

FRIDAY, 6 NOVEMBER 2020

**TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY AND REGENERATION
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

I HEREBY SUMMON YOU TO ATTEND A VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE
COMMUNITY AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WHICH
WILL BE HELD **AT 10.00 AM, ON FRIDAY, 13TH NOVEMBER, 2020**
FOR THE TRANSACTION OF THE BUSINESS OUTLINED ON THE
ATTACHED AGENDA

Wendy Walters

CHIEF EXECUTIVE



PLEASE RECYCLE

Democratic Officer:	Kevin J Thomas
Telephone (direct line):	01267 224027
E-Mail:	KJThomas@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

NOTE:

If you require Welsh to English simultaneous translation during the meeting please
telephone 0330 336 4321 Passcode: 49493225#

(For call charges contact your service provider)

Wendy Walters Prif Weithredwr, *Chief Executive*,
Neuadd y Sir, Caerfyrddin. SA31 1JP
County Hall, Carmarthen. SA31 1JP

COMMUNITY AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13 MEMBERS

PLAID CYMRU GROUP – 7 MEMBERS

- | | | |
|----|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. | Councillor | Ann Davies |
| 2. | Councillor | Handel Davies |
| 3. | Councillor | Colin Evans |
| 4. | Councillor | Jeanette Gilasbey |
| 5. | Councillor | Betsan Jones |
| 6. | Councillor | Dai Thomas |
| 7. | Councillor | Gareth Thomas (Vice-Chair) |

LABOUR GROUP – 3 MEMBERS

- | | | |
|----|-------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. | Councillor | Fozia Akhtar |
| 2. | Councillor | Rob Evans |
| 3. | Councillor | Shirley Matthews |

INDEPENDENT GROUP – 3 MEMBERS

- | | | |
|----|-------------------|------------------------|
| 1. | Councillor | Anthony Davies |
| 2. | Councillor | Irfon Jones |
| 3. | Councillor | Hugh Shepardson |

A G E N D A

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 2. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR FOR THE 2020/21 MUNICIPAL YEAR**
- 3. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS INCLUDING ANY PARTY WHIPS ISSUED IN RELATION TO ANY AGENDA ITEM**
- 4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (NONE RECEIVED)**
- 5. IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT SERVICES COVERED BY THE COMMUNITY & REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** 5 - 26
- 6. IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON HOMES AND SAFER COMMUNITIES** 27 - 38
- 7. IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON CARMARTHENSHIRE'S LEISURE SERVICES** 39 - 66
- 8. COVID-19 UPDATE REPORT FOR REGENERATION.** 67 - 124
- 9. COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20** 125 - 144
- 10. COMMUNITY AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2020/21** 145 - 160
- 11. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THE 5TH FEBRUARY, 2020** 161 - 166

This page is intentionally left blank

COMMUNITY & REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 13TH NOVEMBER 2020

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT SERVICES COVERED BY THE COMMUNITY & REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

To consider and comment on the following issues:

The Property and Planning Services Divisions' response to Covid for following areas covered by the Community & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee:

- Housing Services including New Homes, Repairs and Maintenance
- Planning Policy

Reasons:

To take stock of the impact of the pandemic on the Environment Department from a Community & Regeneration Scrutiny perspective.

To be referred to the Executive Board / Council for decision: **NO**

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDERS:

Cllr Hazel Evans (Environment Portfolio Holder)

Cllr. Linda Evans (Housing Portfolio Holder)

Cllr Mair Stephens (Planning Policy Portfolio Holder)

Directorate: Environment

Designations:

Tel Nos./ E Mail Addresses:

Report Authors

Jonathan Fearn

Head of Property

01267 246244

JFearn@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

Llinos Quelch

Head of Planning
Services

01267 228918

LQuelch@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
COMMUNITY & REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
13TH NOVEMBER 2020

**IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE ENVIRONMENT
DEPARTMENT**

BRIEF SUMMARY OF PURPOSE OF REPORT

The attached detailed Reports assess the Covid-19 pandemic's impact on the Environment Department from a Community & Regeneration Scrutiny perspective:

- Housing Services: New Homes, Repairs and Maintenance
- Planning Policy

This assessment will inform how we reset and further improve the delivery of services in the future.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?

Yes

CONSULTATIONS

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

Signed: Jonathan Fearn, Head of Property
Llinos Quelch, Head of Planning Services

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

1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities

We must make sure that we learn from this unprecedented experience as we reintroduce our services and re-set our strategic and operational priorities. We must identify our key learning points at a service and organisational level in alignment with the revised corporate '*Moving Forward in Carmarthenshire 5 Year Plan*', *Corporate Strategy* and *Well-being Objectives*.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to inevitable widespread changes to the way in which services are delivered by local authorities. This means that it is even more critical that Local Authorities respect the needs of all service users and equalities.

We will need to reprioritise services and our resources in budget setting.

2. Finance

We are in an unprecedented position due to increased costs due to COVID-19 activity. This may cause funding pressures if WG hardship funding cannot be accessed post March 2021.

3. Staffing Implications

Many staff have been redeployed during the periods of lockdown and other restrictions, which have deferred a variety of non-essential services compared with original business plan objectives.

4. Physical Assets

Significant investment in building new council homes and improving existing homes have had to be deferred during the periods of lockdown and other restrictions. This has resulted in a delay in capital projects and backlog of non-essential maintenance which will be progressed once circumstances permit.

IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below

Signed: Jonathan Fearn, Head of Property
Llinos Quelch, Head of Planning Services

- 1. Local Member(s)-** N/A
- 2. Community / Town Council –** N/A
- 3. Relevant Partners –** N/A
- 4. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations –** Monthly meetings with trade unions ongoing

**EXECUTIVE BOARD PORTFOLIO
HOLDER(S) AWARE / CONSULTED:**

YES

Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information

List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Title of Document	Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
Impact of COVID-19 on Carmarthenshire Executive Board Report 19 th October 2020	CCC website

Planning Services: Covid19 service position statement

Community & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee

13th November 2020

carmarthenshire.gov.uk



1. What is the purpose of this report?

The purpose of this report is to provide Scrutiny members with a high level summary of the impact COVID 19 has had on those specific elements of the Planning Services covered by this Scrutiny Committee over the last 8 months from a service user, staff and Council perspective. Those elements relevant to this Scrutiny therefore are:

- Planning Policy;
- Minerals & Waste (excluding the enforcement function);
- Development Management & Built Heritage (excluding the enforcement function);
- Building Control; and
- Street Name and Numbering.

The report also looks ahead in terms of what are the potential implications moving forward as well as key lessons learnt.

It is not the intention of this report to cover every area of the service but instead it will focus on some of the key issues:

All other functions NOT listed above but covered by the Planning Division fall under the remit of the Environmental and Public Protection Scrutiny and form the basis therefore of a separate report.

2. What has been the impact of Covid on services and what changes have we seen?

Some of the above elements of the Planning Service have remained fully open during the COVID period – however the staffing levels available to man those services were significantly reduced as a result of re-deployment (see workforce section below). Other areas were operational in part or suspended (see further detail per Unit below).

A number of Welsh Government guidance letters have been received since the start of the Covid period setting out procedures and temporary legislation to follow around some aspects of the Planning Services (namely Policy, Development Management and Building Control). Some advice was received in a timely manner, others seemed to take a long time to come through and impacted on the effectiveness of services going forward. The updates below reflect any of the guidance received.

All Officers in relation to the services listed above worked from home from the first day of lock down and continue to do so. All non-urgent site visits (urgent being those with risk to life and limb) were suspended and some but not all have been reconvening gradually from July onwards as per detail below with regards each Unit. The temporary suspension of site visits has had an impact on each service area – leading to inevitable delays and build-up of a Covid backlog of works.

Overall

the efficiency of the whole service delivery has also been affected as 50% of staff were partly/fully redeployed during the first 4 months of Covid. Services therefore remain in a position of catching up with a backlog of work that has built up during the Covid period to date – this affects all 5 areas listed below.

In addition to these general points, the following provides a further update re each of the 5 service areas (Units) listed at the start of this document:

a) **Planning Policy Unit**

When we first went into lockdown the Authority was in the final 2 weeks of its Deposit Consultation for the Revised Local Development Plan (LDP) (closed 27th March 2020). In its Revised LDP Delivery Agreement the Council⁵⁰ agreed to make consultation documentation available for inspection at various public locations, including libraries and Council offices. The lockdown meant that this element of the Delivery Agreement could not be met for the last part of the consultation. To avoid any potential challenge the Authority undertook a further 3 week consultation 11th September to 2nd October 2020. This means that in total the LDP has been on Deposit for just over 8 weeks with documents available to view as per the requirements of the Delivery Agreement.

The need to re-consult along with the need to re-visit evidence in light of the impact of Covid today and moving forward will result in up to a 7-month delay to the delivery of the LDP, which has been acknowledged and agreed by the Executive Board. A revised Delivery Agreement with an adoption date of July/August 2022 is being taken through the democratic process. WG have now clarified that Carmarthenshire's LDP is NOT affected by the 'drop dead date' set in legislation and therefore the current LDP will remain in force until the new one is adopted.

S106 work – whilst the general administrative work has been maintained the monitoring and compliance of developments has been disrupted through the limitations on site visits. The impact on developers/applicants particularly

small local builders has been noted. Consequently, the invoicing for contributions has been paused where there is a financial impact arising from Covid – 19 and the lockdown.

Just under 50% of the team were involved in redeployment activities.

b) Development Management Unit (excluding the enforcement function)

All planning application functions remained open at the start of lock down other than; site visits, site notices and new consultations (incl. on new planning applications).

There was also an initial suspension of registering new planning applications until receipt of further Welsh Government Guidance.

These factors combined have resulted in a backlog of cases being brought forward from the first 3 months or so of Covid.

In addition, the staffing capacity was reduced from end of March to end of June by redeployment duties affecting 50% of DMO Unit.

Planning Committee was suspended from mid March and reconvened remotely on the 30th June. To catch up with the back log of applications Committee meetings have since been held twice a month.

Site visits by the Planning Committee were also suspended mid March and remain as such. Officers are supplementing their reports with additional visual aids and where appropriate drone footage is being used. As a result no applications have to date been deferred to a site visit during the Covid period.

Application numbers although reduced slightly in April/May have otherwise been at similar levels to previous years.

All on-site built heritage training ceased at the Tywi Centre until the end of September. Some training was instead undertaken remotely however others require on-site presence to demonstrate students' physical heritage skills and allow for appropriate assessment.

Overall, the service has been significantly hampered during the first 4 months of Covid (longer in terms of the Tywi centre Training element) leading to a delay in service request being dealt with. This has been at a time when a recent Strategic Review of Planning highlighted the resource pressures faced by the service, and the lack of resilience to deal with additional and unexpected demand.

c) Minerals & Waste Unit (excluding the enforcement function)

The team cover 10 authorities including Carmarthenshire in terms of a combination of planning application determinations and monitoring of dormant and live sites.

Desk top work regarding live applications continued throughout although as per the Development Management team there were restrictions in relation to any new applications received and they have been delayed for the same reasons.

Monitoring activity, which requires physical site visits, was suspended and recommenced on 1st October across Carmarthenshire and all other Authorities whom we undertake such work for. This was largely due to H & S issues and site operators not being able to allow the monitoring to be undertaken safely as it requires physical site presence to undertake. Although visits have recommenced localised lockdowns mean that not many visits have been able to happen to date. Additionally as monitoring is an annual requirement with several visits per site being required per annum it is not acceptable to condense all those visits into the remaining part of the year. Therefore those monitoring visits due in the first 7 months of the year cannot be recouped.

The issues around site visits significantly affected the ability of the Unit to undertake most of its duties and therefore this team was one of those that remained involved in redeployment activity the longest with up to 5 of the 8 person team volunteering at any one time.

d) Building Control

All site visits other than those regarded as essential in relation to Dangerous Structures were suspended. Various types of visits have since been switched back on during July and August – however not all types of visits have recommenced. Internal inspection of occupied properties remains suspended with a view of these recommencing by the end of November.

In line with LABC guidance issued in the Spring Officers where possible have replaced site visits with virtual tours with the client via various media formats. However, this has proven ineffective in many cases particularly in relation to completion notices which require an internal inspector of property in more

detail than can be gleaned from a virtual walk through. Overall the service has been significantly hampered during the first 4 to 5 months of Covid. Of the Officers 5 out of 7 were involved in redeployment on a daily basis for the first 4 months with some team members still engaged in August.

e) Street Name and Numbering

This function carried on remotely throughout, although all non-urgent site visits were suspended for the 3 months.

3. What have been the workforce implications?

Staff have been outstanding throughout the pandemic, in continuing to support the service but also in their flexibility and enthusiasm in embracing new challenges and assisting with other essential services at the outset. This has no doubt resulted in staff gaining new skill sets as well as having created great opportunities for team building both with officers within the Division and with those from other Divisions & Departments

All Officers in relation to the services listed above worked from home from the first day of lock down and continue to do so. There isn't any office presence at present though some functions do now require minimal presence and work is underway to ensure that such access can be secured in a safe manner by the end of November with the relevant building checks, risk assessment and safe systems of work currently awaiting sign off.

From the outset Planning was identified as a service with suitable customer skills to help with other services considered, at the time, far more essential. A Corporate decision was taken for as many officers as possible to be re-deployed with regards the food hub (packing and distribution) for families qualifying for free school meals and those who were shielding, delivery of essentials to vulnerable households and training of the fast growing requirements of the cleansing team. Up to 50% were volunteering daily or part of the day until the end of June and some continued to mid-August which is when shielding finished. This meant that many of the planning service functions, though still open to operate in principle, did not have the staff resources to continue a normal level of service. This is true across all the 5 service areas above.

The Head of Service (HoS) and Business Managers have been engaged in various response and recovery groups/discussions/planning throughout and continue to work on a number of cross departmental groups on at least a weekly basis. The HoS continues to coordinate the recovery authorisation

process for Capital Programme schemes which became the focussed priority in June/July with a large number of restart's and continues to require weekly input.

During the course of the crisis and as officers have returned more to the day job and moved away from the redeployment the work pressures and Covid resulting backlog issues on staff have become increasingly apparent. Well-being going forward will be a big issue and a driver for better managing workloads.

We are conscious that this has been a hugely difficult time for staff managing both work and challenging situations at home, and staff have been exemplary in the commitment and dedication they have shown. Many have struggled with the work environment – and Managers have assisted where possible to ensure that appropriate standards exist for this temporary home working. Others have struggled with childcare and again Managers have assisted where they can in terms of signposting for additional help. One of the key challenges moving forward will be managing staff well-being in the winter months which brings its own issues. Home working moving forward has its benefits and disbenefits and these need to be balanced in any future agile working policy by the Authority. It is clear there are significant benefits for the service and Authority as a whole to continue some form of home working but for it to work at its best it will need to be balanced with some office presence – a hybrid approach - which is generally supported by staff in this Service moving forward.

With a high percentage of staff on redeployment duties for the first 4 months staff have from August onwards being catching up with taking much needed and deserved leave. This again has affected and will continue to affect service delivery and is another factor to note in that service delivery is not back to normal levels it was pre Covid.

4. What have been the key financial issues identified?

The following are some of the key issues/implications which have been identified to date:

- Planning fees were down in Q1 compared to Q1 last year by a third (£93,470 compared to £143,340). Most of the impact was seen in April/May with income returning to that similar to last year by June. In Q2 fees were broadly in line with the year before at £207,579 (£213,430 last year). However, this was, in part, due to fees received in Q1 but not registered until Q2 so the overall picture remains one of a

decrease in fee income.

- Building Control income was down between April and August this year by £48 k compared to the same time last year. This is a direct result of inspections being suspended during early Covid (some still suspended) and the fact that the construction industry too slowed during that early period whilst they found their way in terms of new Covid working practices and also dealt with supply issues. The further localised lock downs will affect this in the third quarter too as will any further lockdowns going forward.
- Mineral fees for the first half of the year are down roughly £30,000 in terms of monitoring and £30,000 in potential planning application fees. The monitoring money cannot be clawed back as only a certain number of monitoring visits can occur in relation to each site per year and WG guidelines require that these are evenly dispersed throughout the year. The further localised lock downs have affect this in the third quarter, as has the national lockdown too. Any further lockdowns will continue to diminish the window of opportunity for monitoring visits and therefore income. The of loss income from planning applications depends on whether those applications have been delayed or whether they now get pulled due to economic viability issues and therefore the exact loss of income is more difficult to quantify.
- Tywi Centre training income is also down as on-site training was suspended until late September. However a successful bid to WG for loss of income due to Covid impact for just under £30,000 has been successful. A second bid has been submitted for Q2 for £37,000.

5. How have we approached Communication and Engagement?

Regular contact has also been maintained between the Head of Service and the Executive Board Member and Chair of Planning Committee, to ensure everyone is up to date on what is happening.

E-mail updates have been provided to Planning Committee Members.

E-mail updates have also been provided to Agents – which included passing on relevant information from WG.

Update have been included on the Planning website and through social media with Marketing Team as to delays early on and this banner is kept up to date.

Press releases, e-mails and social media have also been used to publicise the additional LDP consultation.

Weekly Business Managers meetings have occurred (daily in the first month or so) and updates sent to staff as appropriate of changes affecting the service during the pandemic.

6. What are the key implications moving forward?

We must make sure that we learn from this unprecedented experience as we reintroduce our services and re-set our strategic and operational priorities. It is not going to be a case of restarting and getting back to the way we were. This is an opportunity to refresh and renew.

In terms of any future lockdowns, the toll taken on planning services generally the first time around have been Corporately acknowledged. The redistribution of resources to assist other essential services (although essential and the right move at the time) has left a new backlog of work to be dealt with. This will affect the Division's ability to respond in a timely manner to assist with economic recovery. Most of the planning services listed at the start of the document are therefore now seen as essential not only to keep operational for as long as possible but to also keep fully resourced for as long as possible.

Specifically moving forward we will:

- Continue to implement the recommendations of the Strategic Planning Review, and continue with the work undertaken as TIC projects
- continue to challenge and adapt the way we work.
- Further embrace agile working and consider how this is best taken forward to achieve best working practices whilst at the same time improving the well-being of our staff;
- Continue with the reduced travel principle:
 - Make more use of remote meetings or at least hybrid meetings
 - Critically assess the need for site visits – exhausting all other means prior to that (social media walk through etc.) – in line with WG guidance.

- Make better use of drones for Committee purposes but also look at Minerals monitoring etc. There is already a scoping exercise being completed and this will be looked at now at a corporate level.

7. What lessons have we learnt?

- How critical digital solutions have been and will be going forward. As a Service we were lucky in that almost all staff already had most of the equipment to work more agile. This ensures that Services did not completely shut down during the Covid period.
- To continue to question ways of working – it is too easy to carry on with the norm. Covid 19 has shown us that there are always ways of doing things better or simpler. As part of the on-gong service improvement discussions we will continue to look at making the service more effective.
- In a crisis the One Team approach comes through very strongly. Barriers that may have existed get removed and officers work alongside colleagues of different grades and different divisions at ease. This needs to be nurtured and carried through rather than lost as some sense of normality returns in due course.
- Staff Resilience has been exceptional during Covid with people undertaking their day jobs and taking on additional tasks at the same time. This has been at a time when the resilience of the service in terms of resource is being challenged. However, this is a marathon and not a sprint and we need to be careful that the fatigue which is already showing is appropriately managed. We need to make sure that staff are encouraged to take leave (both in terms of leave and breaks in the working day) despite the inability to travel. Time off is even more important during a pandemic such as this. We also need to assist staff to better manage their workday – building in appropriate breaks and addressing any long hours going forward.

To consider and comment on:

- 1. The parts relevant to this Scrutiny Committee to the Planning Division's response to COVID**

This page is intentionally left blank

Property Division

Covid19 Service Position Statement

Community & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee

13th November 2020

carmarthenshire.gov.uk



1. What is the purpose of this report?

The purpose of this report is to provide Community & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee with a summary of the impact COVID 19 has had on Property Division's Services over the last 8 months

The Report covers the following areas of the Property Division which are covered by the Community & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee:

- Housing Services
 - New Homes
 - Repairs and Maintenance

A position statement on other Property Division functions will be reported to other relevant Scrutiny Committees.

2. What has been the impact of Covid on Property's services?

The Covid restrictions, in particular the Wales-wide lockdowns and Llanelli Health Protection Zone (HPZ), have had a significant impact on the Property Division's activities. A range of functions were suspended over recent months, as set out below:

Construction of New Homes

Most of our construction sites were closed by our contractors during lockdown because of staffing and material supply constraints. We have been working with the range of contractors to restart each site as soon as possible, to ensure delivery of the projects but also to support contractor cashflow. All contractors are now back on site, but completion dates have slipped as a result and current estimated completion dates are set out below. These dates are subject to change depending on any further Covid-related measures:

Garreglwyd, Pembrey:
January 2021

Dylan, Llwynhendy:
Phase 1: December 2020
Phase 2: February 2021
Phase 3: September 2021

Maespiode, Llandybie:
Summer 2021

Glanmor Terrace, Burry Port:
December 2022 but with earlier handover on a phased basis

Gwynfryn, Ammanford:
Phase 1: June 2021
Phase 2: July 2021

Carmarthenshire Homes Standard Works (re-roofing, re-rendering, bathroom / kitchen renewals and sheltered housing works)

Delivery of our Carmarthenshire Homes Standard works were suspended and have not yet recommenced. The delay in completing these improvements will continue to have an impact on those occupying our homes.

Work previously planned for 2020/21 was suspended in March because of the Lockdown. We are currently preparing to restart the programme as soon as possible.

Tenders for the 2021/22 programme were about to be issued in March and were put on hold. These documents are currently being revisited and reviewed so tenders can be sought as soon as possible

Non-essential Maintenance

All non-essential maintenance works were suspended in March to reduce the risk of Covid infection. At the outset of the first lockdown communication was issued to all tenants to advise that only essential or safety maintenance works would be undertaken and that we would collate any non-urgent works for future implementation. This message was repeated when the Llanelli Health Protection Zone and the recent Fire-break lockdown were put in place. As a result, there was a significant reduction in requests for non-essential responsive maintenance.

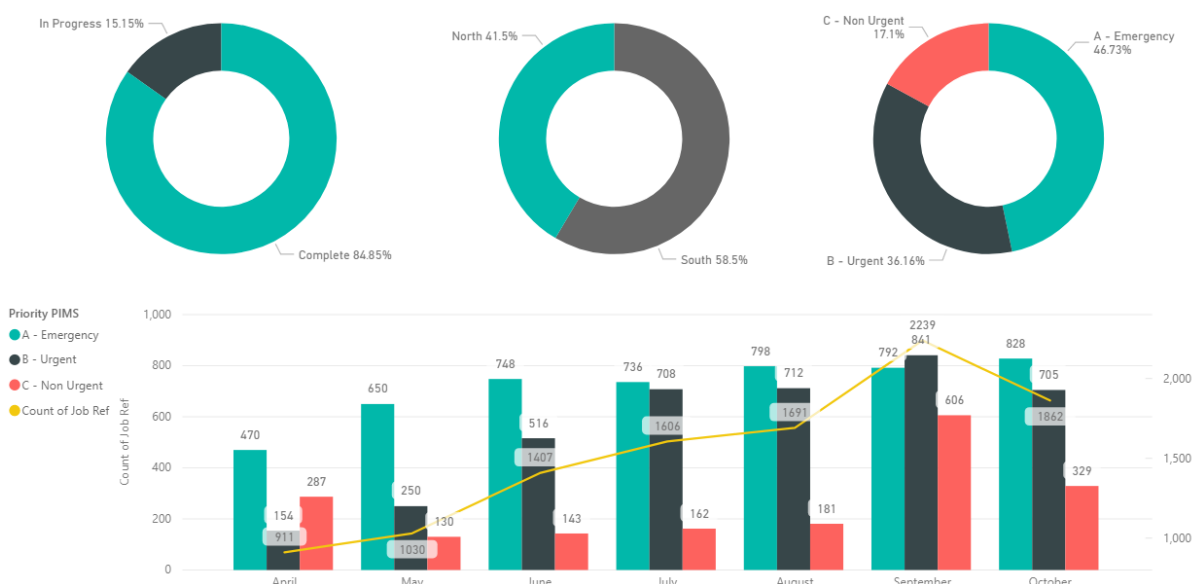
The number of non-essential maintenance requests increased in September up until the Llanelli HPZ during October. Despite the long periods of lockdown, Property Maintenance has been able to complete 37.5% (689) of job requests. This leaves a remaining non-essential responsive backlog of 62.5% (1,149) which will be delivered once government restrictions allow. The

graphs below set out the number and category of repairs requested from April to October, for information.

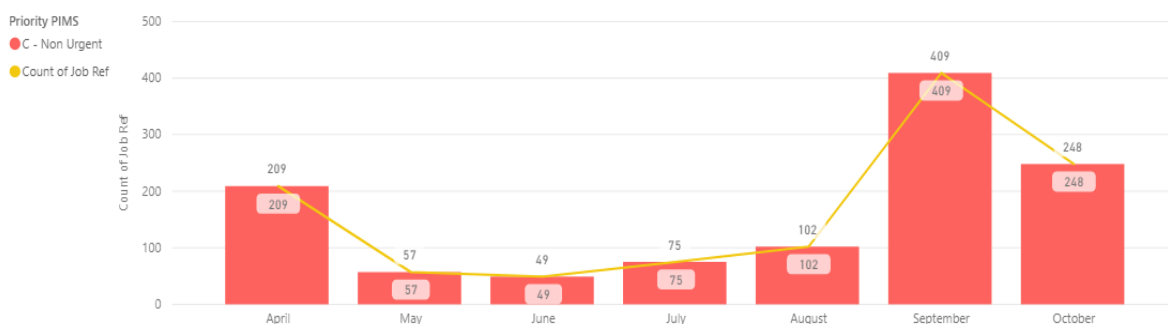


Housing Repairs Demands

Number of Jobs Received
10.75K



Despite the significant impact of Covid on our ability to deliver work, response times for non-essential maintenance that we have been able to undertake currently stands at 15.6 days. We are, however, likely to experience a significant increase in turnaround times in coming months due to starting work on the backlog once restrictions are eased. The graph below shows the non-essential works still in progress and the month they were received. The number of non-urgent jobs is also expected to further increase as tenants start to report more readily, after the current lockdown. The ability and timescales to reduce the backlog will be dependent on the availability of contractors, any future restrictions, and the level of demand for responsive maintenance over the coming winter months.



Property Maintenance overall responsive timescales for urgent and essential work currently stands at an average of 2.6 days. This is currently less than previous years but not comparable due to the reduction of non-essential work demands. This trend is increasing with October data showing 4.2 days due to the current backlog together with increasing non-urgent maintenance requests.

The Building Inspection Team has not been undertaking non-essential inspections so it is anticipated that, once inspections resume, we anticipate that there will also be significant latent maintenance work.

Essential servicing

We continued to deliver essential servicing within tenants' homes. This included the servicing of boilers, solid fuel appliances, smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors and electrical installations. Contractors' safe working practices were reviewed to ensure appropriate measures were implemented as part of the service delivery.

Radon Testing Programme

During January and February 2020, just before the lockdown, we instigated a programme of radon monitoring within council properties. Phase 1 involved placing radon detectors in nearly 500 properties across the county (mainly in the north within higher risk areas). We originally programmed collection of these detectors in May 2020 but, due to lockdown restrictions, this was not possible due to the risk of cross infection. Collection of these detectors is about to commence and will be completed during November and December 2020.

3. What have been the workforce implications?

As lockdown was imposed, a range of Council buildings were closed to the public and staff to encourage home working in accordance with Welsh Government guidelines. Some staff continued to require access to buildings to undertake their work, but this has been closely monitored to ensure access is limited only to those requiring it. To support re-opening of services we introduced an internal independent verification process to ensure that social distancing and other safety measures were in place before any building was

reopened, to ensure the safety of our staff and public. The closure of buildings has significantly reduced the availability of face-to-face service delivery to the public, which has shifted to phone and internet communication.

A range of buildings continue to remain closed and we will be reviewing our property needs for the future. The new ways of working from home are likely to provide an opportunity to reduce our office requirements and focus more fully on buildings that deliver direct services to the public.

Staff have been outstanding throughout the pandemic, in continuing to support people in our communities, and take on challenges that they would never previously have foreseen. For example, Property staff not able to continue with their usual work have been redeployed to help with delivery of food and personal protective equipment (PPE) and in the PPE distribution centre

We are conscious that this has been a hugely difficult time for staff managing both work and challenging situations at home, and staff have been exemplary in the commitment and dedication they have shown.

It should also be noted that tenants, residents, and members have been very understanding during this period, accepting the challenging times we all have faced and the impact this can have on the delivery of the service.

COMMUNITY & REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 13TH NOVEMBER 2020

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON HOMES AND SAFER COMMUNITIES

To consider and comment on the following issues:

1. The Homes and Safer Communities Division's response to COVID

Reasons:

To take stock of the impact of the pandemic on the Homes and Safer Communities Division from a Community Scrutiny perspective.

To be referred to the Executive Board / Council for decision: **NO**

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:-

Cllr. Linda Evans (Housing Portfolio Holder)

Directorate Communities Jake Morgan Report Author Jonathan Morgan	Designations: Director of Communities Head of Homes and Safer Communities	Tel Nos./ E Mail Addresses: 01267 228309 JMorgan@carmarthenshire.gov.uk
--	---	---

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
COMMUNITY & REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
13TH NOVEMBER 2020

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON HOMES & SAFER COMMUNITIES

BRIEF SUMMARY OF PURPOSE OF REPORT

This document is an assessment of the Covid-19 pandemic's impact on the Council's Homes and Safer Communities Division from a Community Scrutiny perspective.

This assessment will inform how we reset and further improve the delivery of services in the future.

To consider and comment on

1. The Homes and Safer Communities Division's response to COVID

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?

Yes

CONSULTATIONS

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

Signed: Jonathan Morgan Head of Homes and Safer Communities

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

1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities

1. We must make sure that we learn from this unprecedented experience as we reintroduce our services and re-set our strategic and operational priorities. We must identify our key learning points at a service and organisational level.
2. We will also need to reset our Homes and Safer Communities vision and align it to the revised corporate '*Moving Forward in Carmarthenshire 5 Year Plan*', *Corporate Strategy and Well-being Objectives*.
3. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to inevitable widespread changes to the way in which services are delivered by local authorities. This means that it is even more critical that Local Authorities respect the needs of all service users and equalities.
4. We will need to reprioritise services and our resources in budget setting.

3. Finance

We are in an unprecedented position due to increased costs due to COVID-19 activity, particularly in relation to homelessness and its prevention. This may cause funding pressures if WG hardship funding cannot be accessed post March 2021.

4 ICT

Significant shift to online/digital service provision in the future.

5. Staffing Implications

A new learning and development plan for staff will be created, taking account of the flexibility and adaptability that has been shown during this period. It will also need to develop opportunities to enable staff to further develop their learning and experiences.

6. Physical Assets

Significant future investing in building new council homes and improving existing homes.

IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below

Signed: Jonathan Morgan Head of Homes and Safer Communities

1. Local Member(s)- N/A
2. Community / Town Council – N/A
3. Relevant Partners – N/A
4. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations – Monthly meetings with trade unions ongoing. Corporate staff surveys informing service. Regular team meetings and briefing ongoing via Teams online.

EXECUTIVE BOARD PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S) AWARE/CONSULTED:

YES

“The last eight months have been immensely challenging for the department. The report provides clear information on impact, actions and changes taken as a result of the COVID pandemic and implications moving forward. I take the opportunity to thank all members of staff that have adjusted to the huge increase in demand and ways of working”.

Cllr. Linda Evans, Executive Board Member for Housing

Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information

List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Title of Document	Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
Impact of COVID-19 on Carmarthenshire Executive Board Report 19 th October 2020	CCC website

Homes and Safer Communities, Housing Services: Covid19 service position statement

Community & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee

13th November 2020

carmarthenshire.gov.uk



1. What is the purpose of this report?

The purpose of this report is to provide Scrutiny members with a high level summary of the impact COVID 19 has had on Housing Services over the last 8 months from a service user, staff and Council perspective. The report also looks ahead in terms of what are the implications moving forward as well as key lessons learnt.

It is not the intention of this report to cover every area of the service but will focus on key delivery issues and future developments in the following areas:

- Strategic Housing Delivery and Investment;
- Advice and Tenancy Support;
- Sheltered Housing; and
- Engagement and Partnerships.

2. What has been the impact of Covid on services and what changes have we seen?

At the outset, tribute should be paid to our remarkable staff and managers whose commitment in dealing with the most difficult of situations has been outstanding. From homelessness, housing management and community engagement through to development and investment the flexibility and adaptability shown has been first class and is certainly a blue-print for moving forward.

