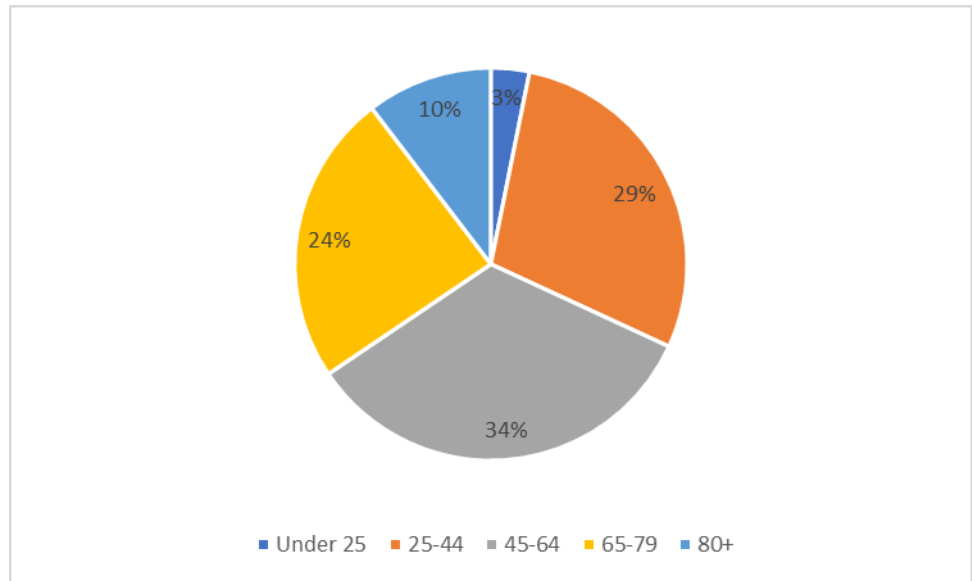
## Tenant Profile

We know that 10% of our lead tenants are aged 80 or over and a further 24% are aged 65 to 79. As a result, 34% of our lead tenants are 65 or above. Only 3% of our lead tenants are under 25, the remaining 63% are aged 25 to 65.

We know that 73% of our lead tenants are white British. A further 25% did not provide information about their ethnic group.

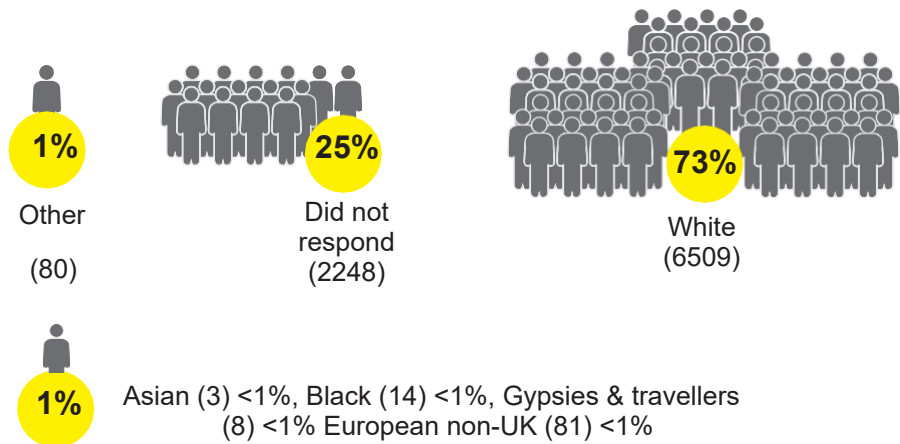
## Tenancies by Age Group

Number of Council tenancies by age group



## Tenancies by Ethnic Group

Number of Council tenancies by ethnic group



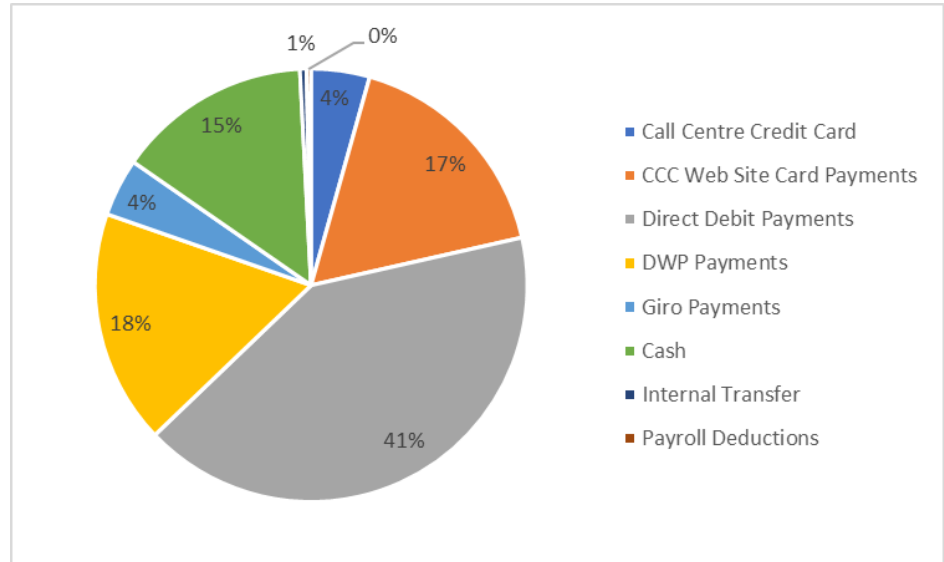


# Universal Credit Tenant Payment Profile

For tenants currently claiming Universal Credit, we know that 41% are paying their rent by direct debit. A further 4% are receiving Universal Credit Payments direct to CCC.

## Tenant Payment Methods

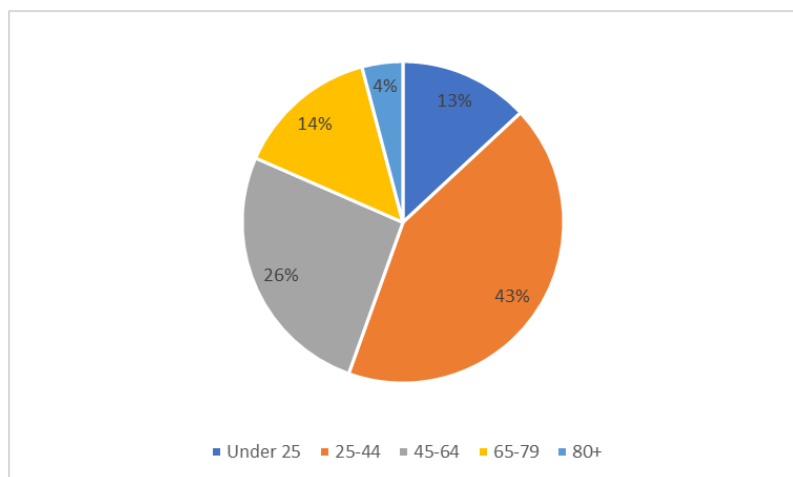
Payment methods by type



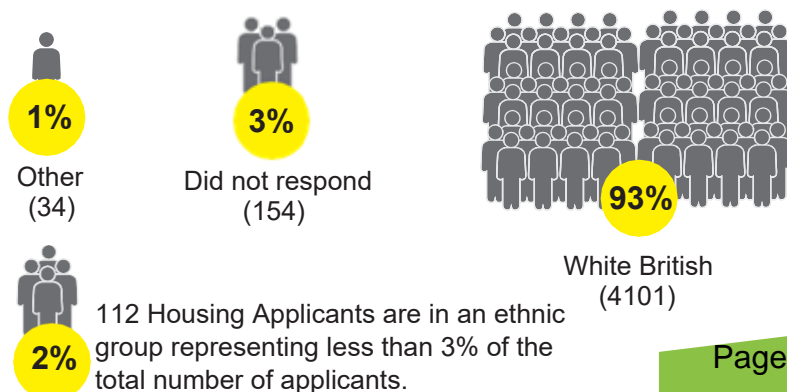
## Housing Choice Applicants

We know that 43% of our lead applicants are aged 25 to 44 with a further 13% aged under 25. 4% are aged 80+ and the remaining 40% are aged 45 to 79. We know that 88% of applicants are white British and a further 1% of our lead applicants did not provide information about their ethnic group.

