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FRIDAY, 15TH MARCH 2024

TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE PLACE, SUSTAINABILITY & CLIMATE CHANGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

RECONVENED MEETING OF THE PLACE, SUSTAINABILITY & CLIMATE CHANGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

I HEREBY SUMMON YOU TO ATTEND A **VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE PLACE, SUSTAINABILITY & CLIMATE CHANGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AT 10.00 AM ON FRIDAY, 22ND MARCH, 2024** FOR THE TRANSACTION OF THE BUSINESS OUTLINED ON THE ATTACHED AGENDA

Wendy Walters

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Democratic Officer:	Janine Owen
Telephone (direct line):	01267 224030
E-Mail:	JanineOwen@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

This is a multi-location meeting. Committee members can attend in person at the venue detailed above or remotely via the Zoom link which is provided separately.

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

**PLACE, SUSTAINABILITY & CLIMATE CHANGE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
13 Members**

PLAID CYMRU GROUP - 6 Members

Cllr. Karen Davies (Vice-Chair)
Cllr. Arwel Davies (Committee Member)
Cllr. Colin Evans (Committee Member)
Cllr. Neil Lewis (Committee Member)
Cllr. Dorian Phillips (Committee Member)
Cllr. Gareth Thomas (Committee Member)

LABOUR GROUP - 4 Members

Cllr. Peter Cooper (Committee Member)
Cllr. Shelly Godfrey-Coles (Committee Member)
Cllr. Tina Higgins (Committee Member)
Cllr. Kevin Madge (Chair)

INDEPENDENT GROUP - 2 Members

Cllr. Sue Allen (Committee Member)
Vacancy

UNAFFILIATED - 1 Member

Cllr. John James

A G E N D A

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST INCLUDING ANY PARTY WHIPS ISSUED IN RELATION TO ANY AGENDA ITEM.**
- 3. SHORELINE MANAGEMENT & COASTAL ADAPTION IN CARMARTHENSHIRE** 5 - 18
- 4. FORTHCOMING ITEMS** 19 - 26
- 5. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 30TH JANUARY 2024** 27 - 36

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PLACE, SUSTAINABILITY & CLIMATE CHANGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

11TH MARCH 2024

SHORELINE MANAGEMENT & COASTAL ADAPTION IN CARMARTHENSHIRE

Purpose:

To raise awareness of the Authority's duties and obligations pertaining to coastal management and the risks posed by climate change and sea level rise

THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE IS ASKED TO:-

Review and assess the information contained in Report and provide any recommendations, comments, or advice to the Cabinet Member prior to the report's consideration by Cabinet.

Reason

To formulate views for submission to the Cabinet / Council for consideration

CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:-

Cllr Aled Vaughan Owen, Climate Change, Decarbonisation and Sustainability

Directorate

Name of Head of Service:

Rhodri Griffiths

Designations:

Head of Place & Sustainability

E Mail Addresses:

RGriffiths@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

Report Author:

Ben Kathrens

Flood Defence & Coastal Protection
Manager

bkathrens@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PLACE, SUSTAINABILITY & CLIMATE CHANGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 11TH MARCH 2024

SHORELINE MANAGEMENT & COASTAL ADAPTION IN CARMARTHENSHIRE

1. SUMMARY OF PURPOSE OF REPORT.

This paper examines how Carmarthenshire County Council is managing our coastline. It provides a summary of the national and local policy approach pertaining to shoreline management and the activities delivered by the Authority in the management of our coastline. This paper then comments on the robustness of current preparedness and future requirements.

Carmarthenshire County Council (CCC) has 90km of coastline which is both an asset in terms of biodiversity, ecosystems, leisure and tourism but also a liability in terms of management, maintenance and inspections. 15km (17%) of the Carmarthenshire coastline is hard engineered to protect against flooding and coastal erosion.

Recent analysis by the Flood Defence and Coastal Defence (FDCC) business unit highlights that we have 19 communities who are at risk of **tidal flooding** and **coastal erosion** in Carmarthenshire. This further equates to

- 2300 residential home at risk;
- Over 2600 properties in total at risk and
- 70 key services.

The Carmarthenshire coast, Hendy to Pendine, has 87 actions within the shoreline management plan policy document and just under 50% of these are the responsibility of the Authority. 18% of these actions have been completed over the last 23-years, 33% are ongoing and a little under half (49%) requiring actioning.

While for information only, this report requests support in exploring funding and better ways of working to deliver a number of actions to ensure that Carmarthenshire's coastal communities and businesses are informed and prepared for the risk of tomorrow.

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 R Griffiths

Head of Place & Sustainability

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

2. Legal

CCC as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) has no statutory duty to protect residents and businesses from flooding.

Under section 21 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, it has a statutory obligation to maintain a register of flood risk assets.

The Shoreline Management Plan-2, the primary policy document pertaining to shoreline management, is a non-statutory policy document.

5. Risk Management Issues

The attached report has highlighted that there are 19 communities at risk of flooding along Carmarthenshire's coast. This equates to 2300 residential homes and 70 key services. In total there are over 2600 properties (home and business) at risk from coastal flooding and or coastal erosion.

6. Physical Assets

On the current flood risk asset database there are 177 flood and coastal erosion risk management assets along Carmarthenshire's coast. These are assets with an annual management and maintenance regime.

In addition to these FCERM assets, Carmarthenshire have property and land that requires adaption to manage the risk posed by climate change and sea level rise. There is currently no single database that allows the number or value of these assets to be quantified.

CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER AWARE/CONSULTED

YES

Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information
List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:
 There are none

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Shoreline management and coastal adaptation in Carmarthenshire.

Abstract

This paper examines how Carmarthenshire County Council is managing our coastline. It provides a summary of the national and local policy approach pertaining to shoreline management and the activities delivered by the Authority in the management of our coastline. This paper then comments on the robustness of current preparedness and future requirements.

