



Community Scrutiny Committee

Annual Report 2015/16

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Committee Membership 2015/16



Cllr. Deryk Cundy
Chair
Bynea
(Labour)



Cllr. Edward Thomas
Vice-Chair
Llandeilo
(Independent)



Cllr. Mansel Charles
Llanegwad
(Plaid Cymru)



Cllr. Anthony Davies
Llandybie
(Independent)



Cllr. Sharen Davies
Llwynhendy
(Labour)



Cllr. Tegwen
Devichand
Dafen
(Labour)



Cllr. Ken Howell
Llangeler
(Plaid Cymru)



Cllr. Irfon Jones
Cynwyl Elfed
(Independent)



Cllr. Shirley
Matthews
Pembrey
(Labour)



Cllr. Jeff Owen
Ty-Isha
(Plaid Cymru)



Cllr. Hugh
Shepardson
Pembrey
(Independent)



Cllr. Gareth Thomas
Hendy
(Plaid Cymru)



Cllr. Jeff Thomas
Carmarthen North
(Plaid Cymru)

Chair's Foreword

I take great pleasure in presenting this Annual Report of the Community Scrutiny Committee covering the period May 2015 to April 2016.

It has been an eventful year during which the Committee considered a wide variety of reports and topics and was engaged in a variety of tasks such as concluding a task and finish review and holding three joint scrutiny meetings.

In June 2015, the task and finish review of Empty Properties was concluded and it was pleasing to note that the Group's work and its recommendations were unanimously received by the Executive Board in July 2015. I look forward to receiving a progress update on the implementation of the Group's recommendations during the forthcoming municipal year.

The Committee has also worked with the Planning Committee in order to monitor another task and finish review that we undertook in 2013/14, to review Planning Enforcement and Protocols. The two joint meetings held with the Planning Committee during the past year have assisted members to closely monitor the on-going work to implement the recommendations that resulted following the review.

I would also like to thank the Committee members for their scrutiny of the wide range of topics that we cover including the specifics of the Swansea Bay Partnership, Regeneration of Cross Hands, Leisure and Sports Facilities, Pembrey Country Park and Burry Port Harbour, the Archive Service, Libraries, HRA Housing, the Allocations Policy, Private Sector Rentals and our Museums, amongst many others.

Your support and constructive input at meetings has been invaluable and most welcome.

I would also like to express my thanks and

appreciation to Cllr. Edward Thomas for his support as vice-chair.

Finally, I would like to thank all the officers for their informed and knowledgeable support, advice and guidance during the past year.

Cllr. Deryk Cundy

Chair of Community Scrutiny Committee

Introduction

Purpose of Annual Report

The following report has been prepared in order to comply with Article 6.2 of the County Council's Constitution which states that a scrutiny committee must:

“Prepare an annual report giving an account of the Committee's activities over the previous year.”

The report:

- Provides an overview of the work of the Community Scrutiny Committee during the 2015/16 municipal year.
- Identifies key areas to be included in the Community Scrutiny Committee's 'Forward Work Programme' for 2016/17.

Number of Meetings

In all, the Community Scrutiny Committee met on 10 occasions between June 2015 and March 2016, three of which were joint meetings, one with the Social Care & Health Scrutiny Committee in July 2015 and the others with the Planning Committee in September 2015 and March 2016 respectively.

The Work Programme for 2015/16

In the main, meeting agendas were consistent with those outlined by the Forward Work Programme for 2015/16, which was confirmed by the Community Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 22nd June 2015.

The Forward Work Programme (FWP) was mainly based on key areas identified as

objectives within the Integrated Community Strategy and Improvement Plan together with standard items such as performance and budget monitoring reports, action plan monitoring reports, and specific requests from the scrutiny committee itself. Additional reports were also requested by the scrutiny committee during the year and the Forward Work Programme was amended accordingly.

The development of the concept of the Forward Work Programme and the process for its agreement, has allowed each scrutiny committee to determine their own work agendas. The benefits of such an approach has led to an improved level of debate and input during scrutiny committee meetings.

