

**MONDAY, 13 DECEMBER 2021**

**TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNANCE & AUDIT  
COMMITTEE**

I HEREBY SUMMON YOU TO ATTEND A **VIRTUAL MEETING** OF  
THE **GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE** WHICH WILL BE  
HELD AT **10.00 AM ON FRIDAY, 17TH DECEMBER, 2021** FOR  
THE TRANSACTION OF THE BUSINESS OUTLINED ON THE  
ATTACHED AGENDA.

*Wendy Walters*

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

<b>Democratic Officer:</b>	<b>Martin S. Davies</b>
<b>Telephone (Direct Line):</b>	<b>01267 224059</b>
<b>E-Mail:</b>	<b>MSDavies@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</b>

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

# **GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE**

## **MEMBERSHIP:-**

### **8 MEMBERS PLUS ONE EXTERNAL MEMBER WITH VOTING RIGHTS**

#### **PLAID CYMRU GROUP (4)**

- |    |            |                |
|----|------------|----------------|
| 1. | Councillor | Kim Broom      |
| 2. | Councillor | Karen Davies   |
| 3. | Councillor | Gareth John    |
| 4. | Councillor | Elwyn Williams |

#### **LABOUR GROUP (2)**

- |    |            |                      |
|----|------------|----------------------|
| 1. | Councillor | Tina Higgins [Chair] |
| 2. | Councillor | Bill Thomas          |

#### **INDEPENDENT GROUP (1)**

- |    |            |                           |
|----|------------|---------------------------|
| 1. | Councillor | Giles Morgan [Vice-Chair] |
|----|------------|---------------------------|

#### **NEW INDEPENDENT GROUP (1)**

- |    |            |                 |
|----|------------|-----------------|
| 1. | Councillor | Louvain Roberts |
|----|------------|-----------------|

#### **EXTERNAL VOTING MEMBER**

*Period of appointment – until the Local Government Elections in May 2022*

- |    |                 |
|----|-----------------|
| 1. | Mrs Julie James |
|----|-----------------|

# AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.
2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS.
3. APPOINTMENT OF LAY PERSONS TO THE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE. 5 - 14
4. PROGRESS REPORTS
  - 4 .1 PEOPLE MANAGEMENT UPDATE REPORT. 15 - 28
  - 4 .2 AUDIT WALES: REVIEW OF PLANNING SERVICE - CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL 29 - 62
5. INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN UPDATE 2021/22. 63 - 72
6. AUDIT WALES REPORT: REGENERATING TOWN CENTRES IN WALES. 73 - 136
7. PROGRESS ON REGULATORY REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS. 137 - 162
8. GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME. 163 - 168
9. MINUTES OF RELEVANT GROUPS TO THE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE:- 169 - 170
  - 9 .1 RISK MANAGEMENT STEERING GROUP - 11TH NOVEMBER 2021; 171 - 174
  - 9 .2 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE GROUP - 17TH SEPTEMBER 2021; 175 - 184
  - 9 .3 GRANTS PANEL - 7TH JUNE 2021; 185 - 188
  - 9 .4 GRANTS PANEL - 11TH OCTOBER 2021; 189 - 194
10. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD ON 12TH OCTOBER 2021. 195 - 204
11. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC.

THE REPORTS RELATING TO THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE NOT FOR PUBLICATION AS THEY CONTAIN EXEMPT INFORMATION AS DEFINED IN PARAGRAPHS 12 AND 13 PART 4 OF SCHEDULE 12A TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) (VARIATION) (WALES) ORDER 2007. IF, FOLLOWING THE APPLICATION OF THE PUBLIC INTEREST TEST, THE COMMITTEE RESOLVES PURSUANT TO THE ACT TO CONSIDER THESE ITEMS IN PRIVATE, THE PUBLIC WILL BE EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING DURING SUCH CONSIDERATION.

- |  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| <b>12. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT - GARREG LWYD RESIDENTIAL UNIT.</b>                       | <b>205 - 214</b> |
| <b>13. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT - DOMESTIC BOILER SERVICING &amp; REMEDIAL FRAMEWORK.</b> | <b>215 - 224</b> |



## GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE 17<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2021

### APPOINTMENT OF LAY PERSONS TO THE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

**Recommendations / key decisions required:**

- 1) To note the new requirement arising from the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 for one third of the Governance and Audit Committee membership to be made of lay persons, and for the Committee to be Chaired by a lay person from May 2022.
- 2) To recommend to the Council the Committee's preferred option as to the size of the Governance and Audit Committee to best meet the members/lay persons ratio.
- 3) To approve the arrangements the recruitment of lay persons to meet this requirement

**Reasons:**

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires one third of the members of the Governance and Audit Committee to be lay persons and for the lay person to be appointed as Committee Chair. This report outlines the arrangements for the size of the committee, and arrangements for the appointment of the additional lay members in readiness for this requirement of the Act to come into force on the 5th May 2022

Relevant scrutiny committee to be consulted: NO  
 Cabinet Decision Required: NO  
 Council Decision YES (Recommendation 2)

CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Cllr David Jenkins (Resources)

<p><b>Directorate:</b></p> <p><b>Chief Executives/ Corporate Services</b></p> <p><b>Name of Head of Service:</b></p> <p><b>Linda Rees Jones</b></p> <p><b>Helen Pugh</b></p> <p>Report Authors:-</p> <p>Caroline Powell</p> <p>Gaynor Morgan</p>	<p><b>Designations:</b></p> <p><b>Head of Administration and Law</b></p> <p><b>Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance</b></p> <p>Principal Auditor</p> <p>Head of Democratic Services</p>	<p><b>Tel:</b></p> <p><b>Email addresses:</b></p> <p><a href="mailto:LRJones@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">LRJones@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a></p> <p><a href="mailto:HLPugh@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">HLPugh@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a></p> <p><a href="mailto:capowell@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">capowell@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a></p> <p><a href="mailto:GMorgan@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">GMorgan@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a></p>
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE 17<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2021

### APPOINTMENT OF LAY PERSONS TO THE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

On the 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021 the Committee considered a report on changes to the Governance and Audit Committee as a result of the provisions within the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. That report made reference to the requirement to increase the number of lay members to one third of the Committee and for a lay person to be appointed as Committee Chair (coming into force in May 2022).

The Governance and Audit Committee currently comprises 8 members plus one external member with voting rights, so if the Committee is to remain at 8 members, this will result in a reduction in elected members to 5 and 3 lay persons.

Alternative options are a Committee of 12 members i.e. 8 Council Members and 4 lay members or 16 members i.e. 11 Council members and 5 lay members. Historically we have had 167 or 168 seats to allocate between elected members across committees so as best accommodate the number of seats for distribution, and if this is to be maintained we would recommend a Governance and Audit Committee of 12 members i.e. 8 elected members (as currently) and 4 lay persons.

The Committee is asked to approve the recruitment process with the view to the recruitment commencing as soon as possible, with the number of lay persons to be appointed being confirmed once the County Council has decided on the size of the Committee.

The recruitment process being recommended is

- a. as per the attached job profile,
- b. shortlisting to be done by one of the following options (as detailed below)
- c. in accordance with the functions delegated to the Committee, the Governance and Audit Committee will interview applicants for the positions of Lay Members of the Committee and will recommend appointments to the Council.

#### Shortlisting Option 1:-

a three member politically balanced Panel of Governance and Audit Committee Members (1 Plaid Cymru, 1 Labour and 1 Independent) with nominations for the Panel confirmed by the relevant Political Parties and notified to the Chief Executive and Head of Democratic Services.

#### Shortlisting Option 2:-

A cross party panel of 1 member per political group as represented on the Committee (1 Plaid Cymru, 1 Labour, 1 Independent and 1 New Independent) with nominations for the Panel confirmed by the relevant Political Parties and notified to the Chief Executive and Head of Democratic Services.

**DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?**

**Advertisement – Appendix 1  
Job Profile – Appendix 2**

# 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 and Law

Helen Pugh - Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance

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

## 1. Legal

Chapter 2 of Part 6 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act requires one-third of the members of the Governance and Audit Committee to be lay persons and for the member appointed as the Committee Chair to be a lay person. These provisions within the Act come into force on the 5<sup>th</sup> May 2022 and forms the basis of this report.

## 2. Finance

The Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales has determined that a daily or half daily fee is appropriate remuneration for the important role undertaken by co-opted members of authorities with voting rights.

Fees for co-opted members (with voting rights) are:-

Lay Chair of audit committees £268 (4 hours and over) £134 (up to 4 hours)

Ordinary co-opted members of audit committee £210 (4 hours and over) £105 (up to 4 hours)

Additional costs will need to be met from the existing Democratic budget with a growth bid for additional funding submitted if appropriate.

## 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 and Law

Helen Pugh - Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance

1. Scrutiny Committee - N/A
2. Local Member(s) - N/A
3. Community / Town Council - N/A
4. Relevant Partners - N/A
5. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations - N/A

**CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO  
HOLDER AWARE/CONSULTED**

N/A

### 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
The Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021		<a href="https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asc/2021/1/contents/enacted">https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asc/2021/1/contents/enacted</a>
Audit Committee meeting 26 <sup>th</sup> March 2021		<a href="https://carmarthenshireintranet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=163&amp;MId=4256&amp;Ver=4">https://carmarthenshireintranet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=163&amp;MId=4256&amp;Ver=4</a>

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## **Appointment of Lay Persons - Governance and Audit Committee**

### **Role of the Governance and Audit Committee**

This statutory committee is a key component of Carmarthenshire County Council's governance framework. The purpose of the Governance and Audit Committee is to provide independent assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of our risk management framework, internal control environment, performance assessment, complaints handling and integrity of our financial reporting and governance processes. The Committee makes an important contribution to ensuring that effective assurance arrangements are in place.

The Governance and Audit Committee meets at least four times a year for which Lay Persons (Independent Members) receive financial remuneration in accordance with the rates determined by the [Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales](#) (section 9, pages 30-31).

