

Leader's Annual Report

2017-2018



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Introduction



Burry Port

Once again it is my pleasure to present to you my annual report for 2017 – 2018. This is my third such report since becoming Leader of the Council but my first since the 2017 elections that saw quite a significant change in the balance of power within the council. This time last year I had the opportunity to welcome 29 new faces to the benches of the council chamber. That represents over a third of the total number of councillors. Over the last year they have been bombarded with training sessions and induction seminars and will now surely be some of the best informed councillors that have ever sat in this chamber. But I hope that you will all have a much better understanding of the ways of local government and that you will be better equipped to take crucial decisions over the remaining four years of this council.

Perhaps I should make it clear that I hope that this council will have a lifespan far exceeding the four years left of this current term. But as we all know, each year, on hearing the first cuckoo in spring, a new Welsh Government Minister comes forward with innovative proposals apparently for the reorganisation of local government and with equally familiar predictability, those proposals are eventually put to one side for future consideration when they are rejected by just about everyone in local government.

Councillors new and old will have become accustomed to the recurring theme of austerity. For several years central government has pursued with dogmatic zeal the wholly discredited economic policy of austerity in public finance. Many financial experts now acknowledge that there was no reason for austerity and that its imposition served no economic purpose. But the reality is that we have had to make do with less for many years now. We have sought financial efficiencies in every aspect of the council's work and I am full of admiration for the staff of the council for coming up with whole host of innovative money saving ideas. But our services have been pared to the bone and it is now becoming virtually impossible to continue protecting our front line services.

Each year the Welsh Government has to establish its own priorities and must decide how much money is available for local government. The answer is invariably “not enough”. We can only hope that a change in leadership that will follow Carwyn Jones’ impending retirement as First Minister will lead to a change in emphasis and that local government will be spared further retrenchment. Yet despite the hard times, so much has happened in Carmarthenshire over the last 12 months that makes me feel so optimistic about our future.

This time last year the Prime Minister had just visited South West Wales to sign the £1.3bn Swansea Bay City Deal. Thanks to a combination of funds from the UK Government, the Welsh Government, the public sector and the private sector, the Swansea Bay City Deal will boost the regional economy by £1.8bn and create up to 10,000 high-quality jobs over the next 15 years. Over the last 12 months, considerable progress has been made behind the scenes. This includes the £200m Life Science and Well-being Village set for Delta Lakes in Llanelli, and the ‘Yr Egin’ creative digital cluster development at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David’s campus in Carmarthen. The executive board is determined to ensure that Carmarthenshire, as a whole, fully benefits from opportunities that will be created through the Swansea Bay City Deal.



From my perspective the most significant moment of the year was the launch of the coalition’s new five year plan: “Moving Forward in Carmarthenshire”.



In this document the Executive Board set out almost 100 priority projects, schemes or services that we plan to deliver over the next five years. The plan, launched in January, identifies key areas of investment and improvement that we will drive forward during the remaining term of this council, in addition to running the council's day to day services.

They include – in terms of the environment - plans to establish Carmarthenshire as the Cycling Capital of Wales, improving road infrastructure and public transport, reducing the council's carbon footprint, supporting sustainable farming initiatives and improving the county's recycling rates.

In education, there are plans to deliver a further £129million Modernising Education Programme investment, make best use of school facilities to support community activities, engage with more young people and move schools along the Welsh language continuum.

In social care and housing, the executive board plans to develop a homelessness strategy, meet its commitment to developing 1,000 affordable homes with emphasis on bringing empty properties back into use and building new, strengthening Welsh language provision within social care settings, providing more support for carers and reducing loneliness in vulnerable and older people.

Planned investment in the county's leisure provision includes development of new and existing facilities, including leisure centres, Burry Port Harbour and Pembrey Country Park.

The regeneration of Carmarthenshire is a key feature. Transformation strategies focus on improving Llanelli, Ammanford and Carmarthen town centres, the county's coastal belt, key growth zones such as Cross Hands and importantly, the regeneration of rural areas.

Although local government is facing an uncertain time due to savage cut-backs in public spending, the council continues to provide hundreds of services on a day to day basis to residents and visitors to Carmarthenshire.

As an executive board, we have identified a number of key projects and programmes that we will strive to deliver over the next four years. We believe that by delivering these projects and programmes we can contribute towards making

Carmarthenshire the best place to live, work and visit.

Our ambitious plan seeks to continuously improve economic, environmental, social and cultural well-being in the county and by doing this we will ensure that our residents, communities, organisations and businesses are supported and enabled to develop and thrive for the benefit of our county and each other..

Detailed reports and recommendations on specific projects and programmes will be presented through the council's democratic processes over the course of the next four years.

I am fortunate as Leader to have an extremely capable and talented group of people who make up the Executive Board. As I have stated previously, they all bring their individual strengths to the table but they are at their best when they work collectively.

But surely what makes Carmarthenshire so successful is the quality of our staff led so effectively by our Chief Executive, Mark James CBE.

My annual report just scratches the surface and hardly does justice to the hard work and endeavour of the thousands of people employed by the Authority. I have made an effort to meet as many of members of staff as possible over the last 12 months and I have been overwhelmed by their sheer enthusiasm and commitment to make Carmarthenshire the best county in Wales.

My sincere thanks to you all.



Cllr. Emlyn Dole

Leader,
Carmarthenshire
County Council





Phase 1, Life Sciences and Well-being Village, Llanelli

It's now been just over a year since the Prime Minister visited South West Wales to sign the £1.3bn Swansea Bay City Deal. The importance of the City Deal can't be overstated. It has secured 11 major projects across Carmarthenshire, Swansea, Pembrokeshire and Neath Port Talbot.



Thanks to a combination of funds from the UK Government, the Welsh Government, the public sector and the private sector, the Swansea Bay City Deal will boost the regional economy by £1.8bn and create up to 10,000 high-quality jobs over the next 15 years.



Over the last 12 months, considerable progress has been made behind the scenes. This includes the development and submission of eight of the 11 City Deal project business cases to the UK and Welsh Governments for approval, with the first sign-offs expected this summer. Among the projects are the £200m Life Science and Well-being Village set for Delta Lakes in Llanelli, and 'Yr Egin', a creative digital cluster development at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David's campus in Carmarthen.