The Committee's Remit

The Community Scrutiny Committee's key responsibilities are for:

- Housing – Social and Private Sector
- Planning Policy
- Community Regeneration including physical and rural development
- Economic Development
- European and Externally Funded Programmes
- Libraries
- Arts and Theatres
- Museums and Archives
- Countryside facilities
- Sports, Leisure and Recreation

Key issues considered during 2015/16

Standard Scrutiny Monitoring Reports / Items

Half-Yearly Performance Management Reports

- One of the principal roles of scrutiny committees is to monitor the performance of services and functions within its remit. They undertake this work mainly through the consideration of half-yearly performance monitoring reports and various action plan monitoring reports. The performance monitoring report provides a balanced picture of performance across the relevant service areas. The Committee considered the half-yearly performance reports for its remit at its meetings in June and November 2015.

Revenue & Capital Budget Monitoring Reports

- The Committee received regular quarterly reports on the revenue and capital budgets for the Regeneration & Leisure Department and Housing Services Division (non-HRA), in addition to Housing Revenue Account.

Actions & Referrals Updates - During the course of the municipal year several requests for additional items were made by committee members to assist them in discharging their scrutiny role. In total, 27 recommendations / requests from the Community Scrutiny Committee were formally recorded. These quarterly reports were produced to give an update on progress and information was also circulated to members outside the formal committee meetings.

Performance / Progress Monitoring

Task & Finish Group Action Plan Monitoring: Planning Enforcement and Protocols - During 2015/16, the Committee held two meetings with the Planning Committee in order to consider progress reports regarding the

recommendations of the Community Scrutiny Committee's task and finish review of Planning Enforcement and Protocols, endorsed by both Committees at a joint meeting in June 2014 and by the Executive Board in July 2014. The Executive Board requested that the monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations be undertaken jointly by the Community Scrutiny Committee and the Planning Committee.

At first joint meeting in September 2015, members expressed disappointed that the recommendation to develop a protocol with Dyfed-Powys Police for information sharing and to investigate the possibility of allowing access to the Police secure database, had not been progressed in a timely manner. Members recognised that Dyfed-Powys Police were proactive in relation to individual enforcement cases deemed a high risk but felt that more formal arrangements were required to enhance the Planning Enforcement risk assessment process and staff safety.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Both Committees unanimously resolved to:

- Request that the Executive Board make strong representations to the Police and Crime Commissioner to ensure that formal arrangements are progressed through dialogue between the appropriate Police representative and the Director of Environment and Head of Planning.
- Suggest to the Executive Board and relevant Departments that the cross departmental group targeting empty dilapidated properties consider developing a process for visiting such properties on annual basis to record any deterioration in condition.

OUTCOMES - At the joint meeting of the Community Scrutiny Committee and Planning Committee on the 24th March 2016, members were informed that a Corporate Multi-Disciplinary Group had now been established that would seek to progress issues with Dyfed-Powys Police. The Committees were also informed that the issue of empty dilapidated properties would form part the Group's work plan.

In March 2016, the Committees met for a second time to monitor the progress in implementing the task and finish group's recommendations.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Committees unanimously resolved that:

- The feasibility be investigated on including within the Planning Department's new computer system, provision for identifying retrospective planning applications.
- An update on recommendation 21 (to make representations to the Legal Advisers to the Justices of the Magistrates Court) be made to the next meeting of the joint committee.
- That the Joint Committee meet in 6 months' time to monitor progress in implementing the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group.

OUTCOMES - At the time of writing, work is ongoing in relation to the members' requests but updates will be provided at a joint meeting, scheduled for September 2016.

Performance Management Framework (Communities Department) - In November 2015, the Director of Community Services introduced a new Performance Framework developed by the Communities Department and sought the Committee's comments on how the framework might be used to inform it of the relevant services' performance. The new framework had been developed in-house, to focus on the most important areas within the department as a way of monitoring the success or otherwise in meeting its objectives.

Annual Performance Report (Planning) - In November 2015, the Committee considered the Authority's first Annual Performance Report for Planning. The Committee noted that as part of the 'Positive Planning' consultation in December 2013, the Welsh Government consulted on a series of proposals for measuring the performance of key stakeholders in the planning service. It noted that the Authority was required to submit this report to the Welsh Government in November of each year.



Leisure Services Annual Update - In March 2016, the Committee received for consideration the Leisure Services Annual Update Report for 2015/16 across its service areas of Leisure and Sport, Cultural Services, Countryside and Coast and the Pendine Outdoor Educational Centre.