### **What is a Lay Person ?**

A Lay Person means a person who:

1. Is not a member or an officer of any local authority;
2. Has not been a member or an officer of any local authority at any time in the period of twelve months ending with the date of appointment; and
3. Is not the spouse of civil partner of a member or an officer of any local authority.

In addition to satisfying this criteria, suitable applicants will need to be non-political with an understanding and commitment to the 7 Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles) and able to demonstrate the following qualities and characteristics:

- Interest and knowledge/experience of financial, risk and performance management, audit, accounting concepts and standards, and the regulatory regime within Wales;
- Objective and independent of mind with an unbiased attitude and ability to apply discretion;
- Supportive of good governance principles and their practical application towards the achievement of organisational objectives;
- Strategic thinker with excellent communication skills;
- Ability to understand and weigh up evidence and challenge respectfully.

A detailed knowledge of local government is not necessary although it would be expected that potential candidates would be interested in matters relating to public life and services. Local interest in, and knowledge of, Carmarthenshire is desirable.

From May 2022 the Governance and Audit Committee will be chaired by a Lay Person, therefore a willingness and ability to fulfil this role is desirable.

**LOCATION:** County Hall, Carmarthen / Remote / Hybrid Meetings

**REMUNERATION:** Remuneration is paid in accordance with the rates determined by the [Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales](#)

**COMMITMENT:** A minimum of 4 meetings per annum

**TERM OF APPOINTMENT:** For a period of 5 years, but could be re-appointed for a further term

**CLOSING DATE:** XXXXXXXXXXXX

For an informal discussion please contact Helen Pugh, Head of Revenues & Financial Compliance – [HLPugh@carmarthenshire.gov.uk](mailto:HLPugh@carmarthenshire.gov.uk)

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## Member of Governance and Audit Committee Role Description

### 1. Accountabilities

- To Full Council
- To the Chair of the Committee

### 2. Role purpose and activity

#### Participating in meetings of the Committee and making decisions

- To demonstrate independence, integrity, and impartiality in decision making according to legal, constitutional and policy requirements.
- To have regard to the requirements of the Chair of the Committee and the professional advice of senior officers of the authority including the Director of Corporate Services and Head of Revenues & Financial Compliance (Head of Internal Audit).
- To Comply with the authority's Code of Conduct.
- To work according to the Terms of Reference for the Committee.
- To contribute to the development of the forward work programme for the Committee.
- To promote the role of the Committee within the authority.
- To report as required to Council.
- To respond to any recommendations made by the Auditor General for Wales.
- To participate in any training and development required for the role.

#### Contributing to the work of the Committee in its role in:

##### Reviewing and scrutinising the authority's financial affairs

- Make reports and recommendations in relation to the authority's financial affairs.
- Oversee the authority's internal and external audit arrangements.
- Work with internal and external auditors.
- Review the financial statements prepared by the authority and approve them when powers are delegated including making relevant reports and recommendations.

##### Contributing to the effective performance of the authority

- Review the draft report of the authority's annual self-assessment and make recommendations for changes to the conclusions or actions that the authority intends to take.
- Make recommendations in response to the draft report of the authority's Panel Assessment (commissioned once per term **from May 2022**).
- Review and assess the authority's ability to handle complaints effectively.
- Make reports and recommendations in relation to the authority's ability to handle complaints effectively.

##### Reviewing and assessing the Governance, Risk Management and Control of the authority

- Review and assess the risk management, internal control, and corporate governance arrangements of the authority.
- Make reports and recommendations to the authority on the adequacy and effectiveness of those arrangements.
- Review and assess the financial risks associated with corporate governance, and be satisfied that the authority's assurance statements, including the annual governance statement, reflects the risk environment and any activities required to improve it.

### **3. Values**

To be committed to the values of the council and the following values in public office

- Openness and transparency
- Honesty and integrity
- Tolerance and respect
- Equality and fairness
- Appreciation of cultural differences
- Sustainability

## Governance & Audit Committee 17th December 2021

<b>PEOPLE MANAGEMENT UPDATE REPORT</b>		
<b>Recommendations / key decisions required:</b> To note the content of the update		
<b>Reasons:</b> At its last meeting the Committee requested a People Management update		
Relevant scrutiny committee to be consulted    No		
Cabinet Decision Required	No	
Council Decision Required	No	
<b>CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Councillor Mair Stephens – Deputy Leader</b>		
Directorate: Chief Executive's  Name of Head of Service: Paul R Thomas  Report Author: Cheryl Reynolds	Designations:  Assistant Chief Executive – People Management  Business & Projects Coordinator	Tel: 01267 246123  Email addresses: <a href="mailto:prthomas@sirgar.gov.uk">prthomas@sirgar.gov.uk</a>  <a href="mailto:careynolds@sirgar.gov.uk">careynolds@sirgar.gov.uk</a>

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE  
17TH DECEMBER 2021**

**People Management Update Report**

**Summary**

At its last meeting the Committee requested an update in relation to People Management. The attached report outlines the health and well being support being provided to staff including support for managing mental health, it also details the work that is being done in relation to the three key themes of our People Strategy.

Theme 1: Employee Engagement & Wellbeing

Theme 2: Leadership & Management

Theme 3: Supporting Transformation & Change

The detailed report attached also provides an overview of what we have put in place to support our staff during the pandemic and what we plan to develop during 2022/23. Our new business plan (which at the time of writing was under development) will set out the detail of our planned priorities, which will be scrutinised by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee in the New Year.

**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 P R Thomas, Assistant Chief Executive, People Management**

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>

## CONSULTATIONS

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

**Signed: P R Thomas, Assistant Chief Executive, People Management**

**1. Scrutiny Committee n/a**

**2. Local Member(s) n/a**

**3. Community / Town Council n/a**

**4. Relevant Partners n/a**

**5. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations n/a**

<b>CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S) AWARE/CONSULTED</b>  YES
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<b>Include any observations here</b>
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**Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information  
List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

**THERE ARE NONE**

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## Governance & Audit Committee

17<sup>th</sup> December 2021

### People Management Update Report

Our People Strategy has 3 key themes which provide the basis of effective people management.

Theme 1: Employee Engagement & Wellbeing

Theme 2: Leadership & Management

Theme 3: Supporting Transformation & Change

#### 1. Theme: Employee Engagement & Wellbeing

##### **Below are examples of what we already have in place**

- ✓ Clear vision in our Corporate Strategy – *Life is for living, let's start, live and age well in a healthy, safe, and prosperous environment*
- ✓ Clear Core Values – *One Team, Customers First, Listening, Acting with Integrity, Delivering Excellence, Taking Responsibility*
- ✓ Flexible [People Management policies](#) that promote good work life balance, which are regularly reviewed to meet the changing needs of the organisation e.g., our Travel Policy recently reviewed in light of the Better Ways of Working project
- ✓ Our new [Better Ways of Working Arrangements](#) that build on the pandemic learning providing more flexibility for staff
- ✓ Range of [Learning and Development](#) opportunities including Digital Skills, Managing and Working in a Hybrid Way, Welsh Language
- ✓ Range of mechanisms that provides staff with information and also provide opportunities for them to get involved or have their say e.g., Better Ways of Working Engagement Sessions, Chief's online event, Intranet Ask a Question, new Appraisal process, TIC reviews, ERF, CERF.
- ✓ New Competency Framework for all roles agreed by CMT in 2021

- ✓ Range of [Health and Wellbeing](#) events, advice and initiatives to support staff in maintaining and improving their physical and mental wellbeing examples include lifestyle advice, in March 2020 we re-signed the [Time to Change Wales](#) pledge; a network of over 70 Employee wellbeing champions within departments and another 85 in our schools. We are also building a network of mental health first aiders who offer peer to peer support.
- ✓ [Occupational Health Service](#) – we have a professionally qualified medical team that is dedicated to supporting our workforce – which includes a wellbeing support service, who focus a range of mental health issues, statutory health surveillance service and clinics with Physicians and Nurses.

### **Health and Wellbeing Support During Covid**

The team continues to listen, adapt, and respond to the constant and ever-changing nature of the pandemic. Reacting swiftly to ensure employees and managers alike are provided with the most up to date, supportive and appropriate information and resources to help them look after their own wellbeing.

### **Below is an overview of the work provided at a corporate level:**

- ✓ Submitted a bid for grant funding from the Welsh government which has been awarded. Funding will be utilised to appoint a Health and Wellbeing Assistant (6 months). This individual will assist in the provision of targeted wellbeing interventions and support for our social care colleagues, in conjunction with the Health and Wellbeing team.
- ✓ Inputted into the development of the corporate induction e-learning module.
- ✓ Inputted into the new Business Plan format to ensure the Health and Wellbeing implications are considered for each new project.
- ✓ Ongoing Health and Wellbeing input and advice provided on the “**Better ways of working**” project to ensure employees health and wellbeing are at the core of all project plans.
- ✓ Ongoing updates and development of our intranet pages to ensure appropriate advice, information and resources are provided



- ✓ Ongoing review of communications with the Media & Marketing department to ensure that all resources/ information provided are reaching all employees across the authority.
- ✓ Virtual and drop in events/e-chats on various health and wellbeing topics such as Time to change – My Mental Health Story, Stress, Menopause etc... with an average of 20- 30 staff in attendance.
- ✓ Continuation of the Corporate Health & Wellbeing Group Structure including a Corporate Strategic Health & Wellbeing Group, Departmental Groups, Schools Group and Champions Groups.
- ✓ Attendance and presentations delivered at various meetings/workshops from DMT's to team level to promote relevant health and wellbeing support and resources. This is included H&S Leadership Board, Heads of Service, Adult Social Care, Environment People Manager's plus many more
- ✓ Continuing to support and raise the profile of the network of over 70 health and wellbeing champions corporately and the recruitment of at least one champion in each school.
- ✓ Ongoing support to all employees via the Health and Wellbeing contact form to ensure staff and managers have an interactive way to contact the team for advice and resources.
- ✓ Virtual Health & Wellbeing Fayre held virtual on the 29<sup>th</sup> of June – 16<sup>th</sup> July 2021; 15 sessions were run for staff on various health topics including "My Mental Health Story" delivered by our Health and Wellbeing Champions, Actif Anywhere taster sessions from the Actif team, mindfulness minute/taster session, Making Things Better, craft session, delivered by some of our very skilled makers within the authority. In total, 146 staff attended.
- ✓ Continual review of employee and departmental feedback to find key themes for promotions
- ✓ Over 26 topic-specific articles produced and communicated via the intranet's latest news bulletin and weekly staff news emails

- ✓ Below we show a breakdown of some of the specific priorities, activities and interventions that we have undertaken during this time.

