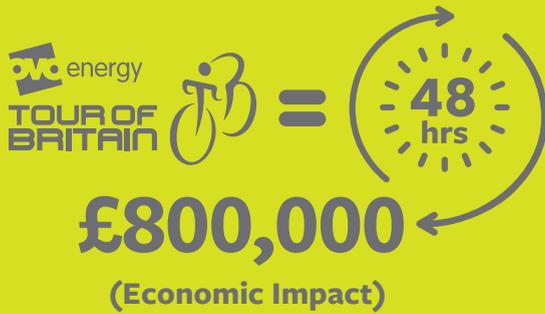


Leader's Annual Report 2018-2019

Key highlights 2018 - 2019

Major Events



Helped to identify and support the delivery of

£16m savings

Economic development

£16.2m



private sector and external funding investment secured

Communities

£45m

to be invested in existing council homes over the next three years.



Resources

76% of our spend is with Welsh suppliers



Average Welsh local authority spend with Welsh suppliers is 59%

Education

72% of **GCSE** entries graded **A*-C Grade**



Environment

£2.8m

invested in highway resurfacing



47,234 appointments 2018/2019

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Introduction



I am pleased to present to you my fourth annual report as Leader of Carmarthenshire County Council. This time last year I spoke enthusiastically about the launch of the coalition's new five year plan "Moving Forward in Carmarthenshire". The document set out almost 100 priority projects, schemes or services that we planned to deliver over a five year period. Some 16 months later I am delighted to say that we are well on the way to accomplishing our goals and that new and exciting projects have been added to that original ambitious list.

One of the exciting projects included in the original document was to establish Carmarthenshire as the Cycling Capital of Wales. In September of last year the cycling world came to Pembrey for the opening day of the Tour of Britain. It was Geraint Thomas' first race at home since being crowned Tour de France. After that day no-one could be left in any doubt that we are serious in our intent to make Carmarthenshire the Cycling Capital of Wales. Indeed, having attracted thousands of spectators to the 2018 OVO Energy Tour of Britain Grand Depart, world-class cycling will return to Carmarthenshire in June 2019 when the finale of the OVO Energy Women's Tour takes place exclusively within the county.

A better than expected but still essentially cash neutral budget settlement from Welsh Government for 2019-20 meant that we were able to ensure that Council Tax will increase by 4.89%, less than originally feared. At this level we are able to deliver services and invest in key areas, whilst minimising the impact on the public. We were

very pleased to be able to respond to public opinion by removing or deferring some budget proposals most strongly objected to during the budget consultation process, including reduced winter gritting operations and the closure of the Pendine Outdoor Education Centre. Meanwhile, school meal prices and car parking fees have been frozen, and extra money has been put in to the budget for education and social care.

We have been able to present a fair and balanced budget which responds to the major concerns fed back from the consultation and provides significant extra resource to critical services.

The Swansea Bay City Deal remains on track to deliver an unprecedented programme of investment in Carmarthenshire. I am confident that the City Deal has the potential to improve people's lives in all parts the county, both urban and rural, by raising aspirations, improving services, boosting skills, and creating well-paid employment opportunities. We can make progress by working together on this.

'Canolfan S4C Yr Egin' was officially opened late last year at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David's Carmarthen campus. Phase one of the 4,000 square metre 'creative industry' development is already close to full occupation, with S4C's newly-relocated headquarters at its heart. A second phase of work is also planned, adding a further 4,250 square metres of commercial floor space for creative sector businesses. City Deal funding worth £5m will contribute to an overall £24.3m project cost. The move to Yr Egin has been an important milestone for S4C and I am confident that this relocation will be a catalyst for supporting employment and the Welsh language in Carmarthenshire.

Another ambitious project that we embarked upon during the last year was the setting up of Delta Well-being. It is a Local Authority Trading Company that is wholly owned by Carmarthenshire County Council and involved the transfer of the Council's Careline service into the Company. The company's main focus is on ensuring that customers receive the very best advice on how the latest technology, be it in the

home or when out and about, can improve their independence.

In February 2019, the Council declared a ‘Climate Emergency’, giving our commitment to become a net zero carbon local authority by 2030 and to develop a clear plan within the next year. An update will be provided on this work in the 2019/20 Annual Report and we will continue to build on those initiatives currently in place whilst working with our Public Services Board partners to develop opportunities to deliver carbon savings.

As always I want to thank my colleagues on the Executive Board for their continuing support and enthusiasm to do the best for Carmarthenshire. The same must also be said for all other Carmarthenshire councillors who passionately represent their individual council wards. I suspect that the public at large will never fully appreciate the efforts made by back bench councillors on a daily basis to do their best for the constituents. They deserve credit and lasting appreciation for their endeavours.

In Carmarthenshire we have some of the finest officers in Wales. I can’t thank them enough for their efforts. They are the people who make a reality of our ambitious plans to continuously improve the economic, environmental, social and cultural well-being of the county. They work tirelessly to ensure that our residents, communities, organisations, businesses and visitors are supported and enabled for the benefit of the county and each other.

Before I close my remarks, I want to pay formal tribute to our Chief Executive, Mark James CBE who announced his retirement earlier this year. He has served Carmarthenshire County Council with distinction since his appointment in 2002 and has been a towering figure in Welsh local government. He has spent more than 40 years in public service and was justifiably awarded a CBE in 2012 for his service to local government. I would like to thank him sincerely for his commitment over the last seventeen years.

In conveying my thanks, I also wish to convey my congratulations to Wendy Walters, who has been appointed as the new Chief Executive, following a thorough and detailed recruitment process. A local person, nurtured in local government, Wendy will be the first woman to take on the role of Chief Executive. I look forward to working with her to continue the good work and I am confident

that we will do so, with renewed vigour and determination to drive our ambitions, to inspire our workforce and to deliver for our communities.



As we look forward to 2019/20, I’d like to draw attention to our Mini Executive Board campaign, where 10 extremely talented young children will shadow us, asking us key questions and helping give our communities a better understanding of our priorities and projects. Bearing in mind that everything we do has an impact on our future generations, we want to involve young people in the delivery of our five-year plan – Moving Forward in Carmarthenshire.

As is usual in local government I’m sure that the next year will bring its new challenges and opportunities but I can assure you that I and my Executive Board will continue to do the best we can for the benefit of Carmarthenshire as a whole.

Cllr. Emlyn Dole

Leader, Carmarthenshire County Council

Regeneration & Policy



Yr Egin, S4C Headquarters, Carmarthen

Regeneration is the Council's number one priority. The Swansea Bay City Deal offers an opportunity to significantly improve the prosperity of the County. Alongside this programme the Council will also undertake a number of developments focusing on rural areas and market towns. During 2018/19, we have created 419 jobs, 111 of which are in a new locations. Through specific world of work schemes, 951 people were supported to volunteer and 134 people were supported into jobs.

The Council is also very aware of its role as a community leader and will be committed to developing effective partnerships and ensuring engagement with a range of stakeholders working for the benefit of Carmarthenshire. To that end, we have secured £16.2m of private sector investment and external funding.



Town Centres

Work is progressing very well in our three primary towns of Ammanford, Carmarthen and Llanelli through the good partnership work of their respective taskforces and forum.

In Ammanford, notable achievements this year include a new customer service Hwb in Quay Street, which opened in December and provides face to face advice on a range of council services, whilst support was also given to develop the premises to house an exciting local growing company named “Coaltown Coffee”.

In Carmarthen Yr Egin opened its doors in late summer with S4C relocating its Headquarters to the venue. Since opening a number of other related businesses have also started operating from the venue with the venture proving a great success. Progress on the Guildhall and Y Morfa has

been made with both now expected to commence later this spring. We have engaged with a developer to progress our aspirations in Jacksons Lane and expect this work to progress over the coming year. In Llanelli we have been busy securing funding from Welsh Government and have recently launched the Targeted Regeneration Investment programme. Our focus remains on the town centre while stretching slightly to include Station Road. Ammanford town centre is also included as part of the programme. The programme will concentrate on bringing vacant sites and premises back into use, tackling poverty and creating opportunities for business and urban living.



