

Head of Service Update - Economic Development

Transformational Strategy 2015-2030

During the autumn of 2015, The Strategic Regeneration Plan for Carmarthenshire 2015-2030 – Transformations was launched. The regeneration of Carmarthenshire for current and future developments, are both ambitious and challenging. The five key aims of the strategy are as follows:

- Business growth, retention and specialisation
- To be skilled and ambitious for long-term success
- Maximising job creation for all
- Knowledge economy and innovation
- Distinctive places and competitive infrastructures

The implementation of the Strategy will be supported by 4 Teams; Llanelli and Coastal; Ammanford and Cross Hands; Carmarthen and Rural; and Employment and Skills.

Delta Lakes

The aim of the Project is to create a highly ambitious and complex Wellbeing and Life Science Village on development land at Delta Lakes Llanelli, meeting the aspirations of Carmarthenshire County Council, Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board, Hywel Dda University Health Board, Swansea University and Welsh Government.

Proposals are highly significant in the context of the Swansea Bay City Region and following an initial scoping exercise undertaken by the key partners will include such facilities and initiatives as, a health and wellbeing academy, business and enterprise, infrastructure, Institute of Life Science, hotel/health tourism and primary care provision. It is proposed a joint funding package, including EU/external funds, could realise an initial development in excess of £100M and has the potential to create between 800 and 1000 jobs.

The project will therefore deliver significant economic benefits across the region and beyond.

This project is also highly significant in its contribution and status within 'A Regional Collaboration for Health' (ARCH) which is a Programme made up of the three key partners - Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board, Hywel Dda University Health Board Swansea University – which is working with a number of key stakeholders to create improved health, wealth and wellbeing for the people of South West Wales

2014 - 2020 Structural and Investment Fund Programmes:

To date, more than £388m of the funding from the new European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF) programmes has already been committed to 37 projects across West Wales and the Valleys, representing 26% of total programme funds. A further 65 projects are at business planning stage. With such an emphasis being placed on national, backbone

projects, regional discussions are key in ensuring that delivery is fit for purpose to meet both local and regional needs. The Economic Development team are working with Welsh Government to realise local impact as part of the backbone schemes. The Regional Engagement Teams (RET) which is being delivered by the Authority on behalf of the region, has 'regionally proofed' 28 national backbone projects to ensure that they fit with local and regional needs.

The team are also working with internal departments on the development of ESF applications. These projects include the Cynnydd project, which aims to increase youth employment and attainment by supporting 11-24 year olds who are, or at risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training). It is likely that this application will be approved by the end of March 2016. A further project focusing specifically on NEETs is currently under development by the Department of Education and Children Services.

The Authority submitted a stage 1 application under the co-operation and supply chain development scheme noted above, for the further development of the Bwcabus project. The aim of the application is to build upon the success of the Bwcabus scheme to develop a new and innovative approach to providing integrated transport services across the region. Pembrokeshire County Council and the Community Transport Association will join the existing Bwcabus and Traws Cymru partnership to extend the geographical area covered. The Authority has been successful at this initial stage and has been invited to submit a full application by mid March 2016.

Rural Community Development Fund

In addition to the above, the Welsh Government recently launched the new Rural Community Development Fund (RCDF), the objectives of which are to promote social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas.

The first funding round for expressions of interest closed on the 31st January 2016 and the following 5 project ideas were submitted by the Authority, all have requested the maximum funding of £128k.

Carmarthen Wetlands

Development of the wetlands site in Carmarthen including installation of footpaths, trails and lakes to create a new sense of appreciation of the natural environment.

Development of Jackson's Lane

To re-develop Jackson's Lane promoting a creative café culture and new kiosk-style outlets for start-up businesses to use as a test trading base for selling seasonal food and crafts as well as promoting Welsh language, culture and heritage.

Pendine Motor Home Site

The project involves the creation of a new 'Aires' site in Pendine which will accommodate overnight parking for 11 motor-homes / camper-vans and will range in size between 10 and 20 spaces.

Tywi Valley Cycleway

Initial phase of a safe walking and cycling route between Carmarthen and Llandeilo utilising the disused railway line running along the Towy Valley providing access to a number of settlements and tourist attractions thus encouraging a healthier lifestyle.

Castle House

The 'Covered External Events Area' – development of an all weather canopy, signage and digital interpretation to extend the range of activities.