Some services have remained fully functional during the COVID period, although certain other areas have seen reduced or suspended activity e.g. allocations at beginning of lockdown, home visits, adaptations etc.

a) Housing Services

Housing Services had to respond and adapt quickly to the pandemic, particularly around **homelessness and its prevention**.

Welsh Government (WG) changed the law around people that are homeless and in 'priority need'. Regardless of a person's previous history, we must now temporarily accommodate and rehouse all single people that present as homeless, including prison leavers. This change has caused a significant demand on temporary accommodation and homelessness services in the County. The impact of this has been:

- an increase in the number of people we have provided with temporary and emergency accommodation. We normally cater for 70 households but currently we have 135 households in temporary accommodation (over 100 are single people);
- providing 12 new households a week with temporary accommodation, mostly single people (it was three or four normally); and
- continuing our prevention work but the change in circumstances has made it difficult to improve on the % of cases we were able to intervene on (now 49% compared to 52 % before).

Allocations were suspended from 23rd March to the beginning of May. Similarly contractors working on bringing **voids back into use** furloughed their workforce so the number of new tenancies in March and April dropped from approximately 60 to 30 a month. New tenancies in August and September rose to 58 and 43 respectively.

Issues which are affecting delivery involve contractors needing to apply safe systems of work so this does limit the numbers of workmen in a property at any one time, a further issue is the availability of materials like plaster.

In terms of **private and social renters** many households, as a result of the outbreak and lockdown, experienced a reduced or complete loss of income. This has resulted in:

- the demand for housing advice rising significantly with number of telephone enquiries rising from approximately 2,500 to 3,500 a month; and
- Council tenant rent arrears rising from £1.5 million in October 2019 to £1.8 million in October 2020. This performance, however, is significantly better than other Local Authorities.

The **adaptation** program was suspended as a result of lockdown, again many contractors furloughing their workforce. More importantly, it was the risk of infection to older people where many were shielding. Only emergency provision was made. We have delivered, however, 106 adaptations, mainly involving small scale work, with a further 150 being commissioned to date this year.

We have continued to manage **sheltered schemes** throughout this period and it should be acknowledged the flexibility of staff and residents has been first class.

b) **Development and Investment**

All **Carmarthenshire Home Standard** related works on tenant's homes have been delayed since March 2020. Only emergency repairs have continued.

The **new build programme** has been delayed as contractors closed their sites between March and July. We are now, however, back on site in Dylan, Garreglwyd, Glanmor Terrace, Maespiode and Gwynfryn. As above, works are taking longer due to the need to social distance on site (less trades can be on site at the same time) and delays with sourcing some raw construction materials.

Covid has also delayed the launch of our consultation for the new affordable housing plan.

We have stopped our **buying private sector homes** programme as the housing market was originally closed in an attempt to stop people moving and the risk associated with staff (valuers and surveyors) entering people's homes.

Covid has, however, presented our service area with many **funding opportunities**, including the Land Release Fund and Optimised Retrofit funding for works and research.

These funding opportunities will help the HRA capital programme go further and provide more affordable homes. It will also shape our decarbonisation programme in our existing stock and help us develop a full costed asset management programme.

Covid has also resulted in the Intermediate Care Fund (ICF) being reprofiled towards our housing capital programmes, including Coleshill Terrace and Glanamman assisted living projects and sheltered housing improvements.

c) **Engagement and Partnerships**

As a result of Covid estate presence and activity has reduced and this has resulted in increased demand and complaints from tenants regarding fly tipping, grounds maintenance and estate issues, and non-urgent repairs not being carried out.

We continue, however, to carry out health and safety inspections and fire safety checks. We have also been unable to deliver the T2T awards.

3. What have been the workforce implications?

Staff have been outstanding throughout the pandemic, in continuing to support people in our communities, and take on challenges that they would never previously have foreseen. For example, staff helping out in care homes to manage Covid-19 outbreaks, being part of the Test Trace and Protect (TTP) programme and assisting with advice and compliance for businesses etc.

We are conscious that this has been a hugely difficult time for staff managing both work and challenging situations at home, and staff have been exemplary in the commitment and dedication they have shown.

It should also be noted that tenants, residents and members have been very understanding during this period, accepting the challenging times we all have faced and the impact this can have on the delivery of the service.

4. What have been the key financial issues identified?

The following issues/implications have been identified:

- There has been reduced capital and revenue spend in terms of the Housing Revenue Account. The budgets are currently being re-profiled for future years and we are particularly conscious of the role our development and investment programmes will play in the economic recovery of the County. We still plan to invest over £50m on building more homes and investing in our existing homes over the next three years; and
- The response to homelessness, whilst being excellent, is resulting in additional monthly costs on average of 109k at the present time. We have a transitional homelessness plan in place to reduce these costs over time. We can currently claim these additional costs through the Welsh Government's monthly hardship claim but this has, to date, only be confirmed up until March 2021.

5. How have we approached Communication and Engagement?

Good and regular communication has been critical to supporting staff, as well as recognising the achievements of staff and taking each opportunity to thank them. The use of technology has meant that we are probably in much more regular contact with each other and have taken the opportunity to have

regular short meetings. This is something that we would want to continue going forward.

There is regular communication with staff via the internet, newsletters, individual letters and published guidance. Team meetings have continued via teams and training modules are being made available via e-learning programmes, wherever possible.

We have also carried out extensive welfare calls to our tenants during this time to ensure they are coping and intervening where it is sensible to do so. We have made over 2000 pro-active calls during this period.

Regular contact has also been maintained between Heads of Service and the Executive Board Member, to ensure everyone is up to date on what is happening.

6. What are the key implications moving forward?

We must make sure that we learn from this unprecedented experience as we reintroduce our services and re-set our strategic and operational priorities. It is not going to be a case of restarting and getting back to the way we were. This is an opportunity to refresh and renew. Recovery Groups have been set up and we are focusing on recovery plans to sustain services following the crisis.

Moving forward generally we will:

- continue to change and adapt the way we work. We are currently looking at how we structure our services moving forward, making sure people can access us as much as possible on a seven day a week basis. We are finding that more and more tenants are using on line services and are happy to communicate in this way;
- further develop our modernisation plans for some services e.g. less building-based services, far more agile working;
- require our workforce to be flexible and adaptive in the long term in the event of future uncertainties; and
- build on the flexibility and adaptability staff have shown during this period to create new opportunities and experiences to further develop;

On a more service specific level we will:

- implement plans to provide additional support, moving to better quality temporary accommodation and additional provision of permanent accommodation.
- prioritize getting empty voids back into use;
- plan for the impact when evictions start up again, especially for private renters;
- expand digital platforms so we can engage with our tenants of all ages;
- start as many CHS+ improvement programmes as possible to aid economic recovery, with the appropriate risk mitigation measures in place that protect our tenants, contractors and staff;
- ensure, over the next six to nine months, that as many Council new build sites as possible start on site. We currently have over 10 sites that we are developing to planning and tender stage. This will again help to stimulate the local economy by creating local job in construction and the supply chain.
- continue to embrace all external funding opportunities; and
- look to purchase suitable properties that have become empty in our town centres due to the pandemic and convert them to residential apartments and homes. This will help our town centres recover and also prevent economic decline and disrepair.

7. What lessons have we learnt?

- Digital solutions will play an ever-increasing role in shaping what we do. Communication has improved significantly, through effective use of virtual technology and going forward, we need to get the right balance between virtual and 'face to face' contact, to make best use of time;
- Staff Resilience has been remarkable during this unprecedented time, but we are seeing, understandably, general fatigue across services and fear regarding the future. We are aware of the need to ensure that staff access supervision, support, and occupational health interventions where necessary;

- Improved collaboration within the council and with external organisations. Attendance at multi agency meetings has improved and regular governance forums have enabled decisions to be made quickly, and identified risks responded to swiftly;
- We have all had to change and adapt the way we work, and staff have been flexible and resilient to ensure that our essential services continue to be delivered. Those who use our services have also demonstrated resilience, patience and understanding during this very challenging time; and
- The pandemic has provided us with an opportunity to work innovatively and we will capitalise on this to continuously improve services. We have inevitably learnt a huge amount during the first wave, which stands us in very good stead to cope with the current second wave. All our processes are in place to manage the various scenarios, so we are confident that we will be able to learn the lessons and manage the challenges ahead together.

To consider and comment on:

1. The Homes and Safer Communities Division's response to COVID

COMMUNITY & REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13TH NOVEMBER 2020

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON CARMARTHENSHIRE'S LEISURE SERVICES

To consider and comment on the following issues:

That the report is accepted, and that the short, medium, and long-term implications are considered.

Reasons:

To take stock of the impact of the pandemic on the Council's Leisure Services.

To be referred to the Executive Board / Council for decision: **NO**

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:-

Cllr. Peter Hughes-Griffiths (Culture, Sport & Tourism Portfolio Holder)

Directorate Communities Jake Morgan Report Author Ian Jones	Designations: Director of Communities Head of Leisure	Tel Nos./ E Mail Addresses: 01267 228309 IJones@carmarthenshire.gov.uk
--	---	--

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
COMMUNITY & REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
13TH NOVEMBER 2020

**IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON CARMARTHENSHIRE'S
LEISURE SERVICES**

BRIEF SUMMARY OF PURPOSE OF REPORT

This document is an assessment of the Covid-19 pandemic's impact on the Council's Leisure, Culture and Outdoor Recreation Services.

This assessment should inform the reset and re-prioritisation of resources and services.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?

Yes

CONSULTATIONS

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

Signed: Ian Jones

Head of Leisure

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

1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities

1. We must make sure that we learn from this unprecedented experience as we reintroduce our services and re-set our strategic and operational priorities. We must identify our key learning points at a service and organisational level.
2. We will also need to reset our Leisure vision and align it to the revised corporate '*Moving Forward in Carmarthenshire 5 Year Plan*', *Corporate Strategy* and *Well-being Objectives*.
3. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to inevitable widespread changes to the way in which services are delivered by local authorities. This means that it is even more critical that Local Authorities respect the needs of all service users and equalities.
4. We will need to reprioritise services and our resources in budget setting.

3. Finance

We are in an unprecedented position due to a combination of additional irrecoverable costs due to COVID-19 activity, foregone income from closed services which may not be fully recompensed by Welsh Government (WG) and planned savings proposals which have been undeliverable due to the pandemic.

4 ICT

Significant shift to online service provision with support for more cashless transactions; online bookings; and streamed products for service.

5. Staffing

Many of our staff have been redeployed, furloughed or retrained to work within new operating procedures and as such we need to update our workforce development plan to re-align it to our new Vision.

6. Physical Assets

Significant implications on current and future use of physical assets, with greater challenges for indoor facilities and reduced capacities and increased cleaning implications for indoor spaces.

IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below

Signed: Ian Jones

Head of Leisure

1. Local Member(s)- N/A
2. Community / Town Council – N/A
3. Relevant Partners – N/A
4. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations – Monthly meetings with trade unions ongoing. Corporate staff surveys informing service. Regular team meetings and briefing ongoing via Teams online.

**EXECUTIVE BOARD PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S)
AWARE/CONSULTED:**

YES

Report discussed and agreed with Cllr Peter Hughes-Griffiths, EBM on 4/11/20

Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information

List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Title of Document	Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
Impact of COVID-19 on Carmarthenshire Executive Board Report 19 th October 2020	CCC website

Leisure Services: Covid19 Service position statement

Community & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee

13th November 2020

carmarthenshire.gov.uk



1. Introduction

1.1 This report highlights the changes and challenges the Leisure Service Division has faced during the first 6 months of 2020-21 due to the Coronavirus pandemic, whilst updating on the status of each service area and reflecting on pre-covid actions, before highlighting future challenges facing this customer facing, income generating service.

1.2 Section 2 of the report updates the current position in terms of services open, partially open, or closed.

1.3 Section 3 reviews the changes imposed upon services; sections 4 and 5 consider workforce and end-user implications; whilst section 6 considers financial implications, and section 7 reviews communication and engagement issues.

1.3 Section 8 of the report then updates on specific service areas and highlights key issues facing certain service functions, including our Theatre and Outdoor Education services.

1.4 Finally, sections 9 and 10 look forward and consider key lessons learnt.

1.5 Thoughts and comments are welcomed from members as part of this process.

2. Impact of Covid on Services

2.1 Services that continued to run throughout:

- Minimal online services: Libraries online services; National Exercise Referral scheme continued to operate virtually, supporting most vulnerable of our clients.
- Central management teams worked online throughout all closures to plan for re-opening and to devise completely new operating procedures, risk assessments and safe systems of work for all services.
- Central support functions also continued to operate to manage the thousands Actif Leisure members and Country Park season ticket holders / seasonal campsite pitch holders.
- Grant advice and support was provided by Culture to freelancers and Community Sport Officers to support third sector groups throughout the period and is ongoing.

2.2 Services closed during initial lock-down:

- Sports & Leisure: Leisure Centres; Swimming Pools; Sports-halls; Fitness Facilities; Soft-play; Outdoor Sports Areas; Specialist indoor facilities e.g. Martial arts / gymnastics facilities; Actif Community Sports Development work
- Outdoor Recreation: Parks; Playgrounds; Country Parks; Outdoor Education Centre; Specialist outdoor facilities e.g. Closed road cycle track, Ski Centre, Toboggan, Crazy Golf
- Cultural Services: Libraries; Museums; Archives; Theatres; Oriel Myrddin; Y Gat Craft Centre; and Dylan Thomas Boat-House;

2.3 Services re-started*:

- Services generally restarted in the following order: Outdoor parks; Outdoor Sports facilities; Libraries (Click ' n Collect first, then buildings / mobile services); Indoor Facilities (restricted)
- All the above had to operate to restricted capacities.
- *N.B. all Leisure services, except for Country parks and playgrounds, have had to close again for the Oct / Nov 2 week national fire-break lockdown, with only online services being able to continue operating.

2.4 Services remaining closed:

- Pendine Outdoor Education Centre
- NCE Pool (managed by Trust and undergoing £70k of essential maintenance work to re-line pool and surround). Challenges here with size of changing spaces, but facility could in theory re-open in late 2020.
- Community Libraries with capacity restrictions/limitations – Bedol, Brynamman, Whitland, Pembrey, St. Clears, Llandovery & Pontyberem.
- Theatres to live audiences
- Y Gat – due to re-open to tenants shortly
- Food and beverage provision has either ceased or been limited to take-away or outdoor provision only at many sites, albeit Yr Orsaf café, Beach Kiosk and Ski café in Pembrey Country Park did re-start an indoor socially distanced, albeit limited menu offer in late Summer
- Carmarthenshire Museum and Museum of Speed remain closed for building works – closures are not associated with COVID-19.

3. Changes to service provision due to Covid

3.1 Key legislation / regulations affecting the service

- Gatherings of no more than 30 people outdoors (affects team sports / events etc)
- 2m social distancing rule (creates huge issues in terms of capacity numbers indoors)
- Up to 15 people can gather for organised indoor activity (was 30 until First Minister's announcement on 2/11/20)
- Various regulations for all manner of different sports and activities, as outlined by the relevant national governing body e.g. indoor / outdoor; team / individual; contact / non-contact

3.2 Updated risk assessments / safe working practices

- All risk assessments have been updated as part of the recovery planning process for each service, along with Safe Systems of Work to protect staff and users, all agreed and by the Health and Safety Team

3.3 New working practices

- All normal and emergency operating procedures for every building and facility have had to be reviewed and re-written. In many instances, these have had to be re-written and updated several times as various restrictions are lifted or re-imposed.
- Online solutions have been developed to deliver some services in a different way.

- All facilities have had to operate with reduced capacities, including outdoor facilities such as Pembrey Country Park, which has been particularly challenging to manage during the latter part of Summer as huge numbers of people chose a 'staycation' for their holiday in the UK.

4. Workforce implications

4.1 Trade unions engagement

- TU's have been involved in scrutinising all recovery plans and are regularly updated through the Communities Department Trade Union Forum, and the Corporate Employee Relations Forum (CERF)

4.2 Furlough

- A total of 168 staff were furloughed across Leisure services. Advantage was taken of flexible furlough as facilities re-opened with reduced operating capacity. Staff have returned from furlough on a phased basis to be re-inducted, trained and back to their normal working roles. The Furlough was due to end on the 31st October 2020, but has subsequently been extended due to England's recent 4 week national lockdown announcement by the Prime Minister (Welsh / Local government eligibility to claim subject to confirmation, albeit limited numbers applying for CCC with most leisure services re-opening).
- Dozens of Leisure, Culture and Outdoor Recreation staff were re-deployed to support other services or furloughed to mitigate unnecessary costs to the authority, with many staff using the time to undertake online training and to broaden their general employment skill-set.

4.3 Redeployment

- Early in lockdown, several staff were redeployed across into critical services to support areas such as Care Homes, Domiciliary Care, Cleaning, Catering, and the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) store.
- With the possibility of further fire-break lockdowns, frontline staff are being trained to work in re-deployed roles during these periods on the assumption that their posts will not be eligible for future furlough type payments.

4.4 Morale

- Generally, morale amongst members of the team has been good. All managers and staff have been offered support through the corporate well-being service and occupational health team, whilst staff working from home have been contacted and communicated with regularly to monitor and support their well-being.
- There is evidence of fatigue within some groups of staff, with many struggling to take annual leave during this period of unprecedented change, the speed and range of which is exhausting. Again, support is being provided with a clear message for staff to ensure they maintain a reasonable work-life balance, ensuring they take sufficient blocks of leave to 'switch-off' from work.

4.5 Workforce development

- Many staff have taken the opportunity to upskill during lockdown periods - some because of redeployment and learning new skills in a new role, whilst many others have completed online corporate learning courses such as Equality, Safeguarding, H&S training etc. Early in lockdown, a concerted effort was made to ensure that all staff were afforded the opportunity to access CCC web-based systems, through the 'bring your own device' policy allowing staff to have access to e-mail, Microsoft Teams and other online support systems from their own or work mobile device. This has helped greatly in leisure where many staff are employed on seasonal or short hour contracts e.g. swimming instructors.


4.6 PPE

- As with all service areas, there was some apprehension in the early stages of lockdown on the availability and need for PPE when staff returned to work. Thankfully, this situation is now clearly defined, and supplies are available as needed for front line staff, albeit, only a for limited need within the service.

5. Service user implications

5.1 Accessibility to services

- Limited capacity: The 2m social distancing rule has resulted in significantly reduced capacities for indoor spaces. As an example, and in practical terms, Amman Valley Leisure Centre's gym capacity has reduced from 53 to 10, and the pool from 109 to 21 (this may also reduce further with recent reduction from 30 to 15 for organised indoor activity gatherings).
- Online: Many services have improved their online offer. Most bookings and payments can now be made online, along with Track, Trace, and Protect registration for onsite visits. Services such as Theatres and the Actif Health and Fitness offer are investing heavily in staffing






TIMETABLE

26 OCT – 8 NOV


DURING 'FIREBREAK' LOCKDOWN (26 OCT – 8 NOV)
 WE'VE ADDED EXTRA CLASSES
 (SEE THOSE MARKED IN DARK GREY BOXES BELOW)

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
10:00 TABATA Cath (30 mins)	06:30 HIIT Cath (30 mins)	08:00 SCULPT & TONE Cath (45 mins)	12:00 BOXFIT Rachel (45 mins)	10:30 LEGS, BUMS AND TUMS Tracey (45 mins)	08:30 FAMILY FITNESS Cath / Sion (30 mins)	09:00 KETTLE BELLS Cath / Leon (45 mins)
10:45 CORE & STRETCH Cath (45 mins)	07:15 CIRCUITS Cath (30 mins)	09:30 ACTIF BURN LITE Cath (45 mins)	13:00 GENTLE YOGA Rachel (45 mins)	11:30 EXERCISE TO MUSIC Tracey (45 mins)	09:15 HIIT Cath / Sion (30 mins)	10:00 CIRCUITS Cath / Leon (45 mins)
12:00 ACTIF BURN Sion (45 mins)	08:00 SCULPT & TONE Cath (45 mins)		16:30 FAMILY FITNESS Sion (45 mins)	17:00 BOXFIT Leon (30 mins)	10:00 FAMILY DANCEFIT* Rachel (45 mins)	
13:00 TABATA Sion (30 mins)	10:15 ACTIF STORY TIME Hannah (30 mins)		17:30 TABATA Sion (30 mins)	17:45 PUMP Leon (45 mins)	11:00 MODERATE FLOW YOGA Rachel (45 mins)	
17:30 LEGS, BUMS AND TUMS Tracey (45 mins)	11:00 (11-16 YEARS) BODYWEIGHT EXERCISES AND TECHNIQUE SESSION Hannah (45 mins)		18:30 SCULPT & TONE Sion (30 mins)			
18:30 STEP Tracey (45 mins)	16:30 FAMILY FITNESS Sion (30 mins)		19:30 CIRCUITS Sion (45 mins)			
	17:30 BODY SCULPT Sion (45 mins)					
	18:30 AEROTONE Cheryl (45 mins)					
	19:30 YOGALATES Cheryl (45 mins)					

31 OCTOBER SPECIAL HALLOWEEN THEMED FAMILY DANCEFIT

ACTIF.WALES



5.2 Track, Trace and Protect (TTP)

- Localised and national procedures are in place across all service areas, most of which are now electronic, or moving in that direction.

5.3 Charges

- Setting charges during this post lock-down period is proving to be incredibly challenging, with having to balance equity, fairness and value for money to paying customers, with an ever-changing landscape of restrictions being applied, lifted and potentially re-applied at very short notice.
- We have done everything we can to keep services affordable and to maintain loyalty for members and season ticket holders. Examples being reduced charges for gym members whilst limited facilities and services are being offered; negotiations with National; Governing Bodies of sport, the Welsh Sports Association, and SportWales (through their '[Be Active Wales](#)' support grant fund) to review club booking charges during period where they have to operate on restricted user numbers, thus making their bookings potentially unviable. There is a very real danger of clubs not booking, or worse still, going bust, if we cannot help them through this period.

6. Financial issues

6.1 Income

- The service has worked on the basis of trying to retain the long-term custom of existing users, helping them through these difficult times. Prior to leisure centres re-

opening, national research indicated that around 17% of people would return to such facilities straight away, around 25% would return after a few months, around 50% would return once things were 'back to normal' and around 5% would not return. It is critical that we offer a safe, trusted, and affordable product to retain both our membership, and pay as you go, user database for the longer term. Short term financial pain for long term gain is the mantra being adopted.

- The service has submitted hardship funding support claims to offset the loss of income caused by the legislative restrictions imposed upon each services area because of the pandemic. Despite 'freezing' leisure centre memberships paid via Direct Debit during this period of closure, over 600 members cancelled their memberships, equating to circa £200k income loss pa. Without Furlough and loss of income hardship funding support, the service would be £2.5m off budget target by year-end 2020-21.
- The Culture team successfully secured support from the £53m WG Cultural Resilience fund with applications totalling £191k approved to support local providers, and several others in the pipeline.

6.2 Additional costs incurred

- The main additional costs incurred by the service as a result of covid restrictions have been associated with re-shaping the physical delivery of services e.g. having to purchase screens, additional cleaning materials, additional tables / chairs for outside catering at Pembrey Country Park, and signage. These costs have not been significant though in the wider context of the budget.
- The service has invested in more technology to deliver services online e.g. equipment to broadcast live fitness sessions through our [Actif](#) Anywhere offer. Whilst this is an additional cost to the service, it is a planned investment brought forward and provides the ability for our services to access from home and thus generating additional money for the service in future years.

6.3 Sustainability

- Whilst we have been able to offset losses with hardship and other grant claims, including furlough claims for staffing costs for income generating areas like Leisure Centres, Theatres and Country Parks, the longer term picture can be viewed as presenting both challenges and opportunities. Social distancing restrictions will continue to affect capacities and thus income generation, however, the development of online products, more staycation holidays, and diversifying or combining our products provide new income generating potential.

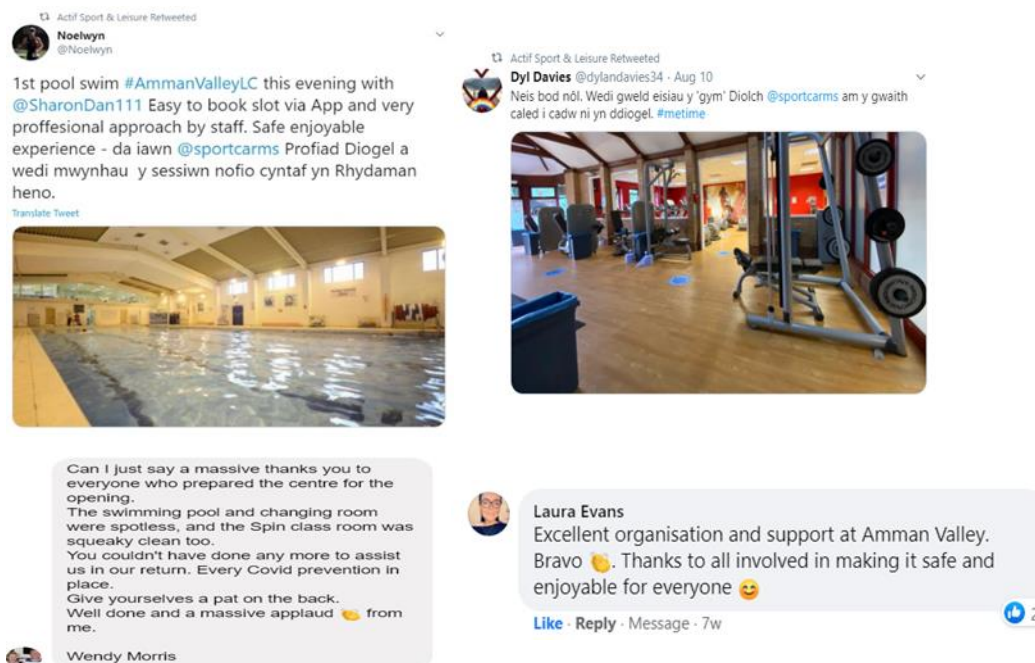
7. Communication and engagement

7.1 Internally with staff and across organisation

- The introduction and roll-out of Microsoft teams as an online communication and collaboration platform has been vital in enabling services to function. The ability to meet online has been critical and the authority should be complimented for having the foresight to invest in IT equipment such as laptops and software packages such as team to help facilitate agile working.

7.2 With users

- Regular dialogue has been maintained with all end users and the public in general via existing communication databases and channels, including social media, fully supported, and directed by the Corporate marketing and media team. Comments from users returning to our re-modelled services have been overwhelmingly positive....



7.3 Politically

- Whilst this was more challenging in the earlier part of the year, the EBM has been kept updated throughout by way of regular calls and online meetings to catch up on matters, plan for service recovery, and to approve any key decisions. Similarly, local members have been engaged and updated on matters pertaining to their locality and have been very supportive of the service during these very challenging times.

8. Service specific updates and issues:

8.1 Pre-Covid (in 2019-20), the Leisure Division continued to go from strength to strength and was (is) widely regarded as amongst the best in Wales. We avoided transferring services to leisure trusts and through a programme of unprecedented investment and innovation, had increased the number of users and income across all areas of the division.

8.2 (Actif) Sport & Leisure

8.2.1 2019-20 highlights and position update

8.2.2 The authority had continued to support 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.

8.2.3 Over £500k has been spent at Ammanford Leisure Centre to re-furbish the wet side changing rooms, with further plans to upgrade the all-weather pitch and improve car parking facilities on site. Carmarthen Leisure Centre's external upgrades are nearing completion, with a new 2G AstroTurf surface laid, the 4x external community Tennis Courts re-surfaced, the Athletics Track re-surfaced and widened, and additional parking and traffic calming measures in place. Works are also well underway in Llandovery, where there is a £350k investment into the school conversion to provide the town with health & fitness facilities adjacent to, and complimenting, the swimming pool.

8.2.4 Plans for the new leisure facility in Llanelli are now moving forward again with over £25 million earmarked for a new leisure centre on the Delta Lakes site. The new centre will improve access and links to the education, health and business development sectors providing a modern, vibrant, and fully integrated facility for the residents of Llanelli, Carmarthenshire, and the wider region. Additionally, it will link the wonderful Millennium Coastal Park with the town and provide the people of Llanelli with the best leisure facilities around.

8.2.5 Our Sport & Leisure services section 'Actif' continues to establish itself as a sector-leader, achieving a Gold Leisure Safety Award on its first application to RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents), which is one of the most prestigious and recognised schemes in the world, with almost 2,000 entries every year and a reach of over 7 million employees.

8.2.6 Customer service levels at our leisure centres are amongst the best in the UK and beyond (pre and during covid), with benchmarked Net Promoter Scores (NPS) from customers hitting the highest since we introduced the system 5 years ago, and mystery visits rating us 'Excellent' with a score of 75.5% countywide, with Amman Valley Leisure Centre being amongst a handful of facilities in the country to score 100%.

8.2.7 With a fresh look to the future, and prior to the pandemic, the creation of a 10-year strategy was well underway. A structural review is creating opportunities to redesign and realign services to be fit for the future, particularly with an increased focus on community sport and physical activity. As a result, we have been able to target inactive adults with a new offer of walking football, rugby and netball activities to add to our existing walking hockey offer, whilst also working with our Education Department to draw down over £50,000 of Pupil Deprivation Grant funding to enhance the activity offer in over 20 of our most deprived schools, and establishing 'Us Girls' clubs to engage girls in sport and activity - with 100% of girls reporting increased confidence as a result of attending.

8.2.8 Our internally developed Actif Physical Literacy Passports for children have also been hailed as such an effective model that Sport Wales have invested in a national partnership

with us, Welsh Triathlon and physical literacy consultants from Cardiff Metropolitan University to create a triathlon passport to be rolled out across Wales. The Carmarthenshire-based development led to 30 schools, 37 of their staff, and over 1,000 pupils being exposed to fun and progressive triathlon activity over the past 18 months.

8.2.9 Annual income at the tail end of 2019-20 was firmly over the £4m mark, thanks largely to significant and continuous growth in fitness and aquatics (both responsible for well over a million-pound income each). That's an additional million pound of income since 2012-13 representing over 30% growth and moving towards a more sustainable service with high value to our population in terms of health and wellbeing returns.

8.3 2020-21

8.3.1 The mental health & wellbeing of the population is likely to be particularly fragile in the coming months and years. Physical activity can have a positive effect in these areas, and the Actif Community Sports development team will work closely with schools and community venues & groups to ensure there are opportunities and targeted interventions in place to activate Carmarthenshire.

8.3.2 The team have recently created a comprehensive 'Club Development Toolkit' which officers will use to support the community to create strong, successful, and sustainable clubs and organisations. Sport Wales have reviewed the toolkit with the potential to develop this into a national resource.

8.3.3 We supported Sport Wales on 66 Sports Club Applications for the Emergency Relief Fund, totalling over £40k of funding to protect Clubs during lockdown. In recent months, our internal Actif community Sports team have been critical in promoting and supporting the award of Emergency Relief Funding, where Sport Wales (funding body) relied on our guidance and advice in allocating a proportion of the £500k+ of national funding to clubs and organisations in Carmarthenshire. This will continue as Sport Wales switch to an £8m+ 'Sport Relief Funding' mechanism moving forward.

8.3.4 We consulted with over 55 Clubs in 6 weeks on applications for the Be Actif Wales Fund. We held 3 Club Webinars with a total attendance of 87 Sports Clubs and Organisations (1 Welsh Only Session)

8.3.5 We worked with National Governing Bodies during every 3-week WG review cycle on their Return-to-play roadmaps and continue to support clubs in response to these changes by assisting them with: risk assessments; COVID-19 Club co-ordinator appointments; and implementing Test Track and Trace Procedures etc

8.3.6 We are also preparing to launch the Actif Communities Ambassadors programme in the shortly to increase informal physical activity opportunities in the community.

8.3.7 The team have also supported the School Holiday Hubs providing and co-ordinating activities during the lock-down periods.

8.3.8 Field Hospitals: Our Actif Facilities team helped support the conversion of Carmarthen and Llanelli Leisure Centres (as well as the Selwyn Samuel Centre and the Parc y Scarlets barn) into temporary hospitals to provide additional bed space for the NHS. [See Leaders vlog](#). More than 360 people volunteered to help set up furniture and equipment at Carmarthenshire's four field hospitals, including many of our Leisure staff.

8.3.9 We have maintained contact with 563 of our National Exercise Referral clients, making 2,878 phone calls taking nearly 1,500 hours, with 668 home programmes sent to vulnerable clients. Feedback has been hugely positive...