Economic Development Update - In March 2016, the Committee also received for consideration an update report on the key activities of the Economic Development Division.

KEY RECOMMENDATION:

During discussions, reference was made to the work of the Tourism & Marketing Unit which had recently established a marketing suite for the Swansea Bay City Region in the Great Hall at the new Swansea University Campus. The Committee unanimously resolved that arrangements be made for the Committee to visit the new Marketing Suite at the Swansea University.

OUTCOME - The Committee has requested a number of site visits for the 2016/17 municipal year and this will be included in its forward work programme.



Pre-Decision Scrutiny

Welsh Government's Home Improvement Loan Scheme

- In June 2015, the Committee considered a report in relation to the Welsh Government's (WG) Home Improvement Loan (HIL) scheme in Carmarthenshire. It was informed that the Loan Scheme provided a new opportunity for the Authority to access funding to offer recyclable loans to improve private sector homes. It was also advised that Carmarthenshire had been the first local authority in Wales to offer loans and therefore had considerable experience in administering such schemes.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Committee unanimously resolved to endorse the report for consideration by the Executive Board and recommended that it accept the loan offer from Welsh Government and amend the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy, to offer loans in accordance with the national scheme.

OUTCOME - At its meeting on the 13th July 2015, the Executive Board unanimously resolved to accept the loan offer from Welsh Government and to amend the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy to offer loans in accordance with the national scheme.

Alternative Management Options for Leisure -

At its meeting in September 2015, the Committee considered a report on the outcomes of a review of all potential management options for the leisure and cultural facilities portfolio. The Committee was asked to consider and comment on the proposed options, mainly to seek to enter into a partnership with an existing or hybrid Not for Profit Distributing Organisation (NPDO) for Sports, Leisure and Theatre services.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Committee resolved to:

- Support the proposal that the Council seeks to enter into a partnership with an existing or hybrid Not for Profit Distributing Organisation for Sports and Leisure services plus Theatre services as recommended within the report.
- Suggest to the Executive Board that the Director undertakes research at the earliest opportunity into alternative management options for the remaining services within the division.

OUTCOMES - The Executive Board considered the report at its meeting on the 28th September 2015. The Board unanimously resolved that (1) Carmarthenshire County Council seeks to enter into a partnership with an existing or hybrid Not for Profit Distributing Organisation (NPDO or Trust) through a procurement process using competitive dialogue, which has the key parameters set out in the procurement strategy within the main report, and which will seek to deliver the relevant services' 3 year PBB savings, in line with the affordability levels set out in the report. The procurement process would not include a bid submission from a newly

establish 'internal' NPDO; (2) that the initial scope of the partnership would be for the Sports and Leisure portfolio (including facilities from Llanelli, Carmarthen, Ammanford, Newcastle Emlyn, St. Clears and Llandovery), plus Theatres services (from Llanelli, Carmarthen and Ammanford), with further consideration of other services by Council at a later date after the contract has been operational for a period of time; (3) that, if there is no interest in some or all of the services, Carmarthenshire County Council should then seek to develop a business case to consider establishing a new NPDO for the services to deliver the financial savings; (4) that it be proposed that the tender specifies that the partner organisation has to apply for admitted body status to the Dyfed Pension Fund, closed to existing employees at the point of transfer; (5) that the tender includes a requirement to cost for the replacement of Llanelli Leisure Centre through a Design, Build, Operate and Maintain Model (DBOM); (6) that officers pursue the opportunity to align any new Leisure Centre in Llanelli with a potential 'Wellness' development as part of the major 'ARCH' City Region project.

The Chair attended the Executive Board meeting on the 28th September to clarify the Committee's comments.

Policy Development and Review

Our Commitment to Affordable Homes - In July 2015, the Committee held a joint meeting with the Social Care & Health Scrutiny Committee in order to consider a report outlining an extensive consultation exercise with the public and partner organisations in relation to affordable homes. The Committee noted that the Council wished to set a clear policy direction and set of principles before developing a delivery plan in the autumn of 2015.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committees unanimously resolved to endorse the report for the Executive Board's consideration and to request that it:

- Investigate new models and develop a business case for creating a wholly owned arms-length trading company for the expansion of affordable housing.
- Contact Cardiff University regarding its recent research into and building of zero carbon affordable homes.