An outline planning application has now been submitted for the Life Science and Well-being Village, with work on site, subject to planning approvals, expected to start towards the end of 2018.

Projected to give the local economy a £467 million boost and create 2,000 well-paid jobs, the development will be made up of facilities including a state-of-the-art leisure centre and spaces for health and well-being services, business and research, education, training and assisted living accommodation. The site will be landscaped to

give opportunities for scenic walks, cycles and recreation as well.

Health promotion, prevention and community services will be at the centre of services delivered on site. We want to help people have the opportunity to make healthier choices and when care is needed we want to try and provide that more conveniently in the community closer to where people live. We recognise that there is a vast number of unpaid carers in the community we want to put in place measure to help support them along with those they care for.

We are working with employers, local colleges and universities to deliver training courses for students from 16 plus through to postgraduate health training for doctors and therapists. We will be targeting the provision of apprenticeships at all levels and work place learning and aim to make significant contribution to training the next generation of health and care practitioners and provide a supportive environment to enable people locally to reach their maximum potential across a wide range of professions.

Work is also quickly progressing at the first phase of 'Yr Egin', which will open this summer. Providing a cutting-edge environment for creative industries, S4C is already on board as anchor tenant for the development, which will include business accelerator facilities, incubation spaces and shared areas for interaction and networking, which will further support local entrepreneurship and creative enterprise.

Like all City Deal schemes, these projects will be underpinned by the 'golden thread' projects of world class digital infrastructure and a skills and talent initiative that will give our young people a pathway to access the high-value jobs that will be created.

The skills and talent project, being led by the South West Wales Regional Skills Partnership, is already exploring what gaps currently exist in the provision of skills, and how this can best be addressed both now and in years to come.

With statistics showing about 40% of students from the City Region not returning to work in

Carmarthenshire once they've graduated from university, the City Deal will help tackle that trend by mapping out what's currently being delivered across the region, identifying gaps in provision and introducing courses that are tailor-made to the City Deal projects.

Technology will also be put in place to enable better remote learning than ever before, so students who live in especially rural parts of the City Region will have access to the same opportunities as everyone else.

Considerable progress is being made on the City Deal's governance, too. A Joint Working Agreement that outlines principles of City Deal working will be considered for approval by all four regional local authorities in coming months, with a private sector chairman of the City Deal's economic strategy board due to be imminently appointed.

Based in the City Deal's Regional Office, a business engagement officer and a communications and

marketing officer have now been appointed to raise City Deal awareness among businesses, the media and other key stakeholders.

Made up of the Leaders and Chief Executives of the four local authorities, universities and health boards, the City Deal's Joint Committee has been regularly meeting in shadow format since the City Deal was signed so it can hit the ground running once the City Deal's governance has been formally approved.

This progress is indicative of an exhaustive amount of work that's been taking place over the last year for the benefit of residents across South West Wales, so we owe a debt of gratitude to everyone involved, not just here at Carmarthenshire Council but also at City Deal partner organisations across the region and beyond.

This work will bear considerable fruit in coming months when formal approval of the City Deal's governance and a number of City Deal projects will occur.



Transform, Innovate and Change (TIC)

Our Transform, Innovate and Change (TIC) programme is aimed at thinking differently, acting differently and therefore delivering differently. The programme which started in 2012 takes into account factors such as the potential to deliver financial efficiencies, service improvement, opportunities to work collaboratively with other public sector partners and transformational projects with potential to deliver greater efficiency savings.



To date it has helped to identify and support the delivery of some £12m savings in terms of cash and avoided costs.



We know that a great deal of improvement activity is going on across the Authority alongside the TIC programme and last year we wanted to recognise and reward it so we launched the TIC Awards which was held last July. Five inspirational projects were presented and the overall winner was our Housing Options team for the way they improved their systems for giving a wide range of advice to our residents in housing need.

TIC has also supported a key corporate initiative for Digital Transformation. This encompasses our Channel Shift project to expand the ways our residents can interact with our services by creating an account and managing services online. We also launched a major initiative around Agile Working, which will make better use of our offices and use technology so our staff have more flexibility in they work and deliver services.

To support our schools in delivering savings to protect pupil education and attainment, we created a dedicated TIC Schools post. The post has been recruited to and a work programme is being delivered identifying the potential savings schools can and are making.

TIC also engaged with all our staff and elected members to find out “What wastes your time?” This identified some 78 improvement areas which are being worked on.

The impact and results of some of these areas are:



Staff Travel – a 12% reduction / £200k +savings



Meetings - 8,000 video conferencing sessions held (since July 17)



Instant Messages – 14,000 sent (since July 17)



Invoices - a 10% reduction



Petty Cash accounts – reduced by 20 in the last year.



Postage and printing – £700k saved since 2014



Fax machines – over 130 to be removed

Going forward the TIC programme will align more closely with our Medium Term Financial Plan and work even more closely with services facing increasing financial constraints to find new ways of working and protect frontline service delivery.

Economic Development



'Opportunity Street', Llanelli

Targeted Regeneration Investment Programme


We have an ongoing commitment to the regeneration of Llanelli town centre. We are in the early stages of discussions regionally to attract and secure funding under the targeted regeneration investment programme which is looking to build on the momentum of the vibrant and viable places opportunity street funding. Our focus will remain on the town centre while stretching slightly to the station road areas. We have also included Ammanford town centre as part of our proposals. The programme will concentrate on bringing vacant sites and premises back into use, tackling poverty and creating opportunities for business and urban living.

This year we have been awarded phases 1 (£750,000) and 2 (418,000) of Welsh Government loan. Both projects linked to this allocated funding are progressing and will make a positive impact on the town centre. We have also secured a further third phase of the funding of £895,000 which we will be making available for both Llanelli and Ammanford town centre. We remain committed to the Llanelli Town Centre task force and positive progress is being made within the town centre and surrounding areas through the positive intervention of stakeholders of the BID group which involves the town council, rural council and other organisations.


Along the coast, work is progressing well on the demolition of the Pontrilas site near North Dock. We have worked with consultants to compile an outline planning application for housing with the aim of marketing the site later in 2018. Moving further west, we are currently working with a preferred developer that has an exclusivity agreement for development on the harbour side site location at Burry Port Harbour.