### **Corporate Health & Wellbeing Groups**

- ✓ Environment H&W group has met 3 times, discussed the H&W Survey results and determined key actions which have been agreed by the Director and presented at the People Managers event. These will be presented to staff as 'You said, we did'. Some actions are already underway.
- ✓ Communities have held 3 Health, Safety & Wellbeing Group meetings, discussions have included issues around back-to-back meetings and meetings out of core hours.
- ✓ Corporate Services have met twice, with the main topic being agreeing and designing a Corporate Services H&W Survey.
- ✓ Chief Executives have been briefed on the Health & Wellbeing Framework and are in discussions regarding most appropriate staff members to form the departmental health and wellbeing group.
- ✓ Education H&W group were formed, and meetings have been held. Terms of reference have been agreed. The group mutually agreed the benefits of meeting free periods particularly due to home working and increased screen time, following this, an options paper was taken to DMT where it was identified that a corporate approach to this was required.
- ✓ Schools group was developed from an existing Headteacher focus group, which will evolve to cover the departmental group remit.
- ✓ All corporate outcomes are fed up to the Strategic Corporate Health and Wellbeing group where solutions are formulated. The team are currently in discussions with IT with regard to pop ups encouraging breaks through the day, taking lunch time, avoiding back-to-back meetings etc.

### **Health & Wellbeing Champions**

- ✓ Continuation of Health & Wellbeing Champion recruitment; now in excess of 70 Champions throughout the authority and a network of School H&W Champions

(85) Microsoft Teams group created for regular and convenient communication with Champions

- ✓ Regular monthly virtual meetings run to keep Champions up to date with the latest support and resources, events, promotions and activities etc. Sharing of good practice and ideas, discussion of wellbeing concerns.
- ✓ Training for new Champions organised and delivered in October 2021
- ✓ Refresher/update training for all Champions organised and will be delivered in November 2021
- ✓ The launch of the Health & Wellbeing Champion buddy system in which experienced Champions can guide newer Champions through the role and mentor them.
- ✓ New twice monthly drop-in sessions for Champions to discuss ideas and share good practice.
- ✓ Ongoing development of our Health and Wellbeing Champions intranet pages.
- ✓ An online Bitesize training for Champions is being developed with Learning and Development for Champions in both schools and the authority.

### **Mental Health Awareness and Support**

Due to COVID 19 the corporate funding was extended for the post of Health and Wellbeing Coordinator (Mental Health) to ensure we were able to continue providing robust and resilient support. Particularly in light of the current and ongoing situation which has had a detrimental impact on mental health and wellbeing.

Below outlines the work and support the team have provided in relation to the mental health and wellbeing of staff:

- ✓ Continuing to raise the profile of mental health and reduce the mental health stigma across the Authority through articles, e-chats, anti-stigma talks, attendance at senior meetings etc...
- ✓ Collaborative work with the provider of our Mental health first aid course to ensure it is tailored to Carmarthenshire County Council employees.
- ✓ Ongoing coordination and promotion of our Mental Health first Aider training.

- ✓ Within Q1/Q2 we have trained 30 MHFAs across all departments within the Authority, with further courses arranged for later in the year.
- ✓ To date 310 staff have attended Mental Health Awareness courses and 152 Managers/ Head teachers have received Positive Mental health in the workplace training. These courses are currently under review, and we will look to roll further sessions out to staff into the new year.
- ✓ We hope to roll the programme out across all Carmarthenshire schools in the new year
- ✓ Development of support, update training and drop-in sessions for our Mental Health first aiders network to ensure they are supported and equipped to deliver high quality support.
- ✓ Review of our Management of Mental Health policy to support managers and staff
- ✓ Drop-in sessions for Head Teachers to promote the support and resources available, particularly within the areas of stress and mental health
- ✓ Continuous review of external mental health resources, e-learning, webinars, guidance etc. to ensure staff are appropriately signposted
- ✓ The Mental Health in the Workplace eLearning module is currently under review in order to ensure we are providing the most appropriate/ supportive and up to date information for all staff.
- ✓ Attendance at various departmental meetings to promote relevant Mental health and wellbeing support and resources
- ✓ Ongoing promotion of Personal Resilience e-learning module
- ✓ Time to Change Wales Employee Champion training delivered to a group of existing Health and Wellbeing Champions
- ✓ Continuous review of mental health support and resources intranet pages
- ✓ Ongoing promotion of relevant mental health awareness raising days, events and promotions

## **Environment Department**

- ✓ H&W survey analysed, and results presented to the H&W Group and all Heads of Service. Priority actions developed with H&W group for the department as a whole, which were presented to managers at the People Managers Conference.
- ✓ Planning - Working with the HOS and H&W reps to undertake further actions and determine new priority actions.
- ✓ Environment are continuing their yoga sessions virtually for staff.

## **Department for Communities**

- ✓ Working with Domiciliary Care services to support staff. Wellbeing leaflet and business card created for digital distribution.
- ✓ Business Support - Actions drafted following H&W survey. Priority actions determined including a wellbeing 'away day' (virtual) which is planned for Nov/Dec
- ✓ Residential Care - Wellbeing leaflet and business card produced and distributed to staff. Met with catering staff to discuss their wellbeing
- ✓ Adult Social Care - Planning facilitated support sessions and peer to peer support network. Action plan for social care staff being developed for the additional support and interventions up until March 22

## **Corporate Services**

- ✓ Corporate Services Health & Wellbeing Group agreed to release a Health & Wellbeing Survey which is currently with staff to be completed

## **Schools**

- ✓ The Health and Wellbeing Champions scheme has commenced in schools, Over 70 schools have nominated a Health and Wellbeing Champion, with larger schools nominating multiple Champions, taking the total number to 85 across Carmarthenshire schools.
- ✓ Bitesize training is being developed for Schools Champions.
- ✓ Wellbeing focus group set up to input into the support developed for HTs Wellbeing
- ✓ Ongoing development of Internal Headteacher Peer Support Network created – 35 Headteachers are partaking in weekly sessions-

- ✓ Chair of Governors received training specifically on supporting HT's wellbeing
- ✓ A document containing an overview of all the support available for Headteachers has been drafted and will be sent out to Headteacher's in November 2021.
- ✓ Wellbeing sessions for Headteachers are being coordinated and will launch in the new year.
- ✓ The Headteacher Wellbeing Charter has been drafted and will be presented at the next Headteacher's meeting for review.
- ✓ A targeted approach to Health and Wellbeing in schools is being established.
- ✓ Coaching opportunities available from Learning and Development is being offered to Headteacher's as well as 1:1 supervision.
- ✓ The partnership with Education Support will be launched in the new year. This includes the support available from ESP as well as the launch of the Health and Wellbeing Champions in schools and Mental Health First Aiders.
- ✓ Schools' Staff Absence Scheme (SSAS) - As at 1 April 2021 there are currently 89 participating primary schools compared to 60 original entrants in 2017/18, 78 during 2018/19, 87 during 2019/20. The level of financial cover has been increased following consultation with participating schools, as follows:
  - The daily rate for teachers has increased from £120 to £160 per day
  - The maternity lump sum for teachers has increased from £3,000 to £4,000
  - The daily rate for teaching assistants, support staff has increase from £50 to £70 per day
  - The maternity lump sum for teaching assistants, support staff has increased from £1500 to £2000

### **Planned improvements (2022)**

- ✓ Prior to the pandemic we started a review of the People Strategy, which was halted due to Covid. This review now needs to be completed, so during 2022 we will review and publish a new Workforce Strategy that considers the findings of the IIP review (Jan 22) and responds to the key challenges facing us post pandemic e.g.
  - Helping our workforce to recover and address any skill gaps and plans for growth in new post Covid world

- Climate/de carbonisation agenda - how do our services mainstream this priority.
  - Legacy costs of the pandemic and how we manage the long term impacts on our workforce.
  - Supporting new and transformational approaches to service delivery and harnessing technology.
- ✓ Falling out of this revised Workforce Strategy will be a workforce plan, and a new Employee Engagement Strategy that will build in an inclusive staff voice mechanism. We will also use this as an opportunity to review and transform how we survey and involve staff in decisions that affect them and their services.
  - ✓ We will also review and resource the Council's Workready Programme to include graduate, apprenticeship and work experience opportunities which are aligned to workforce planning priorities.
  - ✓ Roll out our new [Digital Skills Framework](#) to cover all roles to ensure our workforce is equipped work in a different way.

## 2. Theme: Leadership & Management

### **Examples of what we already have in place:**

- ✓ Workforce Planning Toolkit for managers and training provided
- ✓ Range of People Management data sets including age profile, gender, type of contract etc
- ✓ Bespoke Workforce Planning dashboard designed for Senior Leadership including Heads of Service during 2021
- ✓ Strategic Workforce Planning workshops facilitated by LGA were run during 2021 with CMT and Heads of Service, which will now inform the current business planning process for 2022/23 cycle
- ✓ Range of leadership and management development opportunities including new resources on [Managing a Hybrid Team](#)
- ✓ Heads of Service Development programme has been developed by Heads of Service with the HoS forum meetings being used to develop our Heads of Service as a team and as individuals.

- ✓ Dedicated online resources to support the management of teams that work in a hybrid way.
- ✓ Development of the Resourcelink Reporting Service (RRS) and other reporting developments - this tool provides the facility for all users to run reports direct from My View (our online employee system). The reports are available to Managers on demand. Attendance management information is an essential part of the suite of reports that are available via this system. It provides a valuable additional source for sickness absence data to supplement our performance management information.
- ✓ A "live feed" has also been developed. This provides a snapshot of all absences for the current day and is updated on an hourly basis. Access has so far been limited to key officers and Heads of Service and should provide an additional useful source of management information.