Introduction

Carmarthenshire County Council (CCC) has 90km of coastline which is both an asset in terms of biodiversity, ecosystems, leisure and tourism but also a liability in terms of management, maintenance and inspections. 15km (17%) of the Carmarthenshire coastline is hard engineered to protect against flooding and coastal erosion.

Recent analysis by the Flood Defence and Coastal Defence (FDCP) business unit highlights that we have 19 communities¹ who are at risk of tidal flooding and coastal erosion in Carmarthenshire. This further equates to

- 2300 residential home at risk;
- Over 2600 properties in total at risk and
- 70 key services.

It is for this reason, flood risk is specifically identified within the corporate risk register. NRW flood maps highlighting the coastal flood risk areas can be viewed [here](#).

Policy and legislation

Strategic Planning: The national picture

In consideration of the risks, there has been a shift in thinking in recent years, especially within the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) sector, to risk management and adaptation and away from prevention. However, there is very limited evidence of the implementation of adaptation at the scale needed to fully prepare for climate risks facing the UK across cities, communities, infrastructure, economy and ecosystems².

The National Infrastructure Commission Wales (NICW) has begun to evaluate how flood risk and adaptations are delivered across Wales and how we communicate that risk to Welsh communities. This NICW report is focusing on the future, 2050 to 2100 and will be published in the Autumn of 2024.

¹ Community at Risk Register (CaRR), NRW, 2015.

² [Progress in adapting to climate change - 2023 Report to Parliament - Climate Change Committee \(theccc.org.uk\)](https://www.theccc.org.uk/reports/2023/progress-in-adapting-to-climate-change-2023-report-to-parliament-climate-change-committee/)

Strategic planning - the local picture

CCC is currently preparing a Revised Local Development Plan, 2018-2033. This revised plan will evaluate the risk to the development sites put forward from 2018. In addition, flood risk analysis and flooding mapping on some key strategic developments its being scaled up to include wider areas.

This report also notes that the following is also being delivered:

- There is flood mapping and guidance published by NRW which is updated every 6-months with input from CCC when applicable.
- Flood risk is on the corporate risk register,
- As part of the new Flood Risk Management Plan and Local Strategy (2024-2029), the risk to Carmarthenshire's coastal communities is being assessed at a strategic level.
- As a part of the flood and coastal erosion risk management (FCERM) capital works programme, communities at greatest risk of flooding are receiving more focused analysis, education and engagement.
- The only coastal community that has been recently assessed with regards to the impacts of climate change and sea level rise is Bynea in east Llanelli. The early analysis suggests that this area will begin to see more frequent significant flooding within the next 30-years.

The shoreline management plan

The Shoreline management plan (SMP) is the key policy document for the management of the coastline.

The SMP provides a large-scale assessment of the risks associated with coastal erosion and flooding along the coast and estuaries of Carmarthenshire. It defines high level policies to help manage these risks to people and to the developed, historic and natural environment in a sustainable manner.

First generation SMP (SMP1) was completed along the South Wales coast in 2000 and 2001. The second generation SMP was finalised and published in October 2011 (SMP2) and refreshed in 2021.

The SMP in Carmarthenshire

The SMP2 covers the Carmarthenshire coast from Hendy in the east to Dolwen point in the west. The policy has divided the Carmarthenshire coast into 4 key areas namely:

- The Lougher Estuary - (Hendy to Pwll),
- Pembrey Burrows (Burry Port to Kidwelly),
- The Three Rivers (Kidwelly to Laugharne) and
- Ginst to Dolwen Point (Pendine beach and village).

Within each of these four areas, our coastline is further divided into policy units (smaller areas of our coastline). Each policy unit is assigned one of four strategic policy positions (highlighted in [Appendix A, table-1](#)) and will also have a short narrative pertaining to its management ([Appendix A, table-2](#)).

In addition to the higher-level policy notes, there are also specific actions for each policy unit area. These come under the headings of research, monitoring and data collection, asset management, communication, planning and land management, emergency response environmental mitigation and habitat creation.

The current position

Across the 90km of Carmarthenshire coastline, 4 SMP areas and 46 policy units, there are a total of 87 actions. These are documented in [Appendix-B](#).

- Of these 87 actions, CCC own or have joint responsibility for 43, just under 50%.
- Of CCCs 43 actions, 8 have been completed, 18%
- 33% of CCCs actions are currently ongoing, are business as usual or are being implemented.
- A little under half (49%) of CCC's actions require actioning and have not commenced, predominately due to resource implications.

Reporting

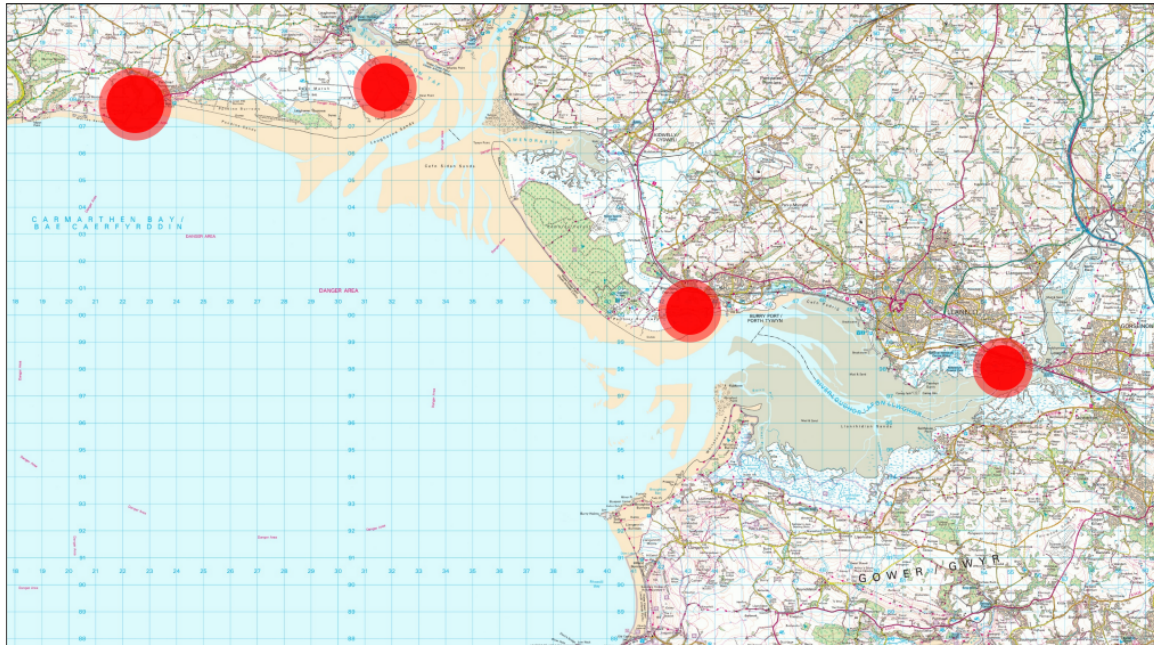
Annual returns on the SMP2 actions are submitted to the Swansea and Carmarthen Bay Coastal Engineering Group (SCBCEG). The SCBCEG oversee all actions in the south-west Wales region and report to NRW and WG accordingly. All Local Authorities and risk management authorities are members of the SCBCEG. They have recently employed one full time officer to drive these regional actions forward and also work closely with the Welsh Coastal Monitoring Centre (WCMC) to deliver regional actions.