The project involves the creation of a new sea front visitor attraction facility containing: a new interactive and modern Sands of Speed Museum; a 42 bed sea front eco hostel; dune gardens; a sand sports area; adventure playground; events area; exhibition esplanade; enhanced Car Park; and a new pedestrian Board Walk.

We are working with a number of interested parties in relation to development of the completed nine plots of Phase 1 of the Cross Hands East Strategic Employment Site with



Having secured £4.5m of European and Welsh Government funding, plans are currently being finalised to deliver later this year a £7m project that will provide year round visitor destination facilities that will aim to maximise Pendine's heritage and its natural assets to drive forward the resorts future economic regeneration as a 'day and stay' event destination.



potential projects coming forward for consideration for the County Council's Property Development Fund. We have also sought building and layout designs for Plot 3, the largest plot on the site to provide a ready project should European or domestic funds become available in the near future. We have commenced updated survey work for Phase 2, to enable detailed planning submissions in 2018/19 as well as informing a future tender exercise for infrastructure works. In fact news has just reached us that we have secured £2.5m worth of funding for Phase 2. This will complete the overall Strategic Site to provide an overall 19ha of development land with the potential to create up to 1000 jobs.

The Cross Hands West developments have provided 143 new homes while a further two sites totalling 3.68ha are currently being marketed by the Council for residential development. Discussions led by the Local Health Board are continuing regarding the development of a medical centre and associated uses. Meanwhile the retail elements of the site continued at place with established companies including Costa, B&M, Dominos, Jenkins, the Food Warehouse and more recently Pets at Home opening on the site all creating a mix of full and part time jobs for the local economy.

Carmarthen Town Regeneration Forum Master-Plan Projects

Significant progress has been made in 2017/18 in respect of the delivery of a number of projects that were identified in the Regeneration Forum's Master-plan. EU funding has been secured to deliver both the Carmarthen Wetlands and Gateway Scheme and the redevelopment of Jackson's Square including the provision of Kiosks in Chapel St and a New Big Screen. In respect of third party led projects that the council is supporting: construction is progressing well on the Yr Egin project with works scheduled to be completed summer 2018; proposals to redevelop the Guild Hall have received planning permission, although we are still waiting for approval from CADW; and proposals to construct the Ethos Tywi office development on Carmarthen Quay are progressing positively.

Ammanford Hwb

With the support of Welsh Government the authority has acquired 41 Quay Street, Ammanford with regards to developing proposals to establish an Ammanford Hwb service. Subject to planning approval it is anticipated that the service will go live early winter 2018.

The first project supported under the Ammanford Regeneration Development Fund will involve the re-development of the former Lloyds Bank building in Ammanford and this project is expected to commence construction early summer 2018. Further applications to the fund are being developed and are progressing with their detailed applications.

Works to demolish and refurbish the current employment units in Glanamman are underway and on completion in early spring 2018 are expected to deliver improved industrial floor-space.

Significant progress has been made in 2017/18 in respect of the delivery of a number of projects that were identified in the Ammanford Task Force's Action-plan. Phase 1 works to build a retaining wall was completed in summer 2017 in respect of the proposed road widening scheme in Margaret Street which is anticipated to be delivered in summer 2018. Public realm

improvement works have been undertaken to Caragamman Crossing and Railway crossing at the bottom of Quay Street. Transport led works are ongoing to improve Tir y Dail junction.

Carmarthenshire Rural Enterprise Fund (CREF)

Under the £2m CREF we are currently helping a number of Carmarthenshire Businesses to grow by providing financial support to enable them to develop new and expanding existing premises where job creation is the result. To date seven projects have been completed which has resulted in the creation of 53 FTE jobs, 30,000 sq ft of employment space being provided and £1.2m of Private sector Investment secured. A further 19 projects are at various stages of development with construction work underway on nine of those projects. In 2019/20 the Council has committed a further £1m to the scheme and applications for the additional funding will be invited from May 2018.

Market Town Public Wi-Fi

In conjunction with Town Councils and with the financial support from EU leader programme the council will implement a two year pilot to introduce free Wi-Fi in several of the authority's Market Towns. The free Wi-Fi project comes with a two year support package for local businesses and key stakeholders to enable those bodies to maximise the benefits of the scheme.

Countywide Property Development Fund Projects

Several projects have received funding under the Countywide Property Development Fund. Works are currently ongoing on the projects at the former Jolly Tar Building on the Quay and Elliston Terrace that will see when completed 12,000 sq ft of high quality office accommodation available. A further two Carmarthen based projects are progressing with their detailed applications. Two Ammanford based projects have received funding – the former Courthouse building in Margaret Street and the Proposed Coaltown Coffee Premises in Foundry Road. A further Ammanford area based project is being progressed through to

the detailed application stage. One rural based project is currently working up a detailed application for consideration. The Council has committed a further £1.5m to the property development scheme for 2019/20 and applications from Commercial Property Developers for the additional funding will be invited from May 2018.

Rural Affairs

We have established a cross-party Rural Affairs Task Group to consider the issues effecting the rural communities in Carmarthenshire. It aims to identify actions the Council, in partnership with other public bodies and organisations, can take in addressing those issues to ensure and support rural regeneration in future years. The Group is led by Cllr. Cefin Campbell, Executive Board Member for Rural Affairs. It will look at issues affecting rural communities including economic development, broadband, housing, transport, agriculture, service provision, education and community life to name but a few. The Group aims to prepare a report and recommendations by March 2019.



Education

Pen Rhos School

Examination and assessment outcomes

Following substantial policy and key changes to the Key Stage 4 performance measures by Welsh Government, comparison with previous years isn't appropriate.

However, Carmarthenshire's outcomes at GCSE mirror performance across Wales with 57.2% of our learners achieving the key Level 2 Inclusive indicator (at least 5 number GCSE passes at grade A* to C including mathematics and language). Our result places us comfortably above the Wales average.

Outcomes of national literacy and numeracy tests at other key stages of education declined very slightly but results at Key Stage 3 continued an encouraging and ongoing upward trend in performance. Our outcomes for the Key Stage 3 Core Subject Indicator (learners achieving Level 5 for English or Welsh, Maths and Science) have achieved higher results than the Wales average for the past four years. Our performance at the Level 3 threshold (learners attaining two or more 'A' levels or equivalent qualification) continues to remain strong with an impressive 97.8% of our learners successfully achieved this goal. The result places us above the Wales average of 97.1%. Our performance has been above the national figure for five consecutive years.