Good progress has been made in driving forward the Swansea Bay City Deal and we are committed to ensuring that the county fully benefits from the opportunities that will be created.

In summer of 2018 all four Councils of the Swansea Bay City Deal unanimously approved the Joint Committee Agreement which formally established the City Deal programme and supporting governance structures. The Joint Committee met formally for the first time in August 2018 and a newly established Economic Strategy Board, representing the private sector, was established in early September. Engagement with regional businesses and industry has been a priority over the last year with a series of workshops and a large scale engagement event taking place at the end of 2018 and a further series of local engagement activity planned for 2019.

Following the completion of two City Deal reviews in early 2019 the Joint Committee have since approved the formal submission of two project business cases to UK and Welsh Government for approval which is expected imminently and will release government funding to the region. As a priority the Joint Committee is continuing to develop City Deal business cases alongside the implementation of recommendations made in the two reviews.

The Llanelli Wellness and Life Science Village

This important, once in a generation, £200m project is taking shape and over the past year has achieved a number of significant milestones. The Village's outline planning application was unanimously approved by Planning Committee in January 2019 and a Full Business Case is being prepared to access £40m of City Deal funding. We are currently working with specialist consultants Arup to design Phase 1, with a view to opening the Wellness Hub (state of the art leisure centre), Clinical Delivery Centre and business incubation /acceleration space and education/training facilities in 2021.

In subsequent phases, Carmarthenshire residents and visitors will benefit from a Wellness Hotel, outdoor recreation and assisted living facilities.

I recognise the uncertainty generated by recent media coverage and, in particular, developments at Swansea University. I wish to place on record the Council's continued commitment to the Wellness Village given its strategic significance in driving regeneration, creating diverse employment opportunities and boosting the economy. Whilst it has been a challenging time, I was pleased to receive the findings of two independent reports which confirmed that the project observed due process and governance in all its undertakings. We now steadfastly move forward, not backward, with our stakeholder partners to deliver landmark facilities and services that will enhance quality of life and place, and improve aspiration and attainment.

Coastline

Along the coast, work to demolish the Pontrilas building at North Dock has been completed. We have shown our ambitions for the North Dock area which has been supported by the submission of an outline planning application for housing with the aim of marketing the site along with other sites in North Dock later in 2019.

Progressing West, the new RNLI station at Burry Port has been completed and we are preparing to market development sites around the harbour side to support our long term regeneration aspirations for the area. At the western end of the county work has commenced on the £7m Pendine



Attractor project which will see on completion in summer 2020 a new sands of speed museum, 42 bed eco hostel, external exhibition area, events area, beach sports area, adventure playground, museum gardens and improved parking facilities.

Cross Hands Growth Zone

We have active interests on the Phase 1 plots with developers pursuing delivery of their projects either via the County Council's Property Development Fund or through Welsh Government. Site designs and a Business Plan have been prepared for Plot 3 in readiness should European Funding become available towards the end of the programme.

Survey Works for Phase 2 have been completed and have informed the Planning submissions and specifications for tendering the works. The works are being procured via the new Regional Civil Engineering Works Framework and will be expected to commence later in 2019. These works will complete the infrastructure for the whole site.

Private sector led works are proceeding on the new 23,000 sqft retail supermarket at Parc Eithin, Cross Hands West and designs work for the scheme for the proposed development of a medical centre and associated uses is underway. Another private sector led development at the former Co-op site on the Business Park is proceeding at pace.

Together these developments will deliver full and part time jobs for the local economy in the short to medium term.

Business Engagement

Supporting businesses throughout the County is a key priority of the economic development division within Carmarthenshire County Council. Our

business support and funding is one way or another designed to assist the business community, whether linked to town centre regeneration, rural development, urban redevelopment or anywhere in between.

Our Economic Development team continues to coordinate and deliver a suite of entrepreneurship and business support products and services to enable a vibrant business community throughout the County. The support is offered to our larger key employers as well as the micro enterprises which make up the vast majority of the County's businesses.

Business Grants and Loans

The Economic Development Team continue to deliver an array of different funds and loans to meet the needs of the businesses across the County. This year we launched a new business fund to support the set up and growth of businesses located in Carmarthenshire. Both the Business Start Up Fund and Business Growth funds are proving very popular. I was once again



pleased to be involved in the launch and final of the Beacon Bursary, which is an annual entrepreneurship competition delivered by Carmarthenshire County Council in partnership with Coleg Sir Gâr and University of Wales Trinity Saint David. The Bursary provides budding entrepreneurs an opportunity to access finance, office space and a wealth of advice and support, and will also provide the best opportunity for their new businesses to become established and flourish.

This year under our Property Development Fund we have seen the completion of the first five projects supported which between them have resulted in the creation of 27,304 sq feet of

employment space with the potential to accommodate 111 jobs. The overall £4.5m fund is expected to realise in excess of £18m investment in commercial property space that will have the potential to accommodate a total of 450 jobs countywide.

To support the growth and development of the county's rural businesses, the Carmarthenshire Rural Enterprise Fund continues to go from strength to strength. To date 16 businesses have benefited from the fund and fourteen of those businesses are now operating in their new or improved premises having completed their projects which have resulted in an investment in excess of £3m and the creation of 64 jobs in rural Carmarthenshire. In addition to the above we are currently working with 20 rural businesses with a view to further projects being delivered in 19/20. In addition to grant support we have secured a further £895,000 of Welsh Government Repayable Funding to add to the £1.16m we received last year to offer as Town Centre Loans targeted at Ammanford and Llanelli. All the proposed schemes will make a positive impact on the respective town centres.

Community Bureau

During 2018/19 the Bureau has handled 434 enquires and supported 409 organisations. The support offered has assisted the creation of 88 jobs, safeguarded 46, and moved 738 people into volunteering, levering in over £6m worth of investment into the county. The level of support provided by the Bureau has delivered astonishing community benefits, helping to make our third sector in Carmarthenshire vibrant.

LEADER Programme

Funded through the Rural Development Plan for Wales (2014-2020), the LEADER programme is designed to get local people, businesses and communities involved in delivering sustainable, yet innovative solutions to address some of the economic, social and environmental challenges facing rural areas.

To date over 30 projects have been awarded totalling over £2.6m tackling a range of varying issues within our rural communities from installation of electric vehicle charging points to

larger scale initiatives such as piloting the installation of free public Wi-Fi across our rural market towns.

The programme has provided a test bed for innovative new ideas across rural Carmarthenshire which provides a foundation for future development and sustainability.

Rural Affairs

The cross-party Rural Affairs Task Group has continued to meet during the year and has engaged a number of different partner organisations and stakeholders. In September 2018 a successful rural affairs conference was held with over 150 stakeholders in attendance. It was an important opportunity to further consider some of the key issues facing Carmarthenshire's rural communities. The final report and recommendations are expected in July 2019.

Promoting the Welsh Language

Promotion of the Welsh language in our county has continued and with the support from our partners on the county's Strategic Forum we have been able to progress on a number of key projects.

During the year, the Forum have published an information pack for people moving to the county. The pack contains statistical information about the Welsh language, information about learning Welsh and Welsh medium education and the opportunities to use the Language in community life and through social media. We are keen to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to learn and to use the Language, and to celebrate our rich cultural heritage. In order to distribute the information pack, new residents to the county will now receive a copy as part of Electoral registration and there has also been a pilot project with Menter Gorllewin Sir Gâr, which worked with a housing association and a local estate agent. The work of distributing the pack will continue during 2019/20.

Development work was undertaken during 2018-19 with the council's Language Leaders. Around 45 Language Leaders are now working within the council to ensure that our services are available through the medium of Welsh and that the Language is promoted within the workplace. We are aiming to ensure a network of Language

Leaders across all departments and I would like to take this opportunity to thank our current Leaders for their commitment and enthusiasm. There is considerable potential to develop the work of these groups, and to co-ordinate collaboration between them as well.

We have continued to build our working relationship with the National Centre for Learning Welsh, both as a local provider and as an employer. Through the Centre, staff have been offered numerous learning opportunities to learn and improve their skills.



The Council has played a key role in supporting the work of the Carmarthenshire Public Services Board (PSB) which brings together representatives from the public sector working across Carmarthenshire.