'Your messages have made me feel less alone'



'We are most grateful for the care and concern that has been shown us since

the fitness classes have been put on hold'

8.3.10 Business recovery: A significant amount of work will be required over the coming months and years to achieve our ambition to get services, attendances & impact, and budget to pre-COVID19 levels. This will include a phased return in line with Welsh Government advice, particularly where facility footfall will reduce because of social distancing requirements and customer comfort. This will detrimentally affect our capacity in high income areas such as gyms, fitness classes and aquatics programme, which are responsible for approximately 80% of leisure centres' income (£2.7m of £3.5m) and around two thirds of Actif's overall income (circa £4.2m).

General attendances with consideration by site and activity compared to pre-covid volumes:

- April to October 23, 2020 overall attendances of 30,837 compared to 145,462 for same period previous year. This equates to an 79% drop in attendances to facilities, this figure is adjusted for CLC and LLC variables as they were not open. It is reasonable to anticipate that attendances may improve over the remainder of the year to approximately 25 – 30% as more services and principle urban centres come online in phasing. Note additional firebreak lockdowns will impact on this statistic.
- At time of writing 2,029 members are active with the service plus an additional 1,373 Actif Anywhere memberships.
- Only core activity is available linked to fitness and swimming with some limited hire. Fitness sessions in the gym being the most popular followed by swimming.
- It is unlikely that core programmes pre-covid will return in the short to medium term to near normal levels especially in coached programmes, events, and some children's activities. Constraints on numbers of people visiting and limited sessions will continue to impact on overall attendance and receipts of income. Costs of

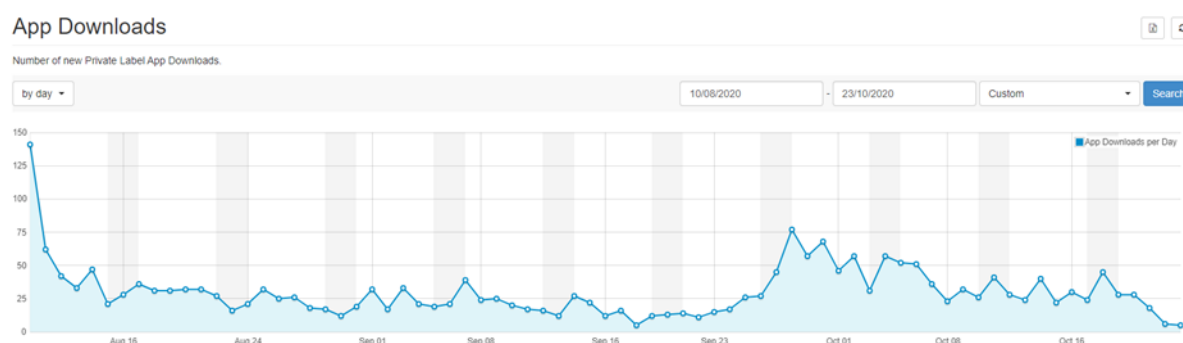
providing services however will remain largely at similar levels unless areas of service are reduced.

8.3.11 The Actif Sport & Leisure team's management staff are not only responsible for Carmarthenshire's response to the pandemic; they sit on multiple national groups leading the country's sport sector forward in this crisis. Examples include sitting on Welsh Sport Association's national 'Facilities' and 'Outdoor Sports' groups which advise Welsh Government on the easing of lockdown measures in these areas.

8.3.12 Digital Development: We have created a number of [online fitness classes](#) for our Actif Leisure members to access free of charge, and charged, during the period that our leisure facilities have been closed, whilst developing a new Actif Anywhere offer to deliver online memberships and activities in future. We continue to develop our digital capability to enhance services for staff and members of the public.

8.3.13 We were successful in being supported by the Council's Digital Transformation Fund:

- And have introduced an Actif 'App' to enable far greater functionality for the public. Already downloaded by over 4,000 users, this app allows users to check class availability and book sessions quickly, and securely, before they arrive, plus it puts the latest news and developments, blogs, and more 'in people's pockets'. The ongoing development and promotion of this is key in the coming months.



- To introduce a workforce management solution, with a multitude of features to better manage rota's, shift allocations, clocking in/out, timesheet processing, qualification-tracking, etc. Much of the development had been completed and this will be activated once services resume.

Further digital developments include:

- The creation of 'Actif TV'. The lockdown has caused a spike in the provision and consumption of online fitness classes. We have launched 'on demand' fitness classes for the general population and for people on our 'Exercise referral scheme' so people can watch and participate in them for free any time. This has been developed by adding a livestreaming service, meaning we broadcast fitness sessions in a timetabled way, live, for customers to sign up for and attend. This will be an

integrated solution, meaning it will link with our member database system (Gladstone), so that a customer's journey with us, and charging mechanisms, will be as seamless as possible. This will be an effective tool in retaining and acquiring members during the period of disruption linked to the pandemic but will be a continuous way of enabling our members to access services 24/7.

- The introduction of 'WeCompli', an App-based tool that will enable us to set, record, track and report on checks in our facilities. These can range from procedural, cleaning, temperatures, maintenance, etc. and will certainly be used for 'COVID' checks in the coming months at least as additional operational measures are put in place. Feeding through to 'dashboards' at multiple levels of management, we can be assured that our individual and groups of facilities are safe and clean, and that issues are recognised and addressed as they occur.

8.2 Outdoor Recreation

2019-20 highlights and 2020-21 position update

8.2.1 On the back of the successful delivery of the Men's Tour of Britain, Pembrey Country Park hosted the final stage of the Women's Tour of Britain in June 2019 with spectators witnessing an exciting and enthralling sprint finish on the National Closed Road Circuit. Further high-profile events followed including the Junior Tour of Wales, a leg of the National Cyclo-Cross Series, and hosting Welsh Athletics National Cross-Country Championships. Our ambition to become the Cycling Hub of Wales is now well established, and investment is still ongoing in local, urban and competition-standard infrastructure, all underpinned by plans for more events and development work in the future. Pembrey Country Park also developed a quality family aimed programme based on a financially sustainable model including annual events and activities at Halloween, Easter, Christmas and during the Summer holidays.

8.2.2 In July 2019, the first ever Green Flag was awarded to Pembrey Country Park on the same day that the new Yr Orsaf Restaurant building, which contains outside toilets, a visitor centre, offices, and function room, was opened. It represented a proud moment in Pembrey's long and rich history, and the Park is now the only facility in Wales to hold both the Green and Blue Flags at the same time. The Park was re-awarded the Green Flag in 2020.

8.2.3 The Council's investment at Pembrey Country Park continued with the first phase of the Park's Masterplan being completed. The improvements to the Park's infrastructure have including the re-modelling and improvements to the new entry and exit system for the Park operation through an Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system. This also controls the entrance to the Beach and the Campsite. New bi-lingual signage has been completed along with a new BMX Pump track, new toilets by the playground area, and a new Adventure Golf Course. At the same time, all food and beverage provision across the Park has been brought in house under the internal Park team.

8.2.4 Coastal communities and Outdoor facility such as PCP saw positive trends in August / early Sept in terms of footfall and potential income. Whilst still trading at 70% occupancy rate in the campsite at Pembrey (with restricted access to amenity facilities etc), looking forward, there is scope to see this income target increase as with entry fees / season tickets, however, much of the income within the park still comes from activities and F&B sales within the park, all of which are still inhibited by social distancing regs.

8.2.5 New facilities also opened in and around Burry Port Harbour with the highlights being the new RNLI Lifeboat Station on the East side of the Harbour, and new the playground on the West side. Burry Port Marina Ltd, who now operate the Harbour on behalf of the Council, are progressing with the dredging of the harbour and its approach channel, as well as finalising designs to refurbish the old RNLI building into a harbour office with modern shower / changing facilities for users, and a public café and ancillary facilities for the users of the harbour. High priority work to repair the listed Harbour walls have now commenced and are scheduled to be completed by early Summer 2021. A franchise has been let for new public toilets and a café on the West side of the Harbour, and discussions are ongoing with Burry Port Town Council with regards their plans for additional toilets around the harbour. Finally, options are being considered bespoke motorhome parking facilities along the Carmarthenshire Coast, and specifically in Burry Port, aligning to the wider Regeneration masterplan for the area.

8.2.6.1 Pendine Outdoor Education Centre continued to deliver high quality residential and non-residential activities in 2019-20, in an inspirational learning environment which challenges and develops the potential of all attendees. However, the enforced coronavirus shut-down and subsequent restrictions have kept the facility closed for the first 6 months of 2020-21 and is likely to remain closed through until September 2021. Some staff have been furloughed / redeployed, whilst the service manager and assistant work with colleagues in the Education department and school heads to re-model what the service could look like in future, with less reliance on the ageing facilities on the current site. The service is valued for its residential and learning experience, and it's evolution will be further guided by the new curriculum in Wales and informed by the result of a survey to all schools in the County. A presentation to consult on the potential re-modelling of the service will be shared with Community Scrutiny members in due course.

8.2.6.2 The Pendine attractor project is being developed in collaboration with colleagues from the Regeneration Division and Pendine Community Council. A joint report will be presented to members in due course updating on the status and timeline for the project which includes new parking provision, a new 42 bed eco Hostel, a new themed outdoor playground facility and sand sports area; a new and significantly upgraded Museum of Speed; and a 11 bay Motorhome facility.

8.2.7 The public have rediscovered their love of walking, nature and the great outdoors whilst using the authority's vast network of public rights of way and footpaths. Outdoor spaces such as Pembrey Country Park, Llyn Llech Owain Country Park, the Millennium Coastal Park and Mynydd Mawr Woodland Park were amongst the first spaces to re-open allowing people to maintain their physical and mental well-being. We have recently secured

£130k from the Valleys Regional Park fund to invest at Llyn Llech Owain as part of a wider masterplan for that facility. Plans include a new toddler play area, improvements to the entrance and walkways, and enhanced outdoor area for the café (which also has new operators), and improvements to the Boardwalk and Visitor Centre.

8.2.8 More than ever before we have realised that our natural environment is vital for our well-being. Wild and natural landscapes sustain us; they give us clean water to drink and fresh air to breathe, they store carbon and protect our homes from flooding, and they can help make us happy and healthy. Nature gives us the foundations for our economy, energy system and our food and farming. Biodiversity and nature's contributions to people are our common heritage and humanity's most important life-supporting 'safety net'.

8.3 Culture

2019-20 highlights and 2020-21 position update

8.3.1 The Carmarthenshire Culture Awards, shone a spotlight on the breadth and depth of cultural activity and talent we have across the County at the Ffwrnes Theatre in April 2019. Winners were chosen from public nominations across 6 categories - excellence in Visual Arts & Crafts, Performing Arts, Creative Media, Literature, Heritage and Music. There were also winners in two special categories. The award for Young Talent went to Cerys Angharad, a 10-year old harpist who has already won numerous national awards, and Outstanding Contribution to Culture went to Gwyn Nicholas, musical director of Côr Llanpumsaint, a mixed choir open to all abilities and ages and which celebrates 40 years this year. Whitland and Drefach Felindre also held a series of successful events as the Town & Village of Culture 2019. The 2020 event will be held once the COVID restrictions are relaxed and the concept for these awards is now well established for future years to continue.

8.3.2.1 Theatrau Sir Gar launched its Arts Ambassador scheme which has grown to involve around 20 people from diverse backgrounds with varying roles and one common theme – they are all passionate about the Arts. They help the theatre on a voluntary basis, in exchange for time credits, acting as community networkers, getting involved creatively with theatre projects or representing the theatre in a meet and greet capacity, helping develop enthusiasm and audiences for the future.

8.3.2.2 Our Theatres continue to face huge challenges during the coronavirus pandemic, being one of the few indoor services that still aren't allowed to operate under Government restrictions. That said, the team have been exceptionally busy in allocating £300k of Cultural support grants to freelancers over recent weeks, funding that is proving critical to the very existence of some of these acts. The Theatres team have also been developing their [Theatrau Sir Gar online](#) offer, with a view to developing hybrid, live and broadcast productions in future as well as exploring greater opportunities to broadcast into homes, care homes, town centre squares, and developing live outdoor productions in places like our Country Parks. About half of theatres staff will be redeployed to critical services from November whilst the theatres remain closed.

8.3.3 Funding has been secured to cement the future of Oriel Myrddin as the foremost visual arts and crafts gallery in West Wales. A development project that will see £1.9m invested to refurbish and extend the gallery which will in future have the capacity and security standards to attract loans from National art collections. 2019/20 saw activities continue to focus on the importance of participation in the arts to wellbeing such as the monthly arts club for older people at the Cartref Cynnes extra care scheme in Johnstown which has seen attendees, many of whom are over 90 experimenting with printmaking, collage and textures. During 2020/21 the focus has been on the development of online activities with Criw Celf and the Young Artists club delivered through this medium.

8.3.4.1 Our library service continues to go from strength to strength and has maintained its standard of excellence in the latest review of achievement of the Welsh Public Library Standards. In 2019-20 over 1 million physical visits were 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. Carmarthen library has had a facelift as part of the scheme to extend and improve the overall appearance in preparation for the return and launch of the new archive repository, hopefully in Spring 2021.

8.3.4.2 Our new Archive Building is complete at the rear of Carmarthen Library, and a new Archives Development Manager starts in November 2020, with their first role being to bring the fantastic Carmarthenshire collection 'home'. The National Library Wales also plan to bring their 'Clip centre' to Carmarthen library during 2021 to enhance the new digital and exhibition area in the reference library, which hosted its first exhibition through the Summer of 2019. Our Library services continued to provide access to our [online Library](#) offer to tens of thousands of residents throughout the lockdown period, whilst developing a new 'click 'n collect service as part of their phased recovery plan.

8.3.5 Contractors are on site at the County Museum making substantial progress on the improvements to the roof and entrance of the building where £1m is being invested as we start to return the Bishop's Palace to its former glory. The scheme is expected to conclude over the coming months with visitors hopefully able to return (subject to Covid) during 2021. Those visitors will also be able to enjoy enhanced customer facilities and experiences later in 2021 as the Tywi Gateway Trust continue with the improvements to the outbuildings, Bishop's Park, and walled garden.

8.3.6 We continue to work in a successful collaboration with Llanelli Town Council, supporting the development of Parc Howard mansion house and grounds, which saw the museum shortlisted for the 'Kids In Museums' Family Friendly Museum award in the small museums category in Summer 2019. Finally, within the Museums service, the shape of the new Museum of Speed in Pendine is obvious for all to see on site as part of the Pendine Attractor site, and as the exciting exhibition designs are concluded.

8.3.7 Discussions are ongoing with St Clears Town Council with regards the future of Y Gat Craft Centre in St. Clears. The facility is currently closed due to covid-19 restrictions;

however, we hope to see tenants back in the building shortly. Further updates will be shared with Community Scrutiny members as discussions develop with this facility.

9 Looking forward

9.1 Risks

- Loss of membership and usage due to new habits having formed and people finding alternative ways to enjoy their free-time and maintain their health.
- Community clubs and groups folding
- Availability of capital funding for schemes in development.

9.2 Opportunities

- Diversifying the products we offer, e.g. expanding the broad 'leisure' offer by looking at town centres as possible locations for non-traditional sport and culture related activities e.g. town centre gyms; adrenaline / activity structures / climbing walls; crazy golf; street theatre; pop up Arts studios; mini zip wire / high ropes facilities etc
- Combining products with other services e.g. Theatres productions and care home activities – can we 'stream' our shows onto big screens within care homes?

10 Lessons learnt.

10.1 What's worked well?

- Feedback from our staff and public on how safe they feel using our services has been very, very positive.
- The move to online services has been very positive and accelerated because of Covid.
- See Appendix 1 'Leisure Recovery plan' for emerging themes.

10.2 What would we do differently?

- The lack of IT equipment, particularly at the beginning of the lockdown restricted what staff could do, particularly working from home, although this barrier has been gradually overcome.
- Different assessments of risk and interpretation of WG guidelines meant that there was a divergence between library services re-opening in different authorities across Wales, often in neighbouring councils, which presented a potentially confusing offer for the public so a more streamlined national approach might have been considered.

RESET

It is not going to be a case of restarting and getting back to the way we were. This is an opportunity to refresh and renew as we mean to go on. One thing is evident, we cannot and will not be returning to the pre COVID-19 "*status quo*".



1. We must make sure that we learn from this unprecedented experience as we reintroduce our services and re-set our strategic and operational priorities. We must identify our key learning points at an organisational level and across the breadth of our services. To

achieve this our Transformation and Innovation and Change Team is undertaking a strategic evaluation.

2. We will also need to reset our Leisure vision, aligning to any chances within corporate documents such as *'Moving Forward in Carmarthenshire 5 Year Plan'*, *Corporate Strategy* and our *Well-being Objectives*.
3. We will need to reconsider our 2020-21 business plans, what we monitor throughout the remainder of 2020/21 and begin to shape our 2021/22 Business Planning approach.
4. Our pre-COVID-19 UK economy prioritised economic growth, forced many people into poverty, and in turn created an unhealthy population that is particularly susceptible to global crises such as pandemics. It's vital that the reset addresses things we can't afford to ignore – such as the current health crisis, the economic crisis the pandemic has triggered and the ongoing climate and nature crises. We have an opportunity to lead the way with visionary ideas and transformative investment, to a future based on well-being.
5. Digital solutions will play an ever-increasing role in shaping what we do.
6. In May, the Future Generations Commissioner published her report on the progress of the future Generations Act and made a number of recommendations for the future that we must consider across all services. [Link to the Future Generations Report 2020](#)

WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT (WALES) 2015

This is an Act introduced by the Welsh Government which will change aspects of how we work. The general purpose of the Act, is to ensure that the governance arrangements of public bodies for improving the well-being of Wales, take the needs of future generations into account. The Act is designed to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of Wales, in accordance with sustainable development principles. The law states that: -

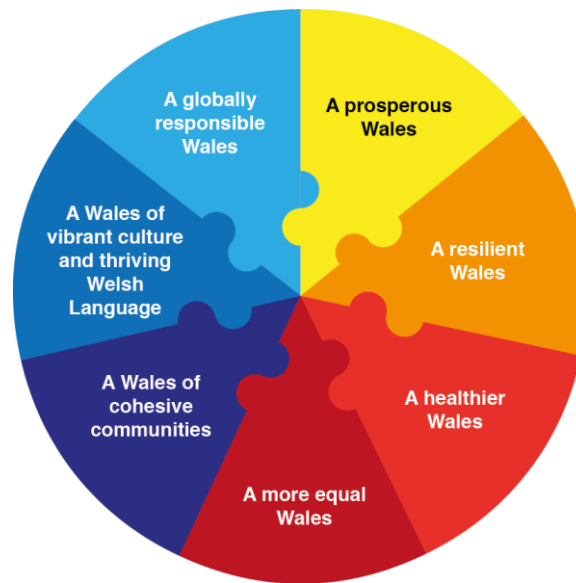
- a) We must carry out sustainable development, improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The sustainable development principle is

'... the public body must act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.'

- b) We must demonstrate 5 ways of working:

Long term, integrated, involving, collaborative and preventative

- c) We must work towards achieving all of the 7 national well-being goals in the Act. Together they provide a shared vision for public bodies to work towards.



For the first time in Wales, the Well-being of Future Generations Act, provides a shared vision for all public bodies in Wales to work towards. Each public body in Wales is required by law to set and publish Well-being Objectives that maximise our contribution to these national Well-being Goals. In Carmarthenshire we have incorporated these Well-being Objectives into our Corporate Strategy 2018-23 and our Leisure services business planning process.

'Life is for living, let's start, live and age well in a healthy, safe and prosperous environment'

This page is intentionally left blank

- 1) To protect and support Carmarthenshire's residents through the coronavirus pandemic
- 2) To innovate and adapt services to support the people of Carmarthenshire into the future

Our residents are safe and looked after

Our workforce feel supported and able to prepare for the future

Our partners have our support to protect & prepare them for the future

Open, ongoing communication underpins our way of working and meets the needs of the public

New and innovative ways of working and operating are developed to maximise future opportunities

Repurposed services make an ongoing difference to those people in greatest need and are able to make the greatest impact post pandemic.

1. The public & many of our partners **need support** through this pandemic
2. Many people will lack **awareness, motivation, resource, and opportunity** to maintain good health, well-being and basic living standards
3. The division can and will need to access **additional support** through other agencies such as Welsh Government, National Agencies, & private and voluntary sectors
4. Individual services will develop their own **resilience plans** to protect, and prepare for the future
5. The **division** will not be able to support every aspect of people's lives, but will play a fundamental role in terms of health and general well-being
6. Recovery planning will be based on **4 key stages**: a) **Baseline** (pre-pandemic state); b) **Emergency protection** phase (acute lockdown period); c) **Prepare and adapt** phase (with likely phased lifting of lockdown restrictions, over circa 12 months); **Prevail** phase ('new normal' period)
7. **Some partner organisations may not survive** the crisis period
8. The current pandemic is reinforcing **inequality**.

9. **Digital solutions** will play an ever increasing role in our future planning and delivery models
10. We need to **rely less on traditional building based solutions, and more on independent community based provision** to make the greatest impact post pandemic.
11. We'll have **less financial resources** to deliver services, for the foreseeable future
12. The **pandemic will pass**, however, some **social distancing** measures are likely to play a part in all of our lives for a considerable time into the future.

Engage, respond, listen, and understand what the sector needs to shape the approach

Include external, cross-sector thinking and learning to innovate and adapt

Re-clarify purpose of each service – why does it exist, then ask what does it do, and how?

Communicate regularly & effectively – internally & externally

Identify and repurpose delivery models

Create an effective learning and evaluation feedback framework & assess impact

Key Principles

- 1. Build back better**
- 2. People centred**
- 3. Collaborate not duplicate**
- 4. Alignment with existing plans and strategies**
- 5. Constantly seek a more resilient, efficient and sustainable delivery model for the longer term.**
- 6. Focus on what will make the biggest difference**
- 7. Keep it simple – make it happen**

Emerging themes from Service plans

Service area	Scenario / description							
		Staff	Customers / end users	Assets / Environment	Communication	Systems	Finance	Other / political
Emerging themes:		Accelerated digital and agile working culture and capability – may need to shift job emphasis / skills.	Some will have 'found' alternative means of engaging or being self-sufficient	Indoor environments may be less attractive moving forward	Digital is key, but could be subject of overload? Brand loyalty is vital – trusted & accessible	Greater reliance on digital systems and teams to develop and administer online	Cashless world Short to medium term, income will be significantly affected.	May be an opportunity to test some new models of working during 'Prepare & Adapt' (3 rd) phase to provide proof of concept some service changes e.g. an alternative to the closure of a building could now be proven to not only replace, but enhance a service to end users
		Widened scope of opportunity broadening skills and experiences of some staff; widened gap between flexible/ committed staff and inflexible/ uncommitted.	Greater awareness of 'local' / self-service, or online offer	Likely prolonged social distancing and hygiene measures in place.	Communication needs to be easy, instant and 24/7 , by whatever means suits best	Make transactions simple, effective, automated and integrated	Value for money key to end user / public	
		Greater opportunity for innovation / innovators	Some will crave social interaction Fear of large gatherings , and will be selective	Less numbers, or larger / different spaces, or longer opening times , with careful consideration of amenities required.		Systems will need to provide intelligence and insight to learn, hold and use preferences and aide decision-making.	Services may cost more if less numbers per m2, and more restrictive operating measures	
		Some anxiety / worry for future	Increased digital access and confidence	Less reliance on 'social gathering' buildings?			Capital and external funding opportunities will be scarce. Service-model is key	Evidence of impact v investment critical.
			Greater inequity Values revisited					

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 8

Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee

13th November 2020

Subject: Covid-19 update report for Regeneration.

Purpose: For members to receive an update on the impact that Covid-19 is having on Carmarthenshire's economy, Businesses and communities.

To consider and comment on the following issues:

The Regeneration Services response to date to the identified impact of Covid-19 and the proposed recovery strategy.

Reasons:

The intelligence gathered clearly demonstrates that the authority and the local economy face an extremely difficult time in coming months as the effects of the Covid-19 crisis puts pressure on jobs and demand. It is therefore essential that the Council's response is in tune with the needs of businesses and communities across Carmarthenshire, taking advantage of opportunities to accelerate change to enable success in the economy of the future. Carmarthenshire's economic recovery needs to be realised as part of a new three-phase economic plan that includes restarting of the local economy followed by a revival phase and long-term renewal.

To be referred to the Executive Board / Council for decision: NO

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:- Cllr Emlyn Dole, Leader

Directorate:

Chief Executives

Name of Head of Service:
Jason Jones

Designations:
Head of Regeneration

Jajones@carmarthenshire.gov.uk
01267 242336

Report Author:
Jason Jones

Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee

13th November 2020

Subject: Covid-19 update report for regeneration.

Purpose: For members to receive an update on the impact that Covid-19 is having on Carmarthenshire's economy, Businesses and communities.

1. SUMMARY OF PURPOSE OF REPORT.

The detailed report attached provides an assessment of the impact that Covid-19 is having on Carmarthenshire's economy and businesses, to identify what is important to them in the short, medium and long-term, so that going forward we can provide them with the assistance they most need. Evidence has also been gathered on the impact on unemployment in the county and the impact on our rural and primary towns. Intelligence has also been sought from developers and investors who have been active in Carmarthenshire to assess whether they are likely to continue to conduct business in the County in the future. The findings of this intelligence, set out in the detailed report attached, demonstrates that the authority and the local economy face a difficult time in coming months as the effects of the Covid-19 crisis puts pressure on jobs and demand.

A summary of Council's response to the identified impact follows:

Emergency Phase:

- Immediately established a Business Contact Centre as a support service. 5000 enquiries received during initial lockdown period of which 2507 businesses in Carmarthenshire have used this helpline seeking support.
- The Council has supported Welsh Government in the delivery of Economic Resilience Funding Phases 1 and 2 for Carmarthenshire businesses.
- The Council's business support teams have widely engaged with and supported our local businesses, many of whom are small and medium sized enterprises. As a result Carmarthenshire County Council has:
 - Made 4,086 payments under the business rates grant, totalling over £46 million
 - Supported 108 businesses with £270k of Welsh Government Business Start Up Grant
- 4 Area Action Teams were set up covering the entire county providing a volunteering service for our local businesses. For example, 1300 retail deliveries were undertaken by our Area Teams.
- Distributed 8,389 Food Parcels distributed to help support those Shielding, with produce provided and sourced through local companies.
- Provided a monthly food parcel to families of children eligible for free school meals. We have distributed more than 9,600 food parcels.
- provided foodbanks across the County support with the purchase of food through our

existing contract with Castell Howell.

- A county wide food directory was created and published on the corporate website - [website set up for Community Support](#) - highlighting services available within specific areas using location tags in order for people to be able to quickly identify what services are in their area.
- We set up dedicated Community response mailbox for members of the public and businesses to forward relevant information regarding their business/support group.
- Local food producers list was created and shared with local food grocery stores in order to highlight local food producers capable of supplying goods.
- CCC's Community Bureau, LEADER Team and ARFOR Team has supported £2.4m grants for businesses since March 2020.
- As a response to the economic shock of Coronavirus, consultants appointed by Carmarthenshire County Council to Undertake its 'Ten Towns Rural Growth Plan Initiative' have carried out new research to provide early insights for the local rural economy during the 'lockdown'. This insight will help Carmarthenshire County Council and others to understand the level of support local communities and businesses may need, as well as the role of growth plans, as the economy starts to reopen.
- Business questionnaire developed to look at current and future needs of local businesses and more than 450 businesses responded. This helped us inform the requirements of the Recovery Phase.
- Council commercial and industrial tenants were provided with an initial 3 month rent relief period (April – June). This support benefitted approximately 255 separate businesses, occupying over 400 properties in total.
- Carmarthenshire County Council set up a hardship rent relief fund for those businesses who were unable to access financial support from various Welsh and UK Government schemes. Eligible businesses were able to obtain up to £1500 support to assist with rent payments.

Recovery Phase

- At its meeting on 29th June 2020, The Executive Board considered a report which provided an assessment of the impact that Covid-19 was having on Carmarthenshire businesses and identified what was important to them in the short, medium and long-term, so that going forward the Authority could provide them with the assistance they most needed.
- As a platform to the development and delivery of the County's Economic Recovery Plan, an internal Business, Economy and Community recovery group has been established to coordinate development and delivery.
- The council has secured Welsh Government Financial Support of £25k per primary town (Carmarthen, Ammanford, and Llanelli) through its targeted Regeneration investment programme to assist key stakeholders (Town Councils and BIDS) in those towns to support businesses. In addition, a successful bid to the EU's LEADER programme has

guaranteed an additional £100k for the 10 Towns Initiative.

- The Council has supported the Welsh Government in the delivery of the following funds for Carmarthenshire Businesses:
 - Childcare Provider Grant
 - Freelancer Fund
- In addition, the Council has established a Business Advisory Group with representatives from key businesses in Carmarthenshire. This direct line of contact between the Council and businesses stakeholders will be key going forward as we identify and respond to the challenges facing our business sector locally.
- A Recovery Action Plan has now been established focusing on 11 key areas, all of which are directly aimed at our economy, our businesses and our citizens.
- We have re-prioritised the Moving Rural Carmarthenshire Forward recommendations, which the Council published last year as part of our rural regeneration strategy and will now be focussing delivery on key areas that will aid COVID-19 recovery including moving ahead with the 10 rural towns programme, focusing on the local foundational economy, re-visiting skills and employment needs as a result of COVID-19, improving digital infrastructure and developing opportunities for local food and drink businesses.
- In the absence of seasonal festivals this year in the County, a digital Virtual Market – 100% Sir Gar – [Go for local](#) has been developed for local shops / producers to showcase their products. There will also be a series of digital events, again with aim to boost business leading up to Christmas.
- The council has extended its support to its existing commercial tenants and has offered a further rent discount of 25% (July – September) to those who can show a 50% or more drop in turnover compared with the same period last year. We continue to work very closely with all our business tenants, assisting with rescheduled payments if necessary, notifying when grants become available, and assisting them with any of their queries.
- We are administering Welsh Government funding to provide financial assistance to businesses that are facing operational and financial challenges caused by the national lockdown announced for Wales as a result of COVID-19. The purpose of the fund is to support businesses with cash flow support to help them survive the economic consequences of the restrictions put in place. The fund - [Firebreak: Enhanced financial support](#) - consists of two separate grants:
 1. Lockdown Non-Domestic Rate Grant
 2. Lockdown Discretionary Grant
- The Council is also looking to participate in the Kickstart Work Placement Programme - As part of the government's plan to increase job opportunities for young people, the new £2 billion Kickstart Scheme has been created to support hundreds of thousands of new, fully subsidised work placements for young people across the country. The 6-month placements are open to those aged 16-24 who are claiming Universal Credit and at risk of long-term unemployment. These will be available across a range of different sectors in

England, Scotland and Wales. The first placements are likely to be available from November. Organisations and businesses sign up for this programme will need to commit a minimum of 30 new job placements. There are not many businesses of sufficient scale in Carmarthenshire able to commit to this. The Council is therefore looking to support businesses who have fewer than 30 jobs on offer by acting as an intermediary to facilitate the required minimum 30 job placements across a number of businesses and also as an employer so that the Council can also offer direct placements. We have identified 68 companies who wish to participate in this scheme, accommodating 174 placements. Proposals are being submitted to Department for Work and pensions.

The attached report contains further detail on the impact of Covid-19 on Carmarthenshire's economy and businesses, the response to date to the identified impact and the proposed recovery strategy.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED ?	<p style="text-align: center;">YES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee 13th November 2020 -Detailed Report 2. An Analysis of the Impact of COVID-19 on Carmarthenshire
-----------------------------------	---

IMPLICATIONS

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

Jason Jones

Head of Regeneration

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

1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities

The detailed report identifies several issues arising from the current crisis. In responding to these challenges, the Council will need to think long term, ensuring an integrated approach, involving and collaborating with stakeholders to prevent where possible business failures and long-term unemployment. This approach is fully aligned with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 five ways of working.

3. Finance

There will be a need for some financial resource to be made available to support some activities and initiatives to respond to the identified challenges. At the current time it is not possible to quantify the level of resource that will be required.

CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below

Jason Jones

Head of Regeneration

1. Local Member(s)

N/A

2. Community / Town Council

N/A

3. Relevant Partners

N/A

4. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations

N/A

EXECUTIVE BOARD PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S) AWARE/CONSULTED

Cllr Emlyn Dole (Leader) has been consulted as EBM and is supportive of the report proposals.

Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information

List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Title of Document	File Ref No.	Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
An Analysis of the Impact of COVID-19 on Carmarthenshire		Copy attached.

This page is intentionally left blank

Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee

13th November 2020

Covid-19 update for regeneration

Detailed Report

BACKGROUND

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic spread to the United Kingdom in late January 2020. By March the scale of the outbreak had already led businesses to change their working practice, such as sending staff to work from home. On March 23rd the UK government imposed a lockdown, banning all "non-essential" travel. The resulting impact on businesses and the economy has been severe with a significant number of businesses either being required, or choosing, to close - notably in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors.