Estyn School Inspections

During the year Estyn inspected 18 Carmarthenshire Schools (14 primary, three secondary and one special school). As a result, six schools were judged as having sector leading practice; seven were judged as being good schools; four schools were placed in the Estyn Monitoring category and one was placed in the Estyn Significant Improvement category.

As a result of this cycle of inspection, several of our schools have produced 'Effective Practice Case Studies' for Estyn to facilitate the wider use of their practice across Wales. Specific areas of activity include international partnership working, a curriculum to engage all learners, whole-school

approaches to supporting disadvantaged learners, science, technology, engineering and mathematics programmes, distributed leadership, effective professional dialogue, improving literacy skills, developing skills through real life experiences, planning and provision for ICT, thinking skills and the Welsh Dimension. We congratulate them warmly for this national recognition.

Our agreed areas for ongoing improvement include; further improving 'wellbeing for all' and activities in support of effective self-evaluation and planning for whole school improvement.

Curriculum Enrichment

We continue to provide a range of curriculum enrichment experiences which include:

- Participation in literacy competitions with Ysgol Stebonheath crowned the 2017 National Bookslam Champions.
- Dan Anthony, Welsh author, visited Carmarthenshire to work with some of our more able and talented writers.
- We had twelve winning submissions in the Welsh Heritage Schools Initiative with Ysgol Nantgaredig winning the National History Museum Shield for their project on the history of Carmarthen town.
- Carmarthenshire was well represented at the 2017 National Digital Learning Event with Ysgol Bro Banw winning the Online Safety Award and Joint Winners of the Digital Project Award. Coedcae School won the 2017 Hwb Community Award for Resources for the new Religious Studies GCSE.
- An increasing number of schools in Carmarthenshire are committed to helping make the world a fairer place by supporting Fairtrade and eighteen schools now hold the coveted FairAchiever Award.

Modernising Education Programme (MEP)

MEP continued apace benefitting thousands of our learners with the completion of major projects, valued at over £20 million, at Ysgol Bro Dinefwr, Maes y Gwendraeth, Carreg Hirfaen, Bryngwyn, Coedcae, St. John Lloyd, Trimsaran and Pen Rhos.

The school investment programme will continue over the next 12 months completing projects at Ysgol Parc y Tywyn, Pontyberem and Llangadog and commencing construction at Ysgol Dewi Sant and Rhys Pritchard, whilst also continuing to develop projects in readiness for investment in the coming years.

We established Carmarthenshire's first Welsh Medium Secondary School at Bro Myrddin and a primary school to replace our last Infants and Junior schools with a new Welsh Medium 3-11 Primary School at Llangennech.

Youth Support Service

There is a focus on ensuring staff receive a range of specialised training in order to develop their knowledge and skills to deliver a high quality service. This has included parenting programmes, restorative approaches, bespoke Autistic Spectrum Training, suicide prevention and substance misuse training.

In December 2017, the Youth Justice Team commenced a further period of further testing and evaluation the Enhanced Case Management process. The approach based on the 'Trauma Recovery Model' is used in supervising young offenders. The Principal Manager of the Youth Support Service addressed the Youth Justice Convention held in Leicester, in relation to our work.

Alongside this work, there is a focus on the impact Adverse Childhood Experiences on the lives of children and young people.

Music Service

The Music Service, which is highly regarded and valued both within the county and nationally, has raised the profile of Carmarthenshire right across the United Kingdom. Recent highlights include Côr Merched Sir Gâr, under the baton of the talented

musician, Islwyn Evans, performing at the Music for Youth Proms at the Royal Albert Hall, winning the prestigious Côr Cymru competition, coming second in the first ever Eurovision Choir of the Year in Riga, Latvia and enchanting Assembly Members in their Christmas Carol Service in the Senedd.



The County Orchestra performed in the Music for Youth Regional Finals at the Symphony Hall, Birmingham and visited New York to perform at the UN School. The Brass Ensemble performed at a BBC Radio Wales outside broadcast.



Children's Services

Our Children's Services continue to be innovative and look for new ways of working which focus on supporting our children and families e.g. the 'Pod' and Signs of Safety approaches in Social Work and the new 'Edge of Care' team.

The Flying Start Expansion into Ammanford is now complete with capital investment enabling the creation of new Flying Start offices with a combined Contact Centre for families. In addition we have a new childcare facility at the newly opened Ysgol Pen Rhos in Llanelli. 1,832 children (0-3) living in deprived communities are able to benefit from Flying Start in 17 locations across Carmarthenshire.

The Families First procurement process is now complete and will comprise of 13 projects focused on preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) as well as helping to mitigate the effects of ACEs on those who have already been exposed to them.

Mid & West Wales (MWW) Regional Adoption Service continues to perform well despite the challenges of the size and diversity of the region.

During the last two years we have seen a significant improvement in placement stability for our looked after children, and we will continue to monitor closely via our Accommodation Panel. The focus is on using our prevention strategies to maintain children at home with their families whenever it is safe to do so.

We have undertaken a review of our children's disability service. All new referrals for children's disability and transition will go through the Central Referral Team as a single point of contact to ensure consistency and ensure people get the help they need, when they need it.

Digital Transformation

Implementation commenced on a significant change programme for the Council, introducing online payments to schools. The new system will provide parents with the opportunity to pay for school meals and other school items such as school trips online, eliminating the need for cash to be taken and kept in school. This will provide benefits for both parents, the Local Authority and for schools.



School Choir, Latvia

Environment



Household Waste Recycling Centre, Nantycaws

Waste Management and Recycling

We continue to meet our targets for waste management and recycling despite a challenging market. The last year has seen considerable changes in the recycling and residual waste markets. The ban on paper and plastics imports by China has significantly affected commodity prices, but not recycling performance at this stage. However, the residual waste market (where non-recyclable waste is shipped to Europe for heat recovery which can be counted against recycling targets) has been difficult with a drop in recycling performance for 17/18 compared to 16/17.