In May 2019 the PSB published its first Carmarthenshire Well-being Plan which focuses on four key objectives which partners can make progress on by working together for the good of Carmarthenshire. The four objectives focus on:

- Healthy Habits
- Prevention & Early Intervention
- Strong Connections
- Prosperous People & Places.

The partnership also supports the community safety focused work through the recently re-vamped Carmarthenshire Safer Communities Partnership. The Partnership has agreed key priorities which require a partnership approach to address:

- Class A Drugs and County Lines
- Violent crime including violence against women and sexual violence
- Counter terrorism
- Cyber crime
- Child sexual exploitation.

Progress against these objectives and priorities will be monitored on an on-going basis through the PSB.

Tackling Poverty

Our children and education services continue to work to prevent poverty through delivering key early intervention programmes such as Flying Start and Team Around the Family (TAF). In addition services such as housing have taken a more proactive, preventative approach to addressing key triggers of poverty to prevent escalation of issues such as homelessness and fuel poverty especially following the introduction of Universal Credit in Carmarthenshire back in December.

The dedicated Communities 4 Work (C4W) and Communities 4 Work plus (C4W+) programmes and targeted support for those who are furthest from the labour market continue to help people into work by building their confidence and skills. In addition we continue to work to improve the lives of those living in poverty through promoting and supporting greater financial literacy via services such as trading standards and housing benefits. We have also delivered initiatives to support key vulnerable groups including the School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP), Toy Box and Hamper appeal.

Over the course of 2018 the Council has been working with residents of Llanelli's Tyisha ward in partnership with a number of key organisations to undertake a huge community engagement programme. The programme known as 'planning for real' sought to gain views and ideas from local residents to inform the development of a regeneration plan for the area. This means that residents, tenants and businesses have had a real opportunity to help plan for changes and improvements that will affect their future.

Armed Forces

If you are a member of the Armed Forces (Regular or Reserve), a veteran, family member or widow(er), then Carmarthenshire County Council and partners are committed to providing easy access to the information and support that you may need. This is fully supported by the Carmarthenshire Armed Forces Champion.

Through funding that we have attracted from the Armed Forces Covenant Trust Fund we now employ a full time regional Armed Forces Liaison Officer whose role is to work collaboratively with

statutory and non-statutory bodies to ensure that individuals are treated fairly and not disadvantaged through their service in the Armed Forces.

This same funding source now provides for increasing information and support available to Veterans and their families across the County through established hubs. We look to take this work forward in collaboration with our partners during the coming year – the focus will be on improving dispersed access amongst our more rural communities.

Customer Care

The Hwb provides face-to-face advice on a range of council issues, as well as being a place people can make payments, get job and training support, access digital facilities, find out about volunteering opportunities and more.



This service available in Ammanford, Carmarthen and Llanelli helps bring more footfall in to the town centre on weekdays, which in turn will help boost trade. A number of partners also use the Hwb to provide face to face services to residents, including employment and training providers C4W and Workways Plus, as well as adult education support Learn Direct. Themed days make it easier for people to know when they can get help with specific issues, including support for the Armed Forces Community every Wednesday, and housing advice every Friday.

The Hwbs across all three locations on average deal with 6,000 appointments per month with the average number of telephone calls received by the contact centre being approximately 22,000 per month.

A very well received service by our customers:

"I would like it to be known that every time that I call the contact centre my query is dealt with efficiently, it's a pleasure speaking to them and everyone is always willing to help".

Customer, March 2019

Tourism



Carmarthenshire recorded the highest tourism growth of any county in Wales in the last 18 months with a 7.8% increase in the economic value of £434m and over 4m in staying visitor days per year (an increase of 8%). Working with both Visit Wales and many local operators, the County Council has increased awareness of the County as an attractive place to visit by gaining significant coverage worth over £0.5m in UK newspaper and magazines – from the Telegraph to the Country Life magazine. With funding support of £1.6m, we are delivering along with two partners from Wales and three from Ireland, a series of new promotional “routes” to further attract new day and overnight visitors to the County.

This year has seen a rise of 5% in the number now employed full time in tourism to well over 6,000 people and the County Council has supported over fifty accommodation, attractions and hospitality ventures with guidance and information on signage, funding applications, promotional opportunities and delivering events, with 18 events supported through the Council’s event support scheme. Actions were delivered to ensure we maximised the economic and positive perceptions to be gained from major events in 2018, including the Celtic Media Festival and the staging of the Tour of Britain cycle race.

Carmarthenshire Markets

Carmarthen Market is a must-see place which has been around for more than 800 years. Although it dates back to Roman times, Carmarthen Market is now sited in a modern, airy hall, which offers some of the best local produce in Wales and has a lively and enthusiastic forum of traders that provide a unique atmosphere. It’s no surprise to regular shoppers that Carmarthen Market is one of the best around, but now it’s official!

The market has just been named Best Market in Wales by Slow Food Cymru, an awards scheme that highlights ‘good, clean and fair’ markets, restaurants and independent food producers and traders across the country.

The awards are won by public vote, with no prior shortlisting.

The market is owned and managed by Carmarthenshire County Council and our work underlines our commitment to using our stock and assets to facilitate economic development within the County.



Information, Communication & Technology

My Account

My Account was launched in February 2018 and allows residents to access personal information regarding their Council Tax account, or for tenants to access rent accounts. Take up has grown from 3,000 residents in 2018 to over 15,000 in 2019. Several additional services have been introduced throughout the year, including the following.

- Pembrey Country Park permit application, allowing visitors to apply for permits online. We received over 500 purchases in the first month.
- Welsh for Adults course materials, providing access to materials for registered users from any location and device at a time most convenient to them.
- Highways Defect reporting, allowing residents to report an issue such as a pothole on the highway. We have added a map and postcode search facility to make it easier to pinpoint the exact location of faults, resulting in less waste for the back-office team searching for a fault.
- Street light defect reporting, allowing residents to report a faulty streetlight quickly and easily.
- Schools transport on-line applications. This is one of the most popular online services, with over 2000 applications in 2018. Re-developed for 2019-2020, the public now have a single form to go to for all types of School bus pass applications.

Paperless Democracy

Elected members have agreed to go paperless from 15th of May 2019. This will be achieved through the use of corporately issued devices such as i-pads and laptops and the Mod.gov digital democracy system. Throughout 18/19 ICT Services together with Democratic Services have been busy preparing for this implementation, supporting colleagues and elected members, deploying and maintaining devices and enhancing the Mod.gov system.

This work has ensured that Members will be able to work in a completely paperless environment moving forward, providing a far more efficient way of working and delivering a significant reduction in printing costs.



Agile working

Agile working is a key strategic project for the authority. A significant part of the project investment is being used to deploy laptops to our workforce, enabling and facilitating a new agile, flexible way of working which allows our workforce to work in a more productive manner. Our project target by 2021 is to have 80% Laptops and 20% desktop PC's as the main devices used by staff.

During 2018/19 we deployed 820 new Laptops to staff as part of the Agile working programme. Our device estate currently sits at 70% laptops and 30% desktops, putting us as an authority on target to achieve our objective.

There has also been a significant deployment of mobile handsets to our front line staff in Communities allowing them to work in a significantly more efficient and effective manner.

Community Services



Closed Road Circuit, Pembrey Country Park

The directorate for Communities is one of the largest departments in the Authority employing nearly 2000 people with overall spend close to £150m. It generates nearly £50m of income. The department is diverse delivering vital community services across the county including, Adult Social Care, Environmental Health, Housing, Museums, Libraries and Leisure.

Adult Social Care

Meeting the needs of the growing number of vulnerable older people in the community continues to be a challenge for the authority. In the current climate of austerity, most services across Wales are facing cuts as central government funding and budgets fail to keep up with growing demand for services. The crisis is so great in some authorities that the volatility of the social care budget is at risk of destabilising all other council activities. In Carmarthenshire, it has been a different story. After many years of spiralling costs, we have succeeded in better managing demand through an investment in preventative services that meet need earlier and support communities better. We also drive efficiency, performance and innovation throughout our services ensuring that those most in need get the most support in the most efficient way, creating a virtuous cycle of investment.