Changes to policy

The original short-term (0-20 year) policies within the SMP are now transitioning to the medium term (20-50 year) policies. The implementation of the medium-term policies will see changes at the following areas as denoted in table-3 below.

Table-3 - The SMP policies and the policy areas that are changing

Area	Short Term policy	Medium or Long term policy	Narrative / details
Morfa Bacas, Bynea, Llanelli	Hold the line	Managed realignment	A change from the short-term policy of hold the line. The coastal path has been significant damage here in recent years and a diversion, as per the policy requirements, has been planned and is being implemented. There are further actions from the SMP2 Refresh to be implemented here also.
Burry Port Marine west to the Nose	Hold the line	managed realignment	The medium and long term policy is managed realignment, a change from the short term policy of hold the line. Unlike Morfa Bacas, this area is experiencing significant deposition as the sand eroded from Cefn Sidan migrates east. The primary asset here is the coastal path and the golf course. Triggers need to be agreed when further actions will be implemented at this location
South Laugharne to Ginst Point	Hold the line	managed realignment	The medium and long term policy is to construct a set back defence through managed realignment, and then hold this set back line by maintaining and upgrading this defence, as required to create a large area of compensatory intertidal habitat on this area of the land, which was reclaimed from the sea during the Medieval period, and is currently susceptible to flood and erosion risk. NRW are leading on this.
Pendine Village	Hold the line	Hold the line Long term management realignment	The short and medium term policy is to hold the line, but the current long term policy is to implement managed realignment, through provision of a setback defence. This is subject to further detailed studies to investigate potential merits/ impacts of managed realignment as part of a wider redevelopment of Pendine. This policy currently appears to conflict with the Authorities aspirations for the area and possibly needs amending.



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Map Centre [239095.9,199584.8]

Dyddiad
Date 19/07/2023

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CCC's current operational coastal management tasks

Operationally, the coastline is managed by both Outdoor Recreation Service and the Flood Defence and Coastal Protection business units. Their duties include:

- Pre and post storm and high tide inspection of assets in areas of highest risk.
- Management and maintenance of B-Lines and coastal safety signage.
- Provision of Beach Lifeguarding Service during peak season on Cefn Sidan (through RNLI)
- Beach inspections / conservation management of the Carmarthenshire Bay SSSI.
- Monitoring the rate of sand dune erosion on Cefn Sidan.
- Formal inspect all 177 of CCC's coastal assets annually.
- Delivery of a programme of asset repairs and maintenance works.
- Delivering a programme of capital works (see [Appendix-C](#))
- Inspect and maintain Aids of Navigation and supervise Trinity House on their annual inspections.
- Procure bi-annual topographical surveys of our coast.
- Develop social science initiatives.
- General management of our coastal environments e.g. vegetation, bins and paths etc.
- Commission studies into coastal erosion
- Manage capital works including repairs to the MCP and coastal path
- Deliver the majority of Carmarthenshire's 43 actions in the Shoreline Management Plan
- Develop and submit annual reports on the delivery of the SMP2;

- Vice Chair of the Regional Coastal Engineering Group (SCBCEG)
- Discharging the duties of the competent harbour Authority and managing North Dock and Burry Port Harbour.

Financials and resources

To manage the Carmarthenshire coastline there currently three dedicated budgets.

1. £60k annual revenue budget managed by the FDCP business unit.
2. £49k on the capital ledger for 2023/24 and
3. £18k annual revenue budget for the provision of lifeguarding services managed by the Outdoor Recreation Service.

The Outdoor Recreation Service have an annual revenue budget of £226k to cover all management activities along the MCP in Llanelli.

There are no specific coastal risk management, strategy or adaption officers or engineers in the Authority.

In summary

The Shoreline management plan is the primary policy document for managing the coast and it has been in place for almost a quarter of a century with three amendments and reviews over this period.

The SMP2 set out the management policy pertaining to the coast and actions to manage the coast.

In total, there are 87 actions pertaining to the Carmarthenshire coast. 43 (49%) are for CCC to deliver.

Currently 18% of CCC's actions are complete, 32% are ongoing and 49% require action.

Climate change will result in significant pressures and increased risks to our coastal communities. Both locally and nationally, there is a move to adaption and resilience and away from defence and prevention, but there is a little evidence of adaption on the scale needed, to be prepare for these future risks.

While significant progress is being made in managing Carmarthenshire coast, the risk to our coastline is increasing as our climate changes and we will need to review the resource requirement of that work to ensure that we mitigate against the risk

There is currently little or no evidence both nationally and locally of forward planning for the impacts of climate change and sea level rise. As such, the communication of these risks and engagement with our coastal communities at greatest risk from climate change and sea level rise is almost non-existent.