The Welsh Government introduced 2 separate grant schemes, the Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) Grant and the Economic Resilience Fund, to support businesses during the lockdown period. Other economic measures such as the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme and Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme were introduced. The Council established a small business rent relief scheme and offered a 3-month rent free period to all its commercial tenants.

Two further phases of Economic Resilience Funding support have been introduced.

The impact of the original lockdown, the more recent Llanelli Health Protection Zone and national fire break restrictions and the enormous economic damage resulting from Covid-19 is self-evident as more reports on the scale of the impact emerge each day. The consequences for the public finances, businesses and households will be severe and drawn out.

IMPACT OF COVID-19

The first stage of the recovery process has been focused on understanding the impact of Covid-19 on our businesses, economy and communities. A questionnaire was widely circulated to find out more about the impact that Covid-19 is having on Carmarthenshire businesses, to identify what is important to them in the short, medium and long-term, so that going forward we can provide them with the assistance they most need. A dedicated business team has been established. This team undertook direct dialogue to build relationships with key business sectors, developers and investors, to ensure that proposed recovery actions appropriately respond to the support that these businesses are telling us that they need moving forward. The findings of this engagement will provide the platform upon which we will develop our economic response and recovery proposals. The findings of this intelligence gathering follows:

The findings of this intelligence gathering follows:

1. Business / Economy

Evidence has been gathered via an electronic survey disseminated to businesses operating within the county to identify what is important to them in the short, medium and long-term, so that going forward we can provide them with the assistance they most need.

A total of 574 businesses from across the county responded to the survey. A copy of the full report (May 2020 – Lockdown) providing an analysis of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the county of Carmarthenshire, is attached. The main findings and conclusions of the report are summarised below:

- a) The negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have been significant and wide reaching for Carmarthenshire's businesses.**
A wide-ranging spectrum of business types and corresponding industries have been negatively impacted by the pandemic. These effects mainly relate to a significant reduction in income, reduced access to customers, problems with supply chains and the possible cessation of trading.
- b) Many of the businesses worst affected are within those sectors deemed of significant importance to Carmarthenshire in terms of employment and/or GVA.**
The visitor economy and food and beverage sectors alone are worth almost £169 million to Carmarthenshire's economy and are therefore sectors of great pertinence to the county. We have also heard first-hand through the survey the challenges being experienced by the Agricultural sector. With a location quotient of 5.64 (showing substantial strength) and a GVA of almost £63 million, adequate support should be offered to support this vitally important sector.
- c) Many businesses (mainly those that are self-employed or freelance), have been unable to access any financial support.**
Analysis has shown that many businesses have faced barriers in accessing support, having been deemed ineligible for the current offer. It could be argued that should any further financial support mechanisms be developed then these businesses should be the first to benefit, especially if any of these businesses align to those sectors deemed high value.
- d) Most businesses will not be able to operate longer than three months if the current situation continues.**
Support developed to date has been done quickly and with depleted resources in many instances. Given the precarious position many businesses find themselves in, should any further support mechanisms be developed then they too will need to be actioned quickly, with the aim of stemming the 'snow-ball' affect that are the impacts of this pandemic.

- e) The most sought-after type of support both in the short and longer term is financial in the form of grants, loans or payment deferrals/holidays.**

These findings present a challenge given that it is currently difficult to ascertain how much longer restrictions will be in place. It could be argued that whilst a financial injection of support would be beneficial for many in the immediate term, if restrictions continue, or are reintroduced in the short-term following a reprieve, then many businesses would unfortunately find themselves in a worrying predicament once again. The sustainability of this financial support would then become uncertain. In conjunction with this, local and national governments could develop a more sustainable and less cost intensive package of support with the aim of supporting businesses to diversify their operations i.e. moving to online selling, re- training staff, product development or aiding with marketing.

- f) Some businesses would find promotion and advertising support from the Council beneficial.**

Businesses primarily operating within the Tourism, Leisure and Hospitality sectors indicated that they would find free advertising and promotion beneficial to their recovery. This is an example of a relatively low-cost and non-resource intensive offer of support placing the Council further at the forefront of assisting businesses to recover. This offer of support could be extended to all businesses irrespective of the sector that they operate in. This also aligns with the 'buy local' marketing message that could be promoted to the county's residents in the hope of providing a much-needed boost to the local companies who are the very foundation of our economy.

- g) There are areas of deprivation in the county where the effects of the pandemic could be felt more acutely.**

Community support initiatives should be focussed first and foremost in the areas highlighted as experiencing increased levels of deprivation. With many people feeling more isolated than ever before it is imperative that the Council continues its support and outreach work, to ensure that those most vulnerable in our communities receive the support that they need.

- h) Some businesses foresee that they will experience skills challenges as a result of the pandemic, with the majority stating that these skills deficits will relate to digital and IT skills.**

With the vast majority of respondents indicating that they would benefit from online training in the fields of IT/digital skills, marketing and diversification there is scope to offer subsidised training through provision that is already in existence as an alternative to cash grants. There is also scope to utilise the wealth of expertise readily available within the organisation to offer non-accredited online training

resources.

- i) **The skills landscape will undoubtedly suffer as a result of the pandemic. The majority of job losses are likely to be at a lower skills level as these jobs tend to be part-time, low paid and more unstable. They are also often aligned with the identified 'shutdown' sectors.** Local Government and organisations such as the Regional Learning and Skills Partnership have a crucial role to play in assisting employers and businesses to identify the skills that they need and ensuring that suitable provision exists to meet these demands.

In addition to the online survey, telephone interviews were conducted (May 2020) with 422 businesses. Many of the trends identified from the survey intelligence have been echoed and substantiated through the qualitative interviews and by other external organisations (Ymlaen Llanelli, Federation of Small Businesses, South Wales Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise Hub Carmarthen, Business Wales). There is a general clear consensus across all intelligence that the pandemic has had an unmeasurable impact on the wellbeing of businesses across the county.

171 businesses are completely closed presently (May 2020) with many indicating that they are in a state of 'hibernation'. A large proportion (166) are partially operating albeit at a reduced capacity, with the majority having placed a significant number of staff on furlough. It is clear that the businesses still trading are those able to operate online, work from home or those that have diversified their offer or service in response to the pandemic.

It seems several businesses operating within the financial and professional services sector such as estate agents and legal and insurance firms were able to continue to trade during lockdown through moving their staff to home working. Whilst many have not been able to offer their full range of services, this has served to keep the respective businesses afloat in this uncertain time.

In response to a question about what support business need moving forward, the vast majority of businesses indicated that the support they desire is related to finance. 114 businesses indicated that an extended period of payment holidays or deferrals would be beneficial to them with a further 93 indicating that financial support in the form of a grant would be of help. The South Wales chamber of commerce have also highlighted the importance of financial support, specifically in the form of extensions to rate relief periods and re-opening grants.

19 businesses highlighted that assistance from the Council to support collaborative procurement, i.e. PPE and safety protection equipment would be welcomed. This would be a prudent approach ensuring economies of scale (where possible), driving

efficiencies and reducing the risk for individual businesses (of which many are small enterprises). This is closely aligned to the desire from the Enterprise Hub to see support offered in collaborative tendering and local purchasing.

10 businesses would like help with promotion for either themselves or their industry as a whole. This is consistent with the message from the Tourism, Leisure and Hospitality sector which was identified through the survey returns and aligns with the call for national promotions from the Federation of Small Businesses.

Many businesses feel that there is a role for the Council to take the lead on developing and supporting campaigns which promote a 'buy local' message and encourage the development and protection of local supply chains. This is a key area of consideration for the county and if successful could alleviate some pressures and would serve to promote local, sustainable growth, supporting not only the businesses based in the county but also their employees and their customers.

A theme raised by several through the survey in relation to the offer of training (especially around digital skills, marketing, online marketing and setting up online shops) has been echoed once again. These findings have been further substantiated by a number of organisations including Coleg Sir Gar, Business Wales and the Enterprise Hub in Carmarthen who made specific reference to training or support in areas such as food safety, mental health first aid, managing finance, business planning, legal issues (especially around employment law) and debt management.

Unfortunately, 18 businesses reported that they were not eligible for any of the financial support grants currently in existence. Most of these businesses are sole traders with no employees. These findings are consistent with those deduced from the impact survey.

78 businesses indicated that they are unsure about what help the Council could offer in addition to what is already being offered. In many circumstances reference was made to the help these businesses had already received for which they were grateful.

The sad reality of the situation is that many businesses will fail, and others will take a significant length of time to get back to where they were. The impact across the UK has been estimated to be as much as one third of total GDP in some sectors. By contrast, some areas of the economy have seen employment growth including distribution, online retail and healthcare. To what extent this is short term growth is unknown and evidence indicates that this temporary employment may be slowing.

2. Unemployment in Carmarthenshire

March / April 2020

An analysis of the number of people claiming unemployment-related benefits in Wales shows that between March and April (first full month of lockdown) there were 104,869 claimants compared with 58,576 in March. This resulted in the claimant rate increasing from 3.9% to 6.8% which compared negatively with the UK average which sits at 5.8%.

The table below provides a breakdown of claimant levels in April 2020 compared with the same time last year. The trends are undeniable and are a stark indicator of the effects of the pandemic. Figures highlighted in the preceding paragraph allows confident deduction that the substantial increases seen in Carmarthenshire are primarily as a result of the pandemic.

Area	Level		Rate	
	April 2019	April 2020	April 2019	April 2020
Carmarthenshire	2,420	5,495	2.2	5.0
Wales	53,770	104,305	2.8	5.4
UK	1,106,610	2,117,360	2.7	5.1

Carmarthenshire's claimant rate appears to compare positively with the averages for Wales and the UK. However, further analysis indicates that Carmarthenshire has seen the greatest increase (2.8) in the claimant rate compared with increases of 2.6 and 2.4 for Wales and the UK respectively. The count of claimants has increased by 127% in Carmarthenshire which is substantially higher than the proportional increases seen at a Wales and UK level, (94% and 91% respectively).

There are several factors which could be attributable to these trends. Carmarthenshire's economy is characterised by a higher than average proportion of self-employed individuals (12.4% compared with 9.6% in Wales). Anecdotal evidence suggests that at a national level the package of support has been lesser and more difficult to access (owing to eligibility and timeliness) for these individuals and many have been forced to claim unemployment-related benefits. It is feasible that many of these additional claimants are therefore those that have been unable to access any other form of financial support.

Those sectors that have suffered 'shutdowns' as a result of the pandemic offer employment to approximately 25,000 people in Carmarthenshire (accounting for 37% of the total workforce). It is realistic therefore to suggest that whilst a proportion of those have been furloughed (with model-based estimates suggesting that 7,500 individuals are benefitting from the furlough scheme in Carmarthenshire) the shortfall of 17,500 people are likely to be those individuals accessing these benefits. The suggestion is that these figures are likely to rise significantly over the coming months.

July 2020

Self- Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS)

- Carmarthenshire has an above average level of self-employed individuals, having the 3rd highest level of potentially SEISS eligible individuals (10,200) of all local authorities in Wales.

- In comparison with other local authority areas Carmarthenshire's take-up rate (74%) is quite low and is lower than the Wales average which sits at 77%. This translates to 2,700 potentially eligible individuals not accessing support.
- Potential reasons for this are numerous and include;
 - This figure included those whose businesses have not been adversely affected by the pandemic.
 - Some individuals did not access the scheme and instead accessed unemployment support and would therefore appear in the claimant counts.
 - Some individuals sought alternative employment.
 - Some individuals may have diversified their operation in order to continue trading throughout the lockdown period and therefore continued to generate income.

Job Retention Scheme – Furloughed Employments by Local Authority

- The furlough rate in Carmarthenshire (28%) sits slightly below the average for Wales (29%). The data shows that a further 53,700 individuals could have benefitted from the scheme.
- Whilst on the one hand this seems positive the risk is that a number of these individuals may have lost their job as a result of the pandemic and have either had to source alternative employment or have unfortunately been forced to access unemployment support.
- It could also mean that a number of businesses may not have necessarily been affected to the point of having to furlough staff and may have been able to continue operations throughout the lockdown period.

Recovery Position:

Building on the work done through the successful COVID response helpline we are looking to further offer support and guidance to Carmarthenshire's businesses (to include the self-employed and freelancers) on funding, recovery and general advice. This will help to futureproof the businesses that already exist in the county but also offer support to new and emerging businesses, which will promote economic growth and create new, local employment opportunities.

We are also taking a proactive approach to exploring mechanisms to support increased value and volume of procurement from locally based SME's in line with procurement regulations. This will support the growth of local SME's which are the very foundation of our economy and help protect and develop local jobs for local people.

Claimant Rates

- The claimant rate as of July in Carmarthenshire was 5.6%, which compares positively with national averages which sit at 6.2% and 6.5% for Wales and the UK respectively.

- The rate in Carmarthenshire has risen by 1 percentage point since June, compared to a rise of 2 percentage points nationally for Wales and the UK. This may suggest that the rate is slowing down in Carmarthenshire.
- Of the 22 local authorities in Wales, Carmarthenshire has the 4th lowest claimant rate (along with the Vale of Glamorgan and Flintshire) which is positive.

Job Postings

- Whilst job losses have occurred, and the claimant rate has significantly increased by 124% the labour market shows early signs of a recovery with jobs becoming available. Our data indicates that job posting levels in July were higher than those seen during the same time period last year, which is positive.
- The occupations in most demand are;
 - Nurses,
 - Care workers and home carers,
 - Sales and retail assistants,
 - Medical practitioners,
 - Teaching assistants,
 - Van drivers,
 - Cleaners and domestics,
 - Other administrative occupations,
 - Elementary storage occupations,
 - Primary and nursery education teaching professionals.

Recovery Position:

Moving forward it is key to support those individuals that have been hardest hit to capitalise on the opportunities available. This will undoubtedly involve an element of re-skilling or upskilling and offering employment support where necessary.

We have already made commitments through our Economy Recovery plan to refocus the work of some key projects to provide training and work experience to people who have become unemployed as a result of the pandemic.

Furthermore, we will be looking to work with partnership organisations to provide assistance and guidance to those who are unemployed to acquire meaningful employment. This extends to offering support to young people who find themselves in need of support, e.g. Kickstart Work Placement Programme.

3.1 Claimant Count vs. Job Postings

- Through monitoring claimant levels and job openings we have been able to deduce occupational areas which need further support and those which are

recovering well. Those occupational areas requiring further support (where claimant counts are increasing, and job openings are decreasing) include;

- Other Elementary Services Occupations,
- Construction and building trades occupations,
- Elementary construction occupations.

Those recovering well (where claimant counts are decreasing, and job openings are increasing) include;

- Sales assistants and retail cashiers,
- Caring personal services occupations,
- Functional managers and directors.

Recovery Position:

As part of the Council's Economic Recovery Plan we are committed to continuing with significant regeneration capital infrastructure investments to boost demand in the construction sector which will support its recovery and create skilled and well-paid jobs in the sector.

In addition, we are aware of the important role that skills will have in Carmarthenshire's recovery and we are committed to developing a local skills action plan to understand the skills available in our local economy. This will support in ensuring that the skills supply of the labour force meets the demands of our economy. This means that through utilising secondary data on claimant counts and job postings we are able to focus investment on those areas of the economy which require skills development.

August 2020 - furloughed employments.

County and district / unitary authority	Employments furloughed	Eligible employments	Take-up rate
Ceredigion	7,900	25,200	31%
Carmarthenshire	22,500	74,900	30%
Neath Port Talbot	16,000	58,400	27%
Pembrokeshire	15,500	45,600	34%
Powys	16,000	51,100	31%
Swansea	28,800	99,800	29%

In short, the take up rate has risen by 2% in Carmarthenshire - one percentage point behind the Wales average which sits at 31%.

3. Rural Towns

Prior to the current crisis we were working with consultants to develop growth plans to revitalise our 10 towns – Llandovery, **St Clears**, **Whitland**, **Newcastle Emlyn**, **Laugharne**, Cwmamman, **Llanybydder**, Kidwelly, Llandeilo and Cross Hands - under the Council's moving rural Carmarthenshire forward strategy. These growth plans were to look forward 10 years with new ideas and priorities agreed in partnership with businesses. The need for these plans has been amplified by the economic whirlwind brought about by the pandemic. The anticipated economic impacts of Coronavirus on 5 of the 10 Towns (shown in bold) has been considered by Owen Davies Consulting. The initial key findings for these 5 towns include:

- Across the five towns, 35% of the workforce (2,330 people) are employed in occupations considered at most risk (administrative, leisure, customer service, elementary).
- If one in five (466) of the most at-risk workforce lost their jobs, unemployment would increase by 70%.
- Whitland (26%) and St Clears (27%) have the highest levels of managers and professionals which offer more capacity to work from home and are considered to be less risk occupations.
- 20% of employees across the five towns are in self-employment and are considered more vulnerable to abrupt and, in some cases, total loss of income.
- Over 40% of businesses in the five towns are in shut down sectors (restaurants, pubs, café, non-food retail etc).
- 50 food and drink businesses and 100 accommodation providers are likely to have closed across the five towns, with Laugharne suffering more significantly than others.
- Impacts on agriculture are likely to have a greater impact on the five towns because there are a higher proportion of people employed in agriculture

A review of the Covid-19 impact on the remaining 5 towns is currently being progressed with further information available shortly.

4. Primary Town Centres

Currently, the economic effects of the Covid-19 crisis are highly uncertain which makes it difficult to draw a clear picture of immediate impact on our primary town centres, namely Carmarthen, Ammanford and Llanelli. The UK and Welsh Governments imposed restrictions on the operation of businesses which specifically targeted the retail sector. Jobs in these businesses were and continue to be particularly affected despite relaxation of lockdown restrictions. Retail businesses will be vulnerable due to shop closures and a strong drop in demand from consumers. Intervention and clear direction from all stakeholders will be required to prioritise key strategies of support to ensure town centre recovery following the Covid-19 crisis.

The initial issues identified and intelligence coming out of those towns are that there will be a need to:

- Improve access/ social distancing measures to be implemented within town centres, including connections between out of town sites and the town's public transport link.

- Increasing footfall to all areas of the town.
- Reducing the number of empty premises in the town centre.
- Provide alternative trading for those businesses based within core town centres (i.e. deliveries, online sales).
- Public transport issues – avoiding congestion.
- Consider alternative uses of derelict sites / empty buildings / potential future development sites in the interim.
- Consider community enterprise and third sector role in recovery of the town.
- Provide Business Support – chamber of trade, self-help initiatives such as town centre partnerships.
- Need for effective town branding and development of a marketing & tourism development strategy.
- Need for financial support for new and existing businesses.
- Strengthen Local procurement / Local supply chain.
- Clear roles and coordination of BIDS / town Centre forums / taskforces/CCC

The Centre for Towns, an independent non-partisan organisation dedicated to providing research and analysis on a range of issues affecting our towns, has recently reviewed the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on towns and cities throughout the UK. The report findings identify Llanelli as being in the top 20 towns in the UK for absolute deprivation and therefore lacking in resilience with regards to COVID-19.

To help as many of our town centre businesses back operating safely as soon as possible following relaxation of lockdown restrictions, the Council has created safe town centre environments, introducing some pedestrianisation of streets to enable sensible movement throughout to give users, residents and businesses confidence to resume activity and business.

We have worked closely with town centre businesses, engaging with them on the town centre proposals and providing advice and support with regard to trading compliance matters. We are helping businesses with licensing requirements to enable them to have street furniture and allowing them to serve customers in the pedestrianised areas. Funding is also being provided to make street furniture available to businesses.

5. Developer / Investor Confidence

Some 15 local, regional and national developers were contacted in respect of their businesses and how they have been impacted by Covid 19. The discussion with developers revolved around 4 main themes:

- Short term impacts (current and in the next 6 months)
- Key constraints anticipated moving forward
- Key opportunities moving forward
- Key public and private sector interventions required

Summary of feedback Received

Short Term Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally, most developers were surprisingly positive and see the current crisis as a challenge but in some instances an opportunity.
--------------------------	---

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rent reduction / rent free windows being requested by a few tenants also some high-profile tenants not paying rent. • A few experiencing delays in incoming payments from tenants and clients. • Mixed response on availability and rates of bank finance. • Some construction materials difficult to get hold of such as plasterboard, plaster and concrete. • Material price rises inevitable in short term due to lack of supply and increasing demand. • Mixed response on anticipated values falling, some developers believe there will be no change others expecting problems with security / projected profit margins from expected devaluation. • Difficult to plan for future as so many unknowns. • A number of projects have been delayed although several were looking to return to site shortly or had returned to site on a limited basis. • Delays being experienced with planning decisions (across Wales) and drainage responses etc. • HMRC furlough payments slow. • Appreciation of quick processing of business rates grant. • Utility companies only doing emergency work. • Current glut of available labour where previously in short supply (Brick layers).
Key Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning process – needs to be more responsive. • Cost value GAP increasing low rentals higher costs. • Increasing costs. • Public sector too strong need to revitalise private sector. • WG withdrawal from Housing association bond scheme. • Lack of reasonable bank and development bank financing at reasonable costs. • Lack of Gap funding schemes such as PDF and business schemes such as CREF. • Communication with local authority would be useful to have single point of contact. • Speculative development unlikely due to higher risk etc • Uncertainty on end values. • Lost income / lack of productivity
Opportunities Moving Forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand still exists for high quality properties.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to market stock / development sites to companies in key cities across UK looking to lower costs and increase quality of life to employees. • Residential market strong plus relocations as above. • Cheap stock and land for acquisition. • Local and consistent procurement. • Remote working practices / IT. • Less competition. • Staycations. • Retirement villages vs care homes. • Live / work schemes. • Creative hubs. • Appetite for joint venture working with Council. • More efficient working practices, IT, home working, TEAMS, reduced travel costs etc. • Opportunities for off site working in construction sector.
Public and Private Sector Interventions Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gap funding support scheme / Property Development Fund. • Higher intervention rates to assist with growing development gap figure. • Forum of developers. • Support to assist with deferring private sector tenants rent. • Rental guarantees from LA. • Joint venture projects potentially LA asset backed. • Seed funding for development of innovative / risky projects. • Low interest or zero interest/ fee commercial borrowing. • Reduce / remove / freeze section 106 contributions. • Use section 106 funds for economic development. • Co-ordinated marketing of development / relocation site.

SUPPORT AND ADVICE PROVIDED TO DATE

In response to the identified challenges facing our businesses, communities and the economy, the Regeneration Service has:

- Immediately established a Business Contact Centre as a support service. 5000 enquiries received during initial lockdown period of which 2507 businesses in Carmarthenshire have used this helpline seeking support.
- Created an online food and community initiative directory to support rural residents - [website set up for Community Support](#)

- Maintained regular contact with town and community councils in order to ascertain volunteer levels, aid those most vulnerable and act as a liaison
- Co-ordinated drivers to assist grocery stores with their capacity to deliver goods to those most vulnerable with over 1,300 deliveries undertaken up to the end of July
- Contacted over 90 food and drink producers to discover capacity in supplying local food stores - a list was produced and circulated to local stores
- Worked with CAVS to administer COVID-19 response fund
- Conducted a third sector COVID-19 impact survey
- Supported rural key workers who were experiencing digital connectivity difficulties through deploying 4G routers via a WG pilot scheme
- Supported rural communities to increase digital connectivity through actively promoting [Rural Gigabit Voucher Scheme](#), and encouraged residents to register their interest for broadband upgrade
- CCC's Community Bureau, LEADER Team and ARFOR Team has supported £2.4m grants for businesses since March 2020
- Carmarthenshire County Council worked with local food suppliers to provide essential food packages to residents in Carmarthenshire who are shielding and had no other means of support. The parcels, which were delivered weekly, contained some local produce as well as other basic food and household items. The council took over the supply and delivery of the food packages from Welsh Government and worked with Castell Howell and other local suppliers to put the packs together. The Council's staff and SirGâredig – Sharing Carmarthenshire's Kindness branded vans were used for the delivery of the parcels. In total 8,381 food parcels were delivered across Carmarthenshire, supporting people who were shielding.
- Over a 3-month period up to mid-June, the Council provided a monthly food parcel to families of children eligible for free school meals. We have distributed more than 9,600 food parcels with most families receiving 3 packs. Following which those in need of continued were directed to their nearest foodbank,
- The Council has been working alongside foodbanks across the County, since the beginning of the COVID 19 pandemic, to provide support with the purchase of food through our existing contract with Castell Howell. The need for foodbank support is still high with most foodbanks having seen an increase in demand over the last few weeks. The Council has sufficient funding to continue to provide support to foodbanks until the end of January 2021.
- The Council has supported Welsh Government in the delivery of Economic Resilience Funding Phases 1 and 2 for Carmarthenshire businesses
- The Council's business support teams have widely engaged with and supported our local businesses, many of whom are small and medium sized enterprises. As a result, Carmarthenshire County Council has:
 - Made 4,086 payments under the business rates grant, totalling over £46 million
 - Supported 108 businesses with £270k of Welsh Government Business Start Up Grant
- Council commercial and industrial tenants were provided with an initial 3 month rent relief period (April – June). This support benefitted approximately 255 separate businesses, occupying over 400 properties in total

- The council has extended its support to its existing commercial tenants and has offered a further rent discount of 25% (July – September) to those who can show a 50% or more drop in turnover compared with the same period last year. We continue to work very closely with all our business tenants, assisting with rescheduled payments if necessary, notifying when grants become available, and assisting them with any of their queries.
- Carmarthenshire County Council set up a hardship rent relief fund for those businesses who were unable to access financial support from various Welsh and UK Government schemes. Eligible businesses were able to obtain up to £1500 support to assist with rent payments
- In the absence of seasonal festivals this year in the County, a digital Virtual Market – 100% Sir Gar – [Go for local](#)- has been developed for local shops / producers to showcase their products. There will also be a series of digital events, again with aim to boost business leading up to Christmas.
- We are administering Welsh Government funding to provide financial assistance to businesses that are facing operational and financial challenges caused by the national lockdown announced for Wales as a result of COVID-19. The purpose of the fund is to support businesses with cash flow support to help them survive the economic consequences of the restrictions put in place. The fund - [Firebreak: Enhanced financial support](#) - consists of two separate grants:
 1. Lockdown Non Domestic Rate Grant
 2. Lockdown Discretionary Grant
- The Council is also looking to participate in the Kickstart Work Placement Programme - As part of the government's plan to increase job opportunities for young people, the new £2 billion Kickstart Scheme has been created to support hundreds of thousands of new, fully subsidised work placements for young people across the country. The 6-month placements are open to those aged 16-24 who are claiming Universal Credit and at risk of long-term unemployment. These will be available across a range of different sectors in England, Scotland and Wales. The first placements are likely to be available from November. Organisations and businesses sign up for this programme will need to commit a minimum of 30 new job placements. There are not many businesses of sufficient scale in Carmarthenshire able to commit to this. The Council is therefore looking to support businesses who have fewer than 30 jobs on offer by acting as an intermediary to facilitate the required minimum 30 job placements across a number of businesses and also as an employer so that the Council can also offer direct placements. We have identified 68 companies who wish to participate in this scheme, accommodating 174 placements. Proposals are being submitted to Department for Work and pensions.

SUPPORT AND ADVICE TO BE PROVIDED - CARMARTHEN'S RECOVERY STRATEGY

In response to the above issues we are proposing a strategy which outlines what is required during the Covid-19 recovery period to ensure that the Carmarthenshire's economy can recover as quickly as possible. Carmarthenshire's economic recovery needs to be realised as part of a new three-phase economic plan that includes

restarting of the local economy followed by a revival phase and long-term renewal. The findings of this impact report are a snapshot of informing the restart phase.

The intelligence gathered clearly demonstrates that the local economy faces a difficult time in coming months as the effects of the Covid-19 crisis puts pressure on jobs and demand. Through acting together, the authority and its partners can take action to restore consumer and business confidence to stimulate investment in our economies, which will create employment and help the unemployed find new jobs.

As a platform to the development and delivery of the economic recovery plan, Carmarthenshire County Council has set up a business, economy and community recovery group to coordinate development and delivery. That group has identified several draft potential action strands and proposals for further consideration. In order to move forward Carmarthenshire County Council is employing external economic advice to assist with bringing this information together and to map out a plan for future projects and tasks to give a kick start and boost to the local economy.

An overarching advisory group, comprising key private sector industry leaders, has been established to assist us with the development and refinement of our draft plan (summarised below) and to lead us through the current crisis. This group will set the vision and direction for recovery.

The Draft Economic Recovery Plan

Carmarthenshire's Economic Recovery Plan is focused on 11 key areas:

1. Capital Infrastructure

- Continue with significant regeneration capital infrastructure investments to boost demand in the construction sector and stimulate confidence.

2. Business Support

- Review of current priorities is required with greater emphasis on engagement. Focus on sector specific as necessary. Greater staff resource required through re-modelling of service. Financial support to assist with recovery. Re-prioritise the Business engagement strategy.
- Set up a business support hotline to support and provide guidance to Carmarthenshire businesses on funding, recovery and general advice.
- Investigate possibility of negotiating bulk purchase / subsidised deals for businesses.
- Refocus Communities for Work to provide training and work experience to people who have become unemployed as a result of Covid 19.
- Workways + provide assistance for the unemployed as a consequence of Covid 19 - ref Short Term Unemployed.
- Investigate possibility of reinvention of Future Jobs Fund to provide guaranteed, paid employment for young people.

3. Town Centre Economy

- Reviewing and refocusing primary town centre regeneration master and recovery plans.
- Develop safe town centre environment plans.
- Supporting BIDs in Carmarthen & Llanelli (3-year cash contribution mirroring levy take to enable BID groups to assist with delivery of town centre recovery initiatives).
- Review current parking initiatives/provisions throughout the County.
- Acquisition of empty retail premises to revive economic buoyancy/footfall through innovation.
- Consider county-wide development order for town centres.
- Put in place arrangements for resumption of trading at our indoor and outdoor Markets – ensuring compliance with regulations and staff and shopper safety.

4. Procurement

- Explore if we can increase the value and volume of procurement from locally based SME's, compliantly within the Procurement Regulations.
- Investigate possibility of sub £25k (3 quotes) through an update of our Council's Contract Procedure Rules to stipulate of the 3 quotes sought one should be from a supplier within the County.
- Opportunity to strengthen our Community Benefits approach.

5. Planning

- Consider relaxation of the emerging LDP for the creation of additional employment areas particularly for B2 uses and small business startups. Consider also any interim options.
- Consider the emerging LDP in terms of home working and the concept of live / work. Consider also any interim options.
- Consider feasibility of reallocating S.106 monies where possible to economic development activity.
- Consider whether there should, or could be, a prioritisation approach for applications that will generate job opportunities/economic benefits.
- Review and simplify planning support for key economic development applications (small and large).

6. Rural Economy

- Review and prioritise Council's Moving Rural Carmarthenshire Forward recommendations and projects.
- Foundational Economy Fund - develop a local food strategy.
- Review 10 town growth plans.
- Investigate feasibility of developing co-operation led milk processing facilities within Carmarthenshire.
- Review Arfor rural business support.

7. Communities

- Support local communities to become more self-resilient with sustainable local supply chains.
- Review the Authorities poverty support measures and priorities.
- Third sector support.
- Deliver community led projects – Leader.
- Reprioritise and grow grant funding to Covid-19 community resilience projects.

8. Digital Connectivity

- Deliver Digital infrastructure regional City Deal project being led by the Council.
- Deliver LEADER funded project to support digital infrastructure in rural areas of Carmarthenshire.

9. Skills

- Skills and Talent Swansea Bay City Deal project - identify new ways of working and the new skills and technology required in order to deliver this across the region.
- Develop local skills action plan.

10. Tourism & Events

- Review current Marketing Destination plans. Ail-ddarganfod Sir Gar / Re-discover Carmarthenshire – assist promotion and marketing of local businesses.
- Road Cycling Marketing Campaign - Work with accommodation providers as to what ride and stay packages can be offered and when
- Cultural Heritage Campaign - Celtic Routes - opportunity to continue this project with a further £1million budget into 2021 will deliver tangible visitors to Carmarthenshire.
- Maximising Signature & Major Events - Major events such as the Tour of Britain can contribute £750k economic impact over a weekend, and a smaller event like Llandovery Grit Fest £50k.

11. Land and assets

- Review accommodation programme considering changing working practice and agile working.
- Reprofile capital receipts and potentially target certain sectors.
- Focus in the short term on invest to save refit scheme, WG funded project.
- Review land availability and reprofile as necessary to ensure that best use of council owned land is being made to support the local economy.
- Development of incubator/commercial accommodation and medium sized food based and production units.