OUTCOMES - The report was considered by the Executive Board at its meeting on the 1st September 2015. The Board unanimously resolved to recommend to County Council that the Strategic directions paper 'Our Commitment to Affordable Homes' be approved. At its meeting in October 2015, County Council duly resolved to adopt the Board's recommendation.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) - In November 2015, the Committee considered a report which informed it of the intention to progress a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

for the county.

Pre-Application Fees - At its meeting in November 2015, the Committee also considered a report which included three options in relation to introducing charges for pre-application advice, prior to the potential submission of applications for planning approval.

Review of the Access to Social Housing Policy - At its meeting in January 2016, the Committee considered a report outlining the results of the members' consultation sessions with relation to the Access to Social Housing policy (commonly known as 'The Allocations Policy') and of the operational review of the Access to Social Housing policy. The Committee's views and comments were also sought in relation to the amended draft Access to Social Housing policy and the proposals for a full consultation exercise.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee unanimously resolved:

- That the report be endorsed as the basis for consultation subject to the term 'Homeless but not in priority need' being amended to 'Homeless with special requirements';
- That a further review of the lettings process be commissioned as part of the consultation process to investigate ways to ensure lettings are conducted in a timely and efficient way.

OUTCOMES - At the time of writing, the consultation is on-going and a post-consultation report is scheduled to be presented to the Committee in September 2016.

Affordable Homes Delivery Plan - In February 2016, the Committee considered the draft Affordable Homes Delivery Plan which provided details as to how the Authority intended to deliver more homes, including the resources to be used.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee unanimously resolved that:

- It be recommended to the Executive Board that it confirm the strategy to utilise our existing options to maximise the supply of affordable homes over the next five years.
- It be recommended to the Executive Board that it look at options to maximise the number of new build homes that could be delivered and provide recommendations by September 2016.
- It be recommended to the Executive Board that it confirm the action area approach for delivering more affordable homes in different parts of the County.
- It be recommended to the Executive Board that when preparing future proposals for the action areas, due consideration be given to their deliverability and sustainability, including matters such as the suitability of the existing local infrastructure (e.g. local amenities) and potential planning constraints.

OUTCOMES - On the 10th March 2016, County Council unanimously resolved to endorse the recommendations, as proposed by the Executive Board at its meeting on the 22nd February 2016.

Consultation

Promoting Independence for Older People in Carmarthenshire - At its joint meeting with the Social Care & Health Scrutiny Committee in July 2015, members were consulted on the long-term strategy for services for Older People.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committees resolved to recommend to the Executive Board that:

- The Communities Department investigates developing a business case for using not for profit or social enterprise models for delivering aspects of services for older people.
- The Communities Department investigates which aspects of Primary, Community and Social Care provision would be able to and benefit from pooling the budgets of NHS and Social Care to deliver a more cohesive, cost effective and sustainable service.

OUTCOMES - The report was considered by the Executive Board at its meeting on the 28th September 2015. The Board unanimously resolved to recommend to County Council that the draft Vision and Strategy be approved.



Carmarthenshire County Council's Annual Report 2014/15 and Improvement Plan 2015/16

- In June 2015, the Committee considered the Council's draft Annual Report for 2014/15 and Improvement Plan for 2015/16. The Local Authority must publish an Improvement Plan as soon as it is reasonably practicable after the start of the financial year and publish an Annual Report on past performance by the end of October each year. Each scrutiny committee is afforded the opportunity to consider these items in relation to their specific work areas.

Annual Revenue Budget Consultation - At its meeting in December 2015, the Committee considered the annual consultation report for the Revenue Budget Strategies for 2016/17 to 2018/19.

Housing Revenue Account and Housing Rent Setting 2016/17 (Revenue and Capital) - In January 2016, the Committee considered the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget and Housing Rent Setting for 2016/17 which was being presented as part of the budget consultation process. The report, a revised version of which was circulated, reflected the latest proposals contained in the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan, which was the primary financial planning tool for delivering the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard Plus (CHS+).