Actions for consideration

The primary aim of this paper, and the immediate priority is to start raising awareness, both internally and externally, about how climate change will impact on the citizens and businesses of Carmarthenshire. Post consultation with the Outdoors Recreation Services and the Flood Defence and Coastal Protection business unit, the following actions are suggested to help us move forward in how we manage our coastline and interact with those communities at greatest risk.

These are not resourced, so we also request support in exploring funding sources to deliver these actions and support the ongoing shoreline management works.

R&D

1. Develop and implement a programme of works that will seek to understand the impacts of climate change and sea level rise on our coastal communities.
2. Develop the citizen science projects participation along the Carmarthenshire coast to monitor how our coastline is evolving.

Spread and Scale

3. Incorporate representatives from strategic planning and regeneration departments into the local and regional coastal group meetings.
4. Strategic planning to consider policies that will allow our coastal communities to adapt to our changing coastline (Pembrokeshire have done some excellent work on this already).

Communication of risk

5. Raising awareness with public and private organisations of the SMP principles, content and recommendations (this document is a start).
6. Engage with landowners/ developers of industrial (and former industrial) sites to ensure future plans for sites are incorporated into wider shoreline management planning and are informed by SMP policy. This should also consider implications related to contamination risks.
7. Engage and work with local communities to ensure that they remain fully informed of the changing risk from coastal erosion and flooding.
8. Learn lessons from Fairbourne and other coastal adaption schemes on the role of the residents in the adaptation of their communities.

Plans and actions

- Produce a CCC coastal action plan. Share out the SMP2 actions and clarify responsibilities for operational and strategic actions; instigate internal performance management.
- Identify triggers for policy transitions, as the start of a journey toward trigger-based management and associated monitoring and regular review.
- Develop a more robust system to manage SMP2 actions and coastal plans;
- Develop a sustainable solution for the management of Burry Port Harbour and North Dock in Llanelli.

Partnership working

- Continue working with the WCMC to identify any additional data collation and analysis needs to support shoreline management decisions.
- Work with NRW to support the forecasting of habitat compensatory needs over the short to medium term. Consider and evaluate the potential benefits of in-situ restoration and habitat enhancement at a local level to support wider Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR) and Wellbeing priorities.
- Work with Cadw and the Welsh Archaeological Trusts to ensure that new or revised information on historical assets that may influence delivery of the SMP is identified and considered in future assessments.
- Work with NRW to identify any potential constraints associated with presence of PRow on structures. There is a need to consider who and how to take this forward.

Appendix A -

Table 1 - the coastal management policies assigned to the coastline in by the Shoreline Management Plan-2

Policy	Description
Hold the line (HTL)	Keep the shoreline in the same place
Advance the line (ATL)	Create more land by moving the defence into the sea
Managed realignment (MR)	Allow the shoreline to move back in a managed way
No active intervention (NAI)	Allow nature to take its course

Table-2 - an extract from the SMP-2 detailing the policy unit, its management policy and a narrative on its agreed management.

12.7	Morfa Bacas (Loughor Bridge to Wildfowl and Wetlands Centre)	Existing defences will be maintained through a policy of hold the line to manage risk of flooding and erosion. Future options for the Millennium Coastal Path will be considered.	The medium and long term policy is managed realignment by setting back existing defences to allow the frontage to evolve naturally with minimum intervention, whilst continuing to manage the risk of coastal erosion and flooding to built assets on low-lying land inshore including railway infrastructure. It is recommended that the Millennium Coastal Path is realigned inshore along this frontage.
12.8	Wildfowl and Wetlands Centre to Penrhyn Gwyn	Maintain and upgrade existing set back defences, through a policy of hold the line to continue to manage the risk of coastal erosion and flooding to the extensive developed low-lying hinterland of Llanelli (which includes residential properties, industrial development, potentially contaminated land and associated infrastructure), subject to the future availability of public funding for coastal erosion and flood risk management. This policy should enable the fronting saltmarsh to develop naturally to a point and will manage the risk of erosion and release of potentially contaminated material into the estuary.	
12.9	Machynys (Penrhyn Gwyn) to the northern end of Llanelli Beach	Maintain and upgrade existing defences under a policy of hold the line , subject to the future availability of public funding for coastal erosion and flood risk management. The policy will continue to manage the risk of coastal erosion and flooding to the extensive developed low-lying hinterland of Llanelli and Machynys, which includes residential properties, industrial development, potentially contaminated land and associated infrastructure. This policy will manage the risk of erosion and release of potentially contaminated material into the estuary.	
12.10	Pwll railway frontage (Llanelli Beach to Tywyn Bâch)	The policy is to hold the line by maintaining and upgrading existing defences in order to continue managing the risk of coastal erosion and flooding to railway infrastructure, subject to the future availability of funding. Due to the proximity of a low water channel immediately adjacent to the existing defences, the defences are likely to come under increasing pressure as sea level rises and therefore it is likely that they will need to be upgraded and improved in the short term (<20 years). It is assumed that these defences would also manage the risk of coastal erosion and flooding to assets in the low-lying hinterland,	

Appendix B - SMP-2 Actions in Carmarthenshire



Appendix B.docx

Appendix C - CCC's coastal capital works programme 2010-2023

Year	Details	Funding	Team
2023	Sea outfall at Ferryside upgraded post storm damage	WG Grant	FDCP
2023	Sea outfall at Llansteffan upgraded due to the changing beach topography.	WG Grant	FDCP
2023	Coastal protection scheme being designed for Burry Port East	FDCP Revenue	Engineering Design, FDCP and Outdoor Recreation Service
2021	Study into the dune and coastal erosion at Cefn Sidan	FCP Revenue	FDCP and Outdoor Recreation Service
2021	Study into the resilience of the Banc Y Lord tidal embankment, Pembrey Airport	FDCP Revenue	FDCP and Outdoor Recreation Service
2020-2023	Options assessment, design and build of a diversion of the coastal path at Morfa Bacas, Bynea, Llanelli	Sustrans and Outdoor Recreation Service	Outdoor Recreation Service
2010-2015	Rock armour upgrades at Pendine, at Burry Port, Llanelli and Machynys.	CCC Capital	Streetscene

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PLACE, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

11TH MARCH 2024

FORTHCOMING ITEMS

To consider and comment on the following:

To note the forthcoming items to be considered at the next meeting of the Place, Sustainability and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee to be held on the 22nd April, 2024.