Housing Choice Register applicants by age

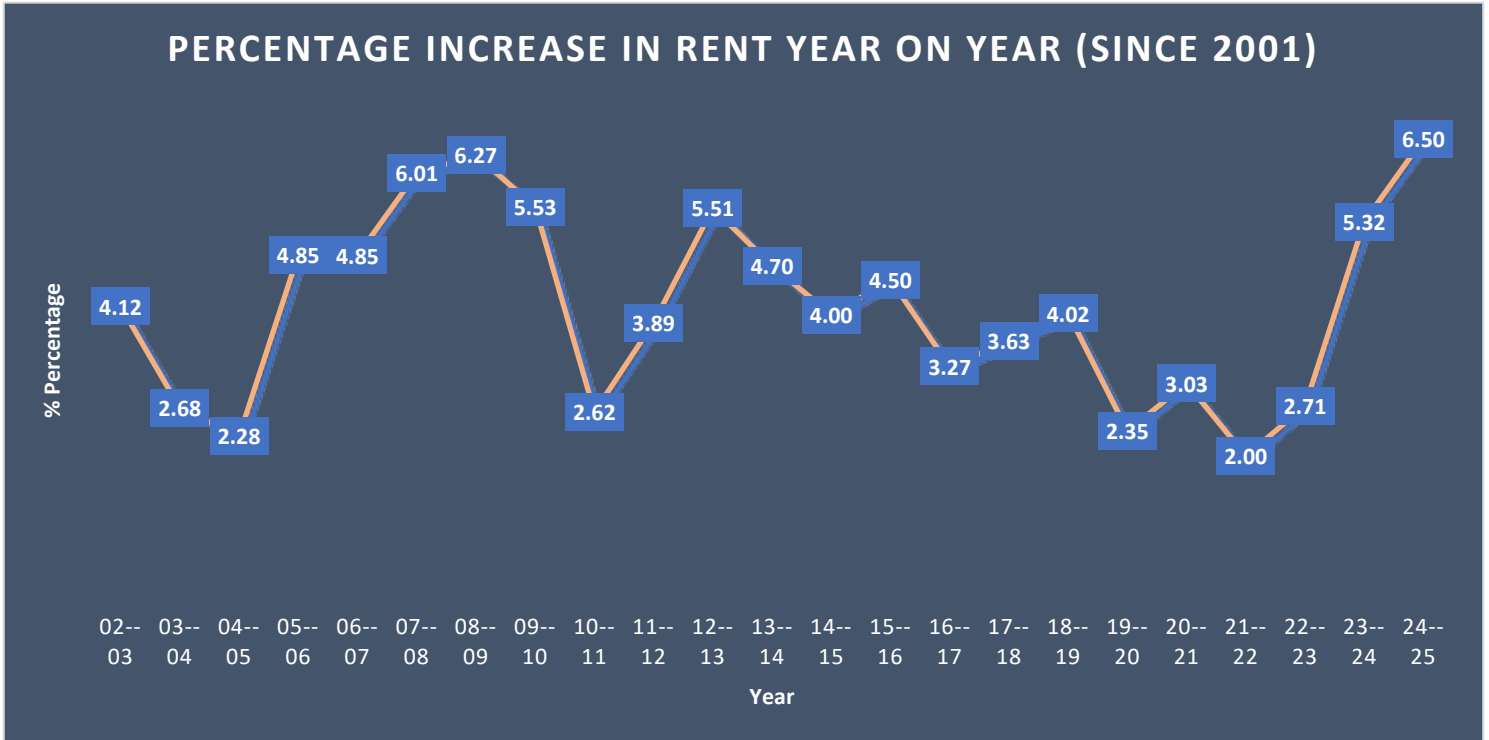


Housing Choice Register applicants by ethnic group, November 2019



# Rent Increase Profile (Since 2001)

The graph below highlights the % increase in rent levels from 2001. The rent increase allow us to continue to deliver the services we already offer our tenants and allow for us to continue to build upon previous achievements.



# Appendix C: How Happy Tenants are with the Services we Provide

The results shown below are taken from the Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR) conducted in September 2021. 1,938 tenants took part in the survey with a 26% response rate overall. A third of the total number of responses was collected online (660), and 47 surveys were completed in Welsh (2%).

STAR surveys are conducted every 2 years by all registered social landlords. The latest STAR survey was undertaken in November and December 2023. The results of this survey will be available for the 2025/26 HRA Business Plan.

<b>The Home</b>	
<b>75%</b> Satisfied with the quality of their homes	The majority of tenants were satisfied with the quality of their home, however, satisfaction levels had fallen by 4% since the last survey done in 2019. High satisfaction levels with the quality of homes was seen in many rural wards. Conversely, there was some lower satisfaction levels in the Llanelli and Carmarthen Town areas. The lowest ratings were for pre 1965 properties.
<b>Value for Money</b>	
<b>75%</b> Satisfied with the rent value of money	The current perception of the rent value for money amongst tenants hadn't changed significantly since the previous survey. There is also some correlation between the quality of the homes and value for money. Older tenants were the most satisfied with value for money. This reflects a pattern seen amongst working age tenants, particularly the younger generations, as they evaluate rent levels compared to other options for affordable housing in the area.
<b>71%</b> Satisfied with service charge value for money	
<b>Repairs &amp; Maintenance</b>	
<b>66%</b> Satisfied with repairs and maintenance overall	Satisfaction levels with the repairs and maintenance service had the greatest influence on overall satisfaction. There are differences by ward, although in most cases this correlated with the general characteristics of the housing within those locations. The most obvious variable for overall satisfaction levels was property age, which connected directly with issues of ongoing maintenance rather than responsive repairs. That said the majority of tenants that took part were satisfied with the last completed repair on their home.
<b>75%</b> Satisfied with the last completed repair	

## Communication & Involvement

**63%**

Felt the Council listened and took their views into account

**52%**

Satisfied with the chance to take part

## Neighbourhood Services

**82%**

Satisfied with neighbourhood as a place to live

**57%**

Satisfied with the way the Council deals with ASB

**69%**

Satisfied with grounds maintenance

## Moving In

**81%**

Satisfied with the condition of the home upon moving in

**84%**

Satisfied with the overall moving in experience

Our tenants continue to feel that listening to their views and acting on their requests is an important part of the service and should be seen as something that will improve our services. As such, it was positive to find most of the survey respondents were satisfied in response to this question. At the opposite end of the scale only 12% were actively dissatisfied. We need to continue to uphold this standard for tenants and identify ways to communicate better with those least satisfied and act promptly on their requests. Older tenants were more likely to say that the Council was easy to deal with.

Satisfaction with our neighbourhoods as a place to live had fallen slightly but is still in keeping with the median for other social landlords. Older tenants were generally more satisfied than the younger population and similarly people living in sheltered schemes and bungalows were more satisfied with their surroundings. The predominant reason for this is that older residents are less transient and are likely to have lived in those communities for a considerable time. As expected, geography played an important part in tenants perception with rural wards scoring well and other wards like Tyisha having lower satisfaction levels for their surroundings. Satisfaction with how we deal with ASB was unchanged. Age continues to be a factor and despite older tenants being more likely to report ASB, they were more satisfied with the resolution which correlates again to the area they live in. There are, however, hotspots of dissatisfaction in some Llanelli Wards.

Of particular interest to us is the experience of new tenants who had needed to move home. This group comprised a sizeable 19% of the total survey sample, a third of whom were aged under 35, and half under 50. The overall experience was rated positively by most of this group. However, we must remember that some of the services that were provided over the past 18 months, such as fitted flooring, white goods etc. may have influenced this. Some new tenants were dissatisfied with the condition of the home when they first moved in particularly for pre-war built properties.

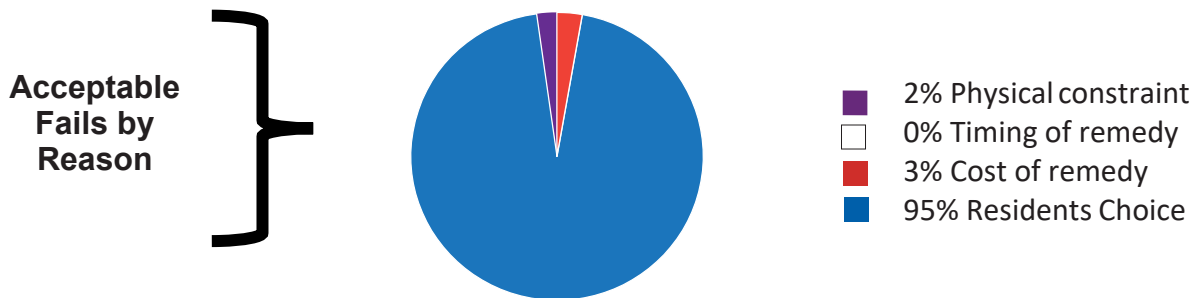
The table below shows how our survey results compare against other retained Council Stock Landlords in Wales.

<b>Tenant Satisfaction retained Council Stock Landlords – 11 (STAR survey results from 2021)</b>				
	Quartile	Rank- Retained Councils	Average satisfaction	CCC
<b>Overall Satisfaction</b>	Mid	6	77%	<b>77%</b>
<b>Repairs and Maintenance</b>	Mid	6	71%	<b>66%</b>
<b>Listening and acting on tenants' views</b>	Top	2	60%	<b>63%</b>
<b>I trust my Landlord</b>	Top	2	75%	<b>80%</b>

# Appendix D: Acceptable Fails

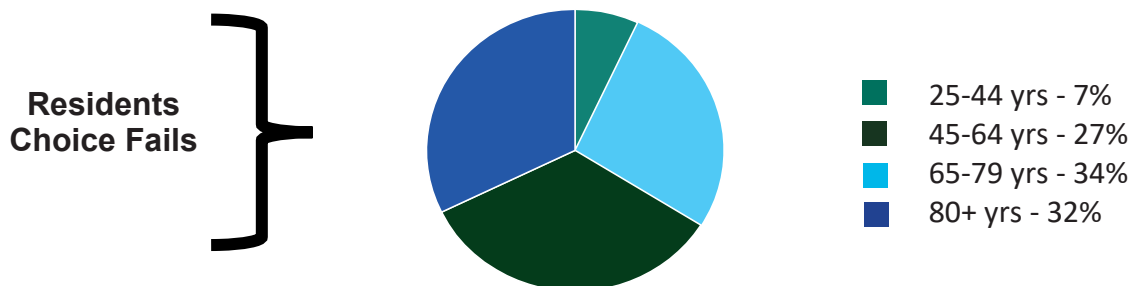
The Welsh Government Outlines ‘acceptable fails’ as a home which meets the standard but has not had all works carried out to make it fully compliant. There are different reasons for why these acceptable fails would occur.

Some tenants have chosen not to have the work done (Residents’ choice) because they were happy with their homes, have made their own improvements or some, particularly older tenants, do not want the disruption. This is, by far, the main reason why homes do not currently meet the standard.



We know that 95% of our acceptable fails are as a result of residents’ choice. The remaining 5% being the cost of the remedy or physical constraints.

We also know that 32% of the residents who chose not to have the WHQS works completed are aged 80 or over and a further 34% are between the age of 65 and 79.



## Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) Compliance

The following table set out our achievement of meeting the WHQS in 2015 by components, together with the annual programme to maintain compliance of the WHQS.

*WHQS Compliance by Component*



# Appendix E: Decarbonisation and Affordability

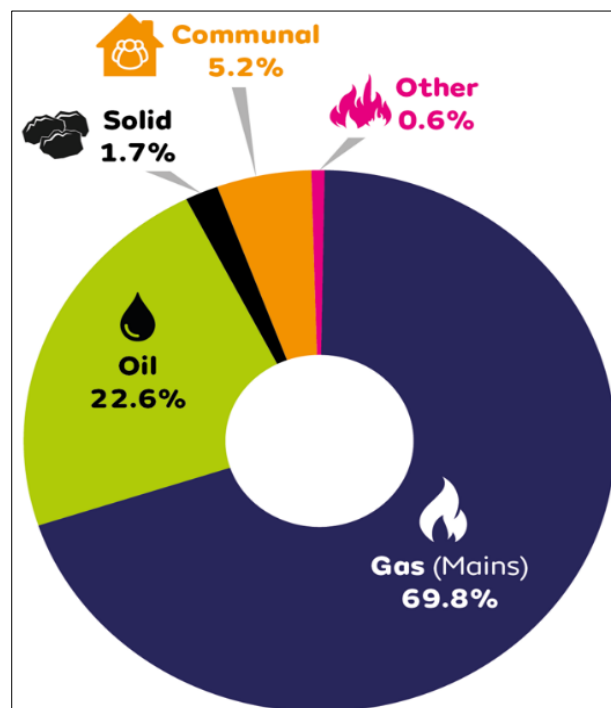
## Understanding our Housing Stock Archetypes

Over 80% of the housing stocks archetype is post-war construction, built between 1945-1990. 26% of those homes are semi-detached houses. We can use this data to shape our decarbonisation programmes and target our investment programmes.