The current overall recycling performance figures for the third quarter of 17/18 indicate a performance of 64.34%, which continues to meet the 19/20 statutory recycling target. Similarly, we continue to meet our landfill diversion targets.



Over 2,400 customers have signed up for the new chargeable garden waste collection scheme where subscribers pay an annual fee for the service. The service is available from March to November each year.

Public Realm Management and the Local Environment

Our Environmental Enforcement, Cleansing, Grounds Maintenance, Flood/ Coastal Management and Municipal Services teams continue to ensure that maintaining, conserving and preserving the local amenity and built environment remains a priority and there is a coordinated approach. We have provided 12 local

waste amnesties in various locations in the County which have successfully provided service provision to people that have difficulty accessing our established fixed disposal facilities.

Over 72 tonnes of recyclable material has been collected out of a total of 108T collected through the amnesties.

Collaborative project work continues to be delivered through the “Pride In Your Patch” initiative that involves working with the Housing Division, Keep Wales Tidy, and other community groups, volunteers and partners to empower the local community and individuals to contribute and assist in dealing with environmental issues in their area, for example through involvement in litter picking activities and dog fouling campaigns.

Investment in transport infrastructure

We have commenced Cross Hands EL2 Phase 2 strategic link to support economic regeneration which was designed in house, we have recognised the importance of linking our plans with the City Deal and other large regeneration initiatives. We have also improved the highway infrastructure at Ammanford to improve traffic flow and reduce congestion. We have successfully lobbied the Wales Government to commence works to progress the Llandeilo by Pass road scheme and our ambitious Towy Valley Path project connecting Llandeilo and Carmarthen.

We have successfully delivered Safe Routes to Schools Projects at Pontyberem and Carmarthen, and have delivered an investment of £445,500 into traffic management route treatment works to improve infrastructure in Bryn, Llangennech, Penygroes and Tycroes.

Road Safety and Active Travel

The Council continued to engage in collaboration and partnership working to deliver road safety education initiatives and identify sites for enforcement and engineering intervention. We have invested in road safety through funding of road safety education programmes and engineering schemes, including rural route

treatment schemes and 20mph speed limits outside schools. To date such improvements have been introduced outside 55 more school sites across the county. Additionally, we have delivered our programme of Road Safety training and engagement with vulnerable road users, including the training of older drivers, young drivers, motorcyclists, and young people.

We have redesigned the home to school transport network to facilitate travel to the LEA designated or nearest school in accordance with the Home to School Transport Policy. We successfully submitted the detailed Integrated Network Map to the Welsh Government for Active Travel, this was assessed and has since been adopted by the Welsh Government.

Maintaining our operational assets

We have continued investment into vehicle replacements during the year in accordance with our strategic fleet replacement programme.

We have developed a Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP) policy document as required by the new Well Managed Highway Infrastructure Code of Practice. We have developed a Highway Network Hierarchy to underpin the Asset Management plan and inform future management of the network. Developing the computer software within the Asset management system has allowed SCRIM investigations (that identify skid conditions of the road surface) to be brought in house, allowing year on year savings.

We have worked closely with Dwr Cymru / Welsh Water to enable delivery of continuing major engineering work on the Rainscape project in the Llanelli Area whilst minimising traffic congestion and impact for residents.

Maintaining Community and School Transport

We have continued to work with the community, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire county councils to sustain the delivery of the Bwcabus integrated transport services and key strategic bus Services.

Development Planning

The Local Development Plan (LDP) sets out the spatial vision for the future of Carmarthenshire

(excluding that area within the Brecon Beacons national Park). It has a direct effect on the lives of every resident of the County as well as major implications on investment programmes, other plans and strategies, communities and landowners alike. Our current Local Development Plan sets out our long-term approach to land use planning until 2021 - and impacts the direction of growth opportunities beyond that period. Community engagement continues to be a key element in producing and implementation of this plan.

The second Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) covering the year 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017 was submitted to Welsh Government on 31 October 2017. This report assessed the extent to which the Local development Plan (LDP) strategy and objectives are being achieved, whether the Plan's policies are functioning effectively and whether changes in legislation and national guidance have any impacts on the Plan. The report concludes that several changes in these circumstances warrant a Review of the LDP. The Review is now in progress with the aim of the new LDP being in place by the end of 2021.

Maximising Planning Contributions

Over the last year, contributions from Section 106 planning agreements have been utilised to deliver a variety of community benefits, including those relating to education, open space, recreation and highway safety. Actual payments received by Carmarthenshire Council during 2017/18 totalled in excess of £960,000, with spend during the same year exceeding £670,000. Both spend and payments received were £100,000 greater than the previous year.

Some of the projects delivered include:

- **Pentref Aled Afal, Ysgol Gymraeg Brynsierfel** –developing children's imagination, literacy and communication skills, as well as social skills in an outdoor area at Ysgol Gymraeg Brynsierfel creating an imaginary village for Welsh storybook characters from the books by Delyth Owen.
- **Morfa Berwig Local Nature Reserve** - Three impassable bridges in Morfa Berwig Local Nature Reserve have been repaired and converted to footpaths. The reserve is used by many people in the local community as a natural green space and also by community

volunteers who carry out conservation work on the reserve.

- **Llwynhendy Play Pod** – creation of a play pod and loose parts located between the Ysgol Brynteg and Llwynhendy Integrated Children's Centre. The play pod and resources will be accessed by pupils of the school during teaching hours, the Integrated Children's Centre during their evening play clubs and by the wider community on weekends and during school holidays. The pod hosts a range of loose parts such as den building nets, ropes, planks, tyres, large blocks, scrap resources and sports equipment and is the only natural local play area with trees and natural play spaces within the ward of Llwynhendy.

Collaborative Working

The Minerals and Waste Unit is widely regarded to be widely regarded as a Centre of Excellence for mineral and waste planning in South Wales. The Unit provide a minerals and waste planning services to seven other Local Authorities.

The Council's Building Control Unit maintains an established network of more than 70 local partners including agents, consultants and other construction professionals to ensure the delivery of a high standard of service.

The Planning Division continue to work in partnership and collaboratively with colleagues across the Council and other organisations to deliver sustainable projects whilst supporting economic regeneration. An example of this is the work towards providing and managing suitable habitat for marsh fritillary butterfly through the Caeau Mynydd Mawr Special Area of Conservation which received a highly Commended Award from the RTPi Wales in November 2017. It received this award because it facilitates a structured solution for developments within the economic growth area, delivering the necessary mitigation required and ensuring that each development is compliant with legislation.