The Carmarthenshire Homes Standard Plus (CHS+) 'Delivering What Matters' - In February 2016, the Committee considered the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard Plus (CHS+) Programme Plan for 2016-2019. Members were advised that the CHS+ programme was grounded in the work of the previous Carmarthenshire Home Standard programme, completed in 2015, in order to maintain and improve on the work already undertaken. Three

key aspects of the Plan were to:

- Support tenants and residents with issues such as Welfare Reform, getting services right, saving tenants money in the home, digital inclusion and active ageing
- Investing in homes to maintain standards
- Provide more homes to increase supply of affordable housing

The Committee welcomed the Plan and thanked the Head of Housing & Public Protection and his staff for the excellent work that had already been achieved and the continued support provided by officers to the Council's tenants.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee unanimously resolved that:

- It be recommended to the Executive Board that it confirm the vision of CHS+ and the financial and delivery programme over the next three years.
- It be recommended to the Executive Board that it confirm submission of the plan to the Welsh Government.

OUTCOMES - At its meeting on the 10th March, County Council unanimously resolved to endorse the Executive Board's recommendation that (i) the vision of CHS+ and the financial and delivery programme over the next three years be confirmed and (ii) that the submission of the plan to the Welsh Government be confirmed.

Investigative Scrutiny

Community Scrutiny Committee Task & Finish Group 2014/15: Empty Properties in Carmarthenshire - In June 2015, the Committee considered the final report of its Task & Finish Group review of Empty Properties in Carmarthenshire. It was informed that the 11 recommendations contained within the report had been formulated by the Group following the consideration of a range of evidence over a series of meetings held between November 2014 and June 2015. The Chair expressed his gratitude to the Group Members and all participants for their contribution to the review.

KEY RECOMMENDATION

The Committee unanimously resolved to endorse the Task & Finish Report and recommendations for consideration by the Executive Board.

OUTCOME - At its meeting on the 27th July 2015, the Executive Board unanimously resolved that the recommendations of the Community Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Group on Empty Properties in Carmarthenshire, as detailed within the report, be endorsed.

The main aims of the review were:

- To identify and evaluate the current activities undertaken by the Housing & Public Protection Division.
- To identify potential improvements and alternative delivery models.
- To identify cost effective best practice by

other authorities, agencies and providers.

The Group held seven meetings as well as site visits (pictured below) between November 2014 and June 2015. The Group's members were:

- Cllr. Deryk Cundy (Chair)
- Cllr. Sharen Davies
- Cllr. Ken Howell
- Cllr. Irfon Jones
- Cllr. Edward Thomas
- Cllr. Jeff Thomas

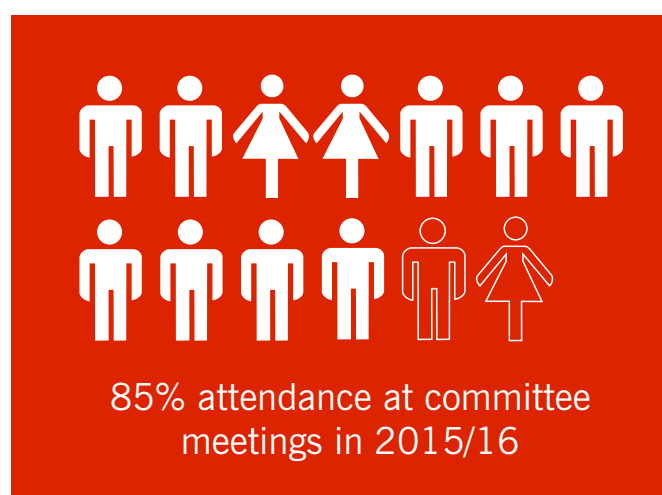


Other activities during 2015/16

The Committee did not undertake a task and finish review or hold any site visits during 2015/16.

Whilst no specific development sessions were held for this Committee, the following all-member development sessions were held during 2015/16, to which Committee members were invited:

- Social Media and Members (June 2015)
- Customer Services (October 2015)
- Responsibilities under Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and Equality Act 2010 in relation to Gypsies and Travellers (December 2015)
- Safeguarding Children (January 2016)



Support for the Scrutiny Function

In July 2015, responsibility for the support of Carmarthenshire County Council's scrutiny function was transferred from the former Scrutiny & Consultancy Team, based in the People Management & Performance Division, to the Democratic Services Unit, based in the Administration & Law Division of the Chief Executive's Department.