An example of innovation has been the creation of Llesiant Delta Wellbeing, our arm's length Telecare Company. We created this unique project last year to protect jobs and services. As the service model for telecare changed we, as a local authority were unable to trade and faced the very real prospect of the service declining and ultimately being provided by call centre services that are usually located outside Wales.

The success of the first year has exceeded all expectations with the service, not only being financially self-sustaining but also expanding across much of Wales and employing an additional 10 people. It has done this whilst protecting all terms and conditions of staff, ensuring better retention of our workforce than ever before. I am pleased to say that in the coming weeks that Llesiant Delta Wellbeing will be formally registered as a living wage employer.

As a result of this investment in the workforce we have been able to compete with the private sector on quality as opposed to cost and we can now

demonstrate a level of innovation in the use of technology-enabled care that is market leading. It is a service that has the unique selling point of being wholly bilingual and now provides an 'active offer' of Welsh to Carmarthenshire and Wales's most vulnerable service users. Plans in the coming months will include opening a second office in Carmarthen as the benefits of what is becoming a thriving business are spread throughout the county.

In seeking out the best models of care, the service has forged links beyond these shores with Spain. Spain is possibly the world leader in meeting the challenges of an older population through the systemic implementation of telecare models to rural, urban and bilingual communities in the regions of Bilbao and Barcelona. As a result of our partnership with Spanish providers, we have secured a £7m investment from Welsh Government in a new support model for the region that provides proactive calls and contact so we can support vulnerable adults before they reach crisis.

The development of initiatives such as 'Carmarthenshire is Kind' and 'Dementia friendly Communities' are also beginning to make a difference as many of our communities seize on these initiatives to enhance their community's resilience. In this way, the efforts that we as a county council make, are amplified as we support and facilitate communities to become increasingly sustainable, vibrant and caring.

Nationally, Wales is facing a crisis in the provision of domiciliary care. Low wages have created a sector that attributes low status for its staff, yet the support provided by these employees is critical for many people living in our communities. Domiciliary care, when delivered efficiently, supports vulnerable adults to live independently at home for as long as possible. This saves money in residential care and hospital costs.

In December Allied Care, who provided more than 10% of our service, collapsed. Through good planning and some additional investment, we acted decisively to bring the service in-house to provide vital stability to both the workforce and service users. We now have an in-house provision that serves close to a third of the market. Moving forward, we will have to consider very carefully how we partner with the best of the private sector to generate innovation and efficiency whilst



Carmarthen Leisure Centre

ensuring that our in-house services are well placed to provide stability and quality in an unstable market.

New provision in Llanelli will be crucial if we are to meet growing demand. The development in Delta Lakes will be a critical contribution and the development of a new residential nursing and assistive living for vulnerable people is at the heart of this development. It is a signal of this administration's intention to invest and deliver services that are world leading for the most vulnerable people of the county.

For many years, we have worked across three localities delivering older people services through community health and social care. Services must be designed and delivered to meet local needs. We have been supportive of the Health Board's stated intention to invest in community health services that prevent the need for acute health interventions. We are encouraged that the regional Health and Social Care partnership is developing and maturing well. As services are delivered increasingly on a locality footprint, it will be critical that robust governance arrangements are established to ensure that a democratic deficit between the two providers are robust for these vital services. It must make sense to join up health and social care services better and we urge the health board and Welsh Government to increase the pace of change and provide real investment in community Health services to address the crisis in our hospitals.

We will continue to face huge challenges in the coming years to meet demand. All local authorities require action by central government to find

national solutions to the funding crisis. However, through the proactive and innovative practice delivered by our excellent workforce I believe we are better placed than most to meet the challenge and to protect and support the most vulnerable people in our community.



Cam Cyntaf

Learning Disabilities and Mental Health

In common with other social care services, demand continues to grow. There is an increasing number of children and adults with a disability who are living longer as health services support people with chronic health conditions or disabilities better than ever before. Expectations of independence from service users have rightly grown; many of our building based residential and day services have become increasingly outdated as families and service users demand services that maximise their independence. Nationally, awareness of mental health grows. Many traditional services have struggled to meet the increasing demand, as need that was historically unmet is now revealed. Health services remain wholly inadequate to meet this change and, as hospital budget for mental health

is reduced, the burden increasingly falls on the local authority to meet need.

Historically, Carmarthenshire has spent too great a proportion of its budget on residential care for adults with learning disability and mental health conditions. We have had well over 100 people in residential care placements over many years because of the inability of services to meet their needs locally. We now have a programme in place to provide tailored community services to the most vulnerable adults with a disability. Through this development of high support levels in the community, we have seen a reduction of 8% in the number of adults in a residential care setting. We expect several other high-support community living projects to be developed in the coming year that will both reduce spend in out of county residential care and release funding for further investment in community support.

We have continued our transformation programme of day provision across mental health and learning disabilities. This has involved re-designing the service's purpose to meet individual need whilst diverting from traditional building based care models to community engagement and independence. I am pleased to say these services are now supporting more people than ever before with innovative programmes of care and activity. The increase in spend on direct payments, whilst challenging for our budgets, allows many users to make choices about what services they want, when they want it. In doing so, we meet need earlier, prevent crisis and support carers to continue their vital work.

“More Than Just Words” is a strategy developed by the Welsh Government to strengthen Welsh language services in health, social services and social care. The Social Care Welsh Language Board meets bi-monthly and is actively progressing the objectives of the More Than Just Words Strategy. It is chaired by the Head of Mental Health and Learning Disabilities and has increased the delivery of the active offer steadily over the last three years.

With investment in training, language skills throughout the department are being enhanced in a way that builds our staffs confidence in delivering bilingual services. We have worked to further strengthen the provision and the use of the Welsh language within our services and ensure that we meet our service users' linguistic need.



Homes and Safer Communities

One in ten people in Carmarthenshire live in council housing. We are proud that we have been able to invest in these homes over many years so that they exceed the National Home Standard. Our latest Business Plan confirms a further £45m to be invested in existing council homes over the next three years.

Through long-term investment and prudent financial management we now have the opportunity to grow our housing stock thus enabling more people to live in secure, affordable homes that meet a good standard. The importance of good housing in Carmarthenshire was underlined recently in an academic study that measured the impact on our population of our investment in housing. This study demonstrated the significant impact our investment is having on people's health and wellbeing and the cost benefit of this to the health service. As an example, our investment in the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard has resulted in 39% fewer hospital admissions for our council tenants aged over 60, for the period 2007-2015.

I am delighted to say we are well on course to reach our 1000 additional affordable homes target by 2021, with nearly 700 homes already delivered. Not only have we bought homes in the private market at a rate of one a week but are also in the construction phase of our first two council home developments with these two sites planned to deliver nearly 50 new homes.

More is to come. We have announced our intention to deliver an increase in council housing not seen in the county for close to 50 years. Plans to deliver at least 900 new council homes in the next 10 years will be set out in the coming months; this is a development that will leave a legacy for



Garreglwyd Housing Development

future generations. As a signal of our commitment, more than £44m has already been set aside in our business plan to start this ambitious programme that will provide secure jobs and homes for the people of Carmarthenshire.

Moving forward, we will create an increased focus on using housing investment to regenerate areas of Llanelli that have been long neglected. Linking a quality housing offer based on secure tenure for residents is crucial. This offer has the potential to link the Delta Lakes development to our ambition for a regenerated town centre. These developments will take time but will be crucial for the people of Llanelli to obtain the rewards from an unprecedented level of investment in the town.

Changes to the way that welfare benefits are administered and delivered have also been central to our thinking and we have implemented detailed plans to mitigate the impact on our residents. Our cross departmental Universal Credit Action Plan is ensuring that support is in place when it is needed and it is also encouraging residents to take more responsibility in managing their accounts and seeking opportunities in terms of training and employment.

Finally, many of our services are relatively unseen but have played a significant role in peoples' lives. Examples include the success of our approach to the Proceeds of Crime (POCA) legislation and numerous Moneywise and financial exploitation schemes to protect vulnerable people. This is administered by our Trading Standards Division as well as the work of our Food Hygiene Service

which is delivered by our Food, Safety and Health team. We also have new plans in place to pro-actively manage the way we are delivering services to tackle homelessness in the County.