In addition to the above Authority led projects, the team has provided advice and assistance to a further 11 community led applications. The Welsh Government will publicise decisions relating to this initial call for applications by the end of March 2016. Successful applicants at this stage will be invited to submit 2nd stage applications.

LEADER

The LEADER Local Action Group (LAG) for rural Carmarthenshire opened its first call for innovative project ideas in November 2015, specifically seeking projects that address certain priorities identified by the LAG. 18 Expressions of Interest were received by the close of the first call of which 6 were approved by the LAG to proceed to the 2nd stage of the application process. These projects included the following:

- Project to facilitate and develop supply chains, pilot new ways of encouraging entrepreneurship as well as identification of new markets for the arts and craft sector
- Pilot project to develop and trial innovative digital heritage interpretation ideas by pairing Carmarthenshire heritage organisations with University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD) students and creative industries.
- Affordable childcare project: Pilot project targeting established holiday clubs to look at new ways of increasing affordability and access.
- Pilot project to expand the Un Sir Gar services offered at the 'Hub' in Llanelli, to rural areas through outreach provision.
- Pilot project to strengthen awareness of Carmarthenshire's cultural and heritage amongst children at primary schools across rural Carmarthenshire. Project will involve local children in identifying local sites for practical hands-on experiences and creating teaching aids and classroom resources to build on these practical heritage experiences.
- Mental health advocacy services – the project will pilot new ways of delivering mental health advocacy services in rural areas by raising awareness of mental ill health, including dementia and developing skills to enable people living in rural communities to help themselves and each other.

The second call for expressions of interest will close on the 1st April 2016 . This call will enable applicants to bring forward innovative ideas which will address the key priorities of the Local Development Strategy, including:

- piloting innovative ways to promote the economic value of the Welsh language
- Investigating and piloting innovative ways of providing non statutory service delivery

- Facilitating and piloting innovative ways of ensuring education and training is aligned to the needs of rural businesses
- Pilot innovative ways of developing sense of place within rural communities
- Investigate and pilot new ways of encouraging entrepreneurship/test trading

In addition, the LAG carried out a procurement exercise in order to appoint a service provider to deliver the digital exploitation theme of the LEADER programme, Carmarthenshire County Council's Community Regeneration Team were successful in their tender to undertake this role which will commence on April 1st.

Ireland Wales Co-operation Programme 2014-2020

We are currently working with internal departments on the following cross-border cooperation project proposals in partnership with other local authorities and organisations in Ireland and Wales. These are at different stages of development and include:

- **Innovation within the Social Enterprise Sector** – to share best practice in supporting, operating and the franchising of Social Enterprises both within West Wales and East coast of Ireland.
- **Achieving Community Benefits through Renewable Energy** – to identify innovative ways of utilising funding received from renewable energy technologies to support the regeneration of the area in the longer term.
- **Celtic Trails** – project aims to develop new tourism marketing brand and tourism trails based around the area's natural and cultural heritage spanning 3 counties both sides of the Irish Sea. **BUCANIER** – project aims to increase the innovation capacity within SMEs and social enterprises by collaborating with HE institution^s and other public bodies to increase productivity across the Ireland Wales Programme area.

The authority will be the lead partner in relation to first three projects, with Pembrokeshire County Council leading on the fourth.

REGIONAL LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

Regional Delivery Plan for Employment and Skills

Work is underway to update the Regional Delivery Plan for Employment and Skills for South West & Central Wales which will be submitted in draft form to the Welsh Government by the 31st March. This will then be followed by a consultation period with the industry training providers and employers. A final report will be submitted by the 31st July 2016.

Demand and Supply Assessment

The Regional Learning Partnership undertook a Demand & Supply Assessment on behalf of the Welsh Government which was to be used to support the implementation of the Regional Delivery Plans and influence the delivery of skills training in the region in line with skills needs. The initial assessment focused on the four key areas:

- a. Energy and Environment
- b. Financial and Professional Services
- c. Tourism
- d. Health and Social Care

The report highlighted a number of key areas where there was a need to increase higher level of full and part time provision within a number of sectors and reduce provision in other areas. The feedback from the assessments has influenced Further Education providers to consider a number of options on course delivery moving forward.