	End terrace	Mid terrace	Semi-detached	Detached	Flat	Total
<b>Pre 1919</b>	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%
<b>1919-1944</b>	2%	3%	7%	0%	1%	13%
<b>1945-1964</b>	3%	3%	26%	0%	6%	38%
<b>1965-1990</b>	8%	8%	14%	0%	13%	43%
<b>Post 1990</b>	1%	0%	2%	0%	2%	5%
<b>Total</b>	14%	15%	49%	0%	22%	100%

## How our Homes are Heated

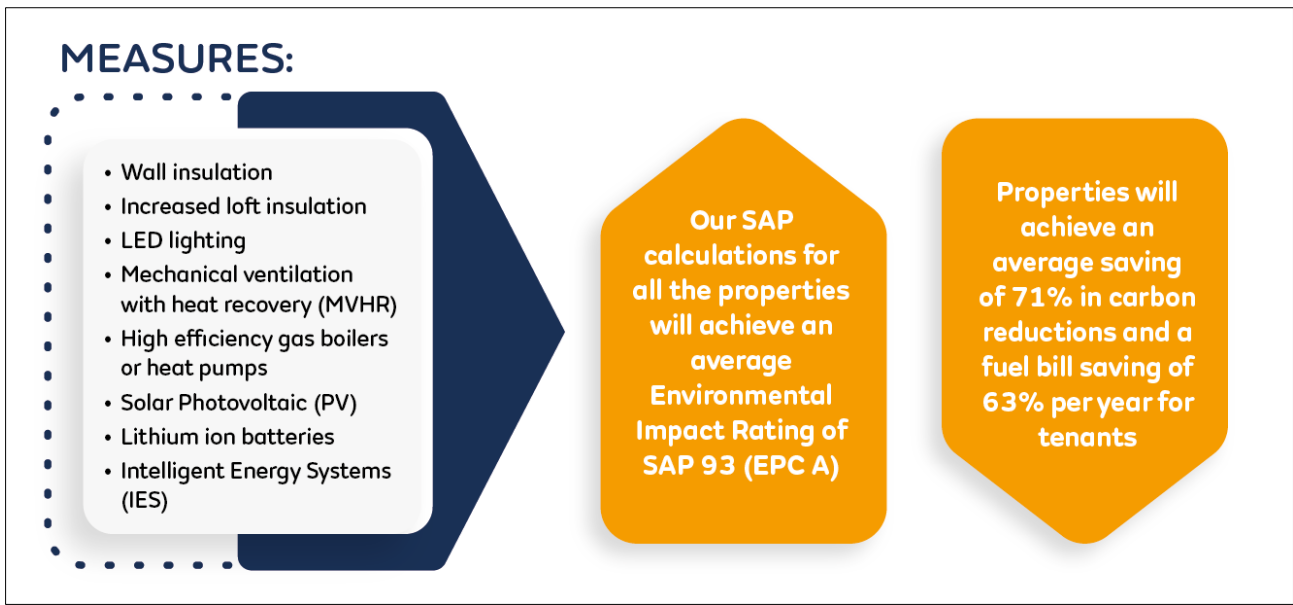
The majority of our homes are heated from mains gas, with nearly a third of our stock heated from oil and other solid fuels.



## What Measures we Take

Through our pilot studies as part of the optimised retrofit programme (ORP) we have been able to identify key areas of our homes that have the highest impact on improving the SAP rating of a home and allowing us to achieve EPC A on our older stock. These measures also support carbon reductions and help mitigate fuel poverty for tenants.

A summary of the works typically carried out on our homes through the retrofit programmes is shown below:



We have also produced an energy performance matrix that we apply to our new build developments. The level we build to is determined on a site by site basis, however, the majority of our new builds are built to level 3 and above.

	Energy Performance	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
	Roof	0.15 W/m2k	0.12 W/m2k	0.12 W/m2k	0.10 W/m2k
	Floor	0.18 W/m2k	0.12 W/m2k	0.12 W/m2k	0.10 W/m2k
	External Walls	0.20 W/m2k	0.12 W/m2k	0.12 W/m2k	0.10 W/m2k
	Part Walls	0.21 W/m2k	0.12 W/m2k	0.12 W/m2k	0.10 W/m2k
	Windows & Doors	1.60 W/m2k	0.85 W/m2k	0.80 W/m2k	0.80 W/m2k
	SAP Rating / EPC	97 / A	97+ / A	105+ / A	105+ / A
	Ventilation	Natural	Natural	Mechanical Ventilation Heat Recovery	Mechanical Ventilation Heat Recovery
	Air Tightness	8	5	1	0.6
	Heating and Renewable Technology	Gas Solar PV	Gas or heat pumps Solar PV Battery Storage Optional	Heat Pump or Electric Panel Heaters Solar PV Battery Storage	Heat Pump or Electric Panel Heaters Solar PV Battery Storage



# Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2024-27

Carmarthenshire's Housing Investment Programme

Appendix F – Compliance Policy



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## 1. The purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this document is to confirm our approach to repairing and maintaining the Carmarthenshire Council housing stock. It takes account of the guidance produced by the Welsh Government in 2015 in terms of compliance and verification with the Welsh Housing Quality Standard 2002 (WHQS).

## 2. The context

- 2.1. Carmarthenshire is committed to providing affordable homes for council tenants that are modern, safe, fuel efficient, situated in well maintained neighbourhoods and are well managed.
- 2.2. In 2006, the Council started its ambitious programme to achieve the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) by the end of 2015. We are pleased to say that we have delivered this programme, on time, to homes where tenants have agreed to have the work carried out. Even though these programmes have been delivered, this does not mean the end to us investing in our housing stock. We are now focused on bringing all our existing homes to an EPC Band C energy performance rating as quickly as possible. This will help meet our decarbonisation targets and mitigate fuel poverty for tenants as part of efforts to reduce the impact of the on-going cost of living crisis.
- 2.3. We have acknowledged the importance of strategic asset management in providing the foundation for our investment plans, as well as the central role of supporting tenants and residents in everything we do. The 2024/27 business plan covers five key themes that have been identified in terms of future investment. These are:

**THEME 1 - Our Estate and Tenancy Management Offer**

**THEME 2 - Investing in Homes**

**THEME 3 - Promoting Affordable Warmth and Decarbonising our Housing Stock**

**THEME 4 – Delivering More Homes**

**THEME 5 - Local Economy, Community Benefits and Procurement**

## 3. Policy statement

- 3.1. In 2015 we achieved the WHQS to homes where tenants have agreed to have work completed - well before WG's target of December 2020. This is in line with our agreed assumptions and timescales, with replacement programmes being based on condition, not time. We now face a range of new targets set out in the newly established WHQS 2023 including:
  - Completing a whole stock assessment and developing individual targeted energy pathways for each home by March 2027;
  - Achieving an EPC Band C rating on all homes by March 2030 using a fabric first approach; and
  - Producing an updated Compliance Policy by March 2025, confirming the Council's approach to meeting the new requirements of WHQS 2023.

3.2. Tenants tell us that getting repairs done on time and maintaining homes to a good standard is important to them. Maintaining the standard is a statutory duty, and the Council has made a commitment to this by ensuring that all homes will be:

- in a good state of repair;
- free from damp;
- free from significant condensation;
- structurally stable;
- in safe and attractive environments; and
- suitable for the household.

#### 4. Tenants' views

4.1. The commitment and support of our tenants' and members' continues to be important to us to ensure that we maintain and improve the standards our of homes and communities in the future.

4.2. Tenant and community engagement have always underpinned the delivery of the housing investment programme, but we want to do more. We want to get better by engaging as widely as possible and maximising opportunities to help build stronger communities.

4.3. We also believe we should give our tenants the opportunity to influence decisions about their homes, the area they live and ensure the services they receive achieve value for money. We undertake a survey of tenants and residents' satisfaction levels (STAR) every two years. The most recent survey was carried out in November and December 2023, the results were being analysed when this Compliance Policy was being developed but the table below shows how our 2021 STAR results compared against other retained Council stock landlords in Wales:

**Tenant Satisfaction retained Council Stock Landlords- 11 (STAR survey results from 2021)**

	Quartile	Rank-retained Councils (out of 11)	Average satisfaction	CCC
<b>Overall Satisfaction</b>	Mid	6	77%	<b>77%</b>
<b>Repairs and Maintenance</b>	Mid	6	71%	<b>66%</b>
<b>Listening and acting on tenants' views</b>	Top	2	60%	<b>63%</b>
<b>I trust my Landlord</b>	Top	2	75%	<b>80%</b>

4.4. We will evaluate our approach to the way we listen and act on tenant's views. We want to get better by:

- engaging as widely as possible with tenants, and including those who don't usually take part;
- keeping in touch with tenants about the repairs that are due to be carried out on their homes. This includes when we will carry out the backlog of repairs that have built up, contractor capacity and market failure;
- developing our in house team and developing skills and capacity to carryout housing repairs ourselves; and
- ensuring our tenants have an opportunity to influence decisions about their homes and the area where they live.

This process will be repeated time and time again, so that we continue to improve the service in line with tenants' expectations.

## 5. Progress and reporting

5.1. As of 31st March 2020, the Council was fully WHQS Compliant having met the standard during 2015 utilising a whole house delivery approach. Some of our housing stock does not meet the standard and are considered acceptable failures. The main reason is due to resident's choice (95%). A small number of properties (5%) were not improved because of physical constraints or the cost of remedy.

5.2. The following table sets out our achievement of meeting the WHQS in 2015 by components, together with the annual programme to maintain compliance.

### WHQS Compliance by Component



5.3. Tenant refusals will be improved by having a rescheduling programme which targets properties when they either become void or whereby an existing tenant who previously refused the works decides to have the work completed.

- 5.4. Future work programmes will be considered in line with the life cycles of components previously upgraded. However, we will be developing a further programme for the following:
- continuing with our roofing, rendering and fabric improvement programme;
  - boiler replacements and servicing;
  - retrofitting our homes and making them more energy efficient achieving a minimum EPC Band C;
  - improving 'our offer' to older people; and
  - building more homes following our commitment set out in the Housing Regeneration and Development Delivery Plan.
- 5.5. We have a robust Governance structure in place which can be found in the Business Plan (Appendix A-E). We report regularly to local members, scrutiny committees and full Council. Progress, good news stories and general information is promoted to tenants in our 'Tenant 2 Tenant' newsletter/magazine.