Leisure and Heritage

The Leisure division continues to go from strength to strength and is widely regarded as amongst the best in Wales. We have avoided transferring services to leisure trusts and through a programme of unprecedented investment and innovation, are increasing the number of users and income across all areas of Leisure and Cultural services.

This year has been an exceptional one in terms of profile for the Leisure team and the County. On the 2nd September 2018, the eyes of the world were on our County and its wonderful assets as Tour De France Winner, Geraint Thomas and his illustrious Sky pro cycling team, led the peloton out of Pembrey Country Park around the newly opened closed road cycle circuit, through the County, showcasing the fantastic community spirit of Carmarthenshire which was broadcast live across the world on ITV. Our ambition to become the Cycling Hub of Wales is now well established, and investment is ongoing in local, urban and competition-standard infrastructure; all underpinned by events and development work. The recent announcement of the UK women's tour arriving in June, cements our place as the go-to location in Wales for high profile cycling.

This administration continues to support unprecedented levels of capital investment in leisure, sport and culture, which in turn drives up income and makes many of these non-statutory services more cost effective and sustainable. Carmarthen Leisure Centre has recently opened a new state-of-the-art spin studio and soft play centre, whilst gym memberships continue to increase beyond all expectations. With our aquatics programme now generating over a £1m of income for the service each year, it is well on its way to becoming self-sustaining. Extended opening hours and family membership are now available to children aged 11 and over and, costing less than £1.50 a day for a family to have unlimited access to pools, gyms and classes, we are providing great value. Critically we are also making a huge difference to Carmarthenshire's population in terms of improving people's health and

wellbeing and thus reducing future demand and cost for health and social care services.

Plans for the new leisure facility in Llanelli are developing well. We are planning to invest well over £20m for a new leisure centre on the Delta Lakes site. The new leisure centre will improve access for people who have not previously visited a leisure centre. Additionally, it will link the wonderful Millennium Coastal Park with the town and provide the people of Llanelli with the best leisure facilities in the county. Over £1m has also been secured to invest in Ammanford Leisure Centre to re-furbish the wet-side changing rooms, upgrade the all-weather pitch and improve car parking facilities on site.

Investment is ongoing at Pembrey Country Park with the new amenity block now fully operational for the caravan and camping site. Work is underway on the new café / restaurant facility which should be open for July 2019, whilst Wi-Fi upgrades and a new barrier system to improve traffic flow at the park are also being installed in the spring of 2019. The park is installing new public convenience facilities at its main playground, along with a fully accessible 'changing places' public convenience facility at the ski centre. New signage is being introduced throughout the park, and a brand-new Adventure Golf course will be available during the summer months. We share Welsh cycling's ambition for mountain biking and a BMX track to contribute towards Pembrey being considered as the go-to venue for all forms of cycling.

Burry Port Harbour which is now operated by Burry Port Marina Ltd continues to benefit from investment around the marina. The new RNLI building, which is due to open in early summer 2019, will allow the old facility to revert to the Harbour office alongside plans to develop shower and public convenience facilities at this location along with a café. An upgrade to the public conveniences at the Western end of the Harbour has been secured by an agreed franchise which includes the development of a café overlooking the new playground planned for the spring of 2019.

The inaugural Carmarthenshire Culture Awards attracted in excess of 150 nominations from members of the public. These awards span eight categories of culture and during April 2018, culminated in a celebration of excellence at the

Ffwrnes Theatre, Llanelli. These will continue in 2019 and, as this event establishes itself in the Cultural Calendar for Carmarthenshire, will become the equivalent of the prestigious annual Sports Personality awards, now in its 21st year.

Our library service is better used than ever; our new mobile service routes are continuously reviewed and developed to provide the best service possible for our rural areas. Our Libraries now meet the new Welsh Public Library Standards core entitlements in full, and of all the quality indicators Carmarthenshire fully met nine and partially met one. There are over 1m physical visits made to Carmarthenshire libraries and over a quarter of a million virtual visits. This makes our libraries amongst the most used of all council services. The new Library 'Makerspace initiative' launched at Ammanford Library and 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 and continues to bring new users to the library and the town centre. We are well advanced in developing new initiatives to enable 24-hour access to our libraries and this will establish us to be amongst the most forward-thinking library services in the United Kingdom.

The new museums strategy is supported by capital funding to invest a million pounds at the County Museum in Abergwili and £500,000 at Parc Howard in Llanelli, along with a further investment for a new Museums Collections store. Substantial external investment has been secured to replace and enhance the museum of speed in Pendine where work is already underway on site. 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 £1.6m of funding for development and work is progressing in partnership with the Tywi Trust to restore this wonderful facility to its former glory.

The new Archive at the rear of Carmarthen Library is under development and the facility is expected to be open to the public in late 2019. This will provide access for the public to visit a state-of-the-art home 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.

Resources



Payment Machine, Hwb Llanelli

Whilst 2018 saw the declaration that “austerity is over”, this has not proven to be the case for Local Government finances. Increasing cost demand combined with significant inflation, pay and pension pressures has yet again squeezed council budgets as well as necessitated unprecedented Tax increases from a number of councils across Wales in response to this.

In the absence of clarity themselves, Welsh Government have abandoned the aspiration of multi-year local government settlements. After adjustments, Carmarthenshire’s settlement was essentially cash neutral. This represents a significant real terms reduction, leading to a significant budget shortfall. We continue to forecast a further funding gap in the years ahead which will have to be met through increased local taxation and cuts to service budgets.

Over the coming three years reductions totalling £25m 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 including in particular the extensive engagement of all councillors in coming to a collectively agreed budget position. 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 and the final settlement received, amongst other positive changes, we were able to increase the overall level of schools funding by over £2.5m in 2019/20, a materially improved position compared to the previously planned cash neutral. I recognise however that much of this funding is precarious, and we need to establish a more stable footing for schools budgets with both Welsh Government and pan-Wales council colleagues.

Collaboration

We have pursued collaboration across the full gamut of public sector partners, recognising that

we must do so with clarity on joint benefits and the need for compromise. We provide a wide range of financial services to Mid and West Wales Fire Rescue Services, including for the last year the successful fulfilment of the Section 151 responsibilities to the Fire Authority members, as well as specific support to both Dyfed Powys Police and Brecon Beacons National Park Authority. We also provide Financial and Audit Services to external organisations, including a Service Level Agreement with Ceredigion County Council.

The council continues to act as the host authority for the Swansea Bay City Deal, providing not only statutory functions but leading on matters such as business rates retention.

Dyfed Pension Fund

The last year has seen continued real and significant action on the Wales Pension Partnership, which is hosted by Carmarthenshire. The Partnership has effected the first pooling of £3.5 billion of Global Equities, delivering an aggregate reduction in investment management expenses.

Progress against subsequent tranches of regional equities and bonds is well advanced and will see further progress over the coming year. As host authority, Carmarthenshire County Council provides administrative and secretarial support and leads a truly collaborative officer group to 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 around £2.4 billion and at funding level of some 97%, pending the triennial valuation to be undertaken over the coming year.

Community Benefits

Community Benefits are applied to all procurement tender exercises where such benefits can be realised (decision based on value and duration). We record and report those Community Benefits delivered utilising the Welsh Government’s Community Benefits Measurement Tool (CBMT).

An example of a recent Community Benefits Measurement Tool completed and signed off was

for Ysgol Penrhos in Llanelli. The tool confirmed that the £8.8m scheme, delivered over a 104 week contract duration, reported that for every £1 spent in Wales, £1.86 was reinvested back into the Welsh economy. 82% of the total expenditure was spent with businesses based in Wales. 31 Apprenticeships, 10 Traineeships, 33 work experience placements, four graduate placements, five work trials, 190 accredited training weeks and 30 non-accredited training weeks were completed.