The remaining five priority sectors will be addressed within the next version of the Regional Delivery Plan for Employment and Skills, these include:

- a. ICT
- b. Advanced Materials and Manufacturing
- c. Creative Industries
- d. Life Sciences
- e. Food and Farming

Links to Economic Development Activities

The Regional Learning Partnership's new Strategic Employer Reference Group (SERG) represents key employers focusing on the skills priorities for the region and provides the employers voice to drive the competitiveness and business growth of the economy of south west and central Wales.

PHYSICAL REGENERATION

Pendine:

Work to construct the Coastal Communities funded commercial and events building on the Museum of Speed site is nearing completion in spite of difficult weather conditions. The building that will house four ground floor commercial units, incorporated public toilet facilities and an upper floor events / restaurant space is due to complete by the end of March 2016.

Laugharne:

Discussions are continuing with a Private Sector Developer to bring forward a residential development and new public car park in King Street Laugharne. The developer has secured planning permission for the site and work is ongoing to discharge the planning conditions and agree terms of the lease in order that work can commence later in the spring. In addition discussions are ongoing with key stakeholders in the township with a view to implementing a town wide parking charging strategy.

Carmarthen:

The officers are continuing to work closely with the Town Centre Regeneration Forum to develop and deliver a master-plan for the economic regeneration of Carmarthen and linked economic areas that will cover the period 2014 – 2030.

The Welsh Government Town Centre Partnership Funded Scheme which commenced in December 2014 is continuing to be delivered. The project elements delivered to date include: three new events including the Vintage Festival; the installation of a footfall counter in King Street; interpretation signage improvements in Nott Square and King Street; a mobile external projection system to display images on key buildings; trader tourism ambassador training and the launch of new branding.

The Carmarthen 'Business in the Community' (BITC) scheme continues to grow from strength to strength and now has 13 national retailers participating in Carmarthen.

Work has commenced on the designs for both the Jacksons Lane and King Street elements of the master-plan proposals, these are expected to be completed by July

Pibwrlwyd:

The team continues to work closely with Coleg Sir Gar to develop a master-plan for a strategic site that offers potential for: the consolidation and re-development of the existing elements of Coleg Sir Gar, newly created employment uses (Use classes B1, B2 (restricted) and B8 these being, Business Use: Office, Industrial and storage / distribution, and other compatible activities.

Vibrant & Viable Places – Tackling Poverty: Opportunity Street

This project aims to tackle the current high property vacancy rate by purchasing and refurbishing properties to create flexible, easily accessible, commercial / service space, and provide quality, affordable new residential units based on identified need.

Three properties acquired by end March 15 are currently being refurbished.

Renovation of the ground floor of 31 Stepney Street for use as a pop-up shop for the 2015 Christmas trade was completed by the end of November 2015. An opportunity has been provided for the STEPS Social Care social enterprise, currently based at Coleshill Centre, to use the space to trade. The property has provided a more accessible outlet and the opportunity for wider promotion of the STEPS project.

Further surveys, inspections, plans and costs for the complete renovation of the property have been requested from Property Services to inform future development possibilities.

For the refurbishment of 10 and 12 Stepney Street, surveys, cost plan, schematic drawings, tender documentation and supporting information has been prepared, building regulations are complete and planning application has been submitted. It is anticipated that this will be determined by end March. Tender documents have been issued to the Framework and are expected to be returned 1st March for Contractor appointment by the end of March.

Further acquisitions are planned by the end of March 2016 to ensure Welsh Government funding for 15/16 is drawn down.

Additional WG funding has also been approved to purchase by the end of March 2016 other vacant properties which will contribute to the project aims.

Ammanford

There are a number of on-going schemes within the town centre and Amman Valley which are updated as follows:

- Foundry Row Site - Developer interests have been sought, with a preferred developer identified.
- Cwmamman Road - The site has been marketed and developer interest shown.
- Glanamman Workshops - Scheme options have been explored with future funding avenues being investigated.
- Town Centre activities are continuing as part of the Town Centre Partnership funding from the Welsh Government. A footfall counter has been installed and is providing weekly data to monitor the effectiveness of activities and interventions for 15/16.