Reason:

The Council's Constitution requires Scrutiny Committees, at the commencement of each municipal year, to develop and publish a Forward Work Programme which identifies the issues and reports which will be considered at meetings during the course of the year.

To be referred to the Cabinet for decision: NO

Cabinet Member Portfolio Holders:

Cllr. Aled Vaughan Owen (Climate Change, Decarbonisation and Sustainability)
Cllr. Edward Thomas (Transport, Waste and Infrastructure Services)

Report Author:

Janine Owen

Designation:

Democratic Services Officer

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PLACE, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

11TH MARCH 2024

FORTHCOMING ITEMS

The Council's Constitution requires Scrutiny Committees, at the commencement of each municipal year, to develop and publish a Forward Work Plan which identifies the issues and reports to be considered at meetings during the course of the year. When formulating the Forward Work Programme the Scrutiny Committee took into consideration those items included on the Cabinet's Forward Work Plan.

The list of forthcoming items attached includes those items which are scheduled in the Place, Sustainability and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee's Forward Work Plan to be considered at the next meeting, to be held on 22nd April, 2024.

Scrutiny Committee members, as part of their role are required to regularly refer to the Cabinet Forward Plan in order to identify any future pre-decision reports, within the scrutiny remit for inclusion onto the Committee's FWP.

Council/Cabinet Forward Plan can be viewed by clicking [HERE](#)

REPORT
ATTACHED?

YES:

- List of Forthcoming Items – 22nd April 2024;
- Place, Sustainability and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee - Forward Work Plan

IMPLICATIONS

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

Signed: Linda Rees-Jones Head of Administration & Law

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets	Bio-diversity & Climate Change
NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE

CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER 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	Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
<u>Cabinet Forward Plan</u>	

CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S) AWARE/CONSULTED	Not applicable
Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:	
There are none	

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FORTHCOMING ITEMS for next meeting to be held on 22nd April 2024

In order to ensure effective Scrutiny, Members need to be clear as to the purpose of requesting specific information and the outcome they are hoping to achieve as a consequence of examining a report.

Proposed Agenda Item	Background	Reason for report	Cabinet Member
Budget Monitoring April 2023 to December 2023	This is a standard bi-monthly budget report covering the revenue and capital budgets for the Environment Department, Public Protection Services and Community Safety which fall within the remit of the Place, Sustainability and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee	To enable members to exercise their scrutiny role.	Cllr. Alun Lenny - Cabinet Member for Resources
Public Rights of Way	To provide the scrutiny Committee with information and an update in respect of the public rights of way within Carmarthenshire	Committee Members requested this report as part of their Forward Work Plan development session in June 2023	Cllr Edward Thomas, Cabinet Member for Transport, Waste and Infrastructure Services
Electric Fleet	To provide the scrutiny Committee with information and an update in respect of the Authorities Electric Fleet.	Committee Members requested this report as part of their Forward Work Plan development session in June 2023	Cllr Edward Thomas, Cabinet Member for Transport, Waste and Infrastructure Services

Items to be circulated under a separate cover to Scrutiny Committee members (as agreed at the Committee's Forward Work Programme development session on 13th June 2023)

Proposed Agenda Item	Background	Reason for report	Cabinet Member
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In accordance with the Committee's Forward Work Programme, there are no reports to be circulated outside of the formal Committee process.

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Place, Sustainability and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee - Forward Work Plan 2023/24

21 st July 2023	3 rd October 2023	23 rd November 2023	14 th December 2023	30 th January 2024	11 th March 2024	22 nd April 2024
Forward Work Programme 2023/24	A Strategic Plan for Managing Our Land for Pollinators in Carmarthenshire	Highways Asset Management Plan Annual Statement update	Planning Enforcement	Budget Monitoring Report (April – October 2023)	Performance Monitoring Report Q3	Budget Monitoring Report (April – December 2023)
Task and Finish Group Report on the Management of Fly-tipping in Carmarthenshire.	Waste Strategy Update	Local Toilet Strategy	Task and Finish Planning and Scoping Document	Budget consultation	Shoreline Management Plan-2; an update on its Delivery.	Public Rights of Way
PS&CC Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2022/2023	Bulky Waste Review	PSPO (alcohol and drug related ASB and crime)	Review of the Dog Breeding Licensing Function of the Business Affairs Animal Health Team	Flood Risk Management Plan-2	Equestrian Strategy <i>(deferred to 2024/25)</i>	Electric Fleet
Free Parking	Referral from Corporate Resources and Performance Scrutiny Committee			Environment Act Forward Plan – (Jan 2023 – Dec 2025)	Pest Control <i>Moved from 14-12-23</i>	
PSPO (prevention dog fouling)						
Scrutiny Committee Members to scrutinise the following reports via e-mail – as agreed by at the FWP development session on 13th June 2023 Forthcoming Items to include scrutiny queries and feedback at the next meeting.						
Budget Monitoring Report (April 2022-Feb 2023)	Shoreline Management Plan-2; an update on its Delivery.	Performance Monitoring Report Q2				
		Budget Monitoring Report (April – August 2023)				
Page 2 Council Annual Report 2022-23	Budget Monitoring Report (April to June 2023) & 2022/23 Outturn report	Shoreline Management Plan-2; an update on its Delivery. <i>Circulated again at the request of the Chair.</i>				

PS&CC Scrutiny Member – Focussed Development Sessions/Site Visits:-

The Committee has requested for the following focused development sessions to take place following each of the scheduled formal Committee meetings (unless otherwise notified).