In some areas there will be a need to challenge current ways of working and regulations to maximise opportunities for local businesses and to make it as simple as possible for business to open and expand in Carmarthenshire. The draft plan and

11 key themes were approved by Executive Board at its 29th June, 2020 meeting. This forms the basis for the Council's recovery strategy report that is currently being finalised.

This page is intentionally left blank

An Analysis of the Impact of COVID-19 on Carmarthenshire

MAY 2020

carmarthenshire.gov.wales

Cyngor **Sir Gâr**
Carmarthenshire
County Council



Page 95

Contents

Section 1 - Introduction	2
Section 2 – Policy Landscape & Labour Market Intelligence.....	3
Section 3 – Business Intelligence.....	12
Section 4 – Main Findings & Conclusions.....	27

Section 1 – Introduction

1.1 Purpose and Context

The COVID-19 pandemic is considered one of the most significant global events in recent history. Its effects have been felt across the world and has resulted in the most significant disruption to normal life in peace time. The ferocity and complicated nature of the virus has meant that people are unable to exercise their fundamental rights of freedom and free movement, resulting in substantial global economic downturns.

As national and local governments attempt to plan for a rapid and flexible recovery, it has never been more imperative that decisions are informed by accurate and timely intelligence. This report is therefore intended to provide an analysis of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the county of Carmarthenshire. It has been developed with the aim of providing some context on such areas as the economy and labour market, people, businesses, education and skills.

1.2 Process and Methodology

This report draws on several data sources of both a primary and secondary nature. The most recently available secondary labour market information has been analysed to provide information regarding the economy, labour market, people and skills. This information has mainly been accessed via an economic modelling package known as EMSI. The data provided through this package is derived from a collection of nine government sources and recognises itself as a complete, accurate and reliable source of labour market information.

Primary evidence has been gathered via an electronic survey disseminated to businesses operating within the county, this has subsequently been analysed to inform the business intelligence section of this report. The survey includes a mix of both closed and open-ended questions, which has provided robust quantitative and qualitative information through which analysis has determined several reliable conclusions.

1.3 Limitations and Factors for Consideration

When reading this report the following factors should be considered;

- The COVID-19 pandemic progresses at pace, and as such its effects are changeable and substantial. In response; policy matters, interventions and labour market information are also changeable, in a bid to offer as flexible a response as possible to the ever-changing situation. This report should therefore be considered a 'snapshot' in time and was correct at the time of writing.
- The business analyses are only representative of those businesses surveyed and are therefore not representative of the entirety of the business demography in Carmarthenshire.

Section 2 – Policy Landscape & Labour Market Intelligence

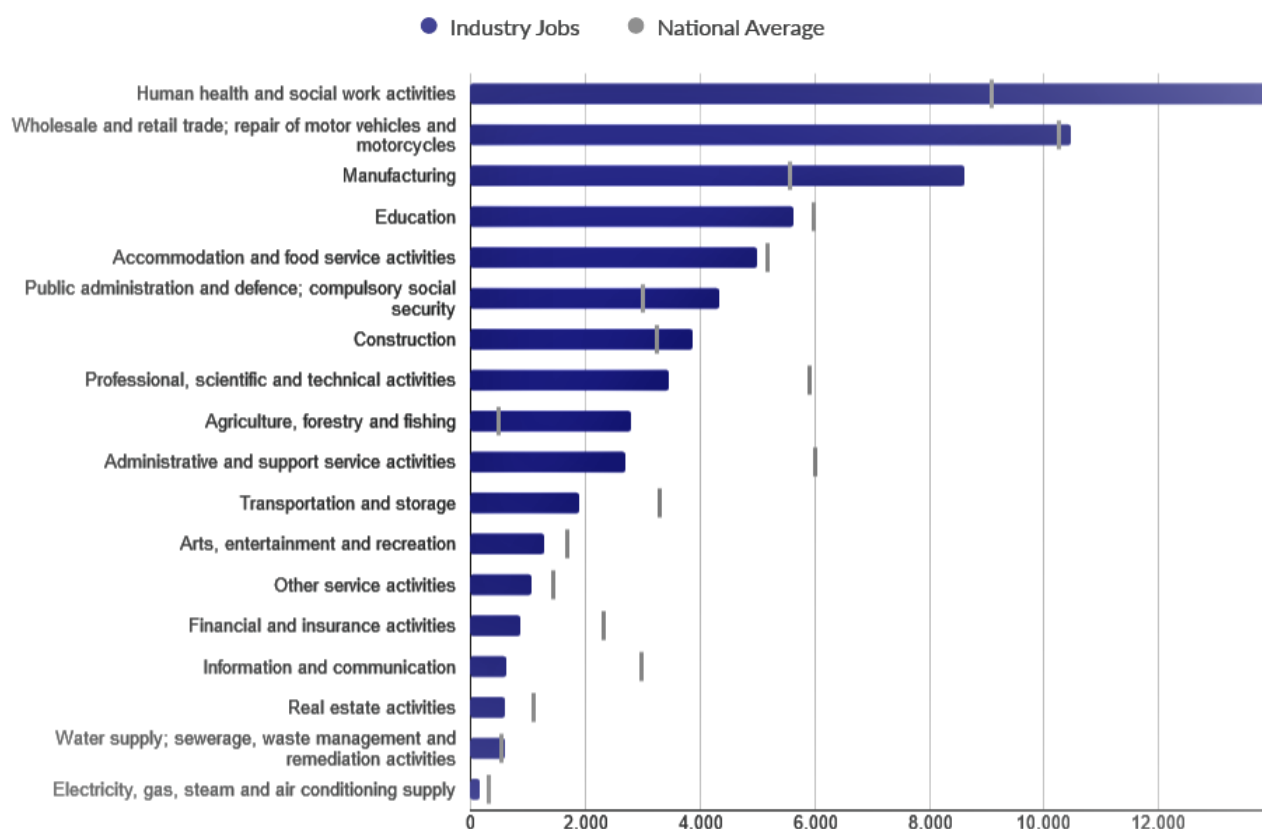
2.1 The Economy

2.1.1 Employment and Unemployment

Prior to the outbreak, Carmarthenshire compared positively with national averages with regards to unemployment, showing lower levels compared with national averages. Whilst it is almost a certainty that unemployment levels will have risen over the last three months, it remains unclear by how much. Recent information released by the Department for Work and Pensions states that in a two-week period (between mid-March and the beginning of April), there were 950,000 successful applications for Universal Credit made at a UK level. Comparatively, a two-week period under normal circumstances would see approximately 100,000 claims made. This is a stark indicator of the true scale of the economic emergency posed to many as a result of the pandemic.

The largest industry in terms of employment in the county is 'Human health and social work activities', which bodes well in terms of the increased pressure on the health sector in light of recent events. However, this is followed by industries which could be deemed more susceptible to the effects of the virus as a result of their reduced capability to social distance and work from home. These include; 'Wholesale and retail trade', 'Manufacturing', 'Education' and 'Accommodation and food service activities.' This is explored in more detail further in the report.

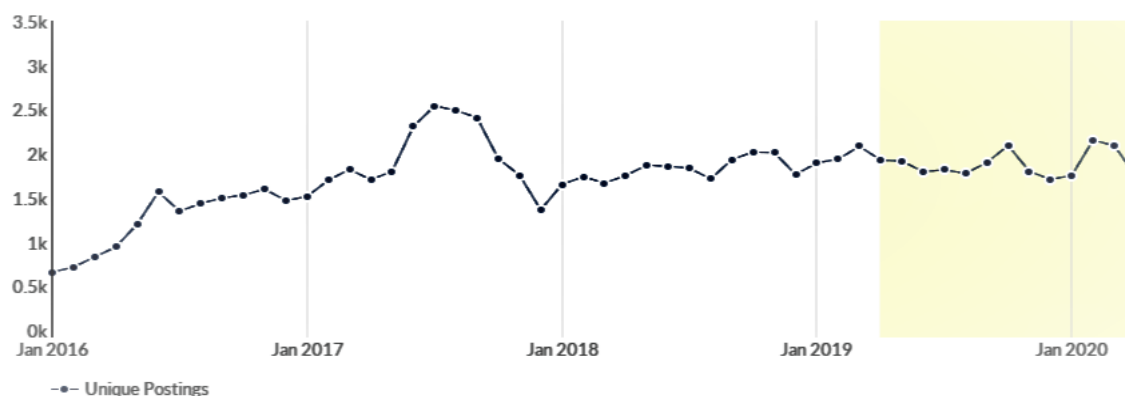
Largest Industries



2.1.2 Recruitment Patterns

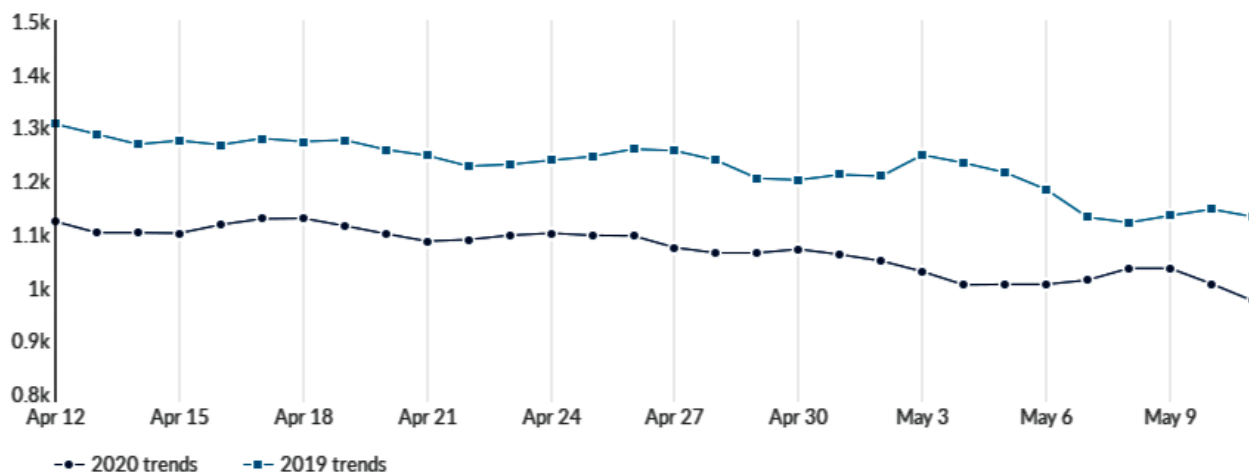
The following chart details how job posting trends have changed since January 2016 in Carmarthenshire.

Unique Postings Trend



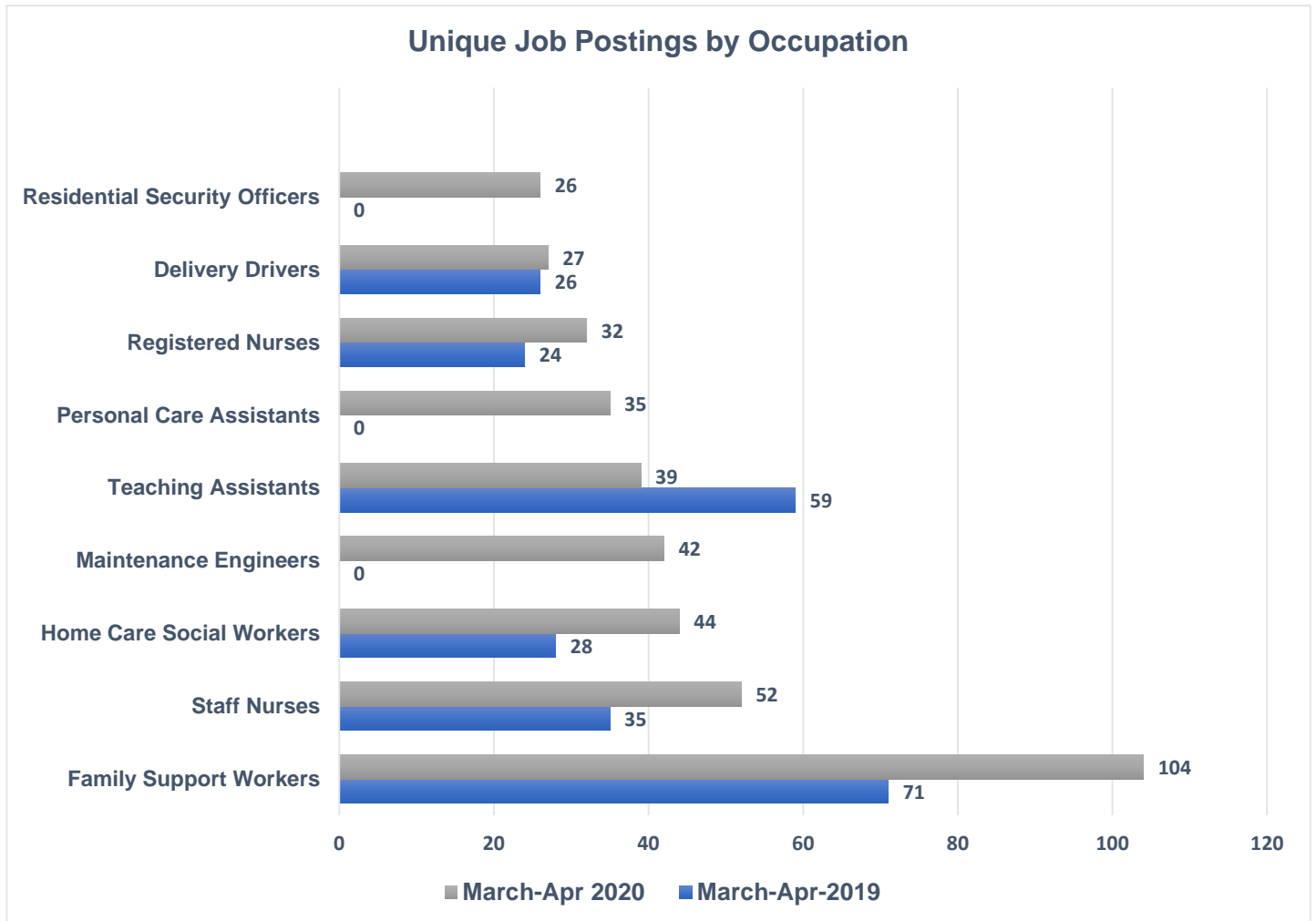
It is evident from the chart above that restrictions introduced as a result of the pandemic have had a dramatic effect on recruitment demand when we consider the labour market in its totality. We see a dramatic rise in recruitment demand between December 2019 and February 2020 which is consistent with patterns exhibited in previous years. We would expect to see this increase continue at a steady pace through the subsequent months, however this year's trends show a sharp decline in recruitment demand from February onwards, which looks set to continue. This is almost certainly attributed to the introduction of stricter measures, i.e. social distancing and lockdown which undoubtedly make recruitment a more challenging prospect for employers.

The chart below, further substantiates the trends previously highlighted. Closer inference of recruitment patterns for the last month show that recruitment is down an average 8.7% on figures for the same time period in 2019. On May the 11th we see the most significant disparity with recruitment levels down 19.3% in comparison to the same time last year.



2.1.3 Occupational Demand

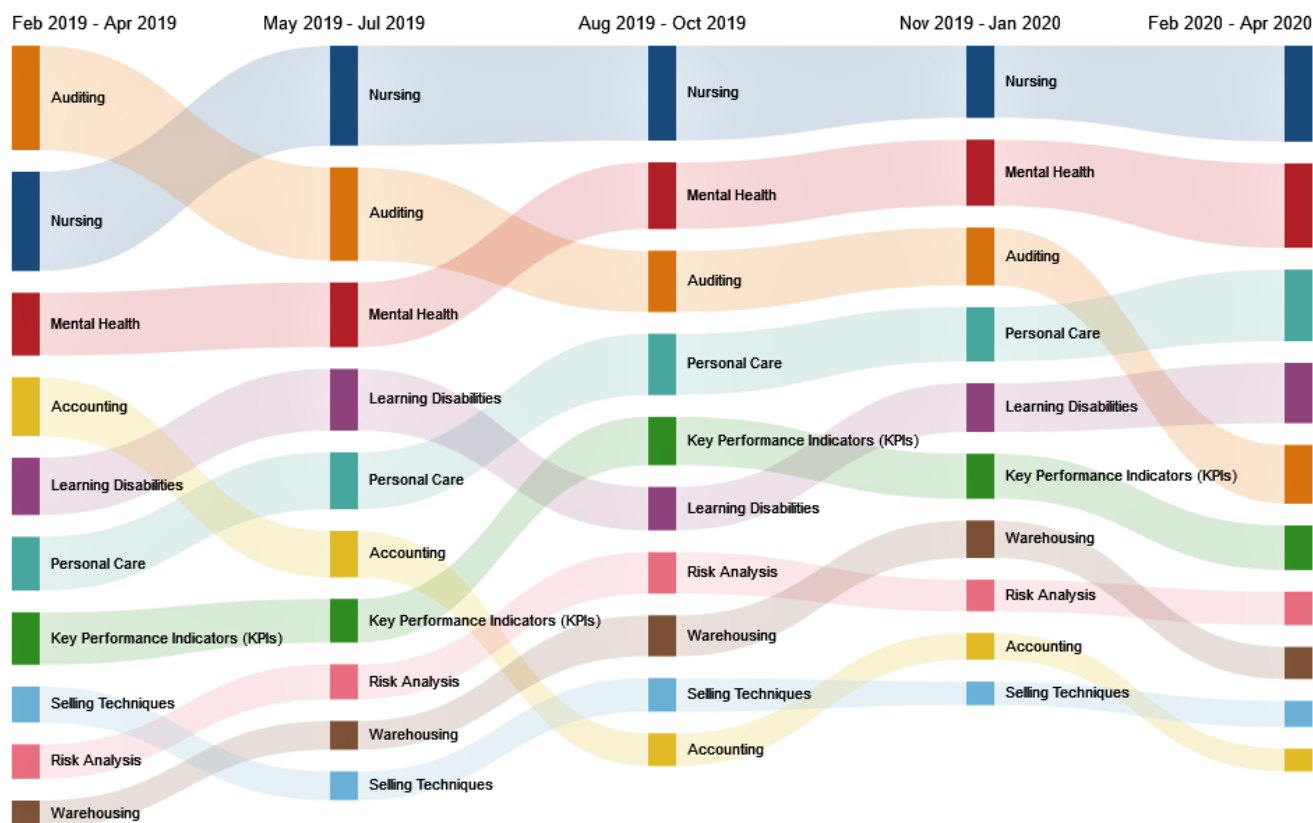
Whilst recruitment demand is down in its totality, the demand for certain occupations has increased. The following chart depicts these fluctuations.



It is evident from the chart that recruitment demand for what are considered health and social care-based occupations has increased, particularly ‘family support workers’, ‘home care workers’, ‘personal care assistants’ and ‘registered nurses’. This is not surprising given the increased pressure that has been placed on these sectors as the country tries to react and respond effectively to the serious health and social effects of the COVID-19 virus. In addition, the demand for ‘maintenance engineers’ has risen, this could be reflective of the growing demand for manufacturing businesses (and similar) to invest in maintaining their machinery, equipment, systems and infrastructures whilst they are not operating at full capacity or at all. This ensures that once restrictions are lifted work can continue quickly and with ease.

2.1.4 Skills Demands

The following infographic indicates how skills demands have fluctuated over the course of the last year in Carmarthenshire.



The infographic above gives an indication that nursing has consistently remained the most sought-after skill in the Carmarthenshire over the last year. This trend is likely to continue given the current pressures on the National Health Service. There has been little fluctuation over the course of the year, with the exception that skills related to mental health, personal care and learning disabilities have increased. Skills related to auditing and accounting have seen decreases.¹

How the skills landscape on the whole will be affected as a result of the pandemic is not easily identifiable. The majority of job losses are likely to be at a lower skills level as these jobs tend to be part-time, low paid and more unstable. This could result in a further widening of the already prevalent skills gap between the highest and lowest skilled in the labour market. Crucial to addressing this skill gap is understanding exactly what skills people have as well as understanding how these skills are transferrable to other sectors. In accordance with this, employers and businesses need to be able to identify the skills that they need, and providers need to define the skills that they need to teach. Local Government and organisations such as the Regional Learning and Skills Partnership have a crucial role to play in supporting businesses and providers to meet these challenges.

¹ Analysis of EMSI data

2.1.5 Gross Value Added (GVA)²

National debt levels have been, and are likely to continue to rise sharply as Governments attempt to react to the wide-reaching effects of the virus. The impacts of this substantial rise in Government spending are likely to be felt for some time with the global economy contracting quicker and deeper than ever before. According to the International Monetary Fund many advanced economies are expected to enter recession this year, these include the UK and US. Many social and economic commentators predict that Wales will be one of the hardest hit due to its social and economic landscape.

It is not yet possible to project the impact of the pandemic on local economies such as Carmarthenshire, however it is possible to identify which sectors of the economy are most pertinent in the area and subsequently identify those at most risk. The following table highlights Carmarthenshire's position in this respect.

Industry	% Change of Jobs (2010-2020)	Location Quotient ³	GVA (2016)	% Total of GVA
Health and Care	31.6%	1.68	£338,593,817	14.46%
Government	-17.5%	1.46	£180,433,101	7.70%
Education and Childcare	-16.5%	1.03	£161,793,225	6.91%
Property Development	25.7%	0.96	£158,204,355	6.75%
Food and Beverage	7.8%	1.04	£131,036,234	5.59%
Vehicle & Defence Technology	258.1%	2.76	£88,913,493	3.80%
Building Services	19.8%	1.01	£88,168,094	3.76%
Personal Services	15.1%	1.08	£87,668,872	3.74%
Commercial Services	8.8%	0.41	£83,489,309	3.56%
Civil Engineering	7.6%	1.06	£77,754,314	3.32%
Financial & Legal Services	70.4%	0.52	£76,634,986	3.27%
Upstream Metal	29.6%	5.62	£73,367,054	3.13%
Household Goods and Services	-4.3%	1.05	£71,141,102	3.04%
Utility	22.7%	0.70	£62,968,246	2.69%
Agricultural Inputs & Services	26.1%	5.64	£62,697,940	2.68%
Automotive Services	-9.0%	0.93	£60,923,907	2.60%
Food & Drink Production	82.6%	2.14	£50,809,331	2.17%
Logistics & Ecommerce	-8.7%	0.57	£43,540,715	1.86%
Sports & Leisure	23.5%	0.80	£41,275,156	1.76%
Visitor Economy	38.0%	1.01	£38,855,577	1.66%
Education & Knowledge Creation	62.8%	0.45	£35,019,478	1.50%
Production Technology	-16.2%	0.60	£34,916,246	1.49%
Retail	-28.5%	1.06	£29,575,074	1.26%
Downstream Metal	26.8%	1.76	£26,968,760	1.15%
Business Services	23.7%	0.52	£26,774,717	1.14%
Professional Services	-9.1%	0.33	£24,903,786	1.06%

² GVA is the value generated by any unit engaged in the production of goods and services.

³ A figure higher than 1 indicates that the given sector is considered a strength for the county.

Digital	-2.7%	0.17	£24,374,404	1.04%
Creative	-2.3%	0.32	£20,999,494	0.90%
Precision Technology	-56.5%	0.26	£19,200,481	0.82%
Forestry	5.7%	4.48	£17,548,391	0.75%
Metalworking Technology	74.5%	1.24	£17,066,892	0.73%
Plastics & Vulcanised Products	152.2%	2.29	£16,936,226	0.72%
Local Transport	-30.2%	0.45	£12,724,822	0.54%
Passenger Transport	73.3%	0.67	£11,717,079	0.50%
Local Environmental Services	86.7%	1.30	£8,852,909	0.38%
Fishing	-59.7%	1.01	£8,613,708	0.37%

Although it could be argued that all sectors shown in the table above have suffered some adverse effects, highlighted in Blue are those industries which have essentially suffered ‘sector shutdowns’ as a result of the pandemic⁴. Three of these are in Carmarthenshire’s top ten industries in terms of GVA creation, and in totality the industries highlighted account for 24% of Carmarthenshire’s total GVA, totalling £552,730,549. As a guide, in the worst-case scenario this would mean that GVA in Carmarthenshire could see a possible deficit of approximately £500 million.⁵

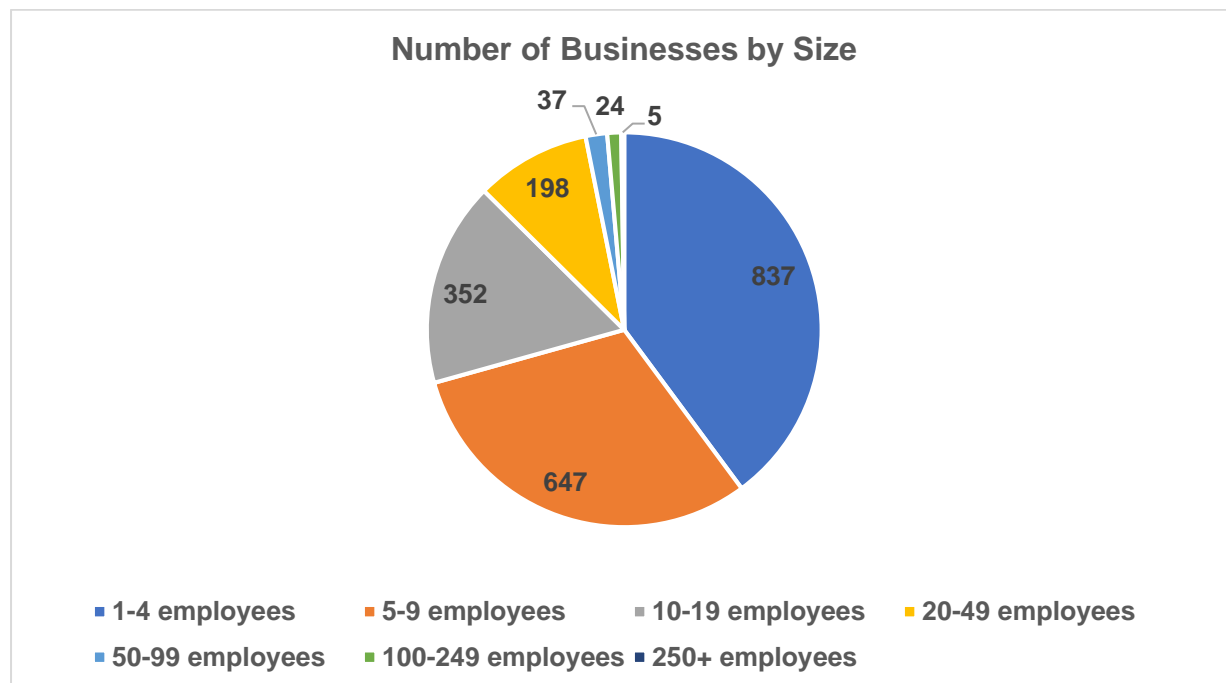
There are opportunities to support these sectors specifically, but also others which are either of specific pertinence to Carmarthenshire (i.e. those with a location quotient above 1) or those that are deemed high value sectors in terms of GVA.

⁴ With the exception of some elements of the education sector

⁵ Analysis of EMSI – (2016)

2.1.6 Business

In Carmarthenshire there are approximately 3,175 businesses operating within those sectors deemed most susceptible to the pandemic. The following chart provides a breakdown of the size of these businesses in terms of the number of people they employ:



Whilst it is not possible to determine the exact proportion of self-employed individuals affected by the pandemic, this data does suggest that the greatest proportion of businesses at highest risk are those employing less than 4 people. It is reasonable to suggest therefore, that a large proportion of the 837 are self-employed.⁶

Taking account of all businesses irrespective of the sector they operate in, at a UK level 39% of small and medium sized enterprises have either closed down or are planning to do so in the near future. The research also found that the type of support that businesses are looking for varies according to size;

- 'For micro-businesses (those with fewer than 10 employees), cashflow is crucial, with 40% stating they need advice on this,
- Small businesses (10-49 employees) are looking for support to access grants and government loans (31%),
- Medium-sized firms (50-249 employees) want the most guidance with supporting staff from a wellbeing perspective (44%).'⁷

What this means from a Carmarthenshire perspective is explored in section 3.

⁶ Analysis of EMSI – Inter Departmental Business Register (2018)

⁷ <https://smallbusiness.co.uk/two-in-five-small-businesses-face-closure-because-of-coronavirus-2550068/>

2.2 People

The virus has been described by some as a 'great leveller' however this is not strictly accurate. Whilst it's true that the virus can affect anybody in a transmission sense, it is apparent that individuals from certain socio-economic groups are more susceptible to its wider implications.

2.2.1 Workers in shutdown sectors

Analysis shows that approximately 24,925 people in Carmarthenshire work in 'shutdown sectors', this accounts for 37% of the total workforce. This is consistent with the average for Wales and compares positively with UK averages (42%).

It is not possible to identify precisely how many of these individuals have been furloughed through the job retention scheme, however at a UK level it is expected that around 9 million workers will be furloughed⁸ with 50% of all companies putting most of their staff into the scheme. Further analysis indicates that the 9 million account for 29% of the total workforce in the UK. Applying the same logic to Carmarthenshire figures would suggest that around 7,500 individuals are benefitting from the scheme.⁹ This clearly leaves a significant shortfall whereby it's likely that many individuals will solely be relying on unemployment benefits, having (in many circumstances) suffered notable drops in their usual incomes.

This undeniably poses economic challenges for Carmarthenshire, the effects of which will be evident long after the pandemic ends. It may take months for household income to recover to pre-pandemic levels resulting in lower levels of disposable income which feeds the local economy. In this situation, individuals are less likely to purchase items that they deem non-essential, it would therefore be prudent to promote a 'buy local' message for essential items. This would stimulate growth at a local level, resulting in a steadier economic future for local businesses and their staff.

Analysis of the demographic of those working in these 'shutdown sectors' indicates that the majority are female, with the largest proportion aged between 25 and 34. A significant number (20.3%) are also aged between 16 and 24. The average wage for jobs in these sectors is £18,801, which is significantly lower than the Carmarthenshire average for all jobs which is £23,800. This substantiates the fact that from a socio-economic perspective those most likely to experience negative effects as a result of measures put in place are low earners, women and the younger generation.

2.2.2 Deprivation

The effects of the virus have been shown to disproportionately affect areas experiencing severe deprivation. Analysis has shown that deprived areas are experiencing higher death rates, seeing more severe financial effects and experiencing the largest negative effects to over-all wellbeing. Positively, there are no small areas of deep-rooted deprivation in

⁸ According to analysis by the Resolution Foundation, using latest figures on take-up from the British Chamber of Commerce

⁹ A guide based on a model approach

Carmarthenshire. Of the county's 112 LSOA's¹⁰ only 4.5% are considered in the most-deprived 10% in Wales, these areas are Tyisha 2, Bigyn 4, Tyisha 3, Llwynhendy 3 and Glanymor 1.¹¹ Particular attention should be paid to these areas to ensure that interventions meet the needs of these communities as they are more likely to be hit hardest.

2.2.3 Social Impacts

The virus has resulted in a momentous and challenging change to lifestyle and working practices. At a Wales level 78% of adults are 'very or somewhat worried' about the effect of COVID-19 on their life right now. 48% feel that their wellbeing is being affected and 47% report feeling high levels of anxiety. There are many contributing factors to this increased anxiety with most reporting; 'worry about relatives and friends', 'financial concerns' and 'uncertainty about education'.

For context, at a UK level 73% of households reported that they have seen a reduction in their income. 16% reported that they have no income at all and a further 20% reported that they are providing financial support to friends and family.

30% of survey respondents indicated that they are feeling uncertain about exams and qualifications, with a further 40% reporting concerns that the quality of education is being affected.¹²

2.3 Education

At a UK level it is believed that approximately 15.4 million learners have been affected by school and institution closures as a result of the pandemic.¹³ It is thought that almost 500,000 children in Wales have suddenly found themselves unable to attend school and have subsequently been cut-off from the social and educational benefits that attendance brings. Most worryingly, is the probable exacerbation of existing inequalities that some 28% of learners in Wales face. These existing inequalities relate to;

- Falling educational attainment and possible larger effects on their labour market outcomes,
- Access to adequate learning resources and support,
- Access to adequate nutrition and warmth.¹⁴

These factors are undoubtedly magnified in the current situation, whereby home schooling and a greater reliance on home life have become prevalent.