Built Heritage

Carmarthenshire's Built Heritage Team have been involved with the Award winning renovation works at Pantyffynnon Station where their support and

commitment for the project was acknowledged by the judging panel led to it being awarded the 'best restored structure' at the UK wide Railway Heritage Trust Conservation Awards. A heritage carpentry student (trained by the Tywi Centre, Built Heritage Team) was also given a wonderful opportunity to work on the restoration of the Grade II listed station.

Park and Playground Asset Transfers and Collaboration

All but a handful of parks and playgrounds have now transferred to local organisations, including sporting associations and community and town councils, with Maintenance and Improvement Grants provided. Local management of these facilities will ensure that they are maintained to a level that reflects local requirements and will facilitate grant funding opportunities that the County Council would not be eligible for. Carmarthenshire County Council has been recognised as a leader in facilitating asset transfers and has contributed to Welsh Government guidance to encourage best practice in this area.

We have also been awarded Welsh Government funding to help develop property records across the community and town council and third sector, to ensure that community assets are effectively identified and promoted as part of the work Public Services Board's Well-being Plan.

Parc Howard

The County Council has continued to invest in the park and museum and has now entered into a formal joint management arrangement with Llanelli Town Council: The Parc Howard Collaboration Group. The Group will jointly fund current running costs; explore the potential for grant funding to further develop and maintain facilities; and prioritise how best to spend the £500,000 capital funding allocated in the County Council's capital programme to further enhance this prime asset for Llanelli and the wider County.

Property Design Team

The Council's Property Design Team continues to deliver a wide range of new facilities to improve the assets available for the Council's services. During 2017/18 we completed four new schools:

Ysgol Penrhos at Seaside, Llanelli, Major extensions to St John Lloyd School in Llanelli, The new Trimsaran School and major extensions at Coedcae School. The new apartments and retail units at 10-12 Stepney St, Llanelli and first phase of new industrial units at Glanamman were also completed.

Graduate and Apprentice Recruitment

The Council's Environment Department continues to support the Next Steps programme, which provides four weeks of work experience with local construction firms and apprentice appointments for the winning candidates. In summer 2018 the Council will also be offering apprentice places for the first time as part of this programme.

The Council has once again supported the Carmarthenshire and Regional Construction Training Groups (CCTAL) and Cyfle which employ and train shared construction apprentices, Cyfle was recognised as a leader in apprentice training through the award of the Queens Award for Enterprise – Innovation in 2017.

During 2017/18 we recruited 10 graduates and 10 apprentices into the Environment Department and plan to recruit more during the coming year.

Agile Working

We have launched our agile working approach across the Council's office buildings to further reduce the back-office costs and enhance our office environment for staff. Work is underway in

a range of buildings to introduce agile working spaces, including major refurbishments at St David's Park and 3 Spilman Street.

Industrial Estates and Farms

Our 400+ Industrial units and 28 farms continue to be fully let. Our industrial units provide a flexible source of easy-in, easy-out employment space for local businesses and support businesses which provide approximately 2,000 jobs in the County. We are also now offering new letting opportunities in Glanamman following the refurbishment of 13 new units, with more to come in Phase 2.

Energy Reduction

Increasing utility costs, plus associated penalties for carbon emissions, require delivery of ever more challenging energy efficiency programmes. We have signed up to exploring ambitious energy saving opportunities in our non-domestic buildings, including schools, under the Welsh Government supported Re:fit Cymru programme, which uses energy performance contracts to guarantee projected energy savings. This complements and accelerates our successful corporate energy efficiency programme which continue to deliver year-on-year reductions in our energy consumption across the Council's buildings.



Resources



County Hall, Carmarthen

As I mentioned in my introduction, the difficult funding scenario facing Local Government continues, and Council has for some time recognised the need to do things differently and prioritise how it wishes to spend its increasingly scarce resources. We have always been able to set a balanced budget despite the decreasing resources, whilst at the same time maintaining service standards to a large degree.

Once again this year we have received a settlement for only one year at individual authority level and although at an overall 0.2% increase it was more favourable and supportive of Local Government than had originally been anticipated. This is again a real term reduction in funding, and it's forecasted that negative settlements will return to Local Government in future years. We have also faced reductions in some of the specific grants from Welsh Government which has added to the financial pressures on services.

Over the coming three years reductions of £30m will need to be delivered assuming the reduction in Local Government funding continues as forecast within our Medium Term Financial Plan. In addressing the continued pressure and real term reduction in funding, whilst at the same time ensuring that council tax increases were, as far as possible minimised, we have had to continue to seek efficiencies in the way we deliver services and unfortunately in some instances looked at the level of service provision itself.

This year's consultation process has been wide and varied using mixed methods of approach to ascertain a broad spectrum of views on the budget. This has allowed significant debate on the budget and I would like to express my thanks to all who took part in the consultation or responded to the surveys. As a result of the consultation, the final settlement received, and changes in the validation assumptions we were able to revisit some of the savings proposals and also ensure that we protected the Delegated Schools Budget, which together with the establishment of the £500k 'schools Development fund' has meant that we are ensuring that schools are in a strong

position to continue to provide a high level education service moving forward.

Through the process I believe that we have delivered a sustainable and viable Budget Strategy which:

- Responds to the consultation concerns;
- Ensures, as far as possible that service levels and standards are maintained;
- Recognises that our citizens are finding it hard in the current climate and therefore minimises, as far as possible, any increase in the council tax;
- And as far as possible prepares the Authority for any future reductions in funding that may lie ahead.

Collaboration/City Deal

We have responded positively to the collaboration agenda, seeking to mitigate budget reductions and grow resilience where possible. Building on the existing relationship with Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Carmarthenshire now fulfils the Section 151 responsibilities to the Fire Authority members.

The council acts as the host authority for the Swansea Bay City Deal, providing not only statutory functions but leading the discussion with Welsh Government on business rates retention and providing procurement advice as well. More generally, Carmarthenshire's procurement team have been working jointly with Pembrokeshire to create an overarching joint procurement approach, realising the benefits of increased scale whilst respecting individual needs.