Carmarthenshire's Corporate Procurement Unit (CPU) are currently supporting Welsh Government's Policy Procurement Team (Value Wales) in the development of a new CBMT which is currently in draft. The new tool has been developed in response to a Wales Audit Office recommendation made as part of their Public Procurement in Wales Report (Sept 2017), that the Welsh Government should update its community benefits measurement tool to take account of the requirements of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and build on lessons learned from current practice across Wales with regards to application of Community Benefits. Changes include; a new Culture sheet to cover Well-being Goal 6, 'A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language' and the Training tab / sheet has been amended to include reporting of 'environmental' and 'biodiversity' training - This is to recognise and support the enhanced biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

Supplier Engagement



The Council provides a range of supplier engagement initiatives to pro-actively ensure that local SME's are provided with procurement advice and guidance to compete for and provide goods, services and works to the Authority. This supports

two specific recommendations from the Welsh Government's Wales Procurement Policy Statement (2015) to provide open and accessible competition (Recommendation 5) and Supplier Engagement and Innovation (Recommendation 8). In addition to these, Tender Specific Briefing sessions, Meet the Buyer days and Procurement Surgeries there is also in place a dedicated bi-lingual resource as the first point of contact and Procurement link to local Business. CPU also works in conjunction with Welsh Government's Business Wales Service, via their Tender Advisors to run suitable workshops, events and initiatives to support suppliers in order to make local SME's 'Tender Ready'. CPU is instrumental in the formation of these various initiatives enabling pre-procurement engagement as well as adopting a programme of supplier initiatives and events ensuring a pro-active approach to engagement with contractors, suppliers and providers.

Since June 2017 to March 2019, 72 separate individual suppliers have been met with by the dedicated CPU Officer, 21 Tender specific Market Engagement events have been held with almost 800 suppliers attending in total during this period. Examples of the Tenders covered include Minor Works, South West Wales Regional Civil Engineering Framework and Families First, Buses and Taxi Services and Domestic Boiler Servicing. Five dedicated Procurement surgery sessions were held in Carmarthenshire with between eight and 10 suppliers attending each session.

Sustainability

Sustainable Procurement is all about making better choices when buying goods, works or services. It is a process whereby an organisation meets their needs for goods, services, works and utilities in a way that achieves value for money on a whole life basis - in terms of generating benefits not only to the organisation, but also to society and the economy, whilst minimising damage to the environment.

CPU continues to use Welsh Government supported tools such as the Sustainable Risk Assessment to ensure that maximum consideration is given to sustainability issues early in the procurement process.

Transform, Innovate and Change

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.



The TIC Awards is a great way to celebrate our staff successes and achievements and to illustrate that through hard work, dedication, creativity and by introducing new ways of working, we can achieve great success. The second TIC awards award ceremony was held last October. The 5 winning projects were the Schools Sickness Absence Scheme, Digital Customer Service, Pest Control, Learning Disabilities Complex Needs Services and the Ammanford Library “Makerspace”.

The overall winner was the “Makerspace” project which breathed new life into libraries across Carmarthenshire, moved away from traditional thinking and introduced innovation and creativity to the heart of our communities.

TIC has also supported a key corporate initiative for Agile Working within our Digital Transformation agenda and Phase 1 of the Agile Working project has been successfully implemented. This included completion of dedicated “Touchdown” zones in all of our administrative buildings. The renovation of Buildings 2 and 4 in St. David’s Park, Carmarthen

allowing the rental of Building 14 to Health partners. The sale of Parc Amanwy and completion of Ty Parcyrhun in Ammanford. The renovation of 3 Spilman Street will be completed early in the new financial year as well as the sale of 5-8 Spilman Street in Carmarthen. An Agile Working management development programme has been implemented and an extensive engagement programme has also been implemented with staff teams going through Agile Working implementation.

The TIC Schools project has identified £1.2m delivered and potential savings from a range of corporate workstreams such as copying and printing as well as telephony. The schools building cleaning service agreement has been remodelled to provide a better service at an equitable cost. The project has led to improved engagement with schools and since the introduction of the schools development fund last year, 13 bids have been approved and a further four in the pipeline.

TIC has developed a routine spend dashboard which analyses spend over the last 8 years, highlighting areas where spend has decreased but also those where it is increasing.

A key element of the TIC ethos is to build capacity and skills for improvement activity across the Authority. As part of this, TIC continues to roll out the Institute for Continuous Improvement in Public Services accredited Academi course across the organisation. To date a total of 39 staff have either gained the accreditation, completed the Academi Wales course and are awaiting accreditation or have recently started the course.

The TIC team has also been shortlisted for the Academi Wales Continuous Improvement and Change national awards in the “Promoting a better culture” category.

Education



Pen Rhos School

The Council has a vital role in providing the highest quality services to children, young people, families and learners in ways that meet their specific needs. We want to support our young people to fulfil their learning potential and we will continue to strive to offer high standards of comprehensive education, increasingly in modern environments that are fully equipped for 21st century learning. We also want to enable as many pupils as possible to become fully bilingual in Welsh and English. Our Education and Children's Services Department work to protect children and young people from harm and will work with the whole family to address any issues. These commitments are made through the 'Moving Forward in Carmarthenshire' plan, prepared by the Executive Board.

KS4 and 5 examination outcomes

Carmarthenshire's performance at GCSE continued to improve with 58.2% of our learners achieving the Level 2 Inclusive indicator (at least five GCSE passes at grade A* to C including mathematics and language). This result places us comfortably above the Wales average of 55.1%.

An impressive 72.1% of our Carmarthenshire entries were graded A* to C, remaining well above the Wales average of 61.6%. In addition, performance at the highest end of awarded grades witnessed an encouraging 18.1% of our pupils achieving grades A* to A compared to 18.5% across Wales.

Further success has also been gained by our pupils within the National Welsh Baccalaureate with 62.9% of pupils achieving this award, compared with 57.6% achieving nationally.

At Key Stage 5, the commitment and dedication shown by our students and their schools resulted

in nearly 78% of students achieving A*-C grades (an increase of 1.8% in comparison to results in 2017) which witnessed Carmarthenshire remaining comfortably above the Welsh national average of 73.8%. Almost a quarter of the grades awarded (24.8%) were at the A*- A level.

Improved outcomes were also reflected in the AS Level grades with 91.8% of entries being awarded an A - E grade. An increasingly effective range of learning opportunities on offer to our AS students has ensured a 4.6% increase in the A - E pass rate over the last three years.

Estyn School Inspections

During the academic year 2017-18, Estyn inspected 16 primary schools and one Pupil Referral Unit. These schools were inspected under the new inspection framework. Most schools inspected received 'Good' or better in all five inspection areas. An encouraging number of our schools received judgements of 'Excellent' against specific areas within the Framework and were invited to provide 'Good Practice Case Studies' to support the work of other schools. This is cause for much recognition and celebration and builds well on our previous year's performance. Indeed, our schools and services have continued to work hard through effective partnership to achieve such pleasing and encouraging outcomes.

Effective Practice Case Studies during 2017-18 include:

Ysgol Feithrin Rhydaman: Developing children's early leadership roles

Trimsaran: Care, support and guidance

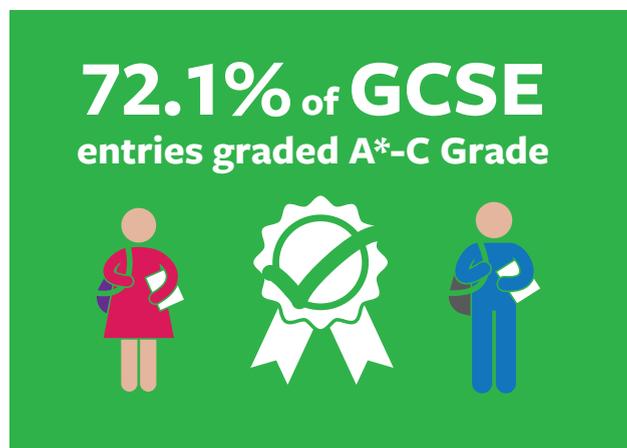
Hendy: Harnessing 'Pupil Voice' to build effective anti-bullying strategies

Pembrey: Planning a more flexible and adaptable creative curriculum to engage pupils' interest

Brynsierfel: Raising standards of wellbeing among pupils and staff

Beca: School Council developing pupils' welfare and setting a strategic direction and developing a curriculum that improves pupils' skills and enthusiasm for learning

Llangunor: Arrangements for additional learning needs education and the effect of intervention programmes on pupils' standards and wellbeing



Johnstown: Using technology and developing pupils' ICT skills

Our agreed areas for ongoing improvement include: effective self-evaluation, planning for whole school improvement, planning for pupil challenge and independent learning.