¹⁰ Lower Super Output Areas

¹¹ <https://gov.wales/welsh-index-multiple-deprivation-full-index-update-ranks-2019>

¹² <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/dataset/s/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsongreatbritaindata>

¹³ <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse>

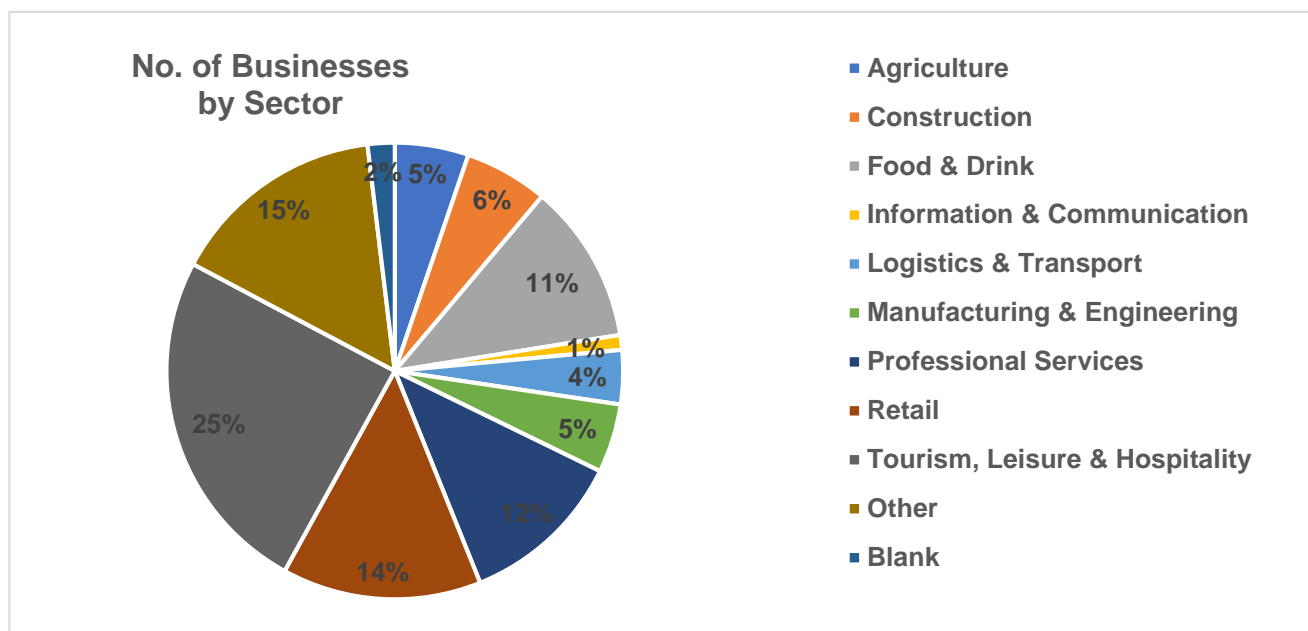
¹⁴ <https://cpag.org.uk/news-blogs/news-listings/impact-school-closures-children-living-poverty-wales>

Section 3 – Business Intelligence

The data discussed in this section has been derived from the analysis of the COVID-19 Business Impact Survey.

3.1 Respondent Demography

A total of 574 businesses from across the county responded to the survey, a breakdown by sector and business size of these respondents is provided below;



3.1.1 Breakdown by Sector

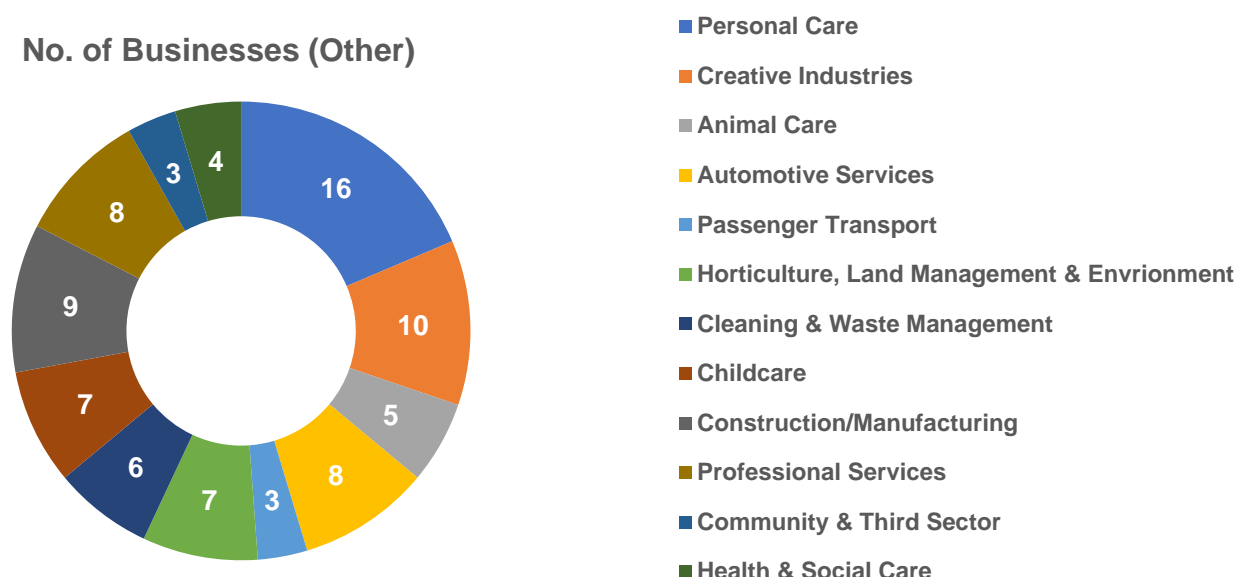
The majority of businesses (142) identified as operating within the 'Tourism, Leisure and Hospitality' sector which is positive as it is arguably one of the sector's that has suffered some of the most devastating effects of the crisis. A further 11 businesses failed to answer the question and have therefore been recorded as 'blank'.

The 'Retail' sector saw 81 responses, followed by 'Professional Services' (67), 'Food and Drink' (65), 'Construction' (34) and 'Agriculture' (30). The smallest representations are seen from the 'Manufacturing and Engineering' sector (28), 'Logistics and Transport' (22) and 'Information and Communication' sectors (6).

88 businesses felt that they did not identify with the pre-determined sectors within the survey and have therefore categorised themselves as 'other'. These responses have been analysed and subsequently allocated sectors (where possible), a breakdown of which is provided below¹⁵;

¹⁵ **Personal Care:** Barbers, hairdressers, beauty salons; **Creative Industries:** Artists, photographers, crafts, musicians, media & music, video production; **Animal Care:** Boarding kennels/catteries, Dog grooming/breeding; **Automotive Services:** Repair garages, valeting garages; **Passenger Transport:** Taxi services; **Horticulture, Land Management & Environment:** Recycling, Renewable Energy, Garden

No. of Businesses (Other)



3.1.2 Breakdown by Sector and Size

The chart below indicates that the majority of respondents identify as sole traders (216) or employ between 1 and 4 people (199). These account for 74% of the total returns. The largest proportion of sole traders operate within the 'Tourism, Leisure and Hospitality' and 'Retail' sectors, with the exception of the 'other' category.¹⁶

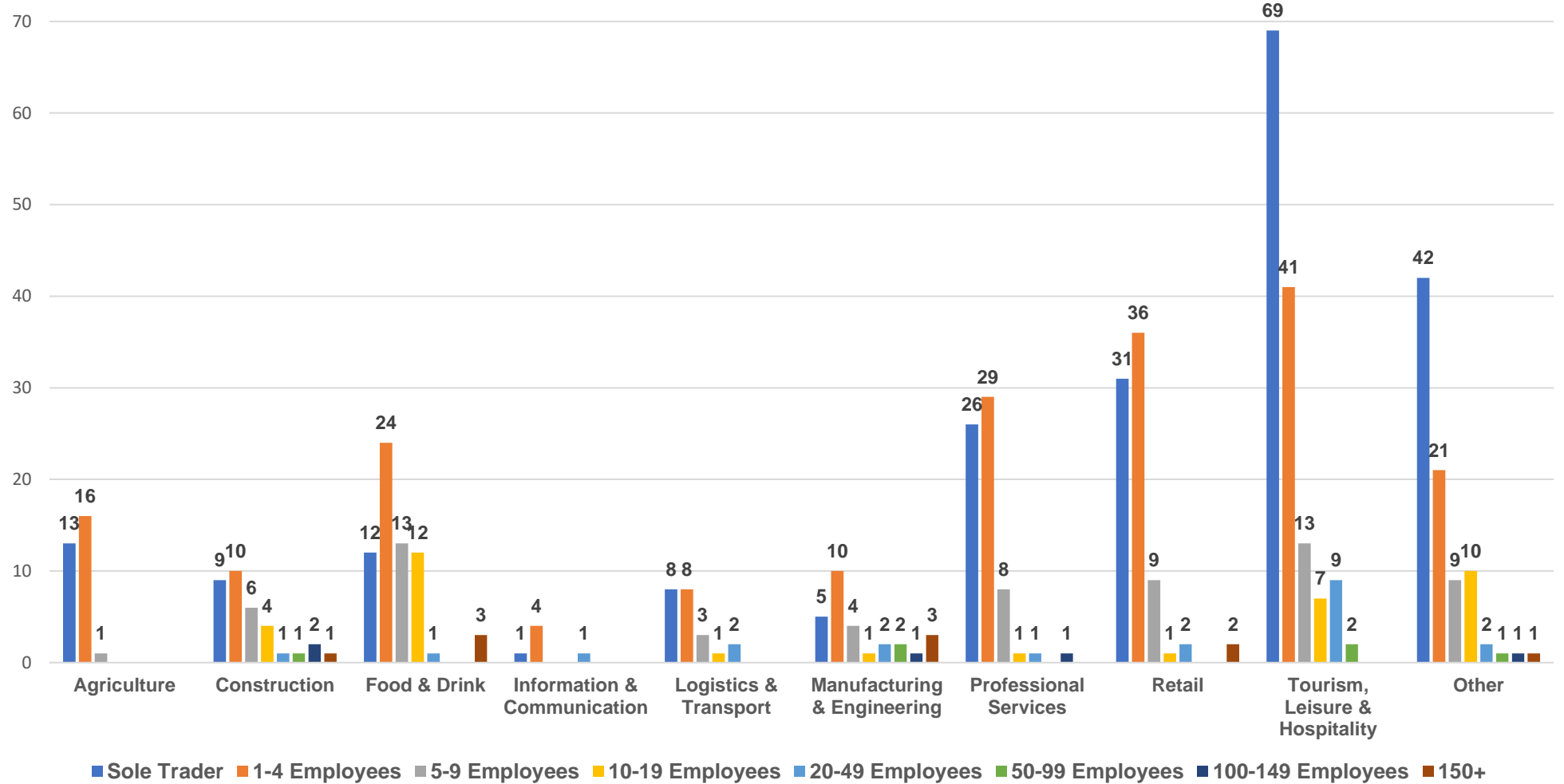
66 respondents employ between 5 and 9 people with the largest proportion of these seen in the 'Food and Drink' sector. The smallest return was seen from businesses employing over 100 people accounting for only 2.6% of the total responses. The sectors where the largest businesses were most prevalent are 'Construction', 'Manufacturing and Engineering' and 'Professional Services'.

What is pertinent to note is that the response demography largely aligns with Carmarthenshire's business demography as a whole. We would expect to see this response pattern as it is directly representative of the business landscape in the county, whereby the county is characterised by micro and small sized enterprises.

landscaping/maintenance, plant grower/retailer; **Cleaning & Waste Management:** Domestic/commercial cleaners, waste management services; **Childcare:** Childminders, nurseries; **Construction/Manufacturing:** Flooring supply, LPG supply, plumber, painter, pet food manufacturer; **Professional Services:** Marketing & sales, online retailer, storage, service industry; **Community & Third Sector:** Community halls/centres, conservation charity; **Health & Social Care:** Care, Care training.

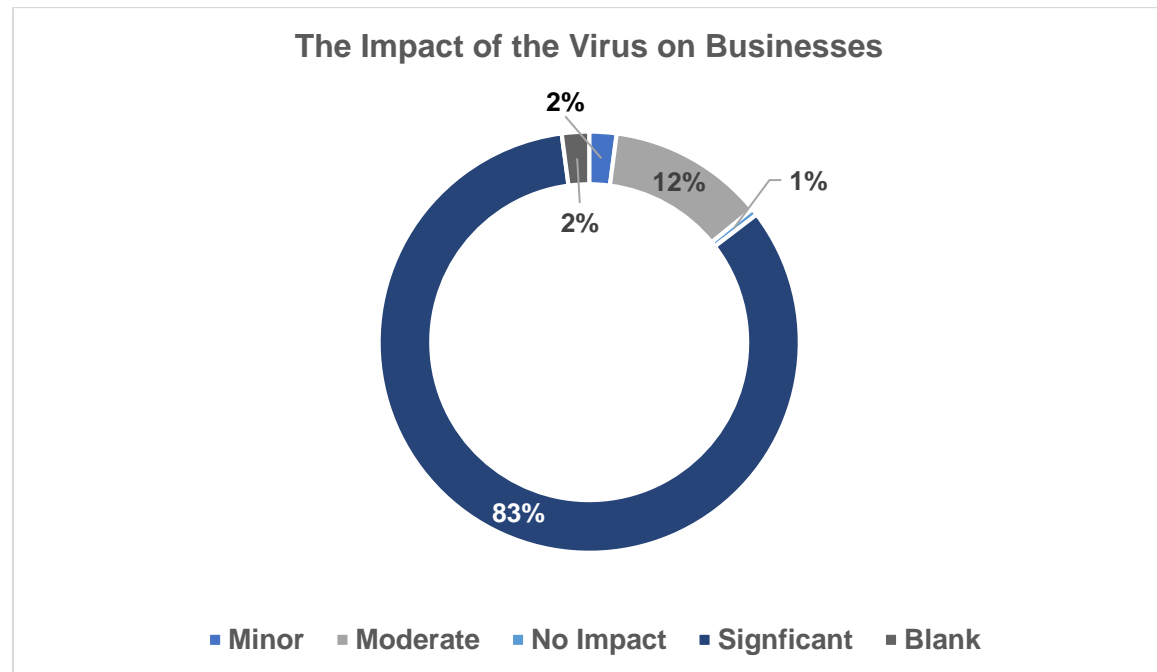
¹⁶ This of course could be directly attributable to the fact that the largest number of returns in totality were from the 'Tourism, Leisure and Hospitality' sector.

No. of Businesses by Sector and Employee Numbers



3.2 The Impact of the Crisis

Businesses were asked how they would gauge the impact of the Coronavirus on their business. The results are conclusive and substantiate anecdotal evidence that many of us are already aware of. The chart below provides further insight;



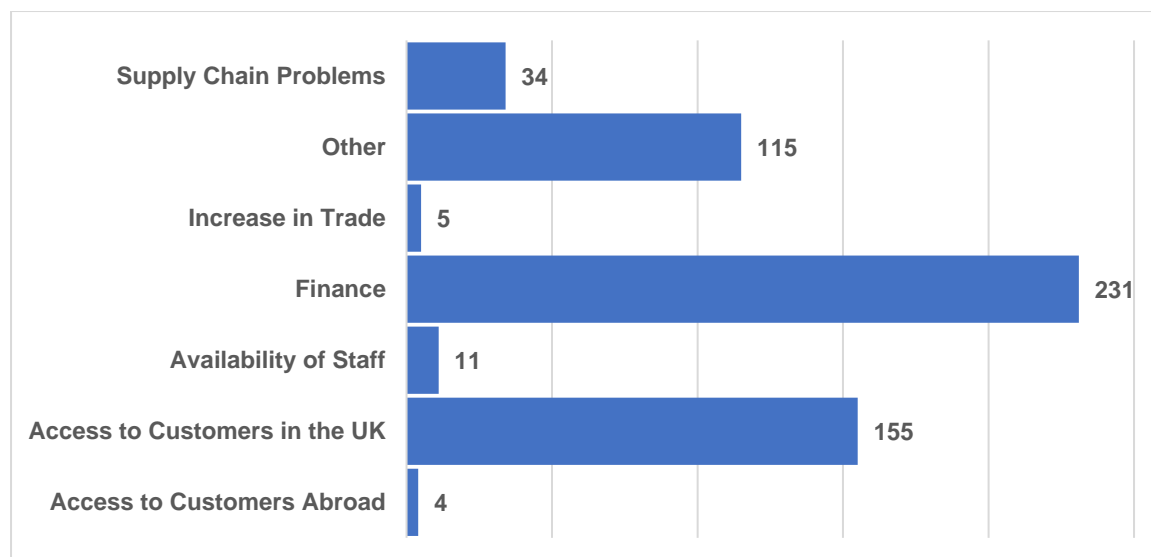
It is evident from the data that very few businesses have experienced 'no impact' as a result of the crisis with only 1% of respondents reporting this through the survey. It is clear that the vast majority of businesses have experienced some impact with 83% describing it as being 'significant'.

Further inference of the data indicates that those reporting 'no impact' are within the 'Retail' and 'Manufacturing and Engineering' sectors, employing between 1 and 4 employees and 5-9 employees respectively. This likely relates to the specific nature of their businesses whereby they may have diversified to meet the changing needs of society, or they operate in sub-sectors where they have been able to continue operations whilst abiding by social distancing and lockdown measures.

The data largely indicates that businesses of all types have suffered similar levels of impact irrespective of the sector they operate within or their size. Although, it is evident that most of the businesses reporting minor impacts are either sole traders or employ between 1 and 4 people.

3.2.1 Categorising the Impact

Those who reported having experienced an impact were asked to categorise this impact, the broad results of which are indicated in the chart below:



Perhaps most crucial to note from the data above is the fact that only 0.8% of businesses have seen an increase in trade as a result of the crisis. Whilst this is positive for these businesses it is apparent that the picture is far bleaker for the remaining majority. A significant 40% are reporting that finance is an issue, corroborating national intelligence which indicates that cash-flow is one of the fundamental issues facing businesses at the moment.

Many of these issues are inter-dependent and the success of one can be determined by the other. For instance, difficulty accessing customers whether locally or abroad and supply chain issues negatively affect the ability to generate income. This puts into perspective the unprecedented nature of the crisis and the complicated and uncertain recovery route for the economy and the businesses which are its very foundation.

A large proportion of respondents reported 'other', following further inference these responses have been categorised as follows;

Impact	No. of Businesses
Reduced access to customers or falling demand for services/product	47
Forced closure/unable to open	54
Devaluing price of milk	4
Business owner having to shield	2
Health and Safety	2
Supply chain issues	6

3.2.2 Impact by Sector

Agriculture (Including Support Services)

A number of agricultural businesses within the county appear to be facing challenges related to bringing their product to market. This is especially true for milk producers with respondents stating that the price at which they sell continues to fall with the devaluation of produce continuing at pace. This is resulting in significant levels of wastage with some having to sell at a lower price than it costs to produce. This is also true for beef and lamb produce. One such respondent stated;

'Reduction to the value of our milk, it is due to reduce further, and we are now selling below the cost of production. As all farms, we have a contract and have no control over the price our milk is bought at and have no negotiating powers. Increase in feed costs due to issues with feed companies having issues purchasing raw materials. The value of our beef cattle has also reduced.'

These issues are exacerbated by supply chain problems and reduced access to customers which culminate into significant issues with finance and income.

Construction

Finance and a lack of access to customers in the UK were reported most consistently by the Construction sector when asked about impacts. These are directly related to a reduction in trade and income which were reported by many others. One respondent indicated that staff are afraid and concerned about working with a lack of appropriate PPE worsening these fears.

Food and Drink

In alignment with the Construction sector, finance and a lack of access to customers in the UK are proving challenging for the Food and Drink sector. One respondent however, noted an increase in trade. A vast majority of these businesses have had to completely shut down their operations as per Government instructions which means many are without an income.

Information and Communication

Access to customers was reported as the main issue for businesses operating within this sector. It is interesting to note that given the perceived highly digital nature of this sector that many businesses are still facing challenges. This once again substantiates how far reaching the impact of the pandemic have been.

Logistics and Transport

Although there has been a growth in demand for services offered by the Logistics and Transport sector at a national level, the data indicates that some Carmarthenshire businesses in this sector are feeling negative impacts. A number of these operations seem

to be directly impacted by school closures, with the majority indicating that these are directly related to finance.

Manufacturing and Engineering

Supply chain issues are a key consideration for many businesses operating within this sector. This has resulted in complete shutdowns for some which has obviously negatively affected income generation. Access to customers both in the UK and abroad has also been reported, with this also reducing the businesses ability to operate at the level they are accustomed to. To corroborate, two respondents indicated;

'Customers in the EU and the UK cancelling orders leading to a plant closure of 8 weeks'

'The shutdown has caused both supply chain problems and shut down customer sites which in turn has cut off my source of income'

Professional Services

Similarly to other sectors businesses within the professional services sector report that finance and access to customers in the UK are their main issues. It appears that many respondents operate within the service sub-sector which has been negatively affected by the reducing income levels of customers. In conjunction with this, some have reported that they are awaiting payments for works already completed. Several have been directly affected by the shutdown with face to face elements of their operations becoming impossible.

'Significant drop in new clients and existing clients not paying their invoices'

'An increasing number of customers are suffering reduced income levels.'

Retail

A significant proportion of respondents have had to cease trading and close their operations completely due to lockdown and social distancing restrictions. It is apparent also, that these businesses are directly feeling the effects of a customer base whose disposable income have seen reductions. A small portion of businesses indicated that supply chain issues were problematic.

Tourism, Leisure and Hospitality

Of the 142 businesses that responded to the survey, nearly half reported that finance is a key concern for them. Contributing factors to this lack of finance is evident through further inference of the data which indicates many have lost access to customers in the UK and abroad. The nature of the sector means that it is reliant on the free movement of people and a face to face approach, these of course are not possible at the moment which poses significant challenges for the sector.

'All bookings have been cancelled and no new bookings, no income as a result'

3.3 Actions Taken as a Result of the Crisis

In response to the crisis businesses have had to make unprecedented changes to the way that they operate. A broad indication of what these measures have been for some is provided in the table below;

Measure	Number of Businesses	% (will not total 100 as respondents were able to select multiple responses)
Implemented furlough	206	36%
Reduced hours of operation	171	30%
Other	164	29%
Adapted business operating arrangements	150	26%
Changed access arrangements for customers and/or suppliers	90	16%
Laid off staff	66	12%
Diversified product or approach	52	9%
Put staff on short time working	39	7%
Stockpiled good/ services	36	6%
Implemented or increased flexible working for staff	27	5%
Increased the number of staff	2	0.3%

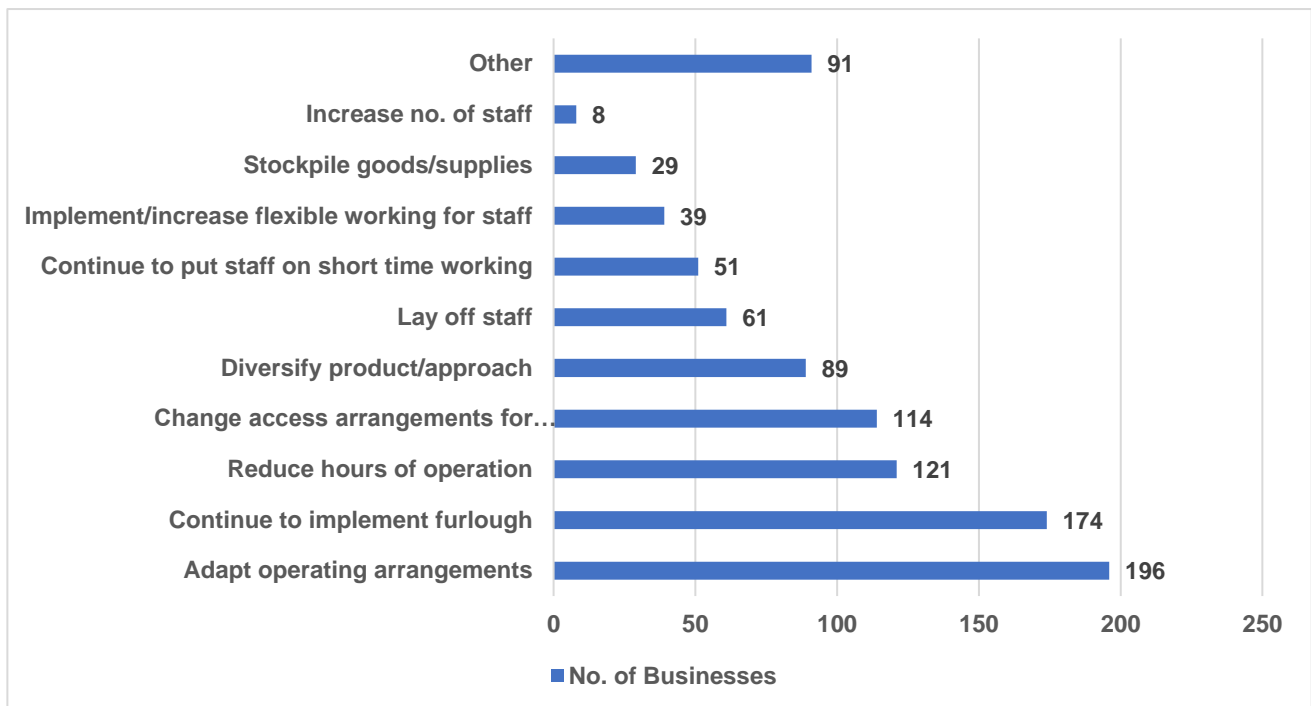
It is positive to see that a large proportion of businesses have furloughed their staff, taking advantage of the Government's Job Retention Scheme. However, in contrast, 66 stated that they have 'laid off staff' which is unfortunate given the availability of such a scheme. A broad analysis indicates that based on the number of people these businesses employ, in the worst-case scenario 994 people have lost their jobs directly as a result of the crisis. This is only representative of the businesses that have responded to the survey, therefore the true figure is unfortunately likely to be higher.

It seems many businesses have attempted to react to the crisis by diversifying or adapting their working practices, hopefully meaning that they have reduced the risk of having to lay off staff or cease trading.

Positively, two businesses have had to employ more people to meet growing demand.

3.3.1 Continuing Actions Taken

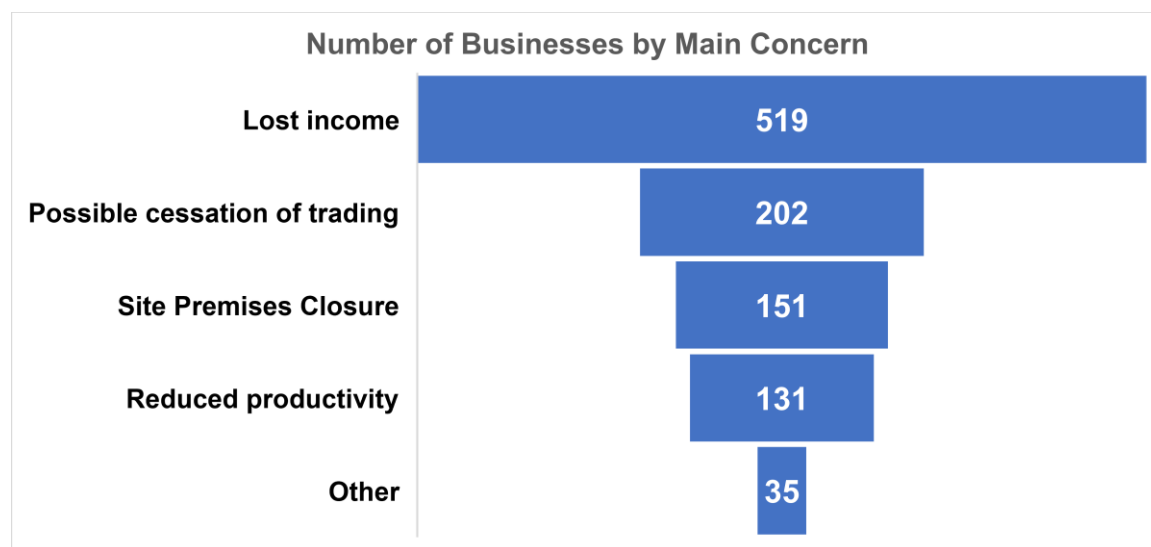
Arguably the pandemic has provided an opportunity to diversify business operations or make changes to working practices. Whilst this has been challenging for the vast majority, some of these forced actions may be positive for businesses moving forward. In an attempt to quantify this, businesses were asked whether they anticipate continuing any actions after restrictions are lifted. The evidence gathered in relation to this is provided below;



A large proportion (196) of businesses foresee that they will continue with the adapted operating arrangements introduced, which hopefully means that they will be able to generate some sort of income. The continuation of the implementation of furlough by 174 businesses is positive also, allowing employees to benefit from at least 80% of their usual income up to £2,500, until a time whereby they will hopefully return to receiving full pay. A likely reduction in the demand for some services or products will result in the introduction of reduced hours of operation for 114 businesses with a further 89 looking to continue with the diversification of their product or approach to meet the needs of a changing labour market.

3.4 Primary Concerns

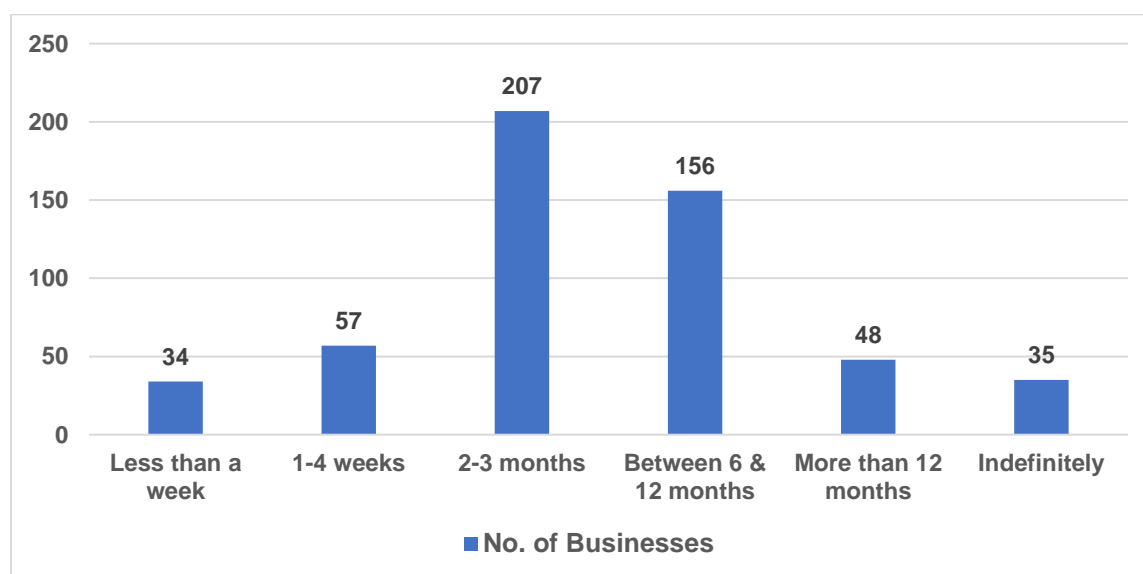
The chart below details the main concerns for businesses at the moment.



This data substantiates themes and trends already highlighted whereby income is reported as the main concern (directly related to challenges with finance). Sadly, 202 businesses indicate that they feel that the cessation of trading is a possibility for them with reduced productivity seemingly less of a concern for many.

3.4.1 The Future

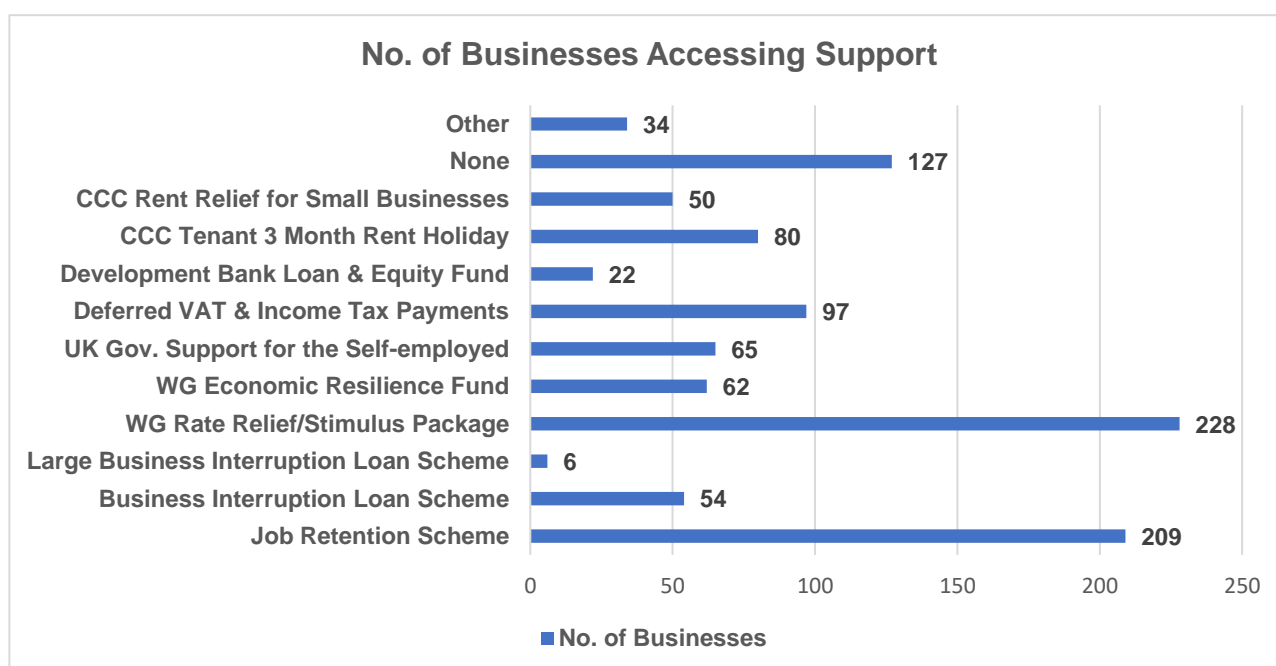
Businesses were asked to state how long they believe they can continue to operate if current restrictions continue. Sadly, 34 businesses reported that they foresee being able to operate for less than a week in the current situation, with a further 57 indicating that they foresee being able to continue operating for between 1 and 4 weeks.