### **Planned improvements (2022)**

- ✓ Further work with Heads of Service Forum do come up with a development programme

### 3. Theme: Supporting Transformation & Change

#### **Examples of what we already have in place:**

- ✓ Range of learning and development opportunities aimed at supporting the management of change
- ✓ Range of solutions making our learning content more accessible to our staff
- ✓ TIC programme supports service transformation and change and is aligned to the council's priorities.
- ✓ Management of the Better Ways of Working project and Our People Workstream

#### **Planned improvements (2022)**

- ✓ Development of a Transformation Strategy
- ✓ New Recruitment and Retention Strategy
  - ✓ Reaching out to schools to inform our Recruitment Strategy



## Governance & Audit Committee 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021

<b>Audit Wales: Review of Planning Services – Carmarthenshire County Council</b>		
<b>Recommendations / key decisions required:</b>		
1. To note the progress made by Carmarthenshire County Council in response to the Audit Wales recommendations		
<b>Reasons:</b>		
Audit Wales undertook the review of Carmarthenshire County Council’s planning services following their Assurance and Risk work had identified the service as a potential risk. It was agreed that Governance & Audit would be updated on progress quarterly.		
<b>Relevant scrutiny committee to be consulted:</b> N/A		
<b>Exec. Board Decision Required:</b> N/A		
<b>Council Decision Required:</b> N/A		
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Cllr. Mair Stephens, Deputy Leader & Cllr Philip Hughes (Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning Enforcement)		
<b>Directorate:</b> Environment  <b>Name of Head of Service:</b> Noelwyn Daniel  <b>Report Authors:</b>  Noelwyn Daniel	<b>Designations:</b>  Interim Head of Planning	<b>Tel No.:</b> 01267 226270  <b>E Mail Address:</b> <a href="mailto:NDaniel@sirgar.gov.uk">NDaniel@sirgar.gov.uk</a>

## Governance & Audit Committee 17<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2021

### Audit Wales: Review of Planning Services – Carmarthenshire County Council

The Audit Wales review sought to answer the question: Is the planning service meeting its own objectives, and supporting the Council in the delivery of its overall objectives?

Overall, Audit Wales found that: Significant and long-standing performance issues in the planning service need to be urgently addressed to help support delivery of the Council's ambitions. They came to this conclusion because:

- the Council's current arrangements for determining major planning applications need strengthening to help it achieve its regeneration ambitions;
- long-standing, significant performance issues in development management and planning enforcement are undermining effective service delivery; and
- the Council needs to urgently review its performance and service improvement arrangements for its planning service to better serve its customers.

The report included 17 key recommendations for the Council to address, these are included in the Audit Wales report and action plan.

This report provides updates up until the end of November 2021 in response to the Audit Wales recommendations and the agreed actions and seeks to provide assurance to the Governance & Audit Committee that significant progress has been made over the last seven months.

**DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?**

**YES**

1. Carmarthenshire response update on agreed action plan

## 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:** Noelwyn Daniel, Interim Head of Planning

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>

### **Legal**

Amendment to the Scheme of Delegation and the Planning Protocol are being proposed that will assist with improving performance of the Planning Division. These will be discussed at CRWG on January 5<sup>th</sup> 2022

### **Finance**

There are financial implications with actions taken to address the recommendations of the Audit Wales report. These are being managed within current budget and at the last budget monitoring the Division was projecting an underspend of £194k. There were financial implications identified relating to the undetermined planning application that were outside of the allocated 8-week time.

### **ICT**

Work is being undertaken to identify improvements that can be made to the Planning Services main ICT back-office system, Arcus Global. This work will be prioritised and taken forward by staff within the ICT & Corporate Policy Division.

### **Risk Management**

Risk has been identified from not addressing the Recommendations within the Audit Wales report and the Corporate Risk Register has been updated to articulate these Risks. Financial risk was also identified if the situation regarding the undetermined applications was not addressed urgently.

### **Staffing**

There have been staffing implications relating to the implementation of the actions to address the Audit Wales recommendation. Staff have been appointed into funded vacant posts but recruiting staff is a challenge across the whole planning sector. Staff well-being is vitally important to the authority and everything is being done to support staff as we address these recommendations.

## CONSULTATIONS

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

**Signed:** Noelwyn Daniel, Interim Head of Planning

**1. Scrutiny Committee: Not Applicable**

**2. Local Member(s): Not Applicable**

**3. Community / Town Council: Not Applicable**

**4. Relevant Partners: Not Applicable**

**5. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations: Not Applicable**

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

There are none

## Audit Wales Recommendations and Key Actions

The table below now contains all seventeen recommendations from the Audit Wales report that was provided in draft to Carmarthenshire County Council on June 14<sup>th</sup> – the final version was received on July 13<sup>th</sup> 2021. Below is the latest update that was provided to Pre-Cabinet on November 29<sup>th</sup> 2021

Work has commenced on ensuring actions are put in place and being delivered to address all recommendations as articulated by Audit Wales.

<b>Strategic impact</b>					
R1 - Align its planning service to its corporate ambitions to ensure:					
<p>R1.1 - It can respond effectively to deal with its regeneration ambitions and can deliver them at pace;</p> <p>R1.2 - That the planning service is effectively contributing to and collaborating with other services to deliver on the corporate agenda.</p>					
R2 - Review the role and outcomes it expects from its planning service as part of its strategic groups, to ensure the service is effectively integrated and delivering the required outcomes.					
<b>Ref No</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>Target Date for Completion</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>
R1.1 & R1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishment of a dedicated team of Development Management staff to focus on 'Major Projects' that support the county's economic recovery plan outputs and aspirations.</li> </ul>	07/06/21	02/08/2021	Complete	Jason Jones
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a Corporate Major Projects Group comprising council officers representing the range of services involved in development proposals, e.g. Planning, Regeneration, Highways &amp; Legal (but not limited to). Priority focus to be afforded to projects that deliver jobs and growth in support of the Council's economic recovery plan. This will be led by the Head of Regeneration.</li> </ul>	24/05/21	05/07/21	Complete	Jason Jones

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protocol to be developed covering applications for major development projects (schemes above 10 residential units or 1,000 m<sup>2</sup> of commercial development) – setting out how we will engage with applicants / developers, with clarity and commitment on the process(es) we will adopt to provide a quality and efficient planning process. Protocol will include, and clearly articulate, the programme activities, timescales and responsibilities that will support CCC’s protocol and commitment to determine major applications.</li> </ul>	12/07/21	27/08/21	Complete	Jason Jones
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consideration to be given to whether a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) should be entered into with applicants for major development projects. PPA would set out set out the scope and timetable for pre-application engagement and subsequent submission and determination of the planning application. Possible useful project management tool that would be bespoke to each development, requiring commitment from both parties – applicant and LPA.</li> </ul>	28/07	17/09/21	On-Going	Jason Jones

**Progress Report June 24<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Expressions of Interest were sent out on June 7<sup>th</sup> with a closing date of June 21<sup>st</sup>. First officer will commence on July 1<sup>st</sup> whilst a further two officers will commence on August 2<sup>nd</sup> 2021.
- Gary Glenister commenced on July 1st

- Officers have been identified that will attend this Corporate Major Projects Group. First meeting will be on w/c July 5<sup>th</sup>

#### **Progress Report July 25<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Gary Glenister and Stuart Walters have met as the Major Projects Group, to review the list of major planning applications. Projects have been prioritised based upon greatest economic impact (Number of jobs created), quick win applications with only minor issues left to resolve.
- Meetings have been convened with internal consultees such as highways, ecology and legal to explore solutions as to how we can collectively work together to process the applications efficiently. Dialogue is also ongoing with external consultees, agents and applicants to move applications forward to determination.
- Prospero a private sector planning agency are assisting and of the 133 applications are currently processing 23 of the major project application.
- The current position on the major applications is as follows:
  - 133 total number of applications
  - 22 approved to date
  - 3 refusals
  - 3 Withdrawals
  - 105 yet to be determined
- Protocol for major developments commenced and envisage completion of draft proposal August 21.

#### **Progress Report September 20<sup>th</sup> 2021**

As of 14<sup>th</sup> September the update on major projects is as follows. The original major planning application schedule presented in July is as follows: 133 applications to be determined, 49 have been approved, 9 have been refused, 5 withdrawn and 9 cancelled.

This schedule has been reviewed to focus upon the more strategic applications and those with greatest economic impact. As such the revised major projects list now focuses on applications that have:

- Housing Developments of 10 residential units or more
- Housing Developments of 0.5ha where the number of units is not known
- Commercial Development where 1000 sqm or more is created.
  
- Sites of 1ha or more
- Development creating 5 or more jobs.

The current update on the major planning applications based upon the above definition is as follows:

- Total Number of applications being determined – 61, of which to date;
- 7 Applications have been approved
- 3 Applications have been refused
- 2 pre-application submissions have been completed.

A total of 49 major applications are left to determined, made up of:

- 47 Applications
- 1 Pre-Application
- 1 EIA Screening

- In addition, a protocol for major developments has been drafted for consideration and final sign off.

#### **Progress Report October 18<sup>th</sup> 2021**

Since the last update on the 14<sup>th</sup> September 2021, where there were 49 major applications left to be determined, a total of 12 have been determined (as of 14<sup>th</sup> October), made up as follows:

- 7 Planning Applications Approved
- 2 Planning Applications Refused
- 2 Pre Application Responses
- 1 EIA Screening Opinion

Since 14<sup>th</sup> September the following 8 have been submitted and added to the list.

- 5 Planning Applications
- 2 Pre-Application
- 1 NMA to a Major

As of the 14<sup>th</sup> October, 45 major applications were left to be determined, made up of:



- 44 Planning Applications
- 1 Pre Application

The draft planning protocol has been presented and endorsed by RDT with a request that the protocol be reviewed by our legal division prior to being presented to CMT for final consideration on the 28<sup>th</sup> October.