Support for the Scrutiny function includes:

- Providing support and constitutional advice to the Council's Scrutiny Committees and to members of those Committees as well as producing minutes of their meetings and ensuring items arising from those meetings are actioned
- Giving support and advice in relation to the functions of the Council's Scrutiny Committees to executive and non-executive members of the Council and its officers
- Managing the strategic development of Scrutiny in Carmarthenshire through engaging in national and regional Scrutiny networks and initiatives, supporting the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Scrutiny Forum, and the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Executive Board Forum
- Advising and supporting the implementation of the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 as guidance is published
- Managing the co-ordination and development of the Scrutiny forward work programmes in conjunction with Scrutiny members
- Managing and co-ordinating Scrutiny review work, including the operation of scrutiny task and finish groups, authoring reports in

conjunction with the groups, and assisting in the implementation and monitoring of completed reviews

- Managing the Scrutiny member development programme.
- Despatching agendas for Scrutiny Committee meetings a minimum of 4 working days prior to the meeting.

For more information on scrutiny in Carmarthenshire including work programmes, task and finish reports and annual reports, visit the County Council's website at: www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/scrutiny

To contact the Democratic Services Unit, please call 01267 224028 or email: scrutiny@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

Committee Member Attendance

Attendance by members of the Community Scrutiny Committee during the 2015/16 year is shown in the table below. A total of 7 committee meetings were held between May 2015 and April 2016.

Scrutiny Committee Member	No. of meetings attended
Cllr. Mansel Charles	7
Cllr. Deryk Cundy	7
Cllr. Anthony Davies	6
Cllr. Sharen Davies	7
Cllr. Tegwen Devichand	5
Cllr. Ken Howell	7
Cllr. Irfon Jones	7
Cllr. Shirley Matthews	5
Cllr. Jeff Owen	6
Cllr. Hugh Shepardson	6
Cllr. Edward Thomas	6
Cllr. Gareth Thomas	5
Cllr. Jeff Thomas	3

Substitutes	No. of meetings attended
Cllr. Sue Allen	1
Cllr. Ryan Bartlett	2
Cllr. Tyssul Evans	1
Cllr. John James	1
Cllr. Louvain Roberts	1
Cllr. Ryan Thomas	1
Cllr. Elwyn Williams	1
Cllr. Joy Williams	1

Executive Board Members	No. of meetings attended
Cllr. Linda Evans (Housing)	5
Cllr. Meryl Gravell (Regeneration & Leisure)	1
Cllr. David Jenkins (Resources)	2

Attendance by members of the Community Scrutiny Committee at joint meetings during the 2015/16 year, is shown in the table below. The Community Scrutiny Committee held 3 joint meetings between May 2015 and April 2016.

Committee Member	Joint SC&H	Joint Planning (i)	Joint Planning (ii)
Cllr. Mansel Charles	1	1	1
Cllr. Deryk Cundy	1	1	1
Cllr. Anthony Davies	0	1	0
Cllr. Sharen Davies	1	1	1
Cllr. Tegwen Devichand	1	0	0
Cllr. Ken Howell	1	1	1
Cllr. Irfon Jones	1	1	1
Cllr. Shirley Matthews	0	1	1
Cllr. Jeff Owen	1	1	1
Cllr. Hugh Shepardson	1	1	1
Cllr. Edward Thomas	1	1	1
Cllr. Gareth Thomas	1	0	1
Cllr. Jeff Thomas	1	1	0

Substitutes	Joint SC&H	Joint Planning (i)	Joint Planning (ii)
Cllr. Sue Allen			1
Cllr. Ryan Bartlett			1
Cllr. Peter Cooper	1		
Cllr. John James	1	1	
Cllr. Anthony Jones	1		
Cllr. Roy Llewellyn		1	
Cllr. Louvain Roberts			1

Executive Board Members	Joint SC&H	Joint Planning (i)	Joint Planning (ii)
Cllr. Meryl Gravell (Regeneration & Leisure)			1
Cllr. Jim Jones (Env. & Public Protection)	1		
Cllr. Jane Tremlett (Social Care & Health)	1		

Glossary of Terms

CHS+ - Carmarthenshire Home Standard Plus

CIL - Community Infrastructure Levy

FWP - Forward Work Programme

HIL - Home Improvement Loan

HRA - Housing Revenue Account

NHS - National Health Service

NPDO - Not for Profit Distributing Organisation

WG - Welsh Government