Cwm Environmental Ltd (Site Visit) – TBC
PSPO Toolkit – TBC

TASK & FINISH REVIEW:

The Committee at its meeting on 2nd July 2021 unanimously resolved that its Task and Finish arrangements for 2021-22-23 would be as follows:

- 1) Review on the Fly tipping within Carmarthenshire
- 2) Review on Dog Breeding in Carmarthenshire (Animal Licensing)

The Task and Finish review on flytipping has been endorsed by the Committee at its meeting on 21st July 2023 and was endorsed by Cabinet at its meeting on 16th October 2023.

The Committee has approved the Planning and Scoping Document on the Animal Licensing and a Task and Finish Group was formulated in December 2023.

PLACE, SUSTAINABILITY & CLIMATE CHANGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

30 JANUARY 2024

PRESENT: Councillor K. Madge (Chair) (In Person)

Councillors (In Person):

K. Davies	S.M. Allen	P. Cooper	T.A.J. Davies
T.M. Higgins	J.D. James	N. Lewis	B.D.J. Phillips
G.B. Thomas			

Councillors (Virtually):

D.C. Evans S. Godfrey-Coles

Also in attendance:

- Councillor A. Davies, Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs, Community Cohesion and Planning Policy **(In Person)**;
- Councillor A. Vaughan Owen, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Decarbonisation and Sustainability **(In Person)**;
- Councillor E. Thomas, Cabinet Member for Transport, Waste and Infrastructure Services **(In Person)**.

Also Present (In Person):

A. Williams, Director of Place and Infrastructure;
R. Griffiths, Head of Place and Sustainability;
R. Hemingway, Head of Financial Services;
D.W. John, Head of Environmental Infrastructure;
B. Kathrens, Flood Defence and Coastal Protection Manager;
R. James, Group Accountant;
R. Carmichael, Rural Conservation Manager;
D. Hall-Jones, Member Support Officer;
J. Owen, Democratic Services Officer.

Also Present (Virtually):

J. Morgan, Head of Housing and Public Protection

Chamber, County Hall, Carmarthen, SA31 1JP and remotely: 10:00am - 12:38pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST INCLUDING ANY PARTY WHIPS ISSUED IN RELATION TO ANY AGENDA ITEM.

Councillor	Minute Item(s)	Nature of Interest
S. Godfrey-Coles	6. Revenue Budget Strategy Consultation 2024/25 to 2026/27	Partner works within the Education section of the Council.

There were no declarations of any prohibited party whips.

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Chair advised that no public questions had been received.

4. EXPLANATION FOR NON SUBMISSION OF SCRUTINY REPORT

The Committee received an explanation for the non-submission of the Pest Control report.

In response to a query raised in regard to future funding to manage the issue of sewer rats, the Head of Housing and Public Protection confirmed that this matter would be included as part of the development of the business case following discussions with Welsh Water would take place.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that:

4.1 the revised date for the Pest Control report be accepted;

4.2 the explanation for the non-submission be noted.

5. REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2023/24

The Committee considered the Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report which provided an update on the latest budgetary position as at 31st October 2023 in respect of services under the remit of the Place, Sustainability and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee.

The Cabinet Member for Resources, in presenting the report highlighted that the estimated net overspend was £1.957m, which included £700k due to the actual pay award being more than budgeted.

The Highways and Transportation division forecasted an overspend of more than a million pounds for the year. The main variances were £300k due to storm damage to highways, loss of income on Parking Services of £277k and a £908k overspend on School Transport.

The Waste and Environmental Services division forecasted an overspend of £664k which was due to a £775k pressure from the delivery of the interim phase of the waste strategy having increased costs as a result of contingency measures having to be put in place.

It was reported that in delivering the proposed efficiencies for 2023/24 as provided in Appendix G to the report, it was envisaged to achieve efficiencies of £1.3m in 2023/24, which would be £318k below target.

The following questions/observations were raised on the report:-

- Reference was made to the Waste Services within the Main Variances - Appendix B of the report. Clarification was sought on the comment 'Outturn includes draw-down from reserves' in regard to the variation of £571k. The Head of Financial Services explained that this was as a result of the transition of the waste collection method towards the kerbside collection. Currently, additional vehicles were providing the kerbside glass collection resulting in temporary additional costs. In order to manage costs, part of the costs were being met by a draw-down on departmental reserves.
- A concern was raised regarding the impact of services should the vacant posts not be filled. It was highlighted that whilst there were proposals to save money by way of not filling vacant posts coupled with the current recruitment freeze the report cites an underspend in connection with various staff vacancies including Noise Control as an example which is a Statutory Duty. The Head of Financial Services explained that full funding for all posts were provided that was part of the Councils staffing structure however, in terms of leavers and maternity cover, the nature of the recruitment process, which varies in duration, creates a salary underspend which is then reflected in the budget monitoring report. The Cabinet Member for Resources emphasised that the introduction of the recruitment freeze reflected the severity of the budget situation and that this was a measure taken to avoid actions such as redundancies.
- Reference was made to Appendix D appended to the report – Department/Schemes main variances. In response to a query raised regarding the comments attributed to variances 'Slipped to future years', the Head of Financial Services provided the Committee with assurances that the funding for capital budgets did not always align with the budget setting which took place on an annual basis and due to this it would often slip to the following year.
- Clarification was sought regarding the comment 'revenue and CCC contribution needed' for the 11k variance attributed to Coastal Protection cited on Appendix D. The Head of Place and Sustainability explained that 11k variance was to fund training within the area of coastal protection, however it was reported that this financial year additional £268k had been successfully secured from the Welsh Government which would offset the funding projection.