**Progress Report November 26<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Major Planning Protocol discussed at CMT on October 28<sup>th</sup> - Legal advice is that this is an operational document and does not require Cabinet member approval. Document has been shared with Cabinet Member Cllr M Stephens for information.
- Since the last update a total of 13 have been determined up to the 19<sup>th</sup> November made up as follows:
  - 9 Major Planning Applications
  - 1 Discharge of Condition
  - 1 Non Material Amendment
  - 2 Pre Application
- Since 14<sup>th</sup> October the following 11 applications have been submitted and added to the list
  - 3 Major Planning Applications
  - 3 Pre Application
  - 1 Non Material Amendment
  - 4 Discharge of Conditions
- As of 19<sup>th</sup> of November, 43 applications are left to be determined, made up of :
  - 38 Major Planning Applications
  - 3 Discharge of Conditions
  - 2 Pre Application

R2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the relevant strategic groups that already exist to ensure Planning Services are fully integrated within their Terms of Reference.</li> </ul>	01/07/21	03/09/21	Complete	Ian R Llewelyn
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure outcomes expected from the Planning Service in delivering the outcomes of these Strategic Groups is clearly documented and agreed.</li> </ul>	06/09/21	29/10/21	Complete	Ian R Llewelyn
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**Progress Report September 20<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- List of strategic groups collated, and planning membership identified – undertaking a review of planning attendees to ensure appropriate representation.
- All attendees to be reminded of their responsibility to share information, deliver on actions arising and link in with others as appropriate.

**Progress Report October 18<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Groups where Planning attendance had ended have been identified with membership restored.
- Action ‘Ensure outcomes expected from the Planning Service in delivering the outcomes of these Strategic Groups is clearly documented and agreed.’ extended to October 29<sup>th</sup>

**Progress Report November 26<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Outcomes of the Strategic Groups to ensure clear actions where planning input is required and clear actions around expectations.
- ToR include membership with identified nominated officers – planning attendees to provide clear feedback through SMT to the relevant managers and where appropriate to contact key officers to resolve actions identified.
- Standing item to be introduced on SMT to ensure actions and information is appropriately shared and for agreed approaches to be discussed and actioned where applicable.
- SMT commit to ensuring information is disseminated to their teams as required.
- Planning membership of groups to be discussed at SMT to ensure appropriate representation at the group.
- **Recommendation 2 is Complete – this is now an on-going service operational matter.**

**Service delivery – development management**

R3 - Develop a plan and timeline to deal with its planning application backlog, in particular the historic backlog.

R4 - Review its planning data collection arrangements to ensure they are being done correctly and reported accurately.

R5 - Address the financial risks associated with the continued overspend in its planning service and the potential fee reimbursement associated with non-determination of applications.

Ref No	Action	Start Date	Target Date for Completion	Status	Responsible Officer
R3	• Co-Locate key staff involved in determination of planning applications that are within Planning Services within the same office accommodation.	07/06/21	21/06/21	Completed	Noelwyn Daniel
	• Establish process for data cleansing of planning applications.	14/06/21	02/08/21	On-Going	Jon Owen
	• Establish active backlog per team/per officer	24/05/21	10/06/21	Complete	Jon Owen
	• Introduce robust performance and case management processes.	21/06/21	03/09/21	On-Going	Noelwyn Daniel
	• Review capacity to address backlog & develop specialist roles.	18/05/21	03/09/21	On-Going	Noelwyn Daniel
	• Review current workload provided to consultants Prospero to assist with planning application backlog and ensure continuous monitoring of workload.	09/06/21	31/10/21	Complete	Hugh Towns
	• Review short term opportunities to streamline the processing and recording of Development management process.	07/06/21	03/09/21	Complete	Hugh Towns

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a Planning Hwb to act as a single point of contact for Development Management and Enforcement.</li> </ul>	06/06/21	21/06/21	Complete	Noelwyn Daniel
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Scheme of Delegation and Planning Protocol and seek approval at CRWG/Full Council.</li> </ul>	27/05/21	10/11/21	On-Going	Noelwyn Daniel
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review officer attendance at Planning Committee.</li> </ul>	04/06/21	11/06/21	Completed	Noelwyn Daniel
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review support provided to Chair of Planning Committee during the meetings</li> </ul>	22/06/21	13/07/21	Completed	Noelwyn Daniel
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify ALL internal consultees that play a part within the determination of a Planning Application. All consultees to be contacted and meeting arranged to discuss priorities.</li> </ul>	08/06/21	18/06/21	Completed	Noelwyn Daniel
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish an agreed procedure for use of Extension of Time Letter and ensure Arcus is utilised for this purpose.</li> </ul>	28/06/21	01/07/21	Completed	Hugh Towns

**Progress Report June 24<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- 10 DM staff & 4 enforcement staff will co-locate in 3 Spilman Street 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. Risk Assessment and Safe Working Practise being completed by H&S.
- Process has been established and DM officers asked to commence work on their individual case loads.
- Information obtained from Arcus Global and each officer has their own spreadsheet.
- Meeting held with Prospero and significant improvements identified that would allow Prospero to perform more effectively in addressing the authorities backlog.

- Hugh Towns has been assigned to closely manage this workload and the performance of Prospero and report back to Intervention Board. Meeting every week with Prospero.
- Prospero Contract to be extended for another 3 months - £35100, This provides us with 6 additional days per week until October 1<sup>st</sup> 2021
- Process Mapping has commenced of the Planning Application process internally.
- This Planning Hwb approach will allow us to have 'ONE VIEW' of all correspondence coming into the Planning Service – majority is for the attention of the Development Management Team & Enforcement. All DMO & Enforcement telephone calls will be transferred to the Planning Hwb
- Planning Hwb Staff will co-locate with Planning Staff to gather intelligence and support staff.
- Reviewed staff attendance at Planning Committee from 01/01/21 to 01/06/21 and compared to attendance 01/01/19 to 01/06/19. Significant increase in 2021.
- 32 internal consultees identified from across the Authority – all play a crucial role in determining planning applications.
- Email has been sent out by the Chief Executive to all Consultees informing them of the importance of responding within 21 days to Planning Applications.
- Process available within Arcus to monitor application and use of EOT letters.
- Introduce a standardised approach to EOT for all DMO's and ensure consistent monitoring.

#### **Progress Report July 25<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Prospero have been allocated additional applications.
- All applications sent to Prospero have now been prioritised – P1, P2 or P3
  - Priority 1 applications are the recent applications which were either Roberts when he left, Eilian's whilst on paternity and some of Gary's when he moved to major projects
  - Priority 2 applications are the ones on the original list they were sent which they have started work on and it would have been counter productive to stop on these
  - Priority 3 are applications on their original list that they had not really looked at.
- Prospero had some training from Emily so that they could validate applications on ARCUS.
- Prospero were waiting for some guidance from CCC in relation to quite a number of applications. That guidance has now been provided and applications can be moved forward
- Prospero were not aware of the S106 process – now rectified
- Prospero had identified a number of applications as invalid but nothing had been done to cancel the applications – now done
- We were getting an average of 10 applications a month processed by Prospero in the first 7 months – 10 have been processed in the first 2 weeks of July. I expect that rate to increase as the consultation period on the new applications they have expires.

- We are looking to split DMO's into 2 'pods' which we have called Aman/Gwendraeth and Tywi/Taf with 4 officers and a Senior in each 'pod'. Prospero will not be allocated new work unless we are under huge pressure and will work on the 167 cases that they still have.

#### **Progress Report September 20<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Prospero contract has been extended until 31 December 2021 – number of applications with Prospero down from 167 on 25th July to 78 on 17th September 2021
- Two 'pod' approach has been implemented and efforts are being made to avoid officers being allocated applications when they are on leave
- DMO's do not now need SDMO authorisation for certain types of application – this removes identified duplication of effort between DMO and SDMO essentially reviewing the same applications which are of a minor and uncontentious nature.
- We are reviewing consultation thresholds with ecology and highways to ensure we are only consulting on matters where the consultees can add value.
- Applications dating from pre-June 2015 have been identified and 'finally disposed of' where there has been no recent contact from the applicant/agent. We are working through applications over 5 years old to identify why no decision has been made and to identify a way forward.
- Action 'Introduce robust performance and case management processes.' Target date for completion is being extended 31/10/21 to ensure all relevant processes can be properly reviewed across the whole spectrum of services within Planning that contribute towards determining planning applications,
- Action 'Review capacity to address backlog & develop specialist roles.' - with staff changes it is necessary to extend the Target Date to 31/10/21 for completion of this work.
- Action 'Review Scheme of Delegation and Planning Protocol and seek approval at CRWG/Full Council' – this was discussed at CRWG on 16/09/21 and some minor amendments required before Full Council on October 13th – Target Date extended until 13/10/21

#### **Progress Report October 18<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Planning committee – reminder to members of responsibilities under code of conduct to be provided as part of the legal officers opening script ahead of each meeting.
- Prospero are helping out with current applications as well as working on the historic cases due to the numbers of applications being received – average number of cases received per month in 2021 is 229 (projected 2,748 for the year) in 2020 the monthly average was 179 (2148 for the year).
- We are reviewing the Section 106 process with Legal to establish where efficiencies can be made.
- We are reviewing consultation thresholds with Natural Resources Wales to ensure we are only consulting on matters where they can add value.
- Action 'Review Scheme of Delegation and Planning Protocol and seek approval at CRWG/Full Council.' extended to November 10<sup>th</sup> to Full Council meeting.

**Progress Report November 26<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Applications with Prospero stand at 46 down from 167 on 25th July 2021. No new cases currently being allocated to Prospero
- S106 review has been progressed and is almost finalised.
- Consultation thresholds with NRW established
- Additional resource now being released to deal with major projects.
- Scheme of Delegation waits to be tabled at Full Council for final approval.