ALN Transformation

The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Bill was passed by Welsh Government and will be supported by regulations and a new ALN Code of Practice. Carmarthenshire is fully committed to embracing and delivering the content of this encouraging and supportive piece of legislation to ensure the highest levels of provision, enjoyment, progression and achievement for all our pupils. Officers and schools have developed numerous areas of effective practice in support of this work, including:

- Person Centred Planning
- One Page Profiles
- Individual Development Plans
- Provision Mapping Programmes

In addition, we have played an integral part in ensuring a strategic and comprehensive model for implementation across our schools through partnership work within our region and with Welsh Government. Senior officers, including our Director for Education and Children's Services continue to lead and co-construct much of this work for the benefit of Carmarthenshire and regional learners.

Curriculum and Wellbeing

Service delivery continues to develop well in our Curriculum and Wellbeing division, with aspects of provision being considered sector leading.

Our highly regarded Music Service's vibrant extracurricular programme continues to flourish, with staff developing Music Therapy provision for learners with Additional Learning Needs. In addition, the Music for All initiative is bringing the benefits of Music to pupils facing disadvantage. This innovative approach is securing improvements in pupils' concentration, behaviour and engagement across the curriculum.

There is considerable momentum underway with respect to implementing the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, geared towards the corporate priority of moving all our schools and settings along the language continuum, with a view to ensuring a truly bilingual Carmarthenshire. We are fully committed to working with our primary and secondary schools to support them along the language continuum and in ensuring that pupils within relevant schools are provided with opportunities to continue with their Welsh medium education throughout all key stages.

The Youth Support Service is setting its sights on the Silver Quality Award, having successfully achieved Bronze last year. Following an innovative in-county pilot, the Enhanced Case Management Model is deployed whilst supervising young offenders. The Youth Support Service's Principal Manager addressed the UK Youth Justice Convention held in Leicester, in relation to this work. Alongside this approach, there is a service-wide focus on the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences on the lives of children and young people. The service has been nominated for three 2019 National Youth Work Excellence Awards.

Modernising Education Programme (MEP)

The Modernising Education Programme (MEP) has been developed in order to support our children and young people to receive a world class education in safe and stimulating environments. MEP continued apace in 2018/19 benefitting thousands of our learners with the completion of major projects, valued at over £20m, at Ysgol St. John Lloyd, Ysgol Parc y Tywyn, Ysgol Pontyberem and the completion of the phase 1 at Ysgol Llangadog.

The school investment programme will continue over the next 12 months with the £4.1m investment at Ysgol Pum Heol and with projects due to start at Ysgol Gorslas, Ysgol Pembrey and Ysgol Rhys Prichard, whilst also continuing to develop projects in readiness for investment in the coming years.

Children's Services

Our Children's Services continues to be innovative and embracing of new ways of working.



Preventative teams such as the Family Support Service and Edge of Care Team have been re-designed to focus on working intensively with families and children at risk of becoming looked after, to enable them to remain within their families whenever possible. Systemic practice is becoming fully implemented in our child care teams and we are continuing to incorporate the Signs of Safety model.

In order to support the psychological wellbeing of looked after children a high level of support and training is provided for our adopters, foster carers, school staff and social workers that promote and support person centred, relational, trauma informed and attachment aware practice and models of engagement across home and school.

Our respite services for children with a disability continue to be highly valued and we have invested time with our parents group in redesigning our after school and holiday services and continue to work with them in shaping the future service.

We are continuing to work closely with colleagues in Housing to improve the accommodation options for care leavers; and our education, training and employment results for looked after children and care leavers are amongst the best in Wales.

Welsh Government commissioned research demonstrated that the outcomes for looked after children in Carmarthenshire were the best of all

those in the research study, in terms of being happy, stable in their homes and attached to their carers.

The Flying Start programme is being delivered in 18 areas of Carmarthenshire covering a total of 768 postcodes. The revised Families First programme commenced in April 2018 comprising 13 projects, eight delivered by the Local Authority and five delivered by the third sector and Hywel Dda University Health Board. They have been delivering a range of activities with the aim of preventing and mitigating the effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences. Going forward we have been chosen as a “pathfinder” by Welsh Government for developing closer integration across childcare, health and early years education

We have responded to and delivered the full roll-out of the 30 hours of free childcare offer for working parents in Carmarthenshire, from January 2019.

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

We will continue to monitor placement stability 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.

Environment



Carmarthen West Link Road

Carmarthenshire has a rich and diverse environment which the Council will strive to protect and enhance for the benefit of residents and visitors. The County's highways infrastructure is a vital artery for the movement of people and goods and its maintenance and development are key to supporting regeneration. The Local Transport Plan commitments are essential to enhance this provision. The effective management of waste is a key part of enhancing our environment and, working with residents, we will strive to further improve recycling rates from the high rates already achieved. The development and use of land in urban and rural areas, in a manner which serves public interest, is also key to ensuring future resilience and prosperity from a community and environmental perspective.

Waste Management and Recycling

In an extremely challenging environment we continue to meet the ambitious targets for waste management and recycling. Maintaining performance against targets has been challenging in 2018/19, in part due to unforeseen changes in the residual waste treatment and wood recycling arrangements, combined with an increase in non-segregated waste entering through our Household Waste recycling centres.

A public consultation has been delivered to inform and support the design of future waste service and over the last 12 months service plans have been developed to ensure continued performance against increasing waste targets in future years.

The current projections for the end of the 2018/19 year indicate a performance of around 60% which will meet the statutory recycling target. Similarly, we continue to meet our landfill diversion targets.

We experienced a 40% increase to the customer base for our chargeable garden waste collection scheme in its second year of operation, meaning that a total 3,500 customers signed up for the 2018 season. Subscribers to the scheme pay an annual fee for the fortnightly collection service, which is available from March to November each year.

Flood Defence and Coastal Protection

The Flood Defence and Coastal Protection team have completed a number of flood alleviation and

sea defence works to protect communities this year with a newly erected £250,000 sea defence at Burry Port in addition to a £100,000 flood alleviation scheme at Llangennech.

Surface water flooding has been identified as being a major historical cause of flooding of property and homes across Wales, so in response, new statutory legislation was enacted this year by Welsh Government under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. As a result, the Council is now classed as a Sustainable-drainage Approval Body (SAB) and has set up a new team to manage all the aspects of technical approval of sustainable surface water drainage systems for proposed new developments.



Storm Callum clean up

Autumn saw the arrival of Storm Callum which caused major disruption and damage to the highway infrastructure in the North West of the County. Our highways teams supported and helped deliver the emergency response to the storm. Work continues and will continue for some time to repair damage to the infrastructure.

Responding to the immediate effects of Storm Callum was a challenge this year with over 200 flooding incidents to homes and businesses recorded; the team followed up with post-flood investigation works as part of the Council's duties under the Flood and Water Management Act. Support was extended to local businesses in the affected areas of the county and a business relief fund was immediately established. Council officers visited over 100 businesses in affected areas, and established a £200,000 business relief fund to assist those affected. Funded by the council, relief grants worth a combined £99,569 have been awarded to 30 county business, with £60,874 having been claimed so far.



Public Realm Management and the Local Environment

Our Environmental Enforcement, Cleansing, Grounds Maintenance, and Municipal Services teams continue to ensure that maintaining, conserving and preserving the local amenity and built environment remains a priority through a coordinated approach.

Fly-tipping costs the local economy thousands of pounds a year in clean-up costs, it undermines legitimate business, affects inward investment, and poses serious risks to our environment. In response to this the introduction of a new on-the-spot Fixed Penalty Notice of £350 for fly-tipping has been a success to help combat waste crime in Carmarthenshire, with 13 notices being issued in the first six months of its operation.

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. Officers also continue to work closely with fast food outlets with the aim of reducing the impact of littering.