Cross Hands East: Strategic Employment Site

Construction works have reached a practical completion with 8.5ha of land transformed into a fully serviced employment site incorporating primary site infrastructure, landscaping and flexible development plateaus. The official launch will be in July. There has been significant interest for the site, with over 12 ongoing enquiries. The site will provide the necessary infrastructure to create a high quality commercial environment to deliver significant job opportunities. The site is a key strategic employment destination within the county and is well placed to serve the region. It is anticipated that the development would accommodate 600 jobs.

An application for funding is currently being drafted, requesting approximately £5m of ERDF grant for the South West region.

COMMUNITY REGENERATION

Community Bureau

The Community Bureau provides a one stop shop for the Third Sector and can assist with funding information and guidance. The Community Bureau can support organisations to achieve their potential and offer designated officer support to develop viable and sustainable projects.

The Bureau has successfully introduced a tailored and focused Key Account Management (KAM) service for the Third Sector. Key Account Organisations include existing Social Enterprises, emerging Social Enterprises, Charities, Voluntary / Community Organisations, Town and Community Councils and partnerships.

Key outcomes 2015/16 to date: 1st April – December 2015

- **12** - Number of Jobs Created
- **21** - Number of Jobs Safeguarded
- **139** - Number of individuals into Training/Education
- **120** - Number of individuals into Volunteering
- **32** - Number of individuals into Employment
- **39** - Number of Key Account Organisations receiving support
- **4** - Number of enterprises created
- **£4,251,862** - Public and Private Leverage Funding
- **185** - Number of Community Projects Funded

The Mynydd y Betws Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund was launched in April 2013 for community projects which benefit specific wards in Carmarthenshire. Projects have to be new and innovative addressing the key themes of - recreation, culture, education, health, environment, energy efficiency and sustainability. The Community Bureau effectively administers Mynydd y Betws Community Benefit Fund with some **55 applications** approved to date across 4 Rounds:

- Round 1 – awarded - £299,159.42
- Round 2 – awarded - £319,893.56
- Round 3 – awarded - £110,501.50
- Round 4 - awarded - £120,438.79

To date £850,000 awarded with an additional £1.5 million of match funding invested into the Amman area. Round 5 will be live from April 1st 2016.

New Project Developments:

WCVA Active Inclusion Fund

An Expression of interest has been submitted to the WCVA Active Inclusion Fund to which we have recently been informed that we were successful and invited to the second stage. The aim of the bid is to reduce economic inactivity in Carmarthenshire targeting LSOA and social housing areas within key rural towns, improving the employability of disadvantaged people furthest away from the labour market. This project will act as a “first steps” in the participants journey to employment. Activities include digital inclusion to assist in online job match, universal credits, money management and volunteering through “time-banking” initiatives. We will work in partnership with Carmarthenshire Association Voluntary Services and other third sector organisations along with Carmarthenshire County Council (CCC) Housing and Social Services to provide a holistic approach in tackling economic inactivity.

Digital Exploitation

The Community Regeneration Team successfully won a two year £90,000 RDP Tender for Exploitation of Digital Technology in Rural Carmarthenshire, in February 2016. The project will create a Digital Coordinator Role, Digital engagement team and a Carmarthenshire-wide Digital Partnership Strategic Stakeholder group. 12 Digital Exploitation Events will be run over the two year period (working closely with

the RDP LEADER and LAG teams), and five Digital “Hubs” are planned. We envision the Digital Hubs will be located in key Strategic market towns, Llandovery, Llandeilo, Newcastle Emlyn, Whitland/St Clears and Kidwelly. These will demonstrate innovative approaches enabled by Digital service delivery; improve access to Digital and Financial services, Digital Employability Opportunities and co-ordination of coaching, upskill and volunteering opportunities. The Digital Hubs are planned to drive economic development, by coordinating expert advice, maximising Superfast Broadband Exploitation, encouraging individuals, organisations and businesses to get online.

BUSINESS

Un Sir Gar

The Un Sir Gar Hub has now been open for 21 months. The overall service aim is to help customers to move closer to the labour market and financial independence. The Hub’s long term goal is to support residents in overcoming their barriers and find rewarding, long-term employment/training by utilising all services available to them across the County.

Since April 2015, Un Sir Gar supported:

- **744** New Customers
- **8288** Hub Footfall
- **536** Customers signposted into employment support organisations
- **73** Customers into Employment
- **77** Customers into Training
- **23** Customers into Volunteering

From the figures above, it is evident that Hub’s Team continue to signpost to relevant organisations and are achieving excellent outcomes.