## 6. Data collection, storage and updating

- 6.1. Prior to delivering the WHQS an internal asset management database was developed to produce the programme of works. This was populated through an 80% stock condition survey and information received from major works programmes at the time. The remaining property data was modelled giving a high level of accuracy to achieve the WHQS.
- 6.2. We believe that managing housing assets goes beyond just investing in good repair and improvements. Asset management is also about reviewing and potentially changing the asset base to providing the right accommodation in the right location, supported by excellent, flexible services for our tenants. It must consider quality and value for money, particularly the whole life of a home and how running costs will affect tenants. This is more important than ever with the on-going cost of living crisis.
- 6.3. By applying an effective asset management strategy to our 9,000 plus homes, it will also enable us to meet our legal requirement of maintaining the housing stock in the future and implementing improvement programmes to meet WHQS 2023.
- 6.4. We fully recognise that in order to achieve the above we must ensure that:
- the right structures, skills, resources, and capacity are in place and are regularly reviewed;
  - robust stock condition information, data and analysis is in place to drive investment;
  - our data is further enhanced and regularly validated by feedback from all programmed and cyclical repairs, and maintenance activities;
  - we complete our cost certainty exercise for our overarching 30-year financial plan; and
  - continue with our stock condition and verification surveys to ensure the data we hold for our housing stock is still accurate.

We use two software systems for data collection and modelling. TOTALMobile, is used for job ordering of programmed works, contractor payments and stores work completion dates. We use the data to forecast future investment requirements as well as our overall 30-year

business plan. Also, we use our Housing Management System (OHMS) to collate and store stock compliance information and other asset data such as adaptations. We are currently in the process of replacing the OHMS system and have already purchased a new system which is currently being implemented to manage stock investment. CIVICA CX Assets will replace OHMS for recording compliance information and is now our primary asset management system. Total Connect will replace TOTALMobile and is currently being implemented. Both systems will complement each other. This will improve functionality and facilitate more efficient analysis and scenario modelling to inform future investment programmes such as our cyclical maintenance programmes and energy pathways to achieving EPC Band A for the future.

## 7. Current compliance position

7.1. Annually, Carmarthenshire County Council completes a WHQS return for the Welsh Government which indicates the condition status of the stock at the end of each financial year. Subject to acceptable fails, Carmarthenshire is 100% WHQS compliant. The table below indicates the most up to date stock compliance status:

CCC CHS+ Status	Total Stock (March 2022)	Total Stock %
Assets	9,321	-
Total Fully Compliant	8,380	90
Total Acceptable Fails	941	10

## 8. Interpretation and current recording of 'Acceptable Fails'

8.1. We will assess elements of the standard as pass, fail or not applicable. The Council accepts four main reasons for an acceptable fail and follows Welsh Government guidance:

In Line with Welsh Government Guidance, certain aspects for categorising an 'acceptable fail' are open to officer interpretation and therefore each case is reviewed by the responsible officer who will then decide if a property fails to meet the criteria		
Tenants' choice or refusal	choice	Where a tenant chooses or refuses works that prevents the council from maintaining or improving the house and is recorded as an acceptable fail. All such acceptable fails are reviewed and/ or rescheduled. The asset will be fully refurbished to the appropriate standard at the next available opportunity (void works or through tenants' change of mind). Tenants <u>do not</u> have a choice whether to have smoke or carbon monoxide detectors installed in their homes or to have their boilers serviced.
Physical Constraint		Physical constraint only accounts for a small percentage (2%) of our acceptable fails whilst this doesn't present a significant problem at this stage it could prevent us from maintaining the standard in future. These properties are

	clearly identified and measures have been put in place to mitigate this at the earliest possible opportunity.
<b>Timing of Remedy</b>	Although this currently does not present a problem for the council, we may in the future defer works to ensure our investment programmes remain efficient, we may also consider combining works to reduce disruption levels for our tenants.
<b>Cost of Remedy</b>	Future investment to support the standard will be based on an assessment of the building(s) and whether it is lettable. Consideration will be given to future lifecycle costs to maintain compliance. Where it is uneconomical to repair, we will carry out an MSCA assessment to determine its long-term viability.

## 9. Risk reduction measures

9.1. We will continue to respond to changes in legislation, regulations or other statutory guidance that will make our tenants homes safer. Ensuring that our tenants are safe and healthy within their homes is a key priority for the Council. We will adopt new, better standards in timely manner and have the following risk reduction measures in place:

- approach to fire safety management;
- radon testing programme; and
- serge protection upgrade.

## 10. Independent verification

10.1. We believe that we report compliance accurately in achieving and maintaining the WHQS, and we will continue to do so. We will also back this up with further verification by:

- demonstrating a clear separation of duties between those reporting compliances and those delivering and enhanced standard of work;
- using internal staff in conjunction with external support to undertake desktop reviews;
- continuing to carry out stock condition surveys on our housing stock each year;
- asking tenants how they would like to be part of the process of verification;
- use a range of methods to assess compliance including independent collection of data; and
- complying with internal and external audit requirements.

## 11. Annual financial statement

11.1. Annually the Council reviews the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan which sets out the investment needed to maintain the housing stock investment programmes.



The Council has a robust 30-year business plan in place and since April 2015 has become self-financing having exited the Housing Revenue Account Subsidy System (HRAS).

- 11.2. Our capital investment programme is supported by funding from the Welsh Government's Major Repairs Allowance (MRA), contributions from revenue, capital receipts as well as prudential borrowing. All of these income streams are used to facilitate the capital investment required to sustain our stock as part of our 30-year business plan.
- 11.3. We will also pursue, where possible, other funding streams and grants to maximise our income that will support and complement the work programmes and/ or services outlined in the Business Plan.

## 12. Recording community benefits

- 12.1. The Council is committed to stimulating the local economy through our housing investment programme.
- 12.2. Where possible, we will use local contractors from the Minor Works Framework and South West Wales Regional Contract Framework (SWWRF). Not only will this provide value for money, as part of the framework agreement our contractors will provide:
- employment including apprenticeship schemes;
  - training and work experience for in and out of education;
  - working with local schools and colleges; and
  - non-core community benefits including regeneration schemes.
- 12.3. We are also committed to developing the skills, training and job opportunities within the Council Services. This includes providing apprenticeships and graduate trainee programmes through Coleg Sir Gar and University of Wales Trinity Saint David.
- 12.4. We will measure all contracts awarded through the capital investment programme against the Value Wales Measurement Toolkit (or similar).
- 12.5. We now record targeted recruitment and training person weeks (52 weeks per £1m of a project's value). This is a combination of apprenticeships, work experience placements and jobs and allows us to accurately measure how our projects impact local people.

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## COUNTY COUNCIL 24<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2024

### COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2024/25

#### **Purpose:**

This report seeks formal adoption of the Council Tax Reduction scheme (which replaced Council Tax Benefit in April 2013) for 2024/25

The scheme can be approved subject to the regulations being approved and coming into force.

The draft regulations are not expected to change and will be the version provided for the Senedd debate on the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2024 which if approved would come into force on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

#### **Cabinet Recommendations:-**

**“Subject to the regulations being approved and coming into force on 19<sup>th</sup> January, 2024 it was UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL**

- 1. that the standard all-Wales Council Tax Reduction scheme provided for in the Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013 be formally adopted;**
- 2. to implement the annual up-rating figures (used in entitlement calculations) and other technical amendments, included in the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Amendment) (Wales) Regulations 2024 due to come into effect 19<sup>th</sup> January 2024 and these Regulations be applied in relation to a council tax reduction scheme made for the financial year beginning on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024;**
- 3. to continue to exercise its discretion with regard to the limited discretionary elements of the prescribed scheme as outlined in the Executive Summary to the report.”**

#### **Reasons:**

- a) Welsh Government has made regulations that retain the 2013/14 Council Tax Reduction scheme (with limited amendments) for 2014/15 and subsequent years.
- b) There is an obligation upon authorities to formally (re-)adopt a Council Tax Reduction scheme by 31<sup>st</sup> January each year otherwise the “Default Scheme” will apply which means Council will be unable to exercise its discretion with regard to the limited discretionary elements in the prescribed scheme.
- c) If the Council wishes to exercise its powers in relation to the limited areas of discretion available to it, it is required to do so as part of the formal scheme adoption process.

Cabinet Decision Required	YES
Council Decision Required	YES - 19 <sup>th</sup> January 2024

**CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER**

Cllr Alun Lenny, Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources

Directorate: Corporate Services	Designations:	Tel & Email addresses:
Name of Head of Service: Helen Pugh	Head of Revenue and Financial Compliance	<u><a href="mailto:HLPugh@Carmarthenshire.gov.uk">HLPugh@Carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a></u>
Report Author: Ann Thomas	Revenue Services Manager	<u><a href="mailto:AnThomas@carmarthesnhire.gov.uk">AnThomas@carmarthesnhire.gov.uk</a></u>

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
COUNTY COUNCIL  
24<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2024**

**COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2024/25**

- As part of the Welfare Reforms introduced in recent years the former Council Tax Benefit scheme (CTB) was abolished with effect from April 2013. In its place is a localised Council Tax Reduction (CTR) scheme which in Wales has been devolved to Welsh Government, although with significantly less funding than the cost of the former CTB scheme.
- The standard scheme introduced by Welsh Government for 2013/14 and (with minor amendments) subsequent years, is a uniform all-Wales scheme, albeit with limited areas of local discretion available to authorities.
- Despite being an all-Wales scheme, individual Councils are required by the Prescribed Requirements Regulations to formally adopt a Council Tax Reduction Scheme by 31<sup>st</sup> January each year.
- The limited areas of local discretion, and the policy adopted by Council in respect of those discretions, are shown below for information. There is no recommendation for change:

Discretion: to disregard part or the whole amount of War Disablement pensions and War Widows Pensions when calculating income.

Policy: The Council exercises its discretion and fully disregards War Disablement pensions, War Widows Pensions and analogous payments, when calculating income for the purposes of assessing entitlement to Council Tax Reduction.

Discretion: The ability to increase the standard extended payment period of 4 weeks given to people after they return to work, when they have been in receipt of a relevant qualifying benefit.

Policy: The Council does not exercise its discretion in relation to extended payments and therefore continues to adopt the 4 week period within the standard scheme.