Part 8 of the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017

(Provision of Toilets) came into force on 31st May 2018 and places the responsibility on local authorities in Wales to publish a Local Toilets Strategy for its area. The Municipal Services team has taken a lead role in the development of the draft strategy which has now been published for public consultation. Whilst local authorities have the powers to provide toilets, there is no legal requirement to do so, however, Carmarthenshire County Council continues to operate a number of public conveniences to high standards throughout the county.

Transport and infrastructure

The Council has continued to invest in strategic transport infrastructure links to support economic development, a commitment made in the ‘Moving Forward in Carmarthenshire’ plan.

We have completed the following schemes:

- Carmarthen West Link Road
- Ammanford Tir y Dail Junction Improvements
- The next Phase of the Cross Hands Link Road
- Phase One of the Tywi Valley Path to provide an Active Travel link
- Continued to develop and build Active Travel links connecting key settlements to employment, retail and health sites at Cross Hands, Llanelli and Llandybie

- We have successfully delivered Safe Routes to Schools Projects at the west of Llanelli (Phase One) and Newcastle Emlyn.

In addition we have been successful in persuading Welsh Government to commence works to progress the Llandeilo Bypass road scheme.

The Council has continued to engage in collaboration and partnership working to deliver road safety education initiatives and identify sites for enforcement and engineering intervention. We invested in road safety through funding of road safety education programmes. We have also 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 also delivered investment of £445,500 into traffic management route treatment works to improve infrastructure at Capel Hendre to Ammanford, Johnstown to Llansteffan and Llandeilo to Crugybar. We supported the successful Tour of Britain event by providing traffic management and maintenance related services that helped showcase Carmarthenshire to the world.

We continue to work with the community, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire county councils to sustain the delivery of the Linc 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 third Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) covering the year 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 was submitted to Welsh Government by the 31 October 2018. This recommended the undertaking of a Review Report into the current LDP. This assessed the extent to which the LDP objectives, strategy and policies 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 warranted the preparation of a Revised (replacement) LDP for the period 2018 - 2033. The preparation of the Revised LDP is now in progress with the consultation on the Draft Proposed Strategy and its supporting documents closing in February 2019. The aim is for the Deposit Revised LDP to be published in December 2019 and the adopted Plan being in place by the end of 2021. We are fully committed to facilitating the widest possible consultation with the public and interested parties, as noted in the 'Moving Forward in Carmarthenshire' plan.

Local Development Order

A new planning order (Local Development Order) to boost Llanelli Town Centre has been introduced as part of a new approach to planning policy and as part of a co-ordinated set of regeneration initiatives through the Town Centre Task Force. The Taskforce aims to stimulate growth and investment by supporting traders, boosting business and increasing footfall.

The Local Development Order (LDO) puts in place a more streamlined planning process, making it easier for developers to utilise existing buildings and bring empty shops back into use.

The LDO will also help attract investment to the area, and to support existing businesses by giving certainty for developers, reducing timescales and reducing the costs associated with making a planning application. The order allows developers

or applicants to attain from the local planning authority a Certificate of Conformity and then a Commencement Notice Approval rather than having to apply for planning application for change of use. This streamlined authorisation process makes it easier for developers and applicants to move forwards with their plans in Llanelli Town Centre.

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 2018/19 totalled in excess of £680,000, with spend during the same year exceeding £540,000.

Some of the projects delivered include:

- **Hendy Park** – Improvements to the existing recreation and amenity provision. Works undertaken by Llanedi Community Council utilising funds secured through s106 contributions.
- **Llangennech Primary School** – The provision of a financial contribution to assist in the provision of improved ICT equipment and the acquisition of reading material for the school.

Collaborative Working

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

The Forward Planning Section along with the Minerals and Waste Unit have since 2014 been preparing the South West Wales Regional Waste Monitoring Report on behalf of the Welsh Government. This follows the award of grant funding to prepare the report annually. The 2018/19 report will be provided to the Welsh Government in April 2019.

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 was highly commended in Wales RTPI awards 2017, and went on to win the Natural Environment category in the UK RTPI awards in May 2018. 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. This project continues to be funded entirely by contributions from developers.

The Rural Conservation Section within the Planning Division has also been working with funding from Western Power to deliver over 40 small landscape schemes on privately owned land within a 3km distance of the new over-head line that connects Brechfa West wind farm to the main grid near Llandyfaelog. As well as benefitting the landscape and biodiversity these schemes have stimulated the rural economy by generating work for local contractors. Similar funds have been used to develop ecological connectivity and additional water vole habitat on Council owned land adjacent to the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust in Penclacwydd, Llanelli.

Built Heritage

In the past year, the Built Heritage Team at the Tywi Centre has secured funding from the Construction Industry Training Board, Leader, Construction Wales Innovation Centre, Heritage Lottery Fund and Cadw to enable us to deliver a suite of built heritage training across Wales.

Projects have included creating a bilingual, interactive teaching resource for primary schools; developing and delivering 'Heritage Impact Assessment' training for Planning Professionals throughout South Wales; becoming the only centre in Wales to deliver Specialist Apprenticeship Programmes in Heritage Carpentry NVQ3 and the only centre in the UK to deliver Heritage Plastering to NVQ3.

The Tywi Centre were commissioned by Historic



Next Steps Apprenticeships

England to deliver a range of short courses as part of the Shrewsbury Flaxmills restoration project. We were also commissioned to develop and deliver courses for Pembrokeshire College construction students by the Haverfordwest Townscape Heritage Initiative. As partners in the CITB funded Heritage Construction in Wales Project, the Tywi Centre have been delivering On-site assessment and training, Level 3 award courses across Wales and have begun developing on-line educational resources.

Industrial Estates and Farms

Our 400+ Industrial units and 25 farms continue to be fully let and we are constantly looking at options for ensuring the most effective use of the estate to support farming initiatives. 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. Our new refurbished units at Glanamman are now nearly fully let, and now accommodate 36 jobs.

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.

Graduate and Apprentice Recruitment

The Council's Property Division 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. For the first time the Council provided two apprentice places and plans to offer more in coming years as part of this programme. The Council has once again supported the Carmarthenshire and Regional Construction

Training Groups (CCTAL) and Cyfle which employs and trains shared construction apprentices.

During 2018/19 we welcomed 10 graduates and 10 apprentices into the Environment Department and plan to recruit more during the coming year.

Collaboration

Carmarthenshire's Property Team continues to be at the forefront of collaboration and in 2018 established a Mid & West Wales Regional Asset Collaboration Group covering the four Counties of Pembrokeshire, Ceredigion, Powys and Carmarthenshire. This group has identified a range of collaboration opportunities and was successful in being awarded grant funding from the Welsh



Government to undertake a regional strategic asset review.

Our Property team was also awarded Welsh Government funding to map out our community meeting facilities across the county, to support the Public Services Board's aim to increase and support volunteering.

Our Property Maintenance Team has successfully awarded a new Minor Works Framework which is available to all public sector organisations in Carmarthenshire. This Framework will provide easy access to contractors, with more than half based in Carmarthenshire and 86% within West Wales.

Property Design Section

The Council's Property Design Section continues to deliver a wide range of new facilities to improve the assets available for the Council's services.

During 2018/19 we completed three new schools at Trimsaran, Parc y Tywyn Pembrey, Ysgol Pen Rhos Llanelli as well as the alterations and extension to St John Lloyd and the first phase of Llangadog CP.

Works have also been done at the new Amenity Block at Pembrey Country Park, The HWB and Cennen Centre in Ammanford and various projects relating to the Agile working Scheme and the Carmarthenshire Housing Standard. We also started the new school at Five Roads, the new museum at Pendine and the new archive in Carmarthen.

We also started development of 48 new Council houses at two sites in Pembrey and Llanelli

The Property Design Section also lead on the South West Wales Regional Contractors Framework (SWWRCF) which is a collaboration between the five regional local authorities and other partners within the region.

In closing this report, which brings together another busy year in the history of Carmarthenshire County Council, I wish to note that the purpose of this report is to summarise all of the activity which has taken place across our communities and across council departments. I wish to sincerely thank everyone who works hard to build on the success of the Authority, and I look forward to another exciting year in our history.