Since June 2015, Customer Service Centre was relocated into The Hub, initially for a 3 month period, whilst refurbishment works were undertaken at Ty Elwyn. The move proved very successful, with benefits such as, increased footfall into Llanelli Town Centre and a more co-ordinated and seamless approach to supporting customers. As a result, it has been agreed to relocate CSC into the Hub on a permanent basis.

Un Sir Gar and The Library Service are currently working together in relation to the new mobile library provision. Un Sir Gar will jointly work with libraries on their mobile vehicles, which will allow Un Sir Gar to reach a further 28 communities across rural Carmarthenshire. Facilities on board will include digital access, printing and access to a phone and/or Skype, which will help customers access services within the Hub. Un Sir Gar will also facilitate regular Hub on Tour events alongside the mobile library, bringing up to 50 different organisations, such as Prime Cymru, Remploy, Workways, Shelter Cymru and Gwalia, to rural communities in Carmarthenshire.

Entrepreneurship – Young People

As part of our continued commitment in supporting entrepreneurship we have delivered a number of key events to both students in secondary, higher and further education.

The final of the 2015 Beacon Bursary was held last June. The two winning business proposals were Rapid IT and Women's Workwear Company. They are both making good progress, with Rapid IT having moved into their office at The Beacon.

Six Carmarthenshire schools took part in last years' Swansea Bay Young Business Dragons. The two winners of the Carmarthenshire Semi final were QE High School and St John Lloyd and they went on to represent the county in the final, which was held last December in the Marriot, Swansea. QE High was given a Highly Commended prize, which was a great achievement for them. An evaluation of the whole event has taken place, dialogue has established that all the schools who participated was really positive. Schools are now participating in our world of work programme and recently worked in partnership with S4C and UWTSD to hold a World of Work event, which took place last November. The aim of the event was to help S4C to engage with local schools and to highlight the potential career opportunities which would come with Canolfan Yr Egin. Forty year 12 pupils from 6 schools attended the event, which involved three interactive workshops on topics associated to the creative sector. These were delivered in partnership with UWTSD, The Big Learning Company and Joio. The feedback was very positive from everyone who was involved and we are waiting the report of the formal evaluation, as S4C are very keen to run similar events in 2016.

This years' Dragons Den competition has been organised so that schools can use this as part of the Welsh Baccalaureate enterprise challenge. CCC has designed an enterprise challenge brief, approved by the WJEC, so any school wishing to use it for their purpose can do so. The individual school finals will be held between March and June with the overall final in July 2016.

As part of our support to schools and colleges for their Welsh Baccalaureate, CCC has delivered presentations on business and enterprise to Bro Myrddin, Ysgol Strade, Amman Valley and Coleg Sir Gar.

CCC delivered a business start up workshop in this years' enterprise symposium held in Coleg Sir Gar's Carmarthen School of Art. 25 students were in attendance most of whom were interested in setting up their own business. These students have been invited to participate in this year's Beacon Bursary competition which will be formally launched on 23rd March. The team will also continue to support the students who wish to set up a business by offering advice and support.

During last years' live webcast with Sir Terry Matthews, Chair of Swansea Bay City Region, in which budding entrepreneurs from local secondary schools posted enterprise related questions to him via email and social media, one young school pupil from QE High, namely Nick Cvetcovic took it upon himself to go up to meet Sir Terry Matthews personally to seek his advise on setting up his own business. Nick is

in the process of setting up his business in which will be given free office space in the Beacon, where he will create two or three jobs, during which he will also be studying for his A levels. He is being mentored by Sir Terry Matthews as well as receiving advice and support from CCC Economic Development Team.

We are currently working with several other companies including Dunbia, Morganstone, Magstim, Tidal Lagoon Power and TRJ to run further World of Work events.

Pareto Employers

The Swansea Bay City Region Strategy recognises the need to support business growth and specifically targets the need to support large-scale existing major employers across South West Wales. A cross region group has been formed to commence the Pareto Employers initiative which will witness businesses across the City Region directly influence the economic direction that the region takes and will shape policy according to business need. Carmarthenshire accommodates a large number of employers that are classed as being in Welsh Government's key growth sectors. This initiative will also see the region promoted as a strong inward investment destination in the global inward investment marketplace. Dialogue is continuing between Local Authorities to identify priorities in the offer to external markets.