Discretion: The ability to backdate the application of Council Tax Support awards for working age and/or pension age, customers beyond a standard period of 3 months prior to the claim.

Policy: The Council does not exercise its discretion in relation to backdating applications and therefore continues to adopt the 3 month maximum period within the standard scheme.

Discretion: The ability to provide more than the minimum information prescribed as part of the notifications of decisions procedures.

Policy: The Council does not exercise its discretion in relation to the provision of additional information and continues to provide the information prescribed as part of the notifications decisions procedures.

- The scheme will be materially unchanged for 2024/25 however, in addition to the normal annual up-rating of certain financial figures used for assessing individual entitlement and some technical adjustments (as is being provided for in ***The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Amendment) (Wales) Regulations 2024***), the statutory instrument makes a number of other amendments as follows;
  - Widowed Parents Allowance and Bereavement Support back payments
    - The proposed amendment to the 2013 CTRS Regulations will ensure no applicant living in Wales is negatively impacted because they have received a Widowed Parents Allowance (WPA) back payment or a retrospective Bereavement Support Payment (BSP).
    - The amendment makes provision to disregard certain payments received from the calculation of an applicant's capital under the scheme.
    - The amendment proposes that any backdated BSP award would be aligned with the existing provision for BSP awards and disregarded for a period of 12 months. Any WPA back payments will continue to be disregarded from a person's capital.
  - Post Office Compensation payments
    - The UK Government has announced funding to enable the Post Office to deliver compensation schemes and arrangements for various cohorts of postmasters. These include the Horizon Shortfall Scheme, compensation arrangements for postmasters whose convictions were overturned and a compensation scheme for postmasters who did not receive remuneration during a suspension period.
    - An amendment will ensure no applicant living in Wales is negatively impacted because they receive any compensation or support payment made in connection with the failings of the Post Office Horizon system.
    - The amendment makes provision to disregard any compensation or support payment received from the calculation of an applicant's capital. The amendment also applies to a non dependant's deduction under the scheme.
  - The Vaccine Damage Payment scheme
    - The Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme (VDPS) incorporated COVID-19 from December 2020, and the scheme is now processing these claims. The majority of VDPS awards are already disregarded relating to compensation for personal injury. However, this does not currently apply to the partners of vaccinated individuals who receive a payment derived from a VDPS award.
    - The proposed amendment to the 2013 CTRS Regulations will ensure that no applicant living in Wales is negatively impacted because they receive a payment under the Vaccine Damage Payments Act 1979 in respect of a partner.
    - The amendment makes provision to disregard a payment received from the calculation of an applicant's capital under the scheme.

- The Infected Blood Inquiry

- The Infected Blood Inquiry published its first interim report in July 2022: this made a number of recommendations for a framework for compensation and redress for the victims of infected blood. The report recommended that interim compensation payments of £100,000 be made to infected persons and bereaved partners who registered with a UK infected blood support scheme.
- Where an infected person or their bereaved partner died before the interim payment could be made, the Government agreed that the interim payment of £100,000 would be made to that person's estate.
- An amendment to the 2013 CTRS Regulations will ensure that no applicant living in Wales is negatively impacted because they receive an interim infected blood compensation payment from their deceased parent's estate.
- The amendment makes provision to disregard a payment received from the calculation of an applicant's capital under the scheme.

- Minor technical and consequential amendments

- Some further minor technical amendments are proposed to the 2013 CTRS Regulations to align provisions in Wales with England and housing benefit provisions. These ensure an applicant who is a pensioner and responsible for a young person who is in receipt of an Armed Forces Independence Payment is taken into account when calculating eligibility.
- The amendment also ensures that the list of matters which must be disregarded in relation to non-dependant deductions in relation to working-age people also applies to pensioners.
- A consequential amendment will also reflect changes to the legislative landscape as a result of The Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act 2022 which becomes operational from April 2024.
- The amendment ensures that where access funds are paid to students on a discretionary basis by the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research, such funds are taken into account when determining eligibility for Council Tax Reduction.

<b>DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?</b>	<b>YES</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: **Chris Moore**

**Director of Corporate Services**

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>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>

## 1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities

The Council Tax Reduction scheme retained for 2014/15 and subsequent years will continue to assess claimants' entitlement on their full Council Tax liability, as happened under the 2013/14 scheme and the former UK-wide Council Tax Benefit scheme.

A local equalities impact assessment was undertaken by the Council in anticipation of the original draft 2013/14 scheme which if implemented, would have reduced all claimants' entitlement. In the event the final 2013/14 scheme was more generous with claimants' entitlement being based on the full charge as will be the case for subsequent years, unless changed. It has not therefore been considered necessary to undertake a further EIA.

**The only changes to the scheme other than the normal annual up-rating of the financial figures used to assess applicant's entitlement, and some technical adjustments are the following:**

- Certain backdated Bereavement Support Payment award would be aligned with the existing provision for Bereavement Support Payment awards and disregarded for a period of 12 months. Any Widowed Parents Allowance back payments will continue to be disregarded from a person's capital.
- Any Post Office compensation or support payment received will be disregarded from the calculation of an applicant's capital and a non dependant deduction.
- Payments under the Vaccine Damage Payments Scheme will be disregarded from the calculation of an applicant's capital.
- The amendment makes provision to disregard a payment received from the Infected Blood Inquiry from the calculation of an applicant's capital.
- Some further minor technical amendments are proposed to the 2013 CTRS Regulations to align provisions in Wales with England and housing benefit provisions. These ensure an applicant who is a pensioner and responsible for a young person who is in receipt of an Armed Forces Independence Payment is taken into account when calculating eligibility. The amendment also ensures that the list of matters which must be disregarded in relation to non-dependant deductions in relation to working-age people also applies to pensioners.



- A consequential amendment will also reflect changes to the legislative landscape as a result of The Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act 2022 which becomes operational from April 2024
- The amendment ensures that where access funds are paid to students on a discretionary basis by the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research, such funds are taken into account when determining eligibility for Council Tax Reduction.

**Council has no power to vary these amendments.**

## **2. Legal**

Under the Prescribed Requirements Regulations the Council is obliged to make a Council Tax Reduction Scheme each year.

The legislation provides for a default scheme to apply in the absence of the Council making a scheme; the Council is nevertheless under a statutory duty to adopt its own scheme, even if it chooses not to apply any of the discretionary elements.

The National Assembly for Wales on the 26<sup>th</sup> November 2013 approved the Regulations governing the operation of Council Tax Reduction Schemes in Wales for 2014/15 and subsequent years.

The Council Tax Reduction Schemes amending Regulations for 2024/25 have been laid on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023 and are scheduled for debate on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2024 and if approved by Welsh Government will come into force on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2024. They will up-rate figures contained in the main regulations that are used to calculate a claimant's entitlement to a reduction under a council tax reduction scheme and introduce further technical / procedural amendments. Council has no power to vary these.

### **3. Finance**

The scheme for 2024/25 continues to have financial implications for authorities.

The former Council Tax Benefit system was fully funded by the Westminster Government however less funding was given to Welsh Government with regard to the replacement scheme.

The initial funding distributed to Councils by Welsh Government has not increased since the new scheme was introduced in 2013/14. Accordingly individual authorities must make up on-going shortfalls due to higher expenditure as a result of any additional caseload and/or higher Council Tax levels.

The Council's proposed provisional budget provision for 2024/25 is £18 936 050

The additional cost to the Council to continue exercising its discretionary powers and disregarding War Widow and War Disablement Pensions (and other analogous payments) is estimated as £14k.

# CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below	
Signed:           Chris Moore	Director of Corporate Services
<b>1. Scrutiny Committee</b> N/A <b>2. Local Member(s)</b> N/A <b>3. Community / Town Council</b> N/A <b>4. Relevant Partners</b> N/A <b>5. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations</b> As there are no proposed changes to the scheme other than those over which Council has no jurisdiction, no public consultation exercise has been undertaken. There is no requirement to consult and no formal consultation has been undertaken in respect of statutory instrument <b>in <i>The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Amendment) (Wales) Regulations 2024</i></b> .	
<b>CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER AWARE/CONSULTED</b>	Yes

<b>Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information</b>	
Title of Document	Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
The Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013	One Drive - Council Tax Reduction folder <a href="https://carmarthenshire.sharepoint.com/sites/SP_CFPO_RB/Benefits/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FSP%5FCFPO%5FRB%2FBenefits%2FCouncil%20Tax%20Reduction%20Scheme%202024%2D25&amp;viewid=0bd8faa6%2D931d%2D4a3b%2Db433%2D3f77bbf1e75e">https://carmarthenshire.sharepoint.com/sites/SP_CFPO_RB/Benefits/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FSP%5FCFPO%5FRB%2FBenefits%2FCouncil%20Tax%20Reduction%20Scheme%202024%2D25&amp;viewid=0bd8faa6%2D931d%2D4a3b%2Db433%2D3f77bbf1e75e</a>
Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2014	CFP - Council Tax Reduction folder <a href="http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2014/66/contents/made">http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2014/66/contents/made</a>
Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2023	<u><a href="#">SL(6)425 - Rheoliadau Cynlluniau Gostyngiadau'r Dreth Gyngor (Gofynion Rhagnodedig a'r Cynllun Diofyn) (Diwygio) (Cymru) 2024</a></u>  <u><a href="#">SL(6)425 - The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Amendment) (Wales) Regulations 2024 (senedd.wales)</a></u>  [laid before the National Assembly for Wales on 5 <sup>th</sup> December 2023:]

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## APPENDIX A

### Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2024-25 – Detailed Report

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 With effect from April 2013, the Council Tax Benefit system was replaced with a localised Council Tax Reduction scheme. In Wales, the replacement scheme was devolved to Welsh Government but continues to be administered by local authorities.
- 1.2 The former Council Tax Benefit system was fully funded by the Westminster Government, however, less funding was given to Welsh Government with regard to the replacement scheme. However Welsh Government made a late decision to make up the shortfall which meant that up to 100% reduction would still be available to qualifying claimants.
- 1.3 The initial funding distributed to Councils by Welsh Government has not increased since the new scheme was introduced in 2013/14. Accordingly individual authorities must now make up any on-going shortfalls due to higher expenditure as a result of any additional caseload and/or higher Council Tax levels.