- Reference was made to the Countryside Access under Highways and Transport section of Appendix G(ii) Savings on Target. In regard to, the comment 'discretionary clearance by Contractors were being ceased', it was asked if suitable enforcement mechanisms were being put in place to ensure that landowners clear encroaching vegetation? The Head of Environmental Infrastructure stated that enforcement notices would continue to be issued against landowners were necessary and any works that the Council carried out would be recovered from the landowner.
- In respect of the Council's Climate change objectives, it was asked if extra revenue was being received from Welsh Government in order to help achieve the Council's targets? The Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Decarbonisation and Sustainability funding was being received to assist with the introduction of electric vehicles and the upgrading of building insulation/heating. Confirmation was provided that further funding would be sought from a variety of sources which included UK and Welsh Government to achieve the net zero commitment that the Council had made.
- In response to a query regarding the funds attributed to the Towy Cycle Path and the timeliness of the spend, the Director of Place and Infrastructure confirmed that funding profile had been extended and approved to March 2025.
- Reference was made to Appendix G(iv) to the report – Parking Services. The comment stated that 'the services was showing a £375k overspend on the August budget monitoring report due to reduced footfall in town centres'. The Cabinet Member for Resources stated that the retail sector and income from carparks continued to be severely impacted upon following the Covid pandemic where many people had turned to online shopping which had resulted in a dramatic reduction in the footfall within town centres. It was reported that the 5% increase was less than the current inflation period of 6.7% and that it was cheaper to park in the Council owned carparks than privately owned. In addition, it was reported that the Council's carparks cost £600k p/a in tax and non-domestic rates which is paid to the Welsh Government. Assurances were given that other measures were being explored to increase the footfall within town centres within Carmarthenshire.

RESOLVED that the Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report 2023/24 be received.

6. REVENUE BUDGET STRATEGY CONSULTATION 2024/25 to 2026/27

[Note: Councillor S. Godfrey-Coles declared a personal interest in this item. She remained in the meeting, took part in the deliberations and voting thereof.]

The Committee considered a report on the Council's Revenue Budget Strategy 2024/25 to 2026/27, as endorsed by the Cabinet for consultation purposes at its meeting held on the 15th January 2024. The report provided Members with an outlook of the Revenue Budget for 2024/2025 together with indicative figures for 2025/2026 and 2026/2027 financial years based on officers' projections of spending requirements and took account of the provisional settlement issued by Welsh Government on the 20th December 2023.

The Cabinet Member for Resources, in presenting the report informed the Committee that the announced provisional settlement represented an average increase of 3.1% across Wales on the 2023/24 settlement, with Carmarthenshire's increase being 3.3% (£11.0m) thereby taking the Aggregate External Finance to £349.441m for 2024/25. While the settlement was significantly above the initial indicative figure of a 3.4% increase and provided some £15.5m more than the Council's original assumption, the Welsh Government had recognised the increased figure would still not be sufficient to meet inflationary pressures facing councils, pay awards and fuel price increases and difficult decisions would need to be made.

The Committee thereupon considered the following detailed budget information appended to the Strategy relevant to its remit:

- **Appendix A(i)** – Efficiency summary for the Place, Sustainability and Climate Change Services;
- **Appendix A(ii)** – Growth Pressures summary for the for the Place and Infrastructure Service;
- **Appendix B** – Budget monitoring report for the Place, Sustainability and Climate Change Services;
- **Appendix C** – Charging Digest for the Place, Sustainability and Climate Change Services.

The following questions/observations were raised on the report:-

- It was commented that this report demonstrated an unprecedented situation and highlights the seriousness of the situation where it was getting increasingly difficult to find areas of saving without impacting on services. The Head of Financial Services stated that this was the first time in his career that he had reported an unbalanced draft budget.
- Several strong concerns were raised in regard to the Highway maintenance Services which identified a £100,000 efficiency saving by reducing surface dressing. The Committee had recently written to the Welsh Government to express its concerns in the lack of funding to maintain the roads within Carmarthenshire and the proposal was an additional sacrifice in maintaining the road network.

- In response to a concern raised in relation to the proposal to cease routine mechanical sweeping of rural roads and will only be provided on a reactive basis, the Director of Place and Infrastructure stated that drainage was key in resolving a lot of issues
- A number of concerns relating to the efficiency saving proposals in regard to the following areas were raised:-
 - Surface dressing
 - Change in mechanical sweeping of rural roads from routine to a reactive basis
 - Deterioration of the road conditions

The Director of Place and Infrastructure explained that the purpose of surface dressing was to intervene in a timely manner to extend the lifespan of the road structure. It was acknowledged that unfortunately, the current budget constraints did not conform to long term asset management. Currently, within the restricted budget a programme of surface dressing was in place which was prioritised according to the condition reported and what the budget allowed. In terms of the inspection regime regarding potholes, in principle the line of defence would be to inspect, log and repair potholes accordingly. In addition, it was emphasised that whilst drainage was key in resolving many issues, it was reported that damage occurred would be managed through routine inspection regimes and reporting methods and the method of repair would be based on the severity of the damage and prioritised accordingly.

In response to a concern raised in that should the Committee support the efficiency savings which would be at a detriment to road users potentially exposing Members to be liable, the Cabinet Member for Resources stated that ultimately it would be the responsibility of the UK and Welsh Governments. Due to the seriousness of the situation, Committee Members were informed that the Cabinet Member for Resources would be proposing to raise the current £600k capital assigned to highway maintenance to £2m towards addressing the more serious road conditions.

- Reference was made to the introduction of carparking charges to carparks within the County which currently were free of charge. Concerns were raised that introducing car parking charges on free carparks could have a detrimental impact on local businesses. The Cabinet Member for Waste, Transport and Infrastructure Services stated that a review was currently underway which would consider free car parks and the impact of introducing car parking charges on the locality. A final report would be presented to Scrutiny in due course. It was commented that the carpark charges within Carmarthenshire Council owned carpark was cheaper than neighbouring Authorities.

It was proposed that as part of the consultation, Cabinet consider the proposal on car parking charges be reviewed based upon the rationale for individual locality free car parking provision. This was duly seconded.