Workways+

During the last 12 months work has been undertaken with our neighbouring LA's to set up a New Adult Employability project "Workways +" under the new EU programme. The operation has now been approved and the official announcement from Jane Hutt MP was made on 16th February 2016. It is envisaged that the operation will commence on April 1st 2016 and will operate until November 2018 (the operation has been in mobilisation from December 1st 2015)

The operation will be managed by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council as lead beneficiary, with delivery teams in each of the five joint sponsor local authority areas; Neath Port Talbot, Swansea, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion.

Carthenshire Workways+ will deliver in three main locations:

- Ammanford
- Carmarthen
- Llanelli

Also outreach venues will be sourced from these areas to promote and engage with participants, therefore reducing travelling costs etc. Participants will include those residing outside of Community First areas, Key target groups will be:

- Economically inactive participants who are:
 - not in education or training and
 - who have low or no skills;
 - a work limiting health condition or disability;
 - care responsibilities;

- are over 54;
 - from a jobless household.
- Long-term unemployed participants who have:
 - low or no skills;
 - a work limiting health condition or disability;
 - are from a BME group;
 - from a jobless household

Outputs

Regional Project Targets – support 4,000 clients

- 900 (22.5%) will enter employment
- 2,000 (50%) will gain a qualification or work relevant certificate upon leaving
- 1600 (54%) will complete work experience or volunteering opportunity

Carmarthenshire's Targets – support 834 clients

- 188 will enter employment
- 417 will gain a qualification or work relevant certificate upon leaving
- 334 will complete work experience or volunteering opportunity

COMMUNITIES FIRST

Communities First (C1st) delivers programmes to narrow economic education/skills and health gaps in the most deprived areas of the County.

Key Outcomes of the Communities First programme 1st April – 31st December 2015:

- **91** participants have secured employment
- **403** participants supported with employment skills
- **161** adults supported with digital skills
- **276** accessed financial inclusion support
- **130** Lift opportunities achieved by participants from workless households
- **172** adults have achieved accredited qualifications
- **743** children supported to do well in school
- **90** adults supported to be engaged in their children's education
- **63** adults participated in our wellbeing programme
- **208** adults participated in physical activity programmes
- **327** participants in healthy cooking workshops

In the last nine months volunteers have given 2071 hours of volunteering directly on the C1st programmes. New volunteers continue to sign up to the programme and

through the Time Credits programme over 800 volunteers have volunteered over 9700 hours this year.

Prosperous Communities

The team run five Goals Clubs and two 'Kick Start' youth Goals Clubs per week in community venues providing support with CV writing or updating, Universal Jobmatch support, online job applications and Universal Credit support. The team deliver IT courses through six sessions per week in community venues and debt and benefit advice and support on a 1-2-1 basis in outreach venues during six sessions per week.

Lift Programme

The Lift programme supports people who have been out of work for six months or more from households where no adult is in work, to find sustainable training and jobs.

Healthy Communities:

Since April 2015, participants who are experiencing mild and moderate mental wellbeing issues including anxiety, low self confidence and low self esteem have been supported through our wellbeing programme.

Learning Communities:

The Learning team have delivered numerous accredited training courses to increase participant's employability or participation in further training in the past nine months including; Emergency First Aid, Retail, Customer Service in Hospitality, Health and Safety in Construction and Food Hygiene.

Marketing and Tourism

Carmarthenshire County Council is committed to improving the economic impact of tourism, an industry that in 2014 was statistically worth £342million per annum to the County, up 2.2% on 2013. Service objectives are to:

1. Plan and carry out strategic research that will assist in service design such as County wide accommodation and hotel studies, Expenditure, Town Centre usage surveys
2. Act as a catalyst and relationship builder with both private, public & 3rd Sector to improve the tourism product in the County
3. Ensure Carmarthenshire is effectively & innovatively promoted as a vibrant area to visit and stay

A range of primary Research is undertaken by the section notably to support the tourism industry and currently within town centres. Being able to provide benchmark data on the consumer visitors to the County is fed into local, regional and national data to support future developments and direction of promotional campaigns. An extensive bi annual visitor survey is carried out at key venues and locations as well as operating a 365 day online survey form. We have also provided a number of economic assessment reports on potential new developments in order to support business plans or applications – these include new caravan sites etc. Using the Bed

Stock database we have to maintain daily, we are able to support planning and economic development with numbers of bed spaces and usage within geographical areas. With a number of actions planned for the three primary town centres, face to face and online questionnaires are being prepared to support the promotional activity.