#### 2 Council Tax Reduction scheme – 2014/15 Onwards

- 2.1 The Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013 are the regulations that govern the operation of Council Tax Reduction Schemes in Wales for 2014/15 and subsequent years. These were approved by Welsh Government on the 26<sup>th</sup> November 2013. Also approved were the default regulations which would apply if an authority failed to adopt the scheme.
- 2.2 The Prescribed Scheme regulations and Default Regulations are extensive and detailed, comprising almost 300 pages and are not therefore appended to this report.
- 2.3 The scheme is subject to the annual up-rating of certain figures used by authorities to assess individual customers' entitlement and is also subject to periodic technical adjustments. These amendments are contained in ***The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Amendment) (Wales) Regulations 2024***.
- 2.4 These regulations have been laid in the Welsh Assembly on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2024 and will be debated by Welsh Government on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2024. If approved, they will come into force on 19<sup>th</sup> January for 2024/25. These complex regulations will update the main regulations and therefore form part of the 2024/25 scheme.

- 2.5 This statutory instrument amends the previous Regulations to uprate certain figures used to calculate entitlement to a council tax reduction, and the amount of any such reduction awarded in the 2024/25 financial year.
- 2.6 These will include Personal Allowances as well as carer and disabled premiums, and the financial figures in respect of these allowances have been increased in line with the cost of living crisis. They have been uprated in line with the Consumer Price Index September figure from the previous year (2023), which is 6.7%.
- 2.7 The financial figures in respect of pensioner rates have been amended and are aligned with Housing Benefit. These have been calculated with assistance from the Department for Work and Pensions.
- 2.8 The financial figures for the income bands and deductions made in respect of non- dependants have also been uprated.
- 2.9 In addition to uprating the financial figures, the statutory instrument makes a number of other amendments as follows.

#### Widowed Parents Allowance and Bereavement Support back payments

- 2.10 The proposed amendment to the 2013 CTRS Regulations will ensure no applicant living in Wales is negatively impacted because they have received a Widowed Parents Allowance (WPA) back payment or a retrospective Bereavement Support Payment (BSP).
- 2.11 The amendment makes provision to disregard certain payments received from the calculation of an applicant's capital under the scheme.
- 2.12 The amendment proposes that any backdated BSP award would be aligned with the existing provision for BSP awards and disregarded for a period of 12 months. Any WPA back payments will continue to be disregarded from a person's capital.

#### Post Office Compensation Payments

- 2.13 The UK Government has announced funding to enable the Post Office to deliver compensation schemes and arrangements for various cohorts of postmasters. These include the Horizon Shortfall Scheme, compensation arrangements for postmasters whose convictions were overturned and a compensation scheme for postmasters who did not receive remuneration during a suspension period.
- 2.14 An amendment will ensure no applicant living in Wales is negatively impacted because they receive any compensation or support payment made in connection with the failings of the Post Office Horizon system.
- 2.15 The amendment makes provision to disregard any compensation or support payment received from the calculation of an applicant's capital. The

amendment also applies to a non dependant's deduction under the scheme.

#### The Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme

- 2.16 The Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme (VDPS) incorporated COVID-19 from December 2020, and the scheme is now processing these claims. The majority of VDPS awards are already disregarded relating to compensation for personal injury. However, this does not currently apply to the partners of vaccinated individuals who receive a payment derived from a VDPS award.
- 2.17 The proposed amendment to the 2013 CTRS Regulations will ensure that no applicant living in Wales is negatively impacted because they receive a payment under the Vaccine Damage Payments Act 1979 in respect of a partner.
- 2.18 The amendment makes provision to disregard a payment received from the calculation of an applicant's capital under the scheme.

#### The Infected Blood Inquiry

- 2.19 The Infected Blood Inquiry published its first interim report in July 2022, this made a number of recommendations for a framework for compensation and redress for the victims of infected blood. The report recommended that interim compensation payments of £100,000 be made to infected persons and bereaved partners who registered with a UK infected blood support scheme.
- 2.20 Where an infected person or their bereaved partner died before the interim payment could be made, the Government agreed that the interim payment of £100,000 would be made to that person's estate.
- 2.21 An amendment to the 2013 CTRS Regulations will ensure that no applicant living in Wales is negatively impacted because they receive an interim infected blood compensation payment from their deceased parent's estate.
- 2.22 The amendment makes provision to disregard a payment received from the calculation of an applicant's capital under the scheme.

#### Minor Technical and consequential amendments

- 2.23 Some further minor technical amendments are proposed to the 2013 CTRS Regulations to align provisions in Wales with England and housing benefit provisions. These ensure an applicant who is a pensioner and responsible for a young person who is in receipt of an Armed Forces Independence Payment is taken into account when calculating eligibility. The amendment also ensures that the list of matters which must be disregarded in relation to

non-dependant deductions in relation to working-age people also applies to pensioners.

- 2.24 A consequential amendment will also reflect changes to the legislative landscape as a result of The Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act 2022 which becomes operational from April 2024.
- 2.25 The amendment ensures that where access funds are paid to students on a discretionary basis by the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research, such funds are taken into account when determining eligibility for Council Tax Reduction.

### **3. Discretionary Powers**

3.1. Although a national scheme has been approved by Welsh Government, within the Prescribed Requirements Regulations there continues to be limited discretion given to Councils to apply additional discretionary elements that are more generous than the national scheme. It should be noted however, that there are no additional monies available from Welsh Government to fund the discretionary elements.

3.2. There are four areas of discretion available to authorities, as follows:

- a) Discretion to increase the amount of War Disablement Pensions, War Widows Pensions and analogous payments, that are disregarded when calculating income of the claimant;

*[Note: The Council, in common with all other authorities in Wales, has previously, exercised its discretion and fully disregarded War Disablement pensions, War Widows Pensions in the calculation of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit.*

*This approach has been retained by the Council for the Council Tax Reduction scheme. The estimated cost to the Authority for 2024/25 is approximately £14k.]*

- b) The ability to increase the standard extended reduction period of 4 weeks given to persons after they return to work where they have previously been receiving a Council Tax Reduction that will cease as a result of their return to work;

*[Note: The 4 week “run on” was an established feature of the former Council Tax Benefit scheme, the existing Housing Benefit scheme and is retained for the all-Wales, standard Council Tax Reduction scheme.*

*If the Council were to increase this period it would deviate from the established arrangements, create a serious anomaly with the on-going Housing Benefit system and increase the cost to the Council]*



- c) The ability to backdate the application of Council Tax Reduction with regard to late claims prior to the new standard period of three months before the claim;

*[Note: The previous Council Tax Benefit regulations allowed maximum backdating of 6 months for working age customers, 3 months for pension age customers]*

- d) The ability to provide more than the minimum information prescribed as part of the notifications of decisions procedures.

*[Note: The Regulations already provide for the provision of detailed information to be included in the notification of decisions including the ability to advise of the impact and consequences of failure to notify a change in circumstances.*

- 3.3. In relation to its discretionary powers, the Council has to date, adopted the following approach since Council Tax Reduction scheme was introduced:

Council:

- a) exercises its discretion and fully disregards War Disablement pensions, War Widows Pensions and analogous payments when calculating income for the purposes of assessing entitlement to Council Tax Reduction
- b) does not exercise its discretion in relation to extended payments and therefore adopts the 4 week period specified within the standard scheme,
- c) does not exercise its discretion in relation to backdating applications and therefore adopts the 3 month maximum period specified within the standard scheme
- d) does not exercise its discretion in relation to the provision of additional information, and continues to provide the information prescribed as part of the notifications decisions procedures

#### **4. Adoption of Scheme**

- 4.1. Under the requirements of the Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013 the Council is obliged to make a Council Tax Reduction scheme. Furthermore, in order to do so, the regulations require the Council to determine its approach to the discretion powers available to it.

- 4.2. It is therefore recommended that subject to the regulations being approved and coming into force for 2024/25:

**a) Council adopts a scheme in accordance with the Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013 and any subsequent amendments that may be required by legislation from time to time, in particular:**

**i. Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Amendment) (Wales) Regulations 2024**

**and**

**b) Council adopts the discretionary powers as follows:**

- i. Council exercises its discretion and for the purposes of assessing entitlement to Council Tax Reduction disregards in full War Disablement Pension, War Widows & Widowers Pensions and any analogous payments as permitted under the Regulations.
- ii. Council does not exercise its discretion in relation to extended payments and therefore applies the 4 week period specified within the standard scheme.
- iii. Council does not exercise its discretion in relation to backdating applications and therefore adopts the 3 month maximum period specified within the standard scheme.
- iv. Council does not exercise its discretion in relation to the provision of additional information and continues to provide the information prescribed as part of the notifications decisions procedures.

## COUNTY COUNCIL 24 JANUARY 2024

### MULTI-LOCATION MEETING POLICY

**DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:**

**‘UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL that the amended Multi-location Meeting Policy be approved.’**

**REASONS:**

To review and ensure that the Multi location meeting policy is appropriate.

<b>CABINET DECISION REQUIRED</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>COUNCIL DECISION REQUIRED</b>	<b>YES</b>

Cabinet Member Portfolio Holder(s): Cllr Linda Evans (Deputy Leader)  
Other:- Cllr Michael Cranham (Chair of Democratic Services Committee)

<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Designations:</b>	<b>Tel Nos / E Mail Addresses:</b>
Chief Executive's		
<b>Name of Head of Service:</b> Linda Rees Jones		
<b>Report Author:</b> Linda Rees Jones	Head of Administration & Law	01267 224012 <a href="mailto:Lrjones@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">Lrjones@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a>
Gaynor Morgan	Head of Democratic Services	01267 224026 <a href="mailto:gmorgan@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">gmorgan@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a>

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
COUNTY COUNCIL  
24 JANUARY 2024**

**MULTI-LOCATION MEETING POLICY**

With the implementation of “The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 the Welsh Government has provided Councils the power and freedom to convene multi-location meetings which will enable greater accessibility and public participation in local government decision making.

Meetings must be capable of being held virtually, but each authority can decide whether their meetings will be held fully virtually or multi-location (where some participants are in the same physical location, whilst others join the meeting virtually, also referred to as ‘hybrid meetings’). Authorities cannot hold purely physical meetings (apart from the Dyfed Powys Police & Crime Panel which is subject to separate regulation).

The Authority’s Multi location meeting policy was approved by Council on the 12<sup>th</sup> October 2022 (Minute 4.1 refers) and took into account the interim statutory guidance issued by Welsh Government. Welsh Government published the final guidance on the 7<sup>th</sup> July 2023 and it is now an appropriate time to review the policy based on our experience of multi-location meetings to-date.