- Reference was made to the proposal that learners aged 16 to 18 attending school or college would no longer be provided with free transport, which would mean that they would have to make their own arrangements. Strong concern was expressed that this proposal would have a detrimental impact on the age group being able to attend college potentially affecting their life chances. The Head of Environmental Infrastructure explained that the proposal was set to be introduced in 2025/26, in the meantime a full scoping exercise would take place and that a report could be presented upon completion.

Therefore, it was proposed that Cabinet reconsider the proposed efficiency saving to remove the provision free transport for learners aged 16 to 18 attending school or college. This was duly seconded.

RESOLVED:

6.1 the 2024/25 to 2026/27 Revenue Budget Strategy be received;

6.2 the proposals for delivery of efficiency savings as identified in Appendix A(i) be received subject to the comments raised by the Committee being considered as part of the consultation with a focus on the following:-

- **Increase the funds made available to highway maintenance;**
- **To reconsider and review the introduction of carpark charges based upon the rationale for individual locality free car parking provision;**
- **to reconsider the proposal to cease free school/college transport for 16 to 18 year olds;**

6.3 the Charging Digest for the Place and Infrastructure Services, as detailed in Appendix C to the report, be endorsed.

7. CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL ENVIRONMENT ACT FORWARD PLAN JAN 2023 - DEC 2025

The Committee received the Council's Environment Act Forward Plan January 2023 – December 2025 for consideration. The report, presented by Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Decarbonisation and Sustainability, provided Members progress made on the delivery of the plan.

The plan included actions which would be delivered and reported on by several service areas, these actions were summarised in appendix A appended to the report.

The following questions/observations were raised on the report:-

- Reference was made to the submission ‘to introduce more sustainable practices on this Carmarthenshire County Council farms’, cited in Appendix A to the report. Clarification was sought on this. The Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Decarbonisation and Sustainability explained in response to the Council’s decision in 2019 to declare a climate emergency together with the Council’s decision in 2022 to ask that Cabinet declare a nature emergency, the Cabinet responded and formulated a Cross-Party Climate and Nature Emergency Panel. Alignment with the United Nations biodiversity aspirations known as the Edinburgh Declaration.
- It was raised that Collins Concise Dictionary states the definition of ‘Sustainable’ – able to continue over a period of time. With this in mind, it was commented that by being too constrictive the farms would not be viable for the future and therefore advised that the Cabinet consider the term sustainability, not only for nature but also to enable farms to produce food products in a sustainable manner. In response, the Cabinet member for Decarbonisation, Sustainability and Climate Change clarified the meaning of “sustainability” in this context as relating to the Sustainability Principle, enshrined within the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the process of improving the economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being of Wales.
- Reference was made to the progress on Property which stated ‘working in partnership with West Wales Rivers Trust’. In response to queries raised regarding the use of consultants, the Rural Conservation Manager provided a background to how the council had worked with the West Wales Rivers Trust and many other environmental organisations. Currently the Council was in receipt of a small amount of funding which could be used for work that partners were delivering in Carmarthenshire. The West Wales Rivers Trust was successful in the bid and works with a number of farms to assist in the pollution run off from farmyards. Case studies were developed by working with the Rivers Trust and utilising their expertise.

RESOLVED that Carmarthenshire County Council Environment Act Forward Plan Jan 2023 – Dec 2025 be received.

8. FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Committee considered the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Local Strategy report. The report, presented by Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Decarbonisation and Sustainability, provided detailed information in regard to the Council’s approach to managing flood risk in Carmarthenshire.

The report explained how flooding would be managed across Carmarthenshire, consistent with local objectives, measures policies and our cooperate and national strategies. The strategy also provided some background information on Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management at both a local and national level.

The following questions/observations were raised on the report:-

- In commending the detail provided within the report, it was commented that unfortunately, flooding issues would remain an issue should the historic intervention methods remain in place. New innovative methods need to be explored and introduced to reduce the flooding issues that were faced with the changing climate and as more developments arise. It was felt that it additional pressure on the Welsh Government to consider change of land use where rainfall was at its heaviest. It was therefore proposed that a letter be sent on behalf of the Committee explaining that the concerns about flooding and that land use needs to be changed to manage the current flooding issues.
- It was commented that the Cabinet should consider making further funds available for this area.
- The Flood Defence and Coastal Protection Manager, in response to a query clarified that the as part of a team the Flood Incident Duty Officer (FIDO) on a weekly rota basis carries out daily monitoring of the weather, particularly rainfall and the tides. Concerns are reported to management who act accordingly.
- In response to a query regarding culvert cleaners, the Head of Environmental Infrastructure explained that currently culvert cleaners and jet systems were shared between deposes within Carmarthenshire and are deployed on a prioritisation basis subject to resources.
- It was asked how proactive was the team in offering floodgates to those who may need them in areas of prone to flooding? The Flood Defence and Coastal Protection Manager explained that 'flood fairs' were being held in areas of need. It was suggested that letters and leaflets be produced and delivered to households explaining what they could do to protect their properties from flooding.
- It was raised that currently any debris cleaned from drains was cleared and left on the pavement/roadside instead of being taken away. This was then subject to being washed back into the drainage system during the next heavy rainfall. It was observed that this practice was a waste of time and resources. It was therefore suggested that following a drain clearance debris be removed. Officers took accepted the point raised and would consider.

RESOLVED that:

- 8.1 Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Local Strategy be received.**
- 8.2 a letter be sent to Welsh Government outlining the Committee's concerns regarding future funding for flooding to allow innovative approaches for areas with a high risk of flooding.**

9. FORTHCOMING ITEMS

The Committee considered the list of forthcoming items to be placed on the agenda for the next meeting scheduled to take place on 11th March, 2024 and was afforded the opportunity to request for any specific information that Members may wish to include within the reports.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the list of forthcoming items for the Committee meeting to be held on the 11th March 2024 be agreed.

10. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 14TH DECEMBER 2023

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 14th December, 2024 be signed as a correct record.

CHAIR

DATE