Business support and investment

The Marketing and Tourism team are one stop shop for advising tourism and hospitality businesses on government led grant support schemes, tourism brown signs, promotional opportunities and one to one guidance on a variety of day to day issues as well as longer term developments.

As well as the projects highlighted overleaf in point 3, we also take the daily enquiries for those seeking a tourism brown sign in Sir Gar, liaising between the business and CCC Highways. We also offer guidance on access to visitor promotional material, planning regulations, access to Tourism Investment Support Scheme financial support.

Over 135 businesses have been supported during April to September with assistance provided on a one to one basis or within forum groups. One to one's have been focussed on delivering two large projects worth potentially £20million as part of the aim to establish at least two new iconic attractions.

The Destination Management Plan for Sir Gar sets out the aspiration and goal to increase its wet weather and seasonality selling points and the development of two new "attractions" were deemed essential in this.

A great deal of time has been invested on getting a Pendine project to be supported by the Welsh Government and other help has been given providing brown tourism road signs, funding for log pods and new touring caravan sites. A grant of £60,000 was awarded in July by the Welsh Government to carry out planning for the 2016 "Year of Adventure". CCC are on national marketing groups on the development of Cruise Ships, Cardiff Airport and on how Wales is promoted in the 4 key markets plus how and what market research is collated and used.

Carmarthenshire Public Relation actions

Public Relations (PR) has been a promotional tool we have invested in for five years as it provides the County national exposure in a variety of mediums which offer an immediate tangible return for those businesses we work with. The process is not one of issuing press releases but of Council staff researching and putting together a collection of visitor products that target seasonal ideas (such as school holidays or Xmas) or niche products (food trails, fishing). These are then offered to the national media in an attempt to entice them to visit and subsequently write about their visit.

120 articles on Carmarthenshire were generated by CCC in this period with National media writers visiting from Coast Magazine, Independent Newspaper, Daily Star, Daily Mail, Sunday Times, Mail onLine and the Daily Mirror, at advertising value equivalent of £150,678.97 for July- September 15 and £200,970.00 for April-June 2015:

Digital media and website

The official visitor website for the County, "Discover Carmarthenshire", is designed and managed in-house and has had its most successful period ever. Fully bi-lingual with Japanese, Mandarin, Italian, French, German & Dutch elements and can track hits per page, linger time, where the user has found us, it has search engine optimisation, is mobile and tablet friendly and updated daily. July saw the first month ever that social media referrals overtook PC for search engine leads to the discover Carmarthenshire website with facebook contributing 95% of these in September 2015 compared to 15% in 2014.

Tourist Information

Castle House in Carmarthen Town Centre is both a visitor attraction and a tourism centre, serving over 10,000 people in this period. As part of the Town Destination Plan, a series of improvements and events are being planned for this area. A new more cost effective and more packed "official visitor guide" has been designed and printed with 10,000 being given to Visit Wales for fulfilling request for Carmarthenshire through their Cardiff outlet to the English market. English and Welsh language versions are available from Carmarthenshire tourism outlets. In order to ensure visitors have immediate access to 'things to do when they arrive', CCC collate, design, and distribute a bilingual printed pack called the Bedroom Browser.

Events

Marketing and Tourism section are the first point of contact for large external events coming to the County as well as organising a number of local community events. During this period we have managed or supported Ammanford Big Day Out, Cwmaman, Gorslas, Burry Port and Seaside Carnivals, Llandeilo Festival of Music, The Big Cwtsh, Llandovery Sheep Festival, Ammanford's Twrch Trwyth Festival plus Vintage and Food Festivals in Carmarthen Town.

What will the next 6 months bring:

Key objective:

- To create jobs and economic growth

Key Priority Areas:

- To progress with the delivering of the key transformational projects as identified in the 'Strategic Regeneration Plan for Carmarthenshire 2015-30,
- To provide support for the delivery of the projects via external funding sources; regional engagement and skills intelligence.
- To realign the service in line with the changing environment