Proposed amendments to the policy, as highlighted in red, include greater guidance on the use of cameras. Some members have not responded when called to speak by the Chair, therefore greater emphasis has been placed on the requirement for members to remain in the meeting throughout debates and during voting, this is particularly important in order to maintain the integrity of the decision-making process and to reduce the opportunity for legal challenge of any decision. Members who need to leave the meeting early or temporarily (i.e. to take a phone call) should notify the Democratic Services Officer that they are no longer present.

**DETAILED REPORT  
ATTACHED?**

**YES.**

## 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
<b>NONE</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>

### Legal

This Policy has been drafted having regard to the provisions of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and the Welsh Government Statutory and Non Statutory Guidance on democracy within principal councils and particularly guidance on multi-location meetings.

## 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. **Scrutiny Committee** Not applicable
2. **Local Member(s)** Not applicable
3. **Community / Town Council** Not applicable
4. **Relevant Partners** Not applicable
5. **Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations** Not applicable

### Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information

List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Title of Document	File Ref No.	Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
Canllawiau Llywodraeth Cymru		<a href="https://www.llyw.cymru/sites/default/files/pdf-versions/2023/8/1/1692615160/statutory-and-non-statutory-guidance-democracy-within-principal-councils-contents.pdf">https://www.llyw.cymru/sites/default/files/pdf-versions/2023/8/1/1692615160/statutory-and-non-statutory-guidance-democracy-within-principal-councils-contents.pdf</a>
WG Guidance		<a href="https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/pdf-versions/2023/8/1/1691417050/statutory-and-non-statutory-guidance-democracy-within-principal-councils-contents.pdf">https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/pdf-versions/2023/8/1/1691417050/statutory-and-non-statutory-guidance-democracy-within-principal-councils-contents.pdf</a>
Council Constitution		<a href="https://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/home/council-democracy/the-council/councils-constitution/">https://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/home/council-democracy/the-council/councils-constitution/</a>

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# **Carmarthenshire County Council**

## **Democratic Services Multi-location Policy**

Multi-Location Meetings (otherwise known as Hybrid meetings) came into force as part of the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 – Section 47, with the aim of increasing accessibility and improved participation in Local Government.

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## ***Introduction***

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The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to Councillors, Officers and the public as to how we manage and conduct multi-location (hybrid) Committee meetings.

Multi-location meetings (sometimes known as hybrid meetings) are a combination of face to face meetings and virtual meetings, whereby some Councillors, officers and the public attend the Council Chamber or other venue, and some attend remotely.

During Multi-location meetings, it is a legal requirement that **participants of meetings that are broadcast are able to “speak to and be heard by each other” and “to see and be seen by each other”**. ~~all participants will be able to see and hear each other and.~~

**Welsh to English**-translation facilities will be available for all.

As a Local Authority we have a duty to make and publish arrangements for the purpose of ensuring that local authority meetings are able to be held by means of any equipment or other facility which enables persons who are not in the same place to attend the meetings.

**Multi-location meetings will operate as close as possible to the Council’s usual meeting practice and all Constitution rules apply.**

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## ***Broadcasting of Meetings***

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As a Council we will ensure that all formal meetings are broadcast live and available for Archive viewing for a period of 6 months. Any discussion in relation to exempt items will not be broadcast. Section 46 of the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires us to make this provision so that members of the public not in attendance at the meeting can see and hear the proceedings. This section specifically applies to meeting which are open to the public.

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## ***Notice of a Meeting***

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We will ensure that each Agenda sets out how Committee Members, Officers and the Public can attend the meeting, and these will be published at least 3 clear days before the meeting is held. The Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires that notices of meetings and electronic information relating to meetings must remain available in an electronic format and be available for a minimum of six years following the date of the meeting.



Agendas, Reports and minutes of formal meetings are published on the Authority's website. ~~A small number of hard copy agendas will also be available to members of the public attending physically.~~

Agendas, report and minutes can be viewed [here](#)

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## ***Physical attendance***

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~~Due to Covid 19, the number of persons allowed to attend in person will be determined in by the Chief Executive and takes into account the latest Covid 19 Guidance or regulations.~~

~~As of 16<sup>th</sup> June 2022 it has been agreed that there will be no limit on the number of people permitted in the Chamber, however~~ **Physical attendance of participants cannot be mandated, and there is no restriction on participants should they wish to physically attend any or all meetings.** The Authority's commitment to net Zero Carbon **however** is one of our primary corporate objectives. Multi-location (hybrid) meetings can contribute to the Council's net Zero objective, and attending remotely helps by limiting the travelling and commuting we do and is essential to achieving this .

Attend remotely if you can.

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## ***Remote attendance***

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- Committee members and officers can join meetings remotely via Zoom if they so wish.
- Committee Members and Officers should consider their personal appearance and background, check what people can see behind and in front of you, be careful not to allow exempt or confidential papers to be seen in the video-feed.
- When attending remotely you should remember once on camera everyone can see your surroundings, try to ensure you are in a room by yourself with no distractions (i.e. family members or pets will be seen in the background). **We ask members not to eat, move around or hold a conversation either on the phone or in person whilst on camera.** If possible, arrange for a non-descript background.
- To maintain confidentiality and ensure you abide by the Code of Conduct, **members attending remotely must be alone when exempt reports are considered.**

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## *Preparing for a Multi-location meeting*


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- Join the multi-location meeting no later than 15 minutes before the start to allow the Democratic Services Officers to gain an accurate list of people in attendance and the opportunity to resolve any equipment issues for those attending remotely.
- Make sure your equipment is fully charged or plugged in to a mains socket as remote meetings can use a lot of battery. Your iPad and laptop will be needed. We recommend that you use your iPad to read the paperwork via the Modern.gov app and your laptop to connect to Zoom if attending remotely. Also make sure your mobile phone is switched off or on silent.
- Make sure you have read the paperwork before the meeting. Prepare thoroughly as the Chair will assume that everyone has read the reports, any contributions are necessary and the debate is focussed.

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## *During the meeting*

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- The Democratic Services Officer will note the participants. Physical attendees should sign the attendance register.
- The Chair will welcome everyone to the meeting and outline how the meeting will work.
- To aid the meeting arrangements, if you know in advance that you wish to speak, please notify the Chair or the Democratic Services Officer before the meeting starts. If you wish to speak, please use the 'raise your hand facility' on Zoom or raise a physical hand if attending in person.
- If attending remotely and you require Welsh to English simultaneous translation, you should click on the interpreter button and select 'English'. If attending in person, headphones are available at the rear or the Chamber and should be plugged into the microphone unit. Please choose the headphone icon  and select English from the list. ~~Leave the headphone on the desk at conclusion of the meeting so that the headsets can be cleaned and isolated for 72 hours before re-use.~~
- Only speak when invited to by the Chair. Speakers should announce their name **before making a comment**. When referring to a specific report, page, or slide, mention the page number so that all members have a clear understanding of what is being discussed at all times.
- To speak remotely please switch on the microphone button and your camera on the bottom toolbar on your screen. To speak in the Chamber, press the microphone button on the device before you

For physical attendees, If the red light above the microphone button comes on, the microphone is activated and you can speak. If the green (flashing) light above the microphone button comes on, your request-to-speak is accepted and you are placed in the waiting list:

- **Green on:** In the waiting list.
  - **Green flashing:** First in the waiting list.
  - You cannot speak until the **red light** above the **microphone** button comes **on**
- Only one person may speak at any one time.
  - Multi-location meetings will operate as close as possible to the Council's usual meetings practice and normal constitution rules apply.
  - Where members of the public are exercising speaking rights at the meeting either in person or via remote attendance, the Chair will as part of their introduction explain the procedure for their participation which will reflect those relevant elements of the above. Members of the public must adhere to this procedure.
  - Remember, the meeting may be open to the public or webcast so it is important to conduct yourself as you would in any public meeting.
  - **When attending Councillors need to ensure that they remain in the meeting throughout debates and during voting in order to maintain the integrity of the decision-making process and to reduce the opportunity for legal challenge of any decision. If a Councillor needs to leave the meeting temporarily they should make sure they notify the Chair or Democratic Services Officer in person or via the chat function within Zoom. The chat function will only be available between an individual member and the host/co-host for the purposes of managing the meeting and attendance thereat.**
  - Given the nature of hybrid meetings, the Chair will use his/her absolute discretion as to the order in which Members are given the opportunity to contribute to the debate on a specific item. The Chair will ensure that every member has the opportunity to participate in the meeting.
  - **Participants of meetings that are broadcast must be able to "speak to and be heard by each other" and "to see and be seen by each other". The ability to see and be seen predominantly applies when a participant is speaking. To encourage participation and engagement all members are asked to ensure their cameras are on during meetings, this is particularly important during quasi-judicial meetings such as Planning and Licensing Committee. For other meetings the Chair may use their discretion whether participants are to keep their cameras on when not speaking, the default position however is that cameras should be on at all times. It is inevitable that there will be occasions when a remote participant may need to disable their camera due to poor connection/internet issues. If this occurs the participant should use the chat function to inform the meeting Chair and democratic services staff of the issue. Due to connectivity issues it may not be possible for all cameras to remain on during full**

council meetings, however all members are expected to switch on their cameras when speaking.

- If Members lose connection during the live meeting, they should make every effort to re-connect, however the meeting will continue as long as the meeting is quorate. If a Member joins the meeting at a later time they must make themselves known immediately to the Chair or Democratic Services Officer, and comment and vote only on those complete agenda items remaining. This can be done using the chat function within Zoom.
- If the numbers present fall below the quorum required, the meeting will end immediately.

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## ***Declarations of Interest***

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If a Councillor or officer declares a Prejudicial Interest at a Multi-Location meeting, that person should withdraw from the meeting unless a specific dispensation has been granted by the Standards Committee.

For remote attendees, the Councillor or Officer will be removed from the meeting by the Democratic Services Officer and placed in the 'waiting room' for the duration of the relevant item. If attendees are in the chamber, they will physically leave the chamber for the duration of the item. On conclusion of that item that person will be invited back into the meeting, once the item relating to the prejudicial item has concluded. Should that person not respond to the call to re-join, the meeting will continue without them providing it is quorate.

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## ***Voting***

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Voting shall be decided by a simple majority of those voting and present at the meeting. **Persons attending physically will be expected to vote with their physical hand, persons attending remotely should vote via the 'raise hand' function on Zoom, and the number of votes will be combined.** ~~This will be carried out by a show of hands via the Zoom app for large meetings, or for smaller committees a mix of physical and virtual hand. For full Council meetings, members attending in person will be asked to bring their laptops to the meeting with the camera and microphone switched off. All members will be asked to vote using the 'raise hand' function on Zoom.~~ If a recorded vote is requested, a roll-call of all Members present will be undertaken (this means that the name of each member will be called and they will be asked if they are for, against or abstaining from the vote). **Options for a combined electronic vote system are being considered and the voting method will be updated as and when necessary.**

The Chair or Democratic Services will announce whether the vote has been carried or rejected. No voting numbers will be announced unless a recorded vote has been called - (CPR 16.5) or a member has asked for their individual vote to be recorded CPR 16.6).