Dyfed Pension Fund

As part of the ongoing development of the Wales Pension Partnership, significant activity has taken place during the year to ensure we are operating an effective Pension Pooling arrangement for Wales. The Joint Governance Committee has met three times during the year and has appointed the third party operator Link Fund Solutions who will operate the Pool moving forward, this fund and operator will obviously be regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

The Joint Governance committee has also agreed the first investment fund for the Pool which will be a Global Equity Fund. As the Wales Pension Partnership develops not only will there be greater investments returns, but we also anticipate seeing a reduction in our investment management expenses for all eight Wales funds. Carmarthenshire County Council is the Host Authority for this Pool in which the arrangement requires us to provide administrative and secretarial support and implement decisions made by the Joint Governance Committee. Dyfed Pension Fund itself continues to operate in a stable manner and currently has a value of £2.6 billion and at funding level of some 97%.

Communities



The directorate for Communities is one of the largest departments in the Authority employing nearly 1,600 people with overall spend of close to £144 million. It generates nearly £50 million of income. The department is diverse, delivering including Adult Social Care, Environmental Health, Housing, Museums, libraries and leisure.

Adult Social Care

Demand for adult social care provision is steadily growing across Wales. With Carmarthenshire's population of over 85 year olds growing by nearly 3% a year there is an inevitability that, in the medium term, we will have to spend more on this service area. Welsh Government sponsored work indicates that Social Care Funding in Wales in this service area would need to rise by 4% in real terms each year with demand pressures on social care rising by 4.1% a year over the next 15 years due to complex and chronic health conditions.

However, our Older Person's Strategy, launched in 2015, aimed to transform services through the development of community based provision and through a change in culture that recognises that over prescribing care to people leads to increased levels of frailty and the loss of independence. As a result our integrated health and social care service has now managed within its allocated budget for the third year in succession, bucking all national trends.

A major contribution to better management of resources has been the implementation of our commissioning framework for domiciliary care. Carmarthenshire implemented a framework for independent providers that ensures a greater emphasis of quality over cost, monitors providers' call durations electronically and enables providers to use the hours more flexibly to achieve the outcomes that the individual wishes to achieve. This framework has placed us as amongst the most forward thinking in Wales and has seen us working with the National regulator (CIW) to run national workshops to support other authorities in improving this challenging area. Last year we consolidated the in-house domiciliary care provision by investing in our in-house service.

Over the next year we expect to see an increase in the proportion of domiciliary care provided by our in-house service. We continued to work closely and effectively with Hywel Dda University Health Board developing a range of initiatives to support people at home. Overall, we are in a good position to respond to the Parliamentary Review of Health and Social Care.

We will further increase the supply of Extra Care through the Delta lakes development, building on the success of the Extra care developments in Ammanford and Carmarthen. We are retaining our current in house residential provision and work is now proceeding on confirming what capital investment will be needed to improve the physical environments to meet future needs.

Our information advice and assistance team, Dewis Sir Gar, provides a 24 hour service via 0300 333 2222 number, coupled with the decision to create a dedicated out of hours social work service enables people to get the right help at the right time.

The launch of Careline Services as a local Authority trading company provides an opportunity for innovation in technology enabled care and demonstrates our desire to innovate in improving the quality of care for our residents. With 85% of the staff in this area being bilingual we are now able to truly deliver on our more than just words strategy in providing an active offer to people across Wales in this sensitive area.

Adult Safeguarding is a priority and over the last year we have invested in a new structure for this service to improve response times and ensure that we have the capacity to prevent the abuse of vulnerable people. This has been a successful programme of change with improved response times of 92.13% of adult protection enquiries completed in seven days enabling us to be confident that the most vulnerable people in the community are safer than ever. We have led on a number of regional initiatives in relation to safeguarding such as a threshold document and establishing consistency of practice concerning Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards.

We are collaborating with HDUHB to transform mental health services and this programme is now at implementation stage. We are remodelling our learning disability day services, reviewing our disability service and developing our substance misuse services. Reviewing care packages in a timely way for these clients has been a priority and compliance in review completion is now close to 100% for these vulnerable client groups.

Improving services for carers has been a priority this year with the appointment of a Carers Information and Assessment Officer and carers champions across all social work teams.

We are collaborating with colleagues in housing to develop a range of accommodation options for people with mental health and learning disabilities. As part of the implementation of the SSWB Act, we are developing creative solutions to meeting individual needs. An example of this is training a group of individuals with mental health issues to run a half marathon, the overall objective to improve their mental health and wellbeing.

We continue to progress more regional ways of working, such as the pooling of long term budgets and setting up joint commissioning.

Housing and Public Protection:

One in ten of people in Carmarthenshire live in a council house. We are proud that we have been able to invest in these homes over many years so that they exceed the National Home Standard. This has continued through the year with over £10 million being spent on maintaining high quality secure, council owned homes.

Our major Health Impact Study will also shortly be published and demonstrates the significant impact our investment has had in improving people's health and wellbeing and the cost benefit this has had for the health service.

This long term investment has given us the opportunity to now invest in growing our housing stock enabling more people to live in secure, affordable homes that are of a good standard. This allows for our affordable homes strategy to be ambitious and will increase the number of affordable homes by more than 1000 in the next five years.

I am delighted that we have exceeded the target in the last year and am proud that we have been buying homes from the open market back into the

public sector at a rate of over one a week. Over 400 additional affordable homes have already been delivered.

Plans to start building homes again are now well advanced on a number of potential sites. A housing company has now been established which will further develop new options to buy, as well as rent. We have also been looking at innovation in terms of how we go about designing, manufacturing and constructing potential new build homes, in conjunction with key partners.

Changes to the way that welfare benefits are administered and delivered have also been central to our thinking and plans are well advanced to mitigate the impact for our tenants. Our Universal Credit Action Plan will make sure support is in place when it is needed but will also promote some tenants taking more responsibility in managing their accounts and seeking opportunities in terms of training and employment.

Finally, there are many of our services that go relatively unseen but have played a significant role in people's lives. Examples include the numerous Moneywise and financial exploitation schemes to protect vulnerable people run by our Trading Standards Division, our Food Hygiene Service delivered by our Food, Safety and Health team and the proactive way we are delivering homelessness services in the County.