<b>R4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review validation of planning applications and ensure its in line with Procedure Order to ensure accurate capturing of data.</li> </ul>	01/07/21	03/09/21	Complete	Hugh Towns
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct a thorough review of all Data collection arrangements with regards to Planning Applications and ensure accuracy and reporting via Arcus Global</li> </ul>	01/07/21	30/11/21	Complete	Hugh Towns

**Progress Report July 25<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Validation checklists have been created for 23 types of application. REG are adding these to I@W for each application for use by officers
- EIA Screening Checklist is also being added by REG to I@W to ensure we don't miss EIA developments
- Consultations were identified by a checklist on I@W – this has now been integrated into ARCUS
- Invalid Notices and Invalid letter/emails have been added to ARCUS and officers provided with guidance which to use for each type of application
- Officers instructed to use Invalid Notices/Letters as it starts the clock for us to be able to return the application if no response within 21 days We have undertaken a mini TIC review into validation and identified some issues to tackle and a few quick wins
- We are working on a Publicity and Consultation Protocol to ensure we are more consistent in how we undertake publicity and consultation.

**Progress Report September 20<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Importance of using validation checklist has been stressed. Use to be reviewed by carrying out spot-checks in I@W.
- Action 'Review validation of planning applications and ensure its in line with Procedure Order to ensure accurate capturing of data.' target date has been extended to 31/10/21 - TIC review process recommenced in September – suspended during August
- Publicity element of the Publicity and Consultation Protocol has been completed. Consultation element has been drafted but requires further input

- Section 106 Protocol to be developed – initial meeting of DMO/SDMO’s took place on 6<sup>th</sup> September
- Number of outstanding applications stands at 667 on 16<sup>th</sup> September – 84 impacted by Phosphates, 123 with Legal Services. Phosphate applications being RAG rated to identify whether some applications can be processed.
- Consideration being given to Built Heritage Officers being the case officer for LBC applications as they have the delegated powers
- Data cleansing undertaken on Built Heritage workload – 62 applications (16<sup>th</sup> September) currently awaiting a response.
- Agricultural Notification procedure has been reviewed and amended
- Guidance notes in relation to applicants duties in terms of biodiversity have been drafted. Once finalised the notes will be provided to applicants with their acknowledgement letter.

**Progress Report 18<sup>th</sup> October 2021**

- Spot checks have established that validation checklists are being used by officers. No invalid notice appeals received in Q2.
- Section 106 Protocol – meeting with Legal Officers arranged for 21<sup>st</sup> October 2021
- Number of outstanding applications stands at 653 (13<sup>th</sup> October) - of which 294 are current cases within time limits and 359 are backlog cases
- Cases potentially impacted by phosphates now stands at 81
- Action ‘Conduct a thorough review of all Data collection arrangements with regards to Planning Applications and ensure accuracy and reporting via Arcus Global’ extended to November 30<sup>th</sup>. Process reviews continuing with Information Management Team.

**Progress Report November 26<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Overall number of outstanding applications stands at 612 (22.11.21) of which the backlog element is 323
- Number of applications awaiting validation stands at 15 (22.11.21)
- Cases potentially impacted by phosphates now stands at 72. Phosphates is the only issue on 50 of those cases.
- Process review of Information Management Team is almost completed
- **Recommendation 4 is Complete** – data collection arrangements will be constantly monitored together with data held on Arcus

R5	• Conduct a thorough review into all spends within the Planning Service and review all current income streams.	12/07/21	01/11/21	Complete	Noelwyn Daniel
	• Prepare and agree an options paper for mitigating the potential fee reimbursement with non determination of applications.	03/09/21	01/11/21	Complete	Noelwyn Daniel



**Progress Report July 25<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Latest budget monitoring meeting is forecasting an overall underspend within the Planning Service for 21/22

**Progress Report October 18<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Latest budget monitoring for Planning Services continues to be an overall underspend for 21/22
- Action 'Conduct a thorough review into all spends within the Planning Service and review all current income streams.' extended to November 1<sup>st</sup>
- Action 'Prepare and agree an options paper for mitigating the potential fee reimbursement with non determination of applications.' extended to November 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Progress Report November 26<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Latest budget monitoring for Planning Services continues to be an overall underspend for 21/22
- The risk of the reimbursement of non determination of applications continues to decline as the backlog of overdue applications reduces. Working through these is believed to be the best approach as during the last 6 months we have only re-imbursed 3 applications which has cost £7,980
- Continued improved performance is the best approach to mitigating this risk and therefore no options paper will be produced and action has been closed.
- **Recommendation 5 is Complete with all spends continuing to be reviewed on an on-going basis and is part of the formal budget monitoring process**

**Service delivery – Planning Enforcement**

R6 - Develop a plan and timeline to deal with its planning enforcement backlog, in particular the historic backlog.

R7 - Review the resources and capacity within its planning enforcement service to address the accruing caseload.

R8 - Ensure that other related Council services are able to accommodate any increases in planning enforcement action.

R9 - Ensure that any changes to its enforcement policy are assessed for impact and consulted on, to ensure all consequences are considered.

Ref No	Action	Start Date	Target Date for Completion	Status	Responsible Officer
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R6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify numbers of applications in each priority and agree time-line and resources for reviewing/closing/progressing cases.</li> </ul>	14/06/21	30/11/21	On-Going	Sue Watts
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proformas/templates to be developed to support above.</li> </ul>	14/06/21	18/06/21	Completed	Sue Watts
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agree case sign off/closure processes with EBM</li> </ul>	14/06/21	01/07/21	Completed	Sue Watts
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review backlog/caseload of individual officers and re-allocate where appropriate</li> </ul>	14/06/21	03/09/21	On-Going	Sue Watts
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Planning input into backlog progress discussion</li> </ul>	14/06/21	03/09/21	Complete	Sue Watts
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BSU to coordinte the functions of licensing and housing.</li> </ul>	14/06/21	18/06/21	Complete	Sue Watts
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Progress against above actions and determine a realistic timeline to clear historic backlog</li> </ul>	06/09/21	01/10/21	Complete	Sue Watts

**Progress Report June 24<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Officers are completing 'infringement' forms on the high priority cases and the more controversial. They have been asked to look at 20 each week.
- The team have completed approximately 80 infringement cases with less than half that have been closed; the remainder requires further work/enforcement action. The site visits, communication and correspondence/notices are taking a considerable amount of time. Officers have been asked to monitor the time taken to collate and issue the notices in order to ascertain whether thee is an admin role that could be utilised to save officers time.
- Reallocation of non case work of Coordinator to administration support officer in order to priortise officers time to help clear the backlog of other officers
- Will be carried out as part of the Enforcement Policy/Statement to be approved as per recommendation in WAO recommendation. This will include prioritising cases.

- BSU to co-ordinate the functions of housing and licencing and carried out by a designated support officer.

#### **Progress Update July 25<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Prosecution templates have been prepared and discussed with Legal. This includes an 'aide memoir' of information required for a prosecution file and a decision form that must be completed by the officer and Manager prior to submitting to Legal. This will ensure that all information is ready for legal to proceed thereby ensuring consistency and efficiency.
- In order to ensure consistency, arrangements are being made for the Enforcement officers and those in Built Heritage and Mineral teams for training/refresher sessions on contents of notices and disclosure to ensure that they are inclusive of all teams and less likely for challenge.
- Executive Board portfolio Member is kept up to date with process and dates in calendar to attend infringement meeting

#### **Progress Update September 20<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Further work undertaken to analyse nature of backlog - this identified a number of areas that need to be addressed within the Case Closure Protocol.
- All high risk cases are being reviewed to check status/strategy and project plans to be developed to progress top 10 risk cases with potential costs of dealing with each case and timescales.
- Case Closure Protocol has been approved by the Cabinet Member for Planning Enforcement on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2021 – this is subject to a 5 day call but could be operational by September 28<sup>th</sup> if there is no call-in.
- Action 'Identify numbers of applications in each priority and agree time-line and resources for reviewing/closing/progressing cases.' target date to be extended and linked to the case closure protocol.
- Action 'Review backlog/caseload of individual officers and re-allocate where appropriate' - it has been decided that this action will remain as on-going as part of operational matters but closed for the purpose of this progress report.
- Action 'Review Planning input into backlog progress discussion' - target date for this has been extended to 30/11/21 due to work required and re-prioritisation.

#### **Progress Update October 18<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Work is on-going to review high/medium risk cases. Infringement forms are being used to determine a course of action for these cases and the adoption of a Case Closure protocol will support a decision to close cases where further action is not considered appropriate in line with protocol.
- Following approval of Case Closure Protocol by the Cabinet Member in September, officers are now reviewing all historical 'anonymous' cases. 55 additional cases have been closed as a result of this work. Additional resources now deployed within the team will provide capacity to review further cases and it is hoped to move to historical cases reported by elected members within the next month.
- Engaged the services of a Barrister via Legal Services for 4 days over the next month to assist with our most complex enforcement cases.

**Progress Report November 26<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Work on-going to review historic cases in line with Case Closure Protocol and a further 66 cases were closed in October and to date 62 in November. Backlog at 26/11/21 now stands at 733.
- Discussions on-going in relation to resourcing the approach to the top 10 high risk cases. Barrister opinion to be sought on these cases prior to action plan with costed options being submitted to CMT/Cabinet early in the new year.

R7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deploy an experienced officer to support the Intervention Board to lead improvement in Planning Enforcement.</li> </ul>	18/05/21	07/06/21	Completed	Noelwyn Daniel
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and Increase capacity within the Planning Enforcement team to address accruing caseload and backlog.</li> </ul>	07/06/21	30/11/21	Completed	Sue Watts

**Progress Update June 24<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Sue Watts has been deployed from Public Protection. She will lead the Planning Enforcement Team and manage the staff in the absence of their Manager.

**Progress Update July 25<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Recruit 2 x Planning enforcement officers for 12mths.
- Continue to explore additional capacity options from other service areas within the Environment Department.

**Progress Update September 20<sup>th</sup> 2020**

- Initial recruitment exercise for the 2x temporary Planning Enforcement Officers posts was unsuccessful. The Posts will be re-advertised in September backed by a recruitment drive (social media etc). In the interim we have been able to identify two agency staff who should be able to start w/c September 27<sup>th</sup> to begin work on enforcement cases.
- Additional support capacity will be provided by Enforcement staff from Ainsley Williams's team to commence September 27<sup>th</sup> – this will be 2 officers for 2/3 days per week.
- Additional capacity had been sourced from the Design team in order to support and progress some of the more contentious cases.