As is normal procedure, details of how Members voted will not be kept or minuted unless a Recorded Vote is called.

Voting on Staff Appointments will be by ballot.

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### ***Exempt Items***

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If a Committee agenda includes an exempt report and following any decision to move into private session the broadcast will be stopped. Individuals who are not entitled to be present during the item will physically leave the Chamber, those attending remotely will be removed from the virtual meeting by the Democratic Services Officer. No attendee is permitted to film, photograph or audio record any part of the proceedings which are exempt ('in camera').

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### ***Attendance by members of the public***

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The public gallery will be open as normal with a maximum capacity of 50 persons. Member of the public can ~~also~~ choose to **attend physical meetings from the public gallery or** view proceedings [online](#)

Members of the public who are making representations/asking questions or presenting a petition will be given the option to either attend the meeting in person or remotely. If attending remotely, the Authority's Remote attendance guidance will apply. If attending in person arrangements for physical attendance will be provided by the Democratic Services Team.

Press will be asked to **attend physically at the meeting venue or** view the [livestream](#) of the meeting.

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## CABINET

**MONDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2023**

**PRESENT:** Councillor D. Price (Chair) (In Person)

**Councillors (In Person):**

C.A. Davies

G. Davies

H.A.L. Evans

A. Lenny

E.G. Thomas

A. Vaughan Owen

**Councillors (Remotely):**

L.D. Evans

**Also in attendance as an observer (Remotely):**

Councillor D.M. Cundy.

**Also Present (In Person):**

W. Walters - Chief Executive

J. Morgan - Director of Community Services

C. Moore - Director of Corporate Services

G. Morgans - Director of Education & Children's Services

S. Davies - Head of Access to Education

J. Jones - Head of Regen, Policy & Digital

L.R. Jones - Head of Administration and Law

G. Ayers - Corporate Policy & Partnership Manager

A. Carter - Schools Transformation & Change Manager

C. Higginson - Media Manager

C. Jones - Procurement Manager

L. Jenkins - Cabinet Support Officer

K. Thomas - Democratic Services Officer

D. Hall-Jones - Member Support Officer

S. Rees - Simultaneous Translator

**Also Present (Remotely):**

M. Evans Thomas, Principal Democratic Services Officer [Note Taker]

M. Runeckles - Member Support Officer

**Chamber, County Hall, Carmarthen and remotely : 10:00 am - 10:45 am**

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P.M. Hughes and J. Tremlett.

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

## 2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Councillor / Officer	Minute Number	Nature of Interest
Councillor A. Davies	12 – Primary Schools Admissions Review (Rising 4s)	She runs a Children’s Nursery in Llanarthne.

## 3. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON THE 13TH NOVEMBER, 2023

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 13<sup>th</sup> November, 2023 be signed as a correct record.

## 4. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE BY MEMBERS

The Chair advised that no questions on notice had been submitted by members.

## 5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The Chair advised that no public questions had been received.

## 6. TO ENTER INTO A DEED OF VARIATION TO AMEND SCHEDULE 3 "TERMS OF REFERENCE" OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE AGREEMENT FOR PARTNERIAETH

Cabinet was reminded that in April 2022 the Authority entered into an agreement with Pembrokeshire County Council and the City and County of Swansea Council for the establishment of a Joint Committee to support the delivery of educational improvements through Partneriaeth Addysg De Orllewin Cymru / South West Wales Education Partnership (“Partneriaeth”).

Partneriaeth’s Terms of Reference (Schedule 3 of the Joint Committee Agreement) provides that governance shall be via three voting members who shall be the Leaders of the three Councils. However, Leaders are inevitably involved in many meetings which can lead to clashing diary commitments. Consequently, at its meeting held on 6th October 2023 Partneriaeth agreed that it would be preferable to have some flexibility for the 3 Constituent Authorities to nominate their Cabinet Member with the Education Portfolio as their voting member instead of their Leader, should they so wish.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the proposal to amend Schedule 3 of Partneriaeth’s Joint Committee Agreement be approved and the voting member for Carmarthenshire County Council shall be the Cabinet Member for Education and Welsh Language and the non-voting member shall be the Leader.

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.



## **7. PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2023/28.**

The Cabinet considered the Procurement Strategy 2023-28 the aim of which was to have a framework in place so that procurement and commissioning decisions play a key role in supporting the delivery of the aims of the Council's Corporate Strategy and the Cabinet's Vision Statement. The report detailed the Corporate Procurement Unit's key priorities over the next 5 years.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Procurement Strategy 2023-28 be endorsed.**

## **8. COUNCIL TAX BASE 2024/25**

The Cabinet considered a report detailing the Council Tax Base calculations in respect of the financial year 2024-25. Council on 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2004 resolved that calculation of the Council Tax Base be designated an executive function.

The County Council is required each year to determine its Council Tax Base and the Council Tax Base of each community within its area for the purpose of setting the level of Council Tax for the forthcoming financial year.

### **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED**

**8.1 that the Council Tax Base calculations for the financial year 2024-25, as detailed within Appendix A to the report, be approved;**

**8.2 that a Council Tax Base of 76,460.40 in respect of the County Council area, be confirmed;**

**8.3 that the relevant tax bases for the individual Community and Town Council areas, as detailed in Table 2 to the report, be confirmed.**

## **9. MID-YEAR TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATOR REPORT 1ST APRIL 2023 TO 30TH SEPTEMBER 2023**

Cabinet considered the mid-year Treasury Management and Prudential Indicator Report which provided an update on the treasury management activities from 1st April to 30th September 2023.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be approved.**

## **10. REVISION OF THE CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

Cabinet considered a report on the revision of the Corporate Safeguarding Policy.

During July and August 2023 the Wales Audit Office completed a review of the assurance and accountability arrangements of Carmarthenshire County Council in ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and are being

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

adhered to. The review examined what the Council itself has done to seek assurance that its arrangements to support safeguarding are effective by reviewing how the Council is discharging its safeguarding responsibilities at all levels: Cabinet, senior management team, Scrutiny and individual officers.

One of the recommendations emanating from the review was that a revision be undertaken of the Corporate Safeguarding Policy that covers all the Council's service areas.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the revised Corporate Safeguarding Policy be endorsed.**

**11. INTRODUCTION OF PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER (PSPO) - LLANELLI TOWN CENTRE**

Cabinet considered a report outlining a proposed new Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) to address alcohol and drug related crime, disorder and nuisance in the area identified in Llanelli.

PSPOs deal with a particular issue or issues in an identified area which is having a detrimental impact on the local community's quality of life. Conditions are imposed, within the Order, to restrict specific behaviour which is evidenced and must be proportionate to the detrimental effect that the behaviour is causing or can cause and are necessary to prevent it from continuing, occurring or recurring. Following consideration of the impact of the previous Order and engagement with local stakeholders it was considered appropriate to propose a new Order for the area.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the making of a new PSPO for Llanelli Town Centre, as detailed in the report, be approved.**

**12. PRIMARY SCHOOL ADMISSIONS REVIEW (RISING 4's)**

[NOTE: Cllr A. Davies had earlier declared an interest in this item.]

Cabinet considered a report detailing the outcome of a Primary School Admissions Review (Rising 4s).

In 2018/19 the Education & Children Scrutiny Committee completed a Task & Finish Review of the current provision for early years education, childcare and play opportunities. One of the conclusions in the report identified that the Authority's Rising 4s Policy is markedly different to other neighbouring Local Authorities' and recommended that the Council undertake a formal review of its current admissions policy for full time education for 4 year olds (the Rising 4s Policy). Cabinet has already considered a report into the rationale for this and requested an assessment of the implications of removal of the Rising 4s Policy in individual schools.

The assessment was undertaken in the form of a gap analysis of education provision for 3 and 4 year old children should the policy be amended. It

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

highlighted where removal of the policy will have limited or no impact and those schools (all 4-11 schools) where removal will leave gaps in provision in some schools and geographical areas. Potential solutions are proposed where gaps in provision have been identified. However, any financial implications of changes resulting in increased expenditure would make them contingent upon the removal of the Rising 4s Policy.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that Carmarthenshire County Council, as the Admissions Authority for community and voluntary controlled primary school, consults on the removal of the Rising 4s Policy during the annual admissions consultation exercise in January 2024, for potential implementation in September 2025.

**13. ANY OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT BY REASONS OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES THE CHAIR DECIDES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY PURSUANT TO SECTION 100B(4)(B) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1972**

The Chair advised that there were no items of urgent business.

**14. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED**, pursuant to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007, that the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items as the reports contained exempt information as defined in paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

**15. UK GOVERNMENT LEVELLING UP ROUND 1 FUNDED PROJECT - CARMARTHEN HWB PROJECT UPDATE**

Following the application of the public interest test it was **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED**, pursuant to the Act referred to in Minute 14 above, to consider this matter in private, with the public excluded from the meeting as disclosure would be likely to cause financial harm to the Council by undermining its position in future negotiations regarding these projects

Cabinet considered a report providing an update on the UK Government Levelling Up Round 1 Funded Project, the Carmarthen Hwb Project.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED**

- 15.1 that the revised proposals, as detailed in the report, be supported;**
- 15.2 that Option B, as detailed in the report, be approved;**
- 15.3 to approve that the additional funding required will be sourced as detailed in the report;**
- 15.4 that the changes to the original scheme be acknowledged and the revised proposals supported.**

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

## 16. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FUND - ROUND 2 APPLICATIONS

NOTE: The Chair had to leave the meeting prior to the commencement of this item. The Vice-Chair presided for this item.]

**Following the application of the public interest test it was UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED, pursuant to the Act referred to in Minute 14 above, to consider this matter in private, with the public excluded from the meeting as disclosure would be likely to place person and businesses named in the report at an unfair disadvantage in relation to their commercial competitors.**

The Cabinet considered a report providing an overview of applications submitted under the Sustainable Communities Fund (Round 3) which is funded via the UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the 11 applications be awarded funding within the available budget, as recommended by the Funding Panel and on the terms and conditions as detailed in Table 2 and Annexe A to the report.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIR

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.