Leisure and Heritage

Four years ago leisure was advancing plans to launch leisure as an arm's length trust. Since the decision was taken not to go down this route the service has gone from strength to strength.

This decision was supported by key capital investment decisions with this administration providing unprecedented capital investment in leisure, sport and culture. Our leisure centres have seen an investment of nearly a million pounds in Gym refurbishments which continues to see user numbers soar and income rising as we offer the best all-round experience in the county. With extended opening hours and family membership now available to children aged 11 and over and it costs less than £1.50 a day for a family to have unlimited access to pools, gyms and classes, this is great value - and a real contribution to making Carmarthenshire's population healthy and active. Satisfaction levels are higher than ever and as a

result we have more than 1000 extra paying members. This has led to us being shortlisted for the national UK active awards.

Work is needed in facilities in Llanelli and we will be investing more than £20 million for a new leisure centre on the Delta Lakes site. Work is ongoing to secure a development partner to deliver this ambitious scheme as part of the wider Wellness Village development at Delta Lakes. The new leisure centre aims to include Wales' only purpose built diving centre, whilst linking the coast with the town and providing the people of Llanelli with the best leisure facilities in the county. £1 million has also been secured to invest in Ammanford Leisure Centre's all weather pitch and car parking facilities later this year. Preliminary planning is already underway.

We have an ambitious cycling strategy supported by real investment in infrastructure, development and events. The Carmarthen Town velodrome has been fully restored to competition standard providing a venue in the county town for national competitions not seen for more than 50 years. Work is also underway on the half million pound closed circuit cycle track investment on the edge of Pembrey Country Park. Similarly, work is underway on the Western end of the new cycle track in the Towy valley, all of which will act as a catalyst for Carmarthenshire to become the cycling hub of Wales. On the 2nd September this year, the County will host the Grand Depart for the prestigious Tour of Britain cycle race, bringing huge profile to the County and its wonderful assets.

Investment is well underway at Pembrey Country Park with a new amenity block being built for the caravan and camping site which now provides online booking capability. Design development is progressing for the new restaurant facility which will be in place for 2019, whilst Wi-Fi facilities and a new barrier system to improve traffic flow for the park have also been procured for installation during 2018.

We have also concluded the development of Burry Port Harbour with the private sector this year. Burry Port Marina Ltd (part of The Marine Group) take over management and maintenance responsibility for the harbour from the 1st April 2018, with a commitment to invest in new re-fuelling facilities, a new harbour office and café, along with a sustainable dredging solution for the harbour.

I was so pleased to support the launch of the Carmarthenshire Culture Awards which attracted in excess of 150 nominations from members of the public for awards across eight categories of culture and culminated in a celebration of excellence at the Ffwrnes Theatre, Llanelli on 6th April 2018.

Our library service is better used than ever with our new mobile service routes tested, reviewed and fully embedded to provide essential services for our rural areas. Our Libraries now meet all of the Welsh Public Library Standards 18 core entitlements in full, and of all the quality indicators Carmarthenshire fully met six and partially met one. Visits to Carmarthenshire libraries are at an incredible 1,142,357 physical visits, and 273,173 virtual visits. I was proud to see that Llanelli library lends the 3rd highest number of books of any library in the United Kingdom. The new Library 'Makerspace initiative' launched at Ammanford Library, working in partnership with Fusion, Unloved Heritage, Communities 1st, Repair Café and Media and Film Youth workers, has drawn national recognition and praise for its innovative engagement.

A new museums strategy has now been agreed by members and is supported by capital funding to invest at the County Museum in Abergwili (£1m), and Parc Howard in Llanelli (£500k), along with a further £500k for a new Museums Collections store. Substantial external investment has been secured to replace and enhance the museum of speed in Pendine with work due to start on site late in 2018. The development of the grounds at the county museum in Abergwili (providing a gateway for the new cycle path in the Towy valley) has secured funding for development in 2018 with the lease being finalised with the Tywi Gateway Trust to initiate this exciting scheme imminently.

The main contractor has been appointed to begin work on the new Archive at the rear of Carmarthen Library in the summer of 2018, with a 12 month build period. This will provide a state of the art home and access to the public for heritage documents that reflect the remarkable history of the county.

This is a level of investment never seen before in our heritage and will provide a window into the county's history for future generations.

Promoting the Welsh language



St. David's Parade, Welsh Week

Promotion of the Welsh language in our county has continued during the year and the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy has set a clear path to follow. With the support of our partners on the Welsh Language Strategic Forum, we have developed a number of projects such as the booklet 'Being Bilingual in Carmarthenshire', which explains the benefits of bilingualism to the parents and carers of our children and young people. An exciting period awaits as we see further developments in the county's 'priority areas'; these being the areas where linguistic change was at its most prominent according to the 2011 Census. Again with the support of our partners, we can fulfil intensive work which is tailored to very local needs, whilst trying to influence positively on the use and development of Welsh.

The Welsh Language Standards were provided to the Council in March 2016 and we have now been implementing the new framework for two years. Council departments have responded well to the Standards and are continuing to improve in terms of service and workforce planning. We are eager to encourage customers from all parts of the county to contact us as a Council through the medium of Welsh and to take pride in the skills they possess. Likewise, I would encourage our learners to contact us in Welsh – it's a perfect opportunity to practice.

During the year, a special working relationship has developed with the National Centre for Learning Welsh. The Council is fortunate to be a local provider but we have also offered numerous opportunities for our workforce to learn and improve their skills. Indeed, this year more staff than ever registered on courses in the county, and we look forward to continuing this work.

The Armed Forces



Musn. Tolhurst from The Prince of Wales Divisional Band

During the year, we have seen a number of developments in terms of achieving the Armed Forces Community Covenant. The Covenant is an opportunity to promote support for the Armed Forces Community who work and live in Carmarthenshire and to recognise and remember the sacrifices made. In partnership with Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire Councils, we have attracted funding from the Ministry of Defence to appoint a Regional Officer who will work closely with this community and ensure engagement with them in terms of services and challenges faced. Additional funding was also received to establish information and advice hubs, and I look forward to reporting on the progress of this project next year.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the third sector organisations that provide specialist advice and services to help personnel serving at present, personnel that have served in the past, and their families – your contribution is invaluable.