- The funding for the vacant Built Heritage Enforcement Officer Post has been increased from 0.6 to 1 FTE. The post will be advertised in September and be advertised in specialist press to attract experienced officers.
- We have approached the former Head of Planning from Cardiff County Council who will be in a position to provide support with putting project plans in place to address the Top 12 most high risk and high profile cases. Discussion are on-going with no decision taken yet – this will be decided by the Intervention Assurance Board.

**Progress Update October 18<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Two additional staff employed via agency whilst recruitment to two secondments is undertaken.
- Additional support has also been provided via the Council’s Environmental Enforcement Team.
- Discussions are on-going in relation to the approach to managing the top 10 risk/priority cases.
- Action ‘Review and Increase capacity within the Planning Enforcement team to address accruing caseload and backlog.’ extended as we are going back out to advertise the two secondment posts.

**Progress Report November 26<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Appointments now made to the 2 secondment posts.
- Growth Bid submitted to make the 2 secondment posts permanent
- Built Heritage Enforcement Officer appointed.
- Additional capacity has been sourced to address top 10 Enforcement cases.
- **Recommendation 7 Complete**

R8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process map the full Impact Assessment on Council Services due to Planning Enforcement action and identify areas for streamlining and greater collaboration.</li> </ul>	06/09/21	30/10/21	On-Going	Sue Watts
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**Progress Update September 20<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Increased enforcement could have various outcomes including an increased in planning applications (demand of DM team), legal Action (demand on Legal Section), requirement for costings of more contentious cases (Design and Property). Further work on the backlog of cases is required prior to carrying out an impact assessment.

**Progress Update October 18<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Discussions will take place with relevant Council services as part of the consultation stage for the proposed Planning Enforcement Statement and this will seek to identify the potential impact on these services.

**Progress Report November 26<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Sessions to be held with internal stakeholders to help evaluate the impact of the draft Enforcement Statement.

<b>R9</b>	• Revise Enforcement Policy and seek approval at Executive Board ensuring completion of Integrated Impact Assessment.	06/09/21	26/11/21	On-going	Sue Watts
	• Develop a Planning Enforcement Charter and seek approval at Executive Board ensuring completion of Integrated Impact Assessment.	06/09/21	26/11/21	Not Started	Sue Watts

**Progress Update September 20<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- New Planning Enforcement Statement has been drafted and will be consulted upon at the Members seminar on September 27<sup>th</sup>. It will then go for Public Consultation before returning and going through the political process for approval at Cabinet.
- Consultation plan developed to engage views of all stakeholders
- Discussions continuing with corporate colleagues re completion of Integrated Impact Assessment

**Progress Update October 18<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- The new Planning Enforcement Statement will now be submitted to CMT on the 28<sup>th</sup> October and Pre Cabinet on the 15<sup>th</sup> November prior to a public consultation exercise.
- The Statement will then proceed through the political process in the new year of 2022.

**Progress Report November 26<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Amendments to be made Enforcement Statement following feedback from Cabinet on the 15<sup>th</sup> December
- Enforcement Statement to be considered by Environment and Public Protection Scrutiny Committee on the 22<sup>nd</sup> December prior to submission to Cabinet Member Portfolio meeting in January 2022.

**Risk management**

R10 - Review its corporate risk register to ensure that the planning risks, related to development management and planning enforcement are comprehensively defined and have clear mitigating actions.

R11 - Assure itself that its corporate arrangements for risk management are effective<sup>1</sup>.

Ref No	Action	Start Date	Target Date for Completion	Status	Responsible Officer
R10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the Corporate Risk Register accurately reflects the significant risks presented by Development Management and Planning Enforcement to the delivery of the Authorities Priorities and the associated financial risk.</li> </ul>	02/08/21	24/09/21	Complete	Noelwyn Daniel

**Progress Update July 25<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Updated Corporate Risk Register to be presented to Governance & Audit Committee on December 17th once approved at CMT & PEB

**Progress Update October 18<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- The updated Corporate Risk Register including all new risks associated with the Planning Service was approved at CMT and was discussed at the Governance & Audit Committee meeting on October 13<sup>th</sup> 2021
- Recommendation 10 is now complete** – ensuring the Corporate Risk Register is regularly reviewed and updated will continue as part of 'business as usual'.

R11	We will review the corporate arrangements for risk management to ensure they are effective and assess progress made on the recommendations made by the Audit Wales report 'Review of Risk Management Arrangement' in July 2019.	01/11/21	01/01/22	On-Going	Jon Owen
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**Progress Update September 20<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- The Intervention Assurance Board have asked TIC to conduct the review which will commence on November 1<sup>st</sup>. Work will be undertaken to agree a Terms of Reference for this review with Head of Revenue and Financial Compliance.
- Target date for completion of this review has therefore been amended to 01/01/22 together with the start date to 01/11/21

**Progress Update October 18<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- A draft TOR is being discussed with the Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance and will be reviewed and agreed at the Intervention Assurance Board on October 27<sup>th</sup> 2021

**Progress Report November 26<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Review in progress and interviews being held with Directors/Heads of Service /3rd tier managers and elected members. Draft report to be completed by end of December.

**Responding to review findings**

R12 - The Council should ensure that in responding to findings of all reviews into the effectiveness of its planning service that it:

R12.1 - Prioritises the actions;

R12.2 - Regularly evaluates the impact of the changes that it is making; and

R12.3 - Regularly reports progress to senior officers and Members to ensure transparent and timely oversight and monitoring, and that any corrective action is taken.

Ref No	Action	Start Date	Target Date for Completion	Status	Responsible Officer
R12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Evaluate all recommendations proposed by the Independent Review into Planning Services in Autumn 2019 and determine which are superseded by the recommendations made by</li></ul>	06/09/21	30/09/21	Complete	Noelwyn Daniel



	<p>Audit Wales. Due to the passage of time evaluate recommendations and decide whether they remain valid and need to be included and monitored within this Action Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review all Recommendations made by TIC over the last 5 years and amalgamate those recommendations if appropriate within this Action Plan.</li> </ul>	06/09/21	30/09/21	Complete	Jon Owen
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**Progress Update September 20<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Enforcement progress update to be reported to TIC Board in September 2021.

**Progress Update October 18<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Recommendation 12 is complete** – regular reporting arrangements are now in place and this is ‘business as usual’. Monitoring reports go to CMT, Pre-Cabinet, Scrutiny and Governance & Audit Committee. Progress is also discussed at Planning SMT and shared with all staff within the Division.

**Performance management**

R13 - Ensure that the data available under the new planning performance management system (Arcus) is designed, maximised, and presented for analysis at relevant meetings.

R14- Ensure that it presents a consolidated range of planning performance information to senior officers and Members to provide them with a fuller picture of service performance. This should include:

- R14.1 - performance data;
- R14.2 - financial data;
- R14.3 - complaints information; and
- R14.4 - risk management information.

R15 better benchmark, collaborate and share learning with other Local Planning Authorities to maximise opportunities to identify and implement good practice.

Ref No	Action	Start Date	Target Date for Completion	Status	Responsible Officer
R13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish management dashboards for key areas of the Planning Service.</li> </ul>	24/05/21	01/07/21	Complete	Jon Owen
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agree format for presenting these performance management dashboards and identify all relevant meetings. Links in with R2</li> </ul>	02/08/21	03/09/21	Complete	Noelwyn Daniel
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a Planning Service monitoring framework for Planning Committee.</li> </ul>	02/08/21	03/09/21	Complete	Ian R Llewelyn

**Progress Update June 24<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Management Dashboard have been produced containing significant performance data.

**Progress Update September 20<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Core indicators to form the monitoring framework for Quarterly reporting to Planning Committee. Initial monitoring outcomes scheduled for CMT 29<sup>th</sup> September 2021 ahead of reporting to Planning Committee 14<sup>th</sup> October. To form a quarterly standing item at future meetings.
- Planning Appeal outcomes, performance and costs awarded against the LPA to form a future quarterly item commencing in October.
- Planning Appeals determined during the previous month to be a standing item at Planning Committee commencing 16<sup>th</sup> September.
- Chair of Planning Committee briefed on the broadening future reports presented to committee to incl performance, policy changes and corporate updates.
- Action 'Agree format for presenting these performance management dashboards and identify all relevant meetings. Links in with R2' target date to be extended to 23/10/21 to ensure consistency in dashboards presented.

**Progress Update October 18<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Planning Performance Core Indicators reported to CMT 29<sup>th</sup> September 2021 ahead of report to Planning Committee on the 26<sup>th</sup> October. Subsequent standing quarterly item.

- **Recommendation 13 is complete** – we will however continuously evolve and improve on the presentation and format of what we present at relevant meetings. This is now ‘business as usual’

**Progress Report November 26<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Quarter 1 - Planning Performance Core Indicators reported to Planning Committee (PC) on the 26<sup>th</sup> October with Q2 scheduled to be reported to PC on the 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2021.

<b>R14</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A revised Corporate Performance Monitoring framework is being established. This will ensure a comprehensive picture of performance will be available for all services via a single dashboard which incorporates to begin with performance data, financial data, complaints and Member enquiries together with risk management information.</li> </ul>	01/07/21	29/10/21	On-Going	Gwyneth Ayers
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**Progress Update July 25<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Draft Corporate Performance Monitoring framework in place and will be going to CMT in September 2021

**Progress Report September 20<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Above draft report is now scheduled in November 2021

**Progress Report November 26<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- The Performance Monitoring Framework was presented and agreed at CMT on November 11<sup>th</sup> and is being presented for discussion to Pre-Cabinet on November 29<sup>th</sup>.
- Qtr2 Performance Monitoring was presented to CMT on November 18<sup>th</sup> in a way that ensures a comprehensive picture of performance was made available for discussion relating to the Corporate Strategy. This included Key Actions, Performance Indicators, Risk Management, Internal Audit, Finance and complaints data. This approach will be developed and enhanced for all Service areas including Planning for 2022/23 reporting year.