It appears that 35 businesses feel that they will be able to operate indefinitely in the current climate. This is positive and is likely due to the nature of the service/product provided by those businesses, it of course could also mean that they have reacted quickly to the changing circumstances and have been able to diversify their operation to meet the growing demand for certain essential products and services.

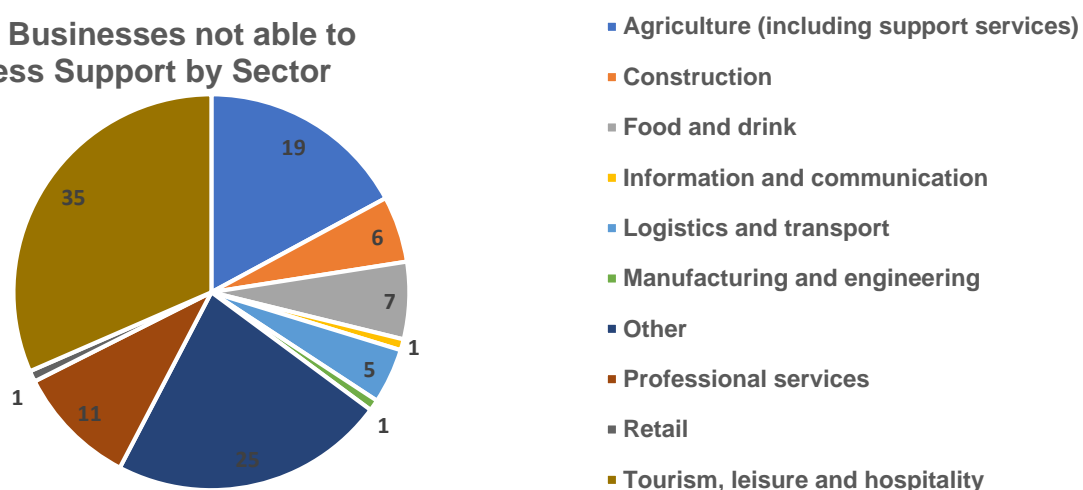
3.5 Support Accessed

The majority of respondents have been able to access some sort of support as a result of the pandemic. A large proportion have taken advantage of the Welsh Government Rate Relief/Stimulus Package and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. A breakdown is provided below;



Unfortunately, 127 businesses have not taken advantage of any support schemes. Contributing factors to this could be the sector that they operate in or their business size i.e. how many people they employ. Further inference of the data indicates that 88% of the 126 that haven't accessed support consider themselves self-employed or freelance. A breakdown of the sectors these individuals operate within is provided below;

No. of Businesses not able to Access Support by Sector



3.5.1 Barriers to Accessing Support

The current pandemic has seen the introduction and roll out of a number of complicated support mechanisms with reduced resources and very little notice. It would be expected therefore that some will have experienced barriers in terms of processes and communication, which was reported by some as challenges in accessing support. Specifically, time lags were mentioned by several and some deemed the process of applying for grants a complicated and arduous one.

Unfortunately, many indicated that they have experienced barriers in accessing any financial support. This primarily relates to businesses that have seemingly not been eligible for any of the support packages due to various reasons, the majority of these being self-employed or freelance.

A small minority indicated that they have not received any information regarding what support is available to them or they find the information difficult to access.

A large proportion are early on in the process of applying for support and therefore felt that they could not answer the question fully.

Positively, 20% of those that answered the question indicated that they had experienced no barriers to accessing support.

3.6 Skills

Businesses were asked what skills implications they foresee in the future as a result of the pandemic. The majority reported that they feel that their business type would not allow for any diversification or change to working practices and as a result believe that there would be no skills implications for them.

Of those that do, the majority (84) stated that they will need support with IT and digital skills in a bid to further their online presence or move towards selling online. Many made specific reference to website development and social media use. In addition, a further 8 businesses

indicated that support to develop marketing skills would be beneficial. 16 businesses indicated that they will be looking to diversify and therefore would benefit from support relating to amending working practices or new product development. A further 8 made specific reference to the need for enhanced marketing skills.

Given the current climate it is not surprising that an overwhelming majority of 216 businesses indicated that they would like to receive any training required via online platforms. A further 35 indicated that in-work training would be their desired approach and a further 32 indicated that they would benefit from training at a local college.

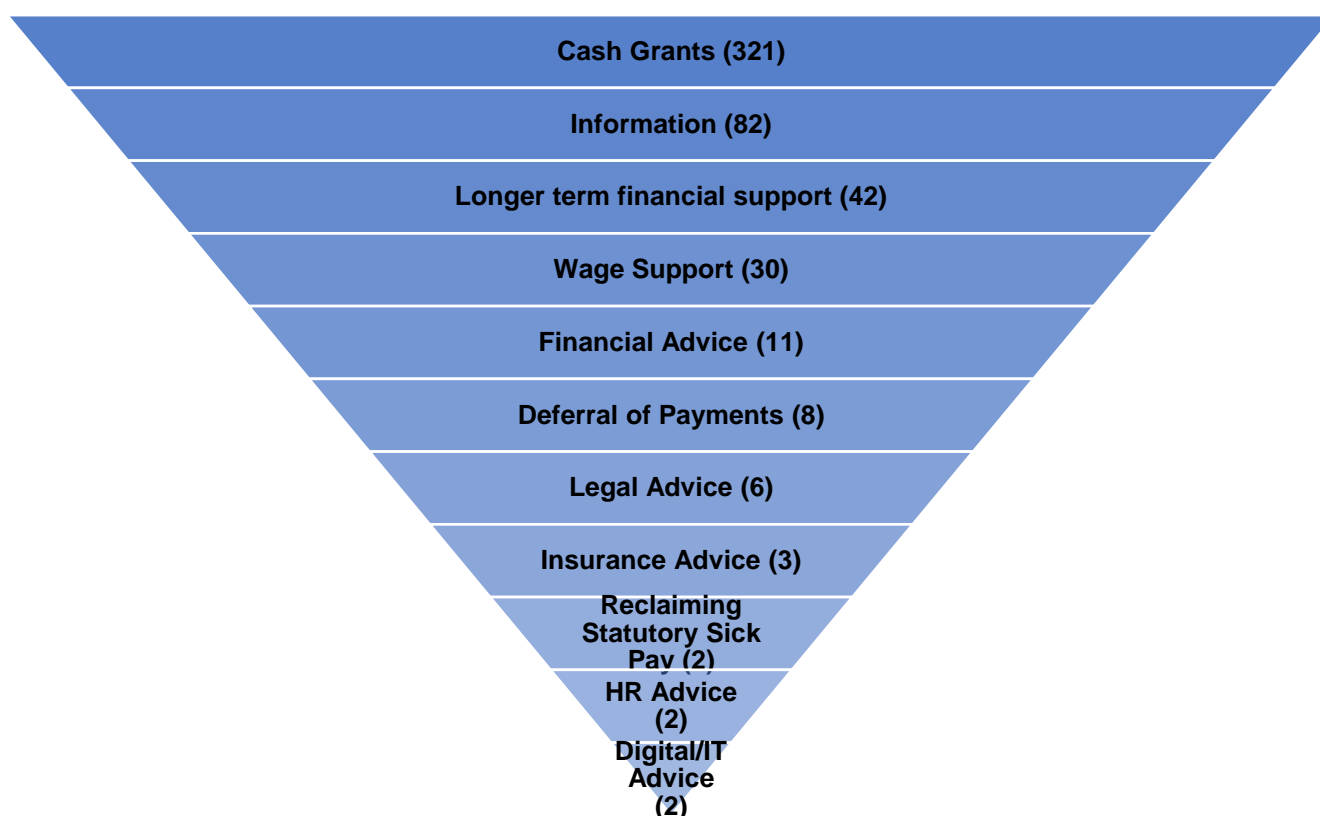
There is some scope here for local governments to utilise the expertise within their own organisations i.e. business support teams, marketing and media and IT departments to develop online training resources to support businesses with these issues. Of course, there is also a wealth of accredited provision available through local colleges and private training providers, but these courses would be at a cost to the business. A cost which many are unlikely to be able to afford at the moment.

An additional option to explore following the relaxation of restrictions would be to develop shared apprenticeship schemes within the sectors of Tourism, Leisure and Hospitality, Health and Social Care and Manufacturing and Engineering. This would be building on the already very successful shared apprenticeship model delivered in the county within the Construction sector¹⁷. For those businesses that cannot diversify or change their business models this could be an attractive option whereby they share the risk of employing an individual and also provide the training to develop the skills that they need. It would also serve to meet the needs of those requesting 'in-work training'.

¹⁷ Cyfle Building Skills - <http://cyflebuilding.co.uk/>

3.7 Support Required

A broad analysis of the data indicates that 321 of survey respondents ranked 'cash grants' as the support mechanism that would be most beneficial to them. This was followed by 'information' and 'longer term financial support'. 'HR' and 'Digital/IT Advice' were ranked as the most beneficial by the fewest number of respondents.¹⁸



3.7.1 Support over the next 3-6 Months

Respondents were asked what support could be provided by the Council in the short term (over the next 3-6 months) to assist them. The vast majority (287), reported that financial assistance in the form of a grant would be most beneficial, especially for those that have not been eligible for any of the financial support initiatives currently available. In accordance with this, a further 75 respondents indicated that an extension to or introduction of payment holidays would support them greatly. Many made specific reference to an extension of the 3-month rent holiday currently in place.

It is apparent that the uncertainty around how much longer restrictions will remain in place is causing financial concern for several businesses. Many indicate that the financial provision would support them to such a time when restrictions are lifted, and they can operate as

¹⁸ Figures will not total the sample size as a number of respondents skipped the question

normal. This is substantiated by the further 23 respondents who made pleas for restrictions to be lifted enough for them to be able to either open their business or start operating in accordance with social distancing guidelines.

Furthermore, 40 respondents referred to the continuation of the advice and information already being relayed. A further 18 indicated that some level of promotion or advertising for their business or sector would be valuable. This includes, promoting the tourism sector, promoting local produce and promoting the services of individual businesses.

3.7.2 Support over the next 6-12 Months

The same pattern of desired support is evident in the longer term. Many (90) reiterated the desire and need for cash grants or interest free loans, with a further 49 requesting the deferral of rent, rates or tax payments. 30 respondents indicated that the sharing and dissemination of key information relevant to businesses would be welcomed. A further 28 reiterated that free promotion and marketing would support them to recover.

Section 4 – Main Findings and Conclusions

- 1. The negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have been significant and wide reaching for Carmarthenshire's businesses.**

A wide-ranging spectrum of business types and corresponding industries have been negatively impacted by the pandemic. These effects mainly relate to a significant reduction in income, reduced access to customers, problems with supply chains and the possible cessation of trading.

- 2. Many of the businesses worst affected are within those sectors deemed of significant importance to Carmarthenshire in terms of employment and/or GVA.**

The visitor economy and food and beverage sectors alone are worth almost £169 million to Carmarthenshire's economy and are therefore sectors of great pertinence to the county. We have also heard first-hand through the survey the challenges being experienced by the Agricultural sector. With a location quotient of 5.64 (showing substantial strength) and a GVA of almost £63 million, adequate support should be offered to support this vitally important sector.

- 3. Many businesses (mainly those that are self-employed or freelance), have been unable to access any financial support.**

Analysis has shown that many businesses have faced barriers in accessing support, having been deemed ineligible for the current offer. It could be argued that should any further financial support mechanisms be developed then these businesses should be the first to benefit, especially if any of these businesses align to those sectors deemed high value.

- 4. The majority of businesses will not be able to operate longer than three months if the current situation continues.**

Support developed to date has been done quickly and with depleted resources in many instances. Given the precarious position many businesses find themselves in, should any further support mechanisms be developed then they too will need to be actioned quickly, with the aim of stemming the 'snow-ball' affect that are the impacts of this pandemic.

- 5. The most sought-after type of support both in the short and longer term is financial in the form of grants, loans or payment deferrals/holidays.**

These findings present a challenge in itself owing to the fact that it is currently difficult to ascertain how much longer restrictions will be in place. In light of this, it could be argued that whilst a financial injection of support would be beneficial for many in the immediate term, if restrictions continue or are reintroduced in the short-term following a reprieve, then many businesses would unfortunately find themselves in a worrying predicament once again. The sustainability of this financial support would then become uncertain. In conjunction with this, local and national governments could develop a more sustainable and less cost intensive package of support with the aim

of supporting businesses to diversify their operations i.e. moving to online selling, re-training staff, product development or aiding with marketing.

6. Some businesses would find promotion and advertising support from the Council beneficial.

Businesses primarily operating within the Tourism, Leisure and Hospitality sectors indicated that they would find free advertising and promotion beneficial to their recovery. This is an example of a relatively low-cost and non-resource intensive offer of support placing the Council further at the forefront of assisting businesses to recover. This offer of support could be extended to all businesses irrespective of the sector that they operate in. This also aligns with the 'buy local' marketing message that could be promoted to the county's residents in the hope of providing a much-needed boost to the local companies who are the very foundation of our economy.

7. There are small areas of deprivation in the county where the effects of the pandemic could be felt more acutely.

Community support initiatives should be focussed first and foremost in the areas highlighted as experiencing increased levels of deprivation. With many people feeling more isolated than ever before it is imperative that the Council continues its support and outreach work, to ensure that those most vulnerable in our communities receive the support that they need.

8. Some businesses foresee that they will experience skills challenges as a result of the pandemic, with the majority stating that these skills deficits will relate to digital and IT skills.

With the vast majority of respondents indicating that they would benefit from online training in the fields of IT/digital skills, marketing and diversification there is scope to offer subsidised training through provision that is already in existence as an alternative to cash grants. There is also scope to utilise the wealth of expertise readily available within the organisation to offer non-accredited online training resources.

9. The skills landscape will undoubtedly suffer as a result of the pandemic. The majority of job losses are likely to be at a lower skills level as these jobs tend to be part-time, low paid and more unstable. They are also often aligned with the identified 'shutdown' sectors'.

Local Government and organisations such as the Regional Learning and Skills Partnership have a crucial role to play in assisting employers and businesses to identify the skills that they need and ensuring that suitable provision exists to meet these demands.

This page is intentionally left blank

COMMUNITY AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 13TH NOVEMBER 2020

Community Scrutiny Committee – Annual Report 2019/20

To consider and comment on the following issues:

- That members consider and approve the Community Scrutiny Committee's annual report for the 2019/20 municipal year.

Reasons:

- The Council's Constitution requires scrutiny committees to report annually on their work.

To be referred to the Executive Board / Council for decision: **NO**

Chair of Community Scrutiny: Councillor F. Akhtar

Directorate

Chief Executives

Name of Head of Service:

Linda Rees-Jones

Report Author:

Kevin Thomas

Designations:

Head of Administration & Law

Democratic Services Officer

Tel Nos / E Mail Addresses:

01267 224010

lrjones@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

01267 224027

kjthomas@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COMMUNITY AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 13TH NOVEMBER 2020

Community Scrutiny Committee – Annual Report 2019/20

The attached 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 workings of the Community Scrutiny Committee during the 2019/20 municipal year and includes information on the following topics:

- Overview of the forward work programme
- Key issues considered
- Issues referred to or from Executive Board / Other Scrutiny Committees
- Task & Finish Review
- Development Sessions
- Member attendance at meetings

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED ?

YES

IMPLICATIONS

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

Signed: Linda Rees-Jones

Head of Administration & Law

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

1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities – In line with requirements of the County Council’s Constitution.

2. Legal – In line with requirements of the County Council’s Constitution.

CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below

Signed: Linda Rees-Jones

Head of Administration & Law

1. Local Member(s) - N/A

2. Community / Town Council – N/A

3. Relevant Partners - N/A

4. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations

**EXECUTIVE BOARD PORTFOLIO
HOLDER(S) AWARE/CONSULTED**

N/A

**Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information
List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

THESE ARE DETAILED BELOW OR THERE ARE NONE (Delete as applicable)

Title of Document	File Ref No.	Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
Community Scrutiny Committee Reports and Minutes		https://democracy.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/mgListCommittees.aspx?bcr=1

Community Scrutiny Committee

Annual Report

2019 - 2020

Scrutiny
in Carmarthenshire



carmarthenshire.gov.uk

Cyngor **Sir Gâr**
Carmarthenshire
County Council



Contents

Chairs Foreword

1. Introduction	3
2. Overview of the work of the Committee in 2019/20	3
2.1 Number of Meetings	3
2.2 The Forward Work Programme	3
2.3 Performance Monitoring / Strategic Issues	4
2.4 Revenue & Capital Budgets	5
2.5 Building More Council Homes – Our Ambition and Plan of Action	6
2.6 Draft Carmarthenshire County Council’s Annual Report for 2018/19	6
2.7 Annual Monitoring Report 2018/19 Adopted Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan.....	6
2.8 Complaints and Compliments Annual Report 2018/19	7
2.9 Annual Performance Report 2018/19 (Planning)	7
2.10 Revised Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan 2018-2033 – Draft Deposit.....	8
2.11 Universal Credit Full Service Update for Carmarthenshire	8
2.12 Council Tenant Survey (STAR) Results 2019	9
2.13 Welsh Public Library Standards 2017-2020	9
2.14 Housing Revenue Account and Housing Rent Setting 2020/21	9
2.15 The Carmarthenshire Homes Standard Plus (CHS+) ‘Delivering what matters	10
2.16 Task and Finish	10
2.17 Site Visits.....	10
2.18 Development Sessions	11
2.19 Referrals	12
3. Challenges	12
4. Future Work	12
5. Support for the Scrutiny Function	12
6. Attendance	13

Chair's Foreword

As the Chair of this Committee, I am pleased to present this Annual Report for the Community Scrutiny Committee for the 2019/20 municipal year. This report provides a comprehensive summary of the work undertaken by the Committee during this period and provides an opportunity to reflect on this work.

The past year has continued to be a challenging period for the Council and I feel that this Committee has continued to constructively play its part in terms of scrutinising performance and contributing to key council policies and decisions.

The Committee discussed and scrutinised a wide variety of topics during the past year. These included the standard and regular monitoring reports as well as new policies and strategies being introduced by the County Council. However, its work programme was affected from the end of March 2020 by the Coronavirus pandemic which saw the cancellation of all Council meetings and the diversion of resources to other council services.

The forthcoming year will no doubt be challenging, and I am confident we will continue to focus on how to improve services effectively and efficiently.

I am looking forward to the challenge of chairing this Committee for 2020/21 and, with the assistance of my Vice Chair and the rest of the Committee, hope we will have a positive impact on the outcomes for the residents of Carmarthenshire.

I would also like to thank all members of the Committee for their contributions and dedication during 2019/20.



Councillor Fozia Akhtar
Chair of Community Scrutiny Committee

1. Introduction

Article 6.2 of the Council's Constitution requires all scrutiny committees to "*prepare an annual report giving an account of the Committees activities over the previous year.*"

The main aims of the report are to highlight the work that has been undertaken by the Community Scrutiny Committee during 2019/20. It outlines the potential future work of the Committee. The document may also facilitate discussions on other items that could be included within future work programmes.

The Committee is chaired by Cllr. Fozia Akhtar and is made up of 13 Elected Members. Support is provided to the Panel by the Democratic Services Team and other Council officers as and when required.

This report provides an overview of the work of the Community Scrutiny Committee during the 2019/20 municipal year. It gives Members the opportunity to reflect on the achievements during the year and to identify what worked well and where improvements could be made. This analysis is instrumental in developing scrutiny

2. Overview of the work of the Committee in 2019/20

2.1 Number of Meetings

The Scrutiny Committee held 6 meetings during the 2019/20 municipal year.

2.2 The Forward Work Programme

The Scrutiny Committee develops its own Forward Work Programme (FWP) and in the main, meeting agendas were consistent with those outlined in the FWP, which was confirmed by the Committee at its meeting on 9th May 2019.

The Forward Work Programme 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 its own work agendas. The benefits of such an approach has led to an improved level of debate and input during scrutiny committee meetings.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 put long term sustainability at the forefront of how public services are designed and delivered and it places emphasis on public bodies to work in partnership with each other and the public to prevent and tackle problems.

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

To compliment the work undertaken during formal meetings, the Committee also undertakes other scrutiny functions such as task and finish, visits to establishments falling within its remit together with member development sessions

2.3 Performance Monitoring / Strategic Issues

Performance Monitoring 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 performance monitoring reports and various action plan monitoring reports. The performance monitoring reports provide a balanced picture of performance across the relevant service areas. The Community Scrutiny Committee received the Performance Monitoring Report for the Council's 2018/19 Wellbeing Objectives at the meeting in October 2019. The reports mainly focussed on underperforming indicators.

Carmarthenshire County Council's Draft Annual Report 2018/19 - As part of its performance monitoring role the Committee received relevant information from the Council's key strategies and plans. One of the key areas relating to the Council's management is the production of an annual report presenting a prime opportunity for review, monitoring and reflection and enabling it to capture on-going activity in meeting its general and specific duties. With that in mind, the Committee in June 2019 considered the Council's draft Annual Report for 2018/19 which included an overview of performance progress reports for all 15 Well-being objectives including those areas falling within its remit. The report had been produced in accordance with the requirements of both the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and provided:-

- An overview of the 2018/19 performance
- Two page progress reports for each of the 15 Well-being Objectives
- A link to track progress on every specific action and target set for each Well-being Objective
- Within the report appendices, other performance information on out-turn data

Outcome:

The Council approved the 2018/19 Annual report at its meeting in October 2019

Departmental Draft Business Plans 2020 - 2023 – In January the Committee considered the Departmental Draft Business Plans 2020 - 2023 for those area of the Communities, Chief Executive and Environment Departments falling within its remit which detailed each of the department's aims, objectives and priorities during that period. This provided the Committee with an opportunity to consider and comment upon the priorities outlined for the departments for the three year period.

Actions & Referrals - During the course of the municipal year several requests for additional items are made by members of the Committee to assist them in discharging their scrutiny role. Actions & Referrals updates are presented to Committee which provide an update on progress in relation to these requests.

2.4 Revenue & Capital Budgets

Budget Monitoring Reports - The Committee received quarterly reports on the departmental and corporate revenue and capital budgets at the meetings held in October, November and January. These reports enabled members to monitor the level of spend in each area and the progress made in connection with any capital works.

Revenue Budget Strategy Consultation 2020/21-2022/23 - As well as monitoring the current budget, the Committee was also consulted on the Revenue Budget Strategy 2020/21 to 2022/23. The report provided the Committee with the current proposals for the Revenue Budget Strategy for 2020/21 together with the indicative figures for the 2020/21 and 2022/2023 financial years.

Outcome:

As part of the widespread consultation undertaken on the Revenue Budget Strategy 2020/21 to 2022/23, the Community Scrutiny Committee considered the budget proposals and requested the Executive Board to fund the estimated £150k cost to primary schools of providing school swimming lessons. However, that was not progressed as part of the budget proposals adopted by the Council at its meeting in March 2020

With regard to the Five Year Capital Programme 2020/21 – 2024/25, Council at its meeting in March 2020 noted that within the Communities Department new funding had been provided for the redevelopment of Oriel Myrddin and for Carmarthen Leisure Centre. The Council also noted the incorporation within the Regeneration and Chief Executive's budgets for the provision of a new Leisure Centre in Llanelli as a key component of the Wellness Village Development proposals.

2.5 Building More Council Homes – Our Ambition and Plan of Action

In July 2019, the Committee considered a report on the Council's proposals to adopt a transformational Building Plan to deliver in excess of 900 new council homes over a 10 year period. That report provided detailed information and proposed recommendations in relation to the following:-

- Where and when the homes would be built;
- The resources available and delivery models
- How wider regeneration priorities across the county would be supported
- How new opportunities would be maximised as they arose.

A fundamental element of the report was to provide 300 new homes in the programmes' first three years with an investment of £53m. Subsequent to the report's adoption, building works had commenced on two schemes at Garreglwyd, Pembrey (14 homes) and Dylan, Bynea (34 homes) providing 48 new homes. Further works planned for 2020 included 3 sites at Glanmor Terrace, Burry Port (32 homes), Gwynfryn, Ammanford (28 homes) and Maespiode, Llandybie (8 homes) providing 68 new homes in total.

Outcome:

The Executive Board and Council at their meetings held in July and September 2019 endorsed the report recommendations.

2.6 Draft Carmarthenshire County Council's Annual Report for 2018/19

As referenced in 2.3 above, the Committee in July 2019 considered the Council's Draft Annual Report for 2018/19. In endorsing that report, the Committee referenced the potential benefits that could accrue if the Council were to introduce fishing permits for waters under its control.

The Committee recommended to the Executive Board/ Council that the Annual Report be endorsed. It also requested the potential for promoting fishing opportunities across the County to be explored

Outcome:

The Annual Report was endorsed by the Executive Board and Council at their meetings in September and October 2019 respectively.

The Committee received an update on the introduction of fishing permits at a Development Session held in November, 2019

2.7 Annual Monitoring Report 2018/19 Adopted Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan

In October 2019, the Committee received the above plan, being the fourth to be produced in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act

2004 and the Local Development (LDP) Regulations 2016 requiring local authorities to submit their Annual Monitoring Reports to the Welsh Government by the 31st October in each year

The Committee debated a wide range of issues relevant to the plan's operation. Those included:-

- The designation of Air Quality Management Areas in Llandeilo, Carmarthen and Llanelli,
- The emerging role of Place Plans through the Positive Planning Agenda and Planning (Wales) Act 2015

The Committee endorsed the report for submission to the Executive Board and Council for approval, prior to onward submission to the Welsh Government.

Outcome:

The Executive Board and Council at their meetings held in September and October 2019 approved the annual report for submission to the Welsh Government by the 31st October.

2.8 Complaints and Compliments Annual Report 2018/19

The Committee, in October 2019, received and endorsed the Council's Annual Complaints and Compliments Report for 2018/19 paying specific attention to Sections 10.4 and 10.6 of the report relevant to its remit.

The report detailed a number of key factors that included:-

- The number of complaints investigated and responded to between April 2018 and March 2019, by department
- Complaints determined by the Ombudsman
- Summary of Councillor Enquiries

Outcome:

The Committee received the Annual report.

2.9 Annual Performance Report 2018/19 (Planning)

In October 2019 the Committee considered the Authority's fourth Annual Performance Report on Planning for the period April 2018-March 2019, produced in accordance with the requirements of the Planning Performance Framework Table, for submission to the Welsh Government by the 31st October.

The Committee debated a wide range of issues relevant to the Division's performance. Those included:

- Actual Income levels received from planning fees failing to meet target budgets,

- The increase in the average number of days taken to determine planning applications

Outcome:

The report was received and forwarded to the Welsh Government by the 31st October, 2019 deadline.

2.10 Revised Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan 2018-2033 – Draft Deposit

In October 2019 the Committee was consulted on the Council's Revised Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan 2018-2033 Draft Deposit

The Committee discussed a wide range of issues relative to the Deposit Draft which included:-

- The supporting of development plans that would contribute to the sustainability of rural communities.
- the increase in migration levels, particularly in the 30-44 age group
- the potential number of candidate sites to be included in the plan
- the use of redundant railway corridors
- the determination of plans submitted under the existing LDP as the Revised Plan progressed to adoption
- renewable energy policies
- the inclusion within the Draft Deposit of the Council's proposals to build 900 new homes over a 10 year period

The Committee endorsed the Draft Deposit for public consultation

Outcome:

The Executive Board and Council at their meetings in October and November 2019 approved the Draft Deposit for formal consultation

2.11 Universal Credit Full Service Update for Carmarthenshire

In November 2019 the Committee, in accordance with its decision in February 2019 received a presentation on the roll-out of Universal Credit within Carmarthenshire. The presentation was provided by the Council's Homes and Safer Communities Division together with representatives from the Department for Work and Pensions and Carmarthenshire Citizen's Advice.

The Committee discussed a number of issues arising from the presentations including the:-

- increased use of food banks
- increase in rent arrears
- support available for armed forces veterans
- numbers of rough sleepers

Outcome:

The Committee received the presentation and requested arrangements be made for a members' seminar to be convened on the roll out of Universal Credit within Carmarthenshire. That seminar was scheduled to be held on the 8th April, 2020, but deferred to a future date due to the Coronavirus pandemic

2.12 Council Tenant Survey (STAR) Results 2019

In January 2020, the Committee received the results of the 2019 Council Tenant Survey commissioned by the Authority and undertaken by ARP Research. Some 5,000 tenants were surveyed with over 2,000 responses received. The key satisfaction rates were noted as being:

- 82% with the council's services
- 79% with the quality of homes
- 77% value for money of rent
- 67% value for money of services charge
- 64% listening and acts on views
- 75% repairs and maintenance overall
- 79% completed last repair
- 85% neighbourhood as a place to live
- 66% grounds maintenance service
- 58% deals with ant-social behaviour

Outcome:

The Committee received the report.

2.13 Welsh Public Library Standards 2017-2020

In January 2020 the Committee received the Welsh Government's assessment on the operation of Carmarthenshire's Library Service for 2018/19. It was noted that the Service met all of its 12 core entitlements in full.

Outcome:

The report was received

2.14 Housing Revenue Account and Housing Rent Setting 2020/21

In February 2020, the Committee considered the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget and Housing Rent Setting for 2020/21, presented as part of the budget consultation process. The report reflected the latest proposals contained in the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan, being the primary financial planning tool for delivering the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard Plus (CHS+).

The Committee raised a number of issues on the report that included: rent arrears arising from the introduction of Universal Credit, void losses, and the decarbonisation of council homes, both existing and new, in line with the Council's commitment to be net carbon zero by 2030 and Welsh and National

U.K. Government targets on carbon emission reductions. The Committee endorsed the report and proposed rent increases to the Executive Board and Council for consideration as part of the budget submission to the Council

Outcome:

The budget Housing Rent setting proposals were adopted by the Executive Board and Council at their meetings in February and March, 2020 respectively

2.15 The Carmarthenshire Homes Standard Plus (CHS+) 'Delivering what matters'

In February 2020, the Committee considered the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard Plus (CHS+) Programme Plan for 2020-2023. Members were advised of the plan's three key aims to:

- explain its provision over the next three year and what it meant for tenants
- confirm the financial profile based on current assumptions for delivery over the plan period
- Produce a business plan for the annual application to the Welsh Government for Major Repairs Allowance for 2017/18 equating to £6.1m

Outcome:

The report was accepted by the Executive Board and Council at their meetings in February and March 2020 respectively.

2.16 Task and Finish

"A review on the provision of Affordable Bungalows within Carmarthenshire"

The Committee previously agreed to undertake a task and finish review on the provision of Affordable Bungalows within Carmarthenshire. The Group met five times considering a wide range of issues and information on the provision of Council social housing. Having evaluated all the information presented to it on the diversity of the Council's housing provision and the equally diverse needs of tenants, the Group concluded it was not possible to identify a rationale for meeting demand for a single house type above other demands and agreed the review should not progress to a full report.

The Group initially comprised the following.

- Cllr. Sharen Davies (Chair)
- Cllr. Irfon Jones
- Cllr. Gareth Thomas (Vice Chair)
- Cllr. Deryk Cundy
- Cllr. Jeanette Gilasbey
- Cllr. Betsan Jones

2.17 Site Visits

The Committee, as part of its 2019/20 Forward Work Programme, undertook site visits to the following.

St Clears Leisure Centre - located within the community of St Clears the leisure centre had visitor levels of circa 40,000 p.a. and was one of several centres owned and operated by Carmarthenshire County Council. The Committee viewed the centres facilities and condition and noted that proposals were being examined for future investment to increased participation levels.

Y Gat, St Clears – situated in Station Road, St Clears was constructed in the middle of the 19th Century as a mill and is currently used as a craft and community centre operating over three floors.

Pendine Outdoor Education Centre – located close to Pendine Beach, the Centre provides residential activity packages for young children, traditionally school groups, for up to five days from Monday – Friday undertaking a programme of outdoor pursuits and environmental studies linked within the school curriculum

The Committee viewed the condition of the centre's infrastructure and noted work was being undertaken on evaluating its future usage and potential investment requirements.

Outcome:

The Committee noted reviews were being undertaken on future delivery options for all three premises and those would be reported in 2020/21

2.18 Development Sessions

The Committee held a development session in November 2019 where it received presentations on:-

1. Fishing Licences:-

Covering the development of community fishing specifically in areas of water/waterways under the council's control where fishing could take place and the measures necessary to be introduced to allow for that use

2. Nant y Ci Livestock Market:-

Providing an update on the operation of the Mart

The following member development sessions / member seminars were held during 2019/20:-

- Mod.Gov training (Delivered by Civica) – May
- Swansea Bay City Deal Seminar – June
- County Lines & Counter Terrorism Seminar – June
- Conservation & Biodiversity Seminar – June

- Life Science & Wellbeing Village Seminar – July
- Code of Conduct Training – July
- Canfod Cartref – July
- Carmarthenshire 50+ Annual Forum Event – September
- Education Grants - October
- Schools Budget – November
- Digital Connectivity Seminar – December
- Net Zero Carbon Plan Seminar – January
- Dyfed Pension Fund Governance & Investments - March

In addition to the above, several departmental budget seminars were held during November/December 2019 as part of the Council's consultation process on the 2020/21 Revenue Budget and the five year capital programme.

2.19 Referrals

The Committee made one referral during 2019/20 to the Executive Board, as part of the 2020/21 Revenue Budget consultations, requesting it fund the estimated £150k cost to primary schools of providing swimming lessons as part of the Key Stage 2 Curriculum, with the cost being met from the £293k unallocated contingency within the budget strategy. The request was not progressed as part of the Budget

3. Challenges

Following a review of its membership in the early part of 2019 the new members worked with the rest of the Committee to face a challenging year addressing a wide range of topics, both corporate and service specific to its remit, contributing to, and commenting on their performance and delivery to achieve improved service delivery.

4. Future Work

The Committee has made significant progress and will continue to concentrate on topics where Members' input will result in positive outcomes to drive forward service improvement. To ensure best use is being made of meeting time and with the benefit of the added value of pre-meetings, the Committee is keen to achieve a more streamlined scrutiny process.

The future work of the Committee will be considered as part of the Forward Work Programme planning session. The FWP will continue to be monitored during the course of the year, together with the Executive Board FWP.

5. Support for the Scrutiny Function

Support for Carmarthenshire County Council's Scrutiny function is provided by the Democratic Services Unit, based in the Administration & Law Division of the Chief Executive's Department.

Support for the Scrutiny function includes:

- Formulating, in accordance with the FWP, and despatching agendas for Scrutiny Committee meetings a minimum of 4 working days prior to the meeting;
- Providing support and constitutional advice to the 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 meetings of the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs with the Executive Board;
- Advising and supporting the implementation of the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 as and when guidance is published;
- Managing the co-ordination and development of the Scrutiny Committees' forward work programmes in conjunction with Scrutiny Committee members;
- Managing and co-ordinating Scrutiny review work, including the administration of scrutiny task and finish groups, assisting in writing reports in conjunction with the groups and assisting in the implementation and monitoring of completed reviews;
- Assisting with the Scrutiny member development programme.

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

To contact the Democratic Services Unit, please call 01267 224028 or e-mail scrutiny@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

6. Attendance

Attendance by members of the Community Scrutiny Committee during the 2019/20 year is shown in the table below. A total of 6 meetings were held between 1st May 2019 and 30th April 2020 against the scheduled 7, with the April 2020 meeting having been cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Scrutiny Committee Member	No. of meetings attended	%
Cllr F. Akhtar	5	83
Cllr. Ann. Davies	4	67
Cllr. Anthony Davies	4	67
Cllr. H. Davies	6	100

Cllr C. Evans	2	33
Cllr R. Evans	6	100
Cllr. J. Gilasbey	6	100
Cllr. B. Jones	5	83
Cllr. H. Jones	5	83
Cllr. S. Matthews	5	83
Cllr. H. Shepardson	6	100
Cllr A. Speake (from 8 th January 2020)	2	33
Cllr. G. Thomas	5	83
Cllr. A. Vaughan Owen (up to 8 th January 2020)	2	33
Substitutes	No. of meetings attended	
Cllr S.M. Allen	2	
Cllr M. Charles	1	
Cllr. W.T.Evans	3	
Cllr. M.J.A. Lewis	1	
Cllr K. Lloyd	1	
Executive Board Member	No. of meetings attended	
Cllr E. Dole	2	
Cllr. L.D. Evans	6	
Cllr. M. Stephens	1	
Cllr. P.H. Griffiths	3	
Cllr D. Jenkins	3	

This page is intentionally left blank

COMMUNITY AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 13th NOVEMBER 2020

Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for 2020/21

To consider and comment on the following issues:

- That the Committee confirm its Forward Work Programme for 2020/21.

Reasons:

- The County Council's Constitution requires scrutiny committees to develop and publish annual forward work programmes that identify issues and reports to be considered during the course of the municipal year.

To be referred to the Executive Board / Council for decision: NO

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:- NOT APPLICABLE

Directorate: Chief Executive's Name of Head of Service: Linda Rees-Jones Report Author: KevinThomas	Designations: Head of Administration & Law Democratic Services Officer	Tel Nos. / E-Mail Addresses: 01267 224010 lrjones@carmarthenshire.gov.uk 01267 224027 kjthomas@carmarthenshire.gov.uk
---	---	---

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COMMUNITY AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 13th NOVEMBER 2020

Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for 2020/21

Purpose of the Forward Work Programme

Article 6.2 of the County Council's Constitution states that: *"Each scrutiny committee is required to develop and publish an annual forward work programme, identifying issues and reports to be considered during the course of a municipal year"*.

The development of a work programme:

- Provides an opportunity for members to determine the priority issues to be considered by their scrutiny committee over the course of the next year.
-
- Provides a focus for both officers and members, and is a vehicle for communicating the work of the Committee to the public. The programme (see attached report) will be published on the council's website and will be updated on a quarterly basis – www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/scrutiny – and sent to key stakeholders for information. It will also be updated on a quarterly basis.
- Ensures agreement of provisional agendas for scheduled scrutiny meetings within the council diary. The Programme is a flexible document that can be amended to reflect additional meetings and agenda items during the course of the year.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED ?

YES – Draft Forward Work Programme 2020/21

IMPLICATIONS

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

Signed: Linda Rees-Jones

Head of Administration & Law

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

1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities – In line with requirements of the County Council’s Constitution.

2. Legal – In line with requirements of the County Council’s Constitution.

CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below

Signed: Linda Rees-Jones

Head of Administration & Law

1. Local Member(s) - N/A

2. Community / Town Council – N/A

3. Relevant Partners - N/A

4. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations N/A

**EXECUTIVE BOARD PORTFOLIO
HOLDER(S) AWARE/CONSULTED**

- N/A

**Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information
List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

THERE ARE NONE

Title of Document	File Ref No.	Locations that the papers are available for public inspection

COMMUNITY AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21

13 th Nov 20	17 th Dec 20	18 th Jan 21	25 th Feb 21	12 th April 21
Community Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2019/20	Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report 2020/21	HRA Budget Service Charges and Rent Setting 2021/22	Scrutiny Actions update	Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report 2020/21
Community Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme Nov 2020 - April 2021	Local Development Orders – Carmarthen Town Centre and Ammanford Town Centre	Carmarthenshire Home Standards Plus (HRA Business Plan 2021-2024)	Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report 2020/21	
Covid 19 Update reports for: Leisure Services Housing Services Regeneration Planning Property	Draft Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan 2018-2033 (provisional)	Revenue Budget Consultation 2020/21 – 2023/24		
	Pendine Outdoor Education Centre	Welsh Public Library Standards Annual Report 2019/20: Carmarthenshire		
	Pendine Attractor Project	Community Cohesion		

OTHER REPORTS TO BE INCLUDED:

TASK AND FINISH REVIEW

Task and Finish Review - to be determined at a later date

Site Visits

- Y Stordy / Museums / Libraries – to be undertaken following any relaxation / cessation of Covid-19 pandemic rules

This page is intentionally left blank

EXECUTIVE BOARD FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 20/21
–as at 26/10/2020 (Period Oct 20 – Oct 21)

Introduction

This plan is published to encourage and enable greater understanding between the Executive, all Councillors, the public and other stakeholders. It assists the Scrutiny Committees in planning their contribution to policy development and holding the executive to account.

The plan gives the public and stakeholders a chance to see the forthcoming major decisions to be made by the Executive Board over the next 12 months. It is reviewed and published quarterly to take account of changes and additional key decisions.

WORKING DRAFT

EXECUTIVE BOARD FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 20/21
–as at 26/10/2020 (Period Oct 20 – Oct 21)

CHIEF EXECUTIVES				
Subject area and brief description of nature of report	Responsible Officer	Executive Portfolio	Scrutiny Committee to be consulted	Date of expected decision by Executive Board
CROSS HANDS EMPLOYMENT SITE	Jason Jones – Head of Regeneration	Leader	N/A	30/11/2020
TARGETED REGENERATION INITIATIVE	Jason Jones – Head of Regeneration	Leader	N/A	30/11/2020-
INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND COVER SHEET	Wendy Walters, Chief Executive/Gwyneth Ayres	Deputy Leader	No	To be confirmed
WELSH LANGUAGE ANNUAL REPORT	Wendy Walters, Chief Executive/Gwyneth Ayres	Culture, Sport & Tourism	June	July
WELLBEING OBJECTIVES	Wendy Walters Chief Executive	Communities and Rural Affairs		
WELSH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS	Wendy Walters Chief Executive	Deputy Leader	If applicable	If applicable
REVIEW OF COMMUNITY COUNCIL BOUNDARIES & ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS	Wendy Walters, Chief Executive	Resources		As and when required
REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION (LEGISLATION CHANGES) - CRWG	Linda Rees Jones Head of Administration & Law	N/A CRWG - FEB	N/A	As And When Required
CITY DEAL UPDATE (INCLUDING PENTRE AWEL)	Wendy Walters Chief Executive	Leader		As & When Required
ANNUAL REPORT	Noelwyn Daniel -Head of ICT & Corporate Policy	Deputy Leader	Date to be confirmed	Date to be confirmed
NET ZERO ACTION PLAN - REVIEW	Jason Jones, Head of Regeneration	Communities and Rural Affairs	Date to be confirmed	Date to be confirmed
BREXIT	Jason Jones, Head of Regeneration	Leader	Not applicable	16.11.20

EXECUTIVE BOARD FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 20/21
–as at 26/10/2020 (Period Oct 20 – Oct 21)

COMMUNITY SERVICES				
Subject area and brief description of nature of report	Responsible Officer	Executive Portfolio	Scrutiny Committee to be consulted	Date of expected decision by Executive Board
SOCIAL CARE FUNDING – COVID-19 RESPONSE	Jake Morgan - Director of Communities	Social Care & Health		
PPE - CURRENT POSITION & FUTURE NEED/UPDATE REPORT	Jonathan Morgan – Head of Homes and Safer Communities / Adele Lodwig	Housing		
FOOD & FEED SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN	Jonathan Morgan – Head of Homes and Safer /Sue Watts	Culture, Sports & Tourism		21/12/20
OLDER PEOPLE’S DAY SERVICES RECOVERY PLAN	Jonathan Morgan – Head of Homes and Safer / Alex Williams	Social Care & Health		NOV/DEC 2020
HOMELESSNESS AND TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION REPORT	Jonathan Morgan – Head of Homes and Safer /Jonathan Willis	Housing		21/11/20
TYISHA	Robin Staines	Housing		
FUTURE PRESSURES IN ADULT SOCIAL CARE	Avril Bracey – Head of Adult Social Care	Social Care & Health		
COMMUNITY COHESION UPDATE	Jonathan Morgan – Head of Homes and SC/Les James	Housing		11/01/21
FUTURE OF HOUSING SERVICES ADVISORY PANEL	Jonathan Morgan – Head of Homes and SCr/Les James	Housing		11/01/21
UNIVERSAL CREDIT AND RENTS UPDATE RENT ARREARS POSITION STATEMENT	Jonathan Morgan – Head of Homes and Safer Communities/ Jonathan Willis	Housing		11/01/21
ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR POLICY	Jonathan Morgan – Head of Homes and Safer Communities /Les James / Sue Watts/Robert David Williams	Culture, Sports & Tourism	E&PP Scrutiny 21/01/21	08/02/21
LD STRATEGY	Chris Harrison Head of Strategic Joint Commissioning/ Avril Bracey - Head of Adult Social Care	Social Care & Health	SC&H 27/01/21	08/02/21
CHS+ DELIVERING WHAT MATTERS BUSINESS PLAN	Jonathan Morgan – Head of Homes and Safer Communities/ Rachel Davies/ Gareth Williams	Housing	18/01/21 Community Scrutiny	08/02/21 (Budget)
DOG BREEDERS LICENCE UPDATE (Change of policy/legislation)	Jonathan Morgan – Head of Homes and Safer Communities/ Roger Edmunds	Public Protection		24/05/21

EXECUTIVE BOARD FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 20/21
–as at 26/10/2020 (Period Oct 20 – Oct 21)

Pending				
DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20	Jake Morgan – Director of Communities/Silvana Sauro	Social Care & Health		TBC
2020 REVIEW OF LICENSING POLICY	Jonathan Morgan – Head of Homes and Safer Communities/ Emyr Jones	Culture, Sports & Tourism		TBC

WORKING DRAFT

EXECUTIVE BOARD FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 20/21
–as at 26/10/2020 (Period Oct 20 – Oct 21)

CORPORATE SERVICES				
Subject area and brief description of nature of report	Responsible Officer	Executive Portfolio	Scrutiny Committee to be consulted	Date of expected decision by Executive Board
BI-MONTHLY REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING REPORTS	Chris Moore Director of Corporate Services	Resources	N/A	SEPT NOV JAN MARCH
QUARTERLY TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATOR REPORT	Chris Moore Director of Corporate Services	Resources	N/A	SEPT/OCT JAN APR
ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT & PRUDENTIAL INDICATOR REPORT	Chris Moore Director of Corporate Services	Resources	N/A	JULY
5 YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAMME	Chris Moore Director of Corporate Services	Resources	ALL JAN/ FEB	JAN
COUNCIL TAX BASE	Chris Moore / Helen Pugh	Resources	N/A	DEC
Council Tax Reduction Scheme	Chris Moore / Helen Pugh	Resources	N/A	FEB
BUDGET STRATEGY (Revenue and Capital)	Chris Moore Director of Corporate Services	Resources	ALL JAN/ FEB	JAN
HIGH STREET RATE RELIEF	Chris Moore Director of Corporate Services /Helen Pugh	Resources	N/A	March
CORPORATE RISK REGISTER	Chris Moore Director of Corporate Services / Helen Pugh	Resources	– Audit Committee March & SEPT	

EXECUTIVE BOARD FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 20/21
–as at 26/10/2020 (Period Oct 20 – Oct 21)

CORPORATE SERVICES

Subject area and brief description of nature of report	Responsible Officer	Executive Portfolio	Scrutiny Committee to be consulted	Date of expected decision by Executive Board
TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY AND STRATEGY	Chris Moore Director of Corporate Services	Resources	N/A	22 ND FEBRUARY – BUDGET MEETING
FINAL BUDGET Revenue & Capital	Chris Moore Director of Corporate Services	Resources	N/A	22 ND FEBRUARY – BUDGET MEETING
HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET AND RENT SETTING REPORT	Chris Moore Director of Corporate Services	Resources	HOUSING	22 ND FEBRUARY BUDGET MEETING
BUDGET OUTLOOK	Chris Moore Director of Corporate Services	Resources	N/A	NOV

WORKING DRAFT

EXECUTIVE BOARD FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 20/21
–as at 26/10/2020 (Period Oct 20 – Oct 21)

EDUCATION & CHILDREN				
Subject area and brief description of nature of report	Responsible Officer	Executive Portfolio	Scrutiny Committee to be consulted	Date of expected decision by Executive Board
SCHOOL UPDATE REPORT- COVID 19, SCHOOLS CAUSING CONCERN AND FINANCE	Gareth Morgans – Director of Education and Children	Education & Children	N/A	
LA EDUCATION SERVICES SELF EVALUATION	Aneirin Thomas – Head of Education and Inclusion	Education & Children	tbc	Tachwedd 2020
UPDATE ON NEW CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENTS	Aeron Rees – Head of Curriculum and Wellbeing	Education & Children	tbc	October 2020
POST 16 EDUCATION	Aeron Rees – Head of Curriculum and Wellbeing	Education & Children	tbc	TBC
RESULTS OF 2020 EXAMINATIONS	Aneirin Thomas – Head of Education and Inclusion	Education & Children	N/A	TBC
PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE YSGOL GYNRADD BLAENAU AND TO INCREASE THE CAPACITY AND CHANGE THE NATURE OF PROVISION AT YSGOL GYNRADD LLANDYBIE (STAGE 1, 2 AND 3)	Simon Davies – Head of Access to Education	Education & Children	YES	21/12/20 (Stage 1) 10/05/21 (Stage 2) 05/07/21 (Stage 3)
ALN TRANSFORMATION ACTION PLAN	Aneirin Thomas – Head of Education and Inclusion	Education & Children	28/01/20	tbc
CHILDREN’S SERVICES PAPER- TBC	Stefan Smith - Head of Children’s Services	Education & Children	N/A	tbc
CARMARTHENSHIRE 10 YEAR STRATEGY FOR EDUCATION	Gareth Morgans – Director of Education and Children	Education & Children	23/11/20	October 2020
PROPOSAL TO RELOCATE YSGOL HEOL GOFFA AND TO INCREASE ITS CAPACITY (STAGE 2 AND 3)	Simon Davies – Head of Access to Education	Education & Children	YES)	21st December

EXECUTIVE BOARD FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 20/21
–as at 26/10/2020 (Period Oct 20 – Oct 21)

Subject area and brief description of nature of report	Responsible Officer	Executive Portfolio	Scrutiny Committee to be consulted	Date of expected decision by Executive Board
PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE YSGOL RHYDYGORS (STAGE 1, 2 AND 3)	Simon Davies – Head of Access to Education	Education & Children	YES	21/12/20 (Stage 1) 10/05/21 (Stage 2) 05/07/21 (Stage 3)
PROPOSAL TO CHANGE THE AGE RANGE AT YSGOL SWISS VALLEY (TBC) (STAGE 1, 2 AND 3)	Simon Davies – Head of Access to Education	Education & Children	YES	21/12/20 (Stage 1) 10/05/21 (Stage 2) 05/07/21 (Stage 3)
PROPOSAL TO DISCONTINUE YSGOL GYNRADD MYNYDD Y GARREG (STAGE 1, 2 AND 3)	Simon Davies – Head of Access to Education	Education & Children	YES	21/12/20 (Stage 1) 10/05/21 (Stage 2) 05/07/21 (Stage 3)

WORKING DRAFT

EXECUTIVE BOARD FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 20/21
–as at 26/10/2020 (Period Oct 20 – Oct 21)

ENVIRONMENT				
Subject area and brief description of nature of report	Responsible Officer	Executive Portfolio	Scrutiny Committee to be consulted	Date of expected decision by Executive Board
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT ORDERS	Llinos Quelch – Head of Planning/Ian R Llewellyn – Forward Planning Manager	Deputy Leader	TBC	2 nd November 2020
HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE MANUAL (HAMP)	Steve Pilliner - Head of Transportation & Highways/ Chris Nelson/ Richard Waters	Environment	2/11/2020	21 st December 2020
HAMP ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT	Steve Pilliner - Head of Transportation & Highways /Richard Waters	Environment	TBC	21 st December 2020
EQUESTRIAN STRATEGY	Steve Pilliner - Head of Transportation & Highways /Caroline Ferguson	Environment	January 2021	TBC
LAND OWNER CHARGING POLICY (FURNTIURE)	Steve Pilliner - Head of Transportation & Highways /Caroline Ferguson	Environment	TBC	TBC
ELECTRIC VEHICLE STRATEGY	Steve Pilliner - Head of Transportation & Highways/ Thomas Evans	Environment	TBC	TBC
AMR PLANNING	Llinos Quelch- Head of Planning	Deputy Leader		TBC
PROPERTY CONTRACTORS FRAMEWORK	Jonathan Fearn - Head of Property	TBC	TBC	TBC
APR	Llinos Quelch- Head of Planning	Deputy Leader	TBC	TBC
CARMARTHENSHIRE NATURE RECOVERY ACTION PLAN	Llinos Quelch- Head of Planning /Rosie Carmichael	TBC	TBC	TBC
CARMARTHENSHIRE POLLINATOR ACTION PLAN	Llinos Quelch- Head of Planning /Rosie Carmichael	TBC	TBC	TBC

EXECUTIVE BOARD FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 20/21

–as at 26/10/2020 (Period Oct 20 – Oct 21)

Subject area and brief description of nature of report	Responsible Officer	Executive Portfolio	Scrutiny Committee to be consulted	Date of expected decision by Executive Board
REGIONAL TECHNICAL STATEMENT	Llinos Quelch- Head of Planning /Hugh Towns	Planning	TBC	TBC
HWRC NORTH	Ainsley Williams. Head of Waste & Environmental Services	Environment	TBC	TBC
PUBLIC CONVENIENCES	Ainsley Williams. Head of Waste & Environmental Services Rhys Davies	Environment	TBC	TBC
BURRY PORT HUMPS	Steve Pilliner - Head of Transportation & Highways/ Adrian Harries	Environment	TBC	TBC
SECTION 278 RAINSCAPE	Steve Pilliner - Head of Transportation & Highways/ Adrian Harries	Environment	TBC	TBC
WASTE COLLECTION STRATEGY REVIEW UPDATE	Ainsley Williams. Head of Waste & Environmental Services Dan John /Geinor Lewis	Environment	TBC	TBC
CLEANSING REVIEW	Ainsley Williams. Head of Waste & Environmental Services Dan John	Environment	TBC	TBC
NAPPY AHP COLLECTION	Ainsley Williams. Head of Waste & Environmental Services Dan John / Geinor Lewis	Environment	TBC	TBC

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 5 February 2020

PRESENT: Councillor G.B. Thomas (Chair)

Councillors:

C.A. Davies, W.R.A. Davies, H.L. Davies, D.C. Evans, R.E. Evans, S.J.G. Gilasbey, B.W. Jones, H.I. Jones, K. Lloyd (In place of S. Matthews), H.B. Shepardson and A.D.T. Speake

Also in attendance:

Councillor E. Dole, Leader of the Council
L.D. Evans, Executive Board Member for Housing
D.M. Jenkins, Executive Board Member for Resources
Councillor A.G. Morgan

The following Officers were in attendance:

C. Moore, Director of Corporate Services
J. Morgan, Head of Homes & Safer Communities
J. Fearn, Head of Property
A Bowen, Investment and Income Manager
S. Williams, Senior Accountant
K. Thomas, Democratic Services Officer

Chamber, County Hall, Carmarthen, SA31 1JP - 10.00 - 11.20 am

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors F. Akhtar and S. Matthews.

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

There were no declarations of prohibited party whips.

The following declaration of interest was made

Councillor	Minute Number	Nature of Interest
K. Lloyd	5 – The Carmarthenshire Homes Standard Plus (CHS+) Business Plan 2020-23	Shareholder in Carmarthenshire Energy (had dispensation from the Standards Committee to speak but not vote)

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (NONE RECEIVED)

No public questions had been received.

4. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET AND HOUSING RENT SETTING FOR 2020/21

The Committee considered the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget and Housing Rent Setting for 2020/21, being presented as part of the budget

consultation process that brought together the latest proposals contained in the revenue and capital budgets for the Housing Revenue Account 2020/23 to be presented to the Executive Board and Council for determination.

The Director of Corporate Services advised that the report had been prepared reflecting the latest proposals contained within the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan, being the primary financial planning tool for delivering and maintaining the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard *Plus* (CHS+) for the future. The proposed investment within the current business plan delivered the CHS by 2015 (to those homes where the tenants agreed to have work undertaken) provided investment to maintain CHS+ and continued investment for the Authority's Affordable Homes Commitment.

The Director of Corporate Services reminded the Committee that with regard to the setting of the Housing Rents, the Authority had, on the 24th February 2015, adopted the Welsh Government's Social Housing Rent Policy for the four year period ending in 2018/19. For 2019/20, the Welsh Government had provided an interim policy while it awaited the results of the Affordable Housing Supply Review. Following that review, the Welsh Government had decided to retain the policy for a further 5 year period from 2020/21 – 2024/25 with some additional/amended requirements with the annual rent uplift for the revised period being CPI (Consumer Price Index) plus 1%, using the level of CPI from September of the previous year. In applying that policy for 2020/21 the Welsh Government had notified local authorities in December 2019 that the increase in target rent would equate to CPI of 1.7% plus 1% totalling 2.7%, and for those below the target rent, a maximum of £2 per week increase could be applied until the target rent was reached. However the total rent envelope would increase by a maximum of 2.7% (£2.36) from £87.41 to £89.77.

The Director of Corporate Services advised that if the Committee was to endorse the budget proposals the 2020/21 Housing Revenue Account would have an expenditure level of £50.1m with the capital programme being £34.7m for 2020/21, £35.2m for 2021/22 and £31.4m for 2022/23

The following issues were raised in relation to the report:-

- The Director of Corporate Services confirmed the use of CPI in calculating rent increases was set by the Welsh Government and local authorities had no discretion in varying that to apply the Retail Price Index in lieu.
- In response to a question on the introduction of Universal Credit and its impact on rent arrears, the Head of Homes and Safer Communities advised there had only been a slight increase in rent arrears overall, which was lower than had been expected and compared favourably with other social housing providers. To date, 1200 tenants had transferred to Universal Credit, with a further 4,000 anticipated over the next four years. He confirmed the authority did not implement its arrears policy for any tenants falling into arrears during the transition period to Universal Credit, in view of the fact the initial payment could take up to five weeks. The Director of Corporate Services referred to the transfer of benefit claimants to Universal Credit and advised that pensioners were exempted from the legislation and would continue to receive their existing benefits.
- In response to a question on the level of rental income for the Council's garages stock, the committee was advised that it equated to approximately £125k per annum. The Council had approximately 160 garage sites and

each of those was being evaluated to assess their future best options which could include repairs, demolition and conversion to parking spaces and disposal.

- With regard to a question on the current void loss of 2.7% the Head of Homes and Safer Communities advised that performance was similar to other local authority and social housing providers. Whilst the top performers were achieving 1.6%, that was mainly achieved by social housing providers whose stock was younger than local authorities.

He advised although the authority had a number of long term voids, it had set aside funding to address those. Once brought back into use, it was anticipated void losses would reduce.

The Head of Property in response to the difficulties previously reported to the Committee on the capacity of external contractors to undertake void works, confirmed discussions had been initiated with contractors to increase their capacity to undertake the works. He also advised on the existing and new contractor frameworks that involved awarding works in packages of between 10 and 20 properties. Those properties could either be confined to one region or spread throughout the county. The time period for completing a package depended on the level of works required.

- The Acting Investment and Income Manager referred to the Welsh Government's requirement for local authorities to build homes near carbon zero and to decarbonise its existing stock. She advised that whilst the Council's new build properties would be highly efficient, the council's existing stock of over 9,500 properties would require a range of options to reduce their carbon footprint. In that regard, the authority, in conjunction with Cardiff University was evaluating a sample model of six properties with differing tenant ranges in terms of age and occupancy levels to assess their lifestyles and energy usage. The results of that model would help inform future policy to improve stock performance.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD/COUNCIL:-

- 4.1 to increase the average housing rent as per the Welsh Government's Social Housing Rents Policy i.e.:-**
- **Properties at target rents to increase by 2.53%**
 - **Properties where rent was below target rent to increase by 2.53% plus a maximum progression of £1 per week**
 - **Properties above target rent be frozen until such time as they met the target**

thereby producing an average housing rent increase of 2.7% (CPI + 1%) or £2.36, producing a sustainable Business Plan, maintains CHS+ and resourcing the Affordable Homes Programme, as supported by the Carmarthenshire Home Standards Steering Group;

- 4.2 To maintain garage rents at £9.00 per week and garage bases at £2.25 per week**

- 4.3 To implement a maximum progression of £1, for rents below target rent, until target rents were achieved.
- 4.4 To apply the service charge policy to ensure tenants who received the benefit from specific services paid for those services
- 4.5 To increase charges for using the Council's sewerage treatment works in line with the rent increase.

5. THE CARMARTHENSHIRE HOMES STANDARD PLUS (CHS+) BUSINESS PLAN 2020-23

(NOTE: Councillor K. Lloyd having earlier declared an interest in this item participated in the debate but did not vote thereon in accordance with the conditions of his dispensation granted by the Council's Standards Committee)

The Committee received for consideration the Carmarthenshire Homes Standards Plus (CHS+) Business Plan 2020-23 the purpose of which was threefold. Firstly, it explained the vision and detail of the CHS+ over the next three years and what it meant for tenants. Secondly, it confirmed the financial profile, based on current assumptions for delivery of the CHS+ over the next three years and, thirdly, produced a business plan for the annual application to the Welsh Government for Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) for 2020/21 equating to £6.1m.

The Committee noted the Plan also highlighted the importance of the Council supporting its tenants and residents in everything it did with the following three key themes having been identified in terms of future investment proposals:-

- Theme 1 – Supporting Tenants and Residents;
- Theme 2 – Investing in our Homes' and the Environment – including development of a Carmarthenshire Decarbonisation Homes Model
- Theme 3 - Providing more homes

The Following questions/issues were raised on the report:

- Reference was made to the Council's proposals to spend nearly £52m over the next three years in building more homes linking in with regeneration and focussing on proposed developments in the Tyisha Ward, the Wellness Village, Town Centre and key rural towns. Having regard to the Council's recent launch of its 'Ten Towns' Initiative, clarification was sought on how the new homes build programme would link in with that initiative.

The Head of Homes and Safer Communities confirmed future house building programmes would align with that initiative. The first building phase, as referenced above, had been developed on the basis of land availability.

- Reference was made to the development of Carmarthenshire's decarbonisation model and clarification sought on what influence the Council had on social and private landlords to decarbonise their properties.

The Head of Homes advised that in relation to Social Landlords that could be addressed by a number of means including the Welsh Government by way of conditioning its Major Repairs Allowance and by the Council in the allocation of the Social Housing Grant. The position for encouraging private landlords to undertake such works would be more difficult. However the

authority may be in a position to offer some incentives via its social letting policy etc. The Welsh Government could also legislate requiring private landlords to undertake decarbonisation works.

- A question was raised on the Council's Radon Testing Programme and the Head of Property confirmed that whilst non statutory, it was being undertaken in terms of best practice as a social landlord and on health and safety for its tenants. He advised that private house owners would be directed to appropriate bodies to advise on testing their properties.
- Reference was made to the standard of build for new homes and the Committee was advised that was governed by Building Regulations Legislation. Whilst that legislation set a minimum standard in terms of safety requirements, house builders could exceed those standards.

The Head of Homes and Safer Communities advised that in relation to the Council's new build programme, all homes would be constructed to meet Design Quality Requirements and would be similar in size to properties built in the 1960's. Work was also being undertaken on developing a Carmarthenshire Standard for new Homes which would be reported to Council for adoption in due course.

The Head of Property confirmed monitoring the quality of the council's build programme is undertaken by property staff and performance arrangements within the contractor framework would be used to monitor appointed contractors. The Council's standards for new build were higher than those set by the Welsh Government and it was seeking to design and construct homes for the long term ensuring their longevity.

- With regard to the proposal within the Plan to plant a minimum of 1,000 trees to offset the carbon footprint of building 1,000 new homes the Investment and Income Manager advised those may not necessarily be planted in Carmarthenshire, as the Council could offset that provision by commissioning tree planting in other areas/countries. A full site appraisal would however be undertaken to inform the best method of tree planting, be that on site or elsewhere.

RESOLVED THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD/COUNCIL TO:-

- 6.1 Confirm the vision of the CHS+ and the financial delivery programme over the next three years**
- 6.2 Confirm the plan's submission to the Welsh Government for the 2020/21 Major Repairs Allowance Application**
- 6.3 Note the intention to develop a new Carmarthenshire Standard by continuing to move towards carbon neutral homes, both existing and new, ensuring new supply chain, jobs and training opportunities were delivered.**

6. FORTHCOMING ITEMS

The Committee considered a list of forthcoming items to be considered at its next scheduled meeting to be held in April 2020.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the list of forthcoming items for the committee meeting scheduled to be held in April 2020 be agreed.

CHAIR

DATE