<b>R15</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will develop a robust and consistent approach to benchmarking the planning service and seek to maximise all avenues to identify and then implement good practise.</li> </ul>	06/09/21	29/10/21	On-Going	Ian R Llewelyn
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### **Progress Update September 20<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Data collection through national performance measures collected across authorities – use as a consistent standard benchmarking measures and establish annual reporting - CMT, Scrutiny and Planning Committee.
- Link in with the City Deal through the Land Use Regional co-ordinating role to share good practice - Planning co-ordinating post currently undergoing recruitment.
- Develop regional links and shared approaches through the establishment of the CJC's and relevant topic subgroup - working group established and now meeting on a bi-monthly basis.

### **Progress Update October 18<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Link in with the City Deal through the Land Use Regional co-ordinating role to share good practice - Planning co-ordinating post appointed with commencement on 1<sup>st</sup> November.
- Regional topic working group developing governance framework and identifying resource requirements to deliver regional planning role.

### **Progress Report November 26<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Link in with the City Deal through the Land Use Regional co-ordinating role to share good practice with the Planning co-ordinating post having commenced their role.
- Service performance indicators and the quarterly assessment of performance to be measured against national benchmarking targets – included as part of reports presented to SMT quarterly monitoring performance across the service.
- Membership of Regional National Groups where best practice is regularly discussed and shared these include – Planning Officer Society for Wales (POSW), All Wales and regional Planning Policy Groups, regional Development Management Group, POSW Minerals and Waste Group, South-west Wales Strategic Development Plan Group, SAC Rivers Planning Group, Phosphate Additionality Group, Welsh Planning and Biodiversity Forum etc.
- Good Practice a standing item on SMT with managers taking ownership of the responsibility to share.
- Best practice staff workshops and briefing sessions (held in abeyance during the response to the Audit Wales Report) to recommence with a focus on teams identifying areas of discussion with the programme agreed through SMT.

### **Service user perspective**

R16 - The Council should better consider and apply the perspective of its service users in designing and delivering its planning services to continuously improve the service in a sustainable way. This should include:

R16.1 - Understanding the current position regarding trends in complaints and customer feedback, and taking action to address any issues;

R16.2 - Setting out clear standards that service users can expect;

R16.3- Improving engagement and ongoing communication with customers.  
 R16.4 - Establishing an improved mechanism for gathering, evaluating, and applying customer feedback.

Ref No	Action	Start Date	Target Date for Completion	Status	Responsible Officer
R16.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The setup of the Planning Hwb will act as a single point of contact for all service users. Analyse the intelligence gathered by the Planning Hwb and develop an action plan and implement sustainable improvements</li> </ul>	21/06/21	30/10/21	On-Going	Noelwyn Daniel
R16.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a Planning Customer Charter setting out clearly the standards and timescales service users can expect.</li> </ul>	06/09/21	30/11/21	On-Going	Ian R Llewelyn
R16.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Planning Services content online and improve availability of online forms.</li> </ul>	07/06/21	01/11/21	On-Going	Deina Hockenhill
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish an on-going engagement programme with customers including agents &amp; developers/</li> </ul>	02/08/21	30/11/21	On-Going	Deina Hockenhill
R16.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See action against R16.1</li> </ul>				

**Progress Report Update June 24<sup>th</sup>**

- For R16.1 please reference R3
- Work has commenced to review the online forms and content of the website. Media & Marketing are leading this piece of work.

**Progress Report Update September 20<sup>th</sup>**

- R16.3 - "Check if you need planning permission" page is currently the only real live page so that we can channel all enquiries and understand what information our customers are looking to find. Planning enforcement is ready to go live but the team need to finalise the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage form. Our aim is to introduce a milestone template to many sections of the site which will be beneficial for our customers as they search or apply for any specific details etc. This work is ongoing

- Quarterly e-newsletter will be sent to all developers and agents from the autumn onward. This will include useful links and support. From October onwards a minimum of 2 social posts on the work of our planning service will be promoted on the corporate social channels. Various letter templates have already been re-written with the customer in mind. Further letters will be modified during the next couple of months.
- Phosphates information is now live on the website and a request more information have been made available to our customers. Some have already signed up and engaging with these will begin early Autumn as information is received from the service.
- R16.2 - Draft planning customer charter to link to the work on the wider Corporate Charter to be reported in due course. Content to be reflective but to drill down into service specific commitments. Exploring the potential for customer engagement to inform some of its commitments.

#### **Progress Report Update October 18<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Planning Customer Charter pending progress on the corporate customer charter – reflects the need for integration between them.
- Planning Hwb has collated good intelligence to date with specific details of source queries and nature of enquiry. This has provided a priority action plan for website updates. One to ones with the officers has also enabled the team to address improvements within the current web content and therefore improved customer experience. The Hwb has received and dealt with 2,899 queries since its implementation this includes 184 DSU enquiries.

#### **Progress Report Update October 18<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- The website has ample information, we are currently reviewing pages to ensure the language is clear and that the customer journey is as straightforward as possible. Our aim is that all correspondence and communication is consistent to avoid any confusion, and this may lead to us including simple video content to explain certain processes. To date we have amended 5 different letter/email templates and amended more than 5 key sections of the website.
- The website is required to link to 3 different portals 'Arcus', info@work and the WG planning application Wales. To avoid confusion, we must stop referencing to this as the planning portal.
- Using Arcus instead of info@work as our primary document management system.
- Make changes to the public register section of arcus on the website to ensure the search and application reference pages more user friendly - enabling the user to locate application files more easily.
- Await confirmation from Arcus on additional functionality within the system that we're not currently using for example having a PDF editor that would allow planning officers to edit and add scales to plans.
- Arrange additional training and create a training programme for all staff to fully understand the system.
- The planning pages of the corporate website now also has a pop-up function which allows us to highlight any changes to any planning policies. For example, the TAN 15 Policy change from 1 Dec.
- Extending/Changing your home – this is a new page which has an eform 'check if you need planning?' for any existing property enquiries only.
- Report a Breach (Planning) New Enforcement Page is now live, with 2<sup>nd</sup> stage to follow.

- We will introduce to the website the milestone markers for certain processes so that customers who come back and forth will know where they are within the process.
- We aim to create new content to highlight why have an architect / agent and what's involved in the planning process. We feel this will address failure demand and better understanding of the process. Complete by January 2022
- Major projects will be uploaded to the website in an accessible format as soon as possible and a refresh of the current content will be done to ensure no reference to the old way of working.
  
- More than 50 FAQs have now been loaded onto the website and these are updated and added to on a regular basis. These are the FAQs that staff, planning Hwb and customer service use to ensure consistency in our engagement, messaging and responses.
- Member seminar and agent meeting have been conducted and further meetings will be arranged as part of the engagement programme
- Corporate consultation will support planning enforcement with their public consultation. Aim to get this out early Jan 2022. A specific programme on how this will be communicated will also be put in place.
- We will set up specific focus groups to analyse the effectiveness of the customer journey on certain web pages such as making changes to your home, submitting a planning application, and what's involved in a planning process. Complete Feb 2022
- Develop an engagement feedback form for all successful applicants to complete to rate the service and monitor ways in how we improve moving forward. Would need to see how this would work with agents.
- Develop a message that can be sent to persistent callers so that a clear and consistent message is sent to close off certain enquiries.
- A press release, Leader's statement and a member's bulletin update has been prepared to clarify and respond to the planning audit review. We had eight press enquiries – six of these we provided the Leader's statement. The other two were from Wales Online and were follow-up enquiries to which we responded with an updated statement reflecting the progress made since receiving the audit reports.
- Actions 'Establish a Planning Customer Charter setting out clearly the standards and timescales service users can expect.' / Review Planning Services content online and improve availability of online forms. / Establish an on-going engagement programme with customers including agents & developers are all extended to November 30<sup>th</sup> 2021 due to volume of work required in these areas.

#### **Progress Report November 26<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- Action on establishing a Planning Customer Charter linked directly to improvements in communication and web content (R16.3) and is an expression of clarity around what the customer can expect of the Planning Service and what the service should expect from its customers.
- The following key elements have been or are in the process of being implemented.
  - ❖ Major projects/applications protocol was reported to CMT 28<sup>th</sup> October 2021.
  - ❖ Consultation Protocol was reported to CMT 23<sup>rd</sup> September
  - ❖ Enforcement Statement reported to Pre-Cabinet on the 15<sup>th</sup> November.

- Note the customer charter is not a single document but an expression of the Planning Services commitment to the customer expressed through the online content and the above protocols etc.

**Well-Being of Future Generations**

R17 The Council should take the opportunity in any changes to the planning service to consider how it might act more closely in accordance with the sustainable development principles in contributing to the delivery of the Council's well-being objectives.

Ref No	Action	Start Date	Target Date for Completion	Status	Responsible Officer
R17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will carry out a full Integrated Impact Assessment and ascertain opportunities to fully embed all sustainable development principles of the Well-Being of Future Generations to ensure any changes contribute fully to the Council's Well-Being objectives.</li> </ul>	01/09/21	01/11/21	On-Going	Noelwyn Daniel

**Progress Update September 20<sup>th</sup> 2021**

- The Planning Services Business Plan for 2021/22 is being revised for presenting to the Communities Scrutiny members in October.
- Work will commence on developing the Divisional business plan for 2022/23 in October and look to utilise the new approach to Integrated Impact Assessments which will take into full account of the sustainable development principles. It will also review the contribution to the Council's Well-Being objectives.





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## Governance & Audit Committee 17 December 2021

<b>INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN UPDATE 2021/22</b>		
<b>Recommendations / key decisions required:</b> To receive the report.		
<b>Reasons:</b> Regular progress report to be presented to each Governance & Audit Committee meeting.		
<b>Relevant scrutiny committee to be consulted:</b> N/A		
<b>Cabinet Decision Required:</b> N/A		
<b>Council Decision Required:</b> N/A		
CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Cllr D Jenkins		
<b>Directorate:</b> Corporate Services  <b>Name of Head of Service:</b> Helen Pugh  <b>Report Author:</b> Caroline Powell	<b>Designation:</b> Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance  Principal Auditor	<b>Tel No.:</b> 01267 246223  <b>E Mail Address:</b> <a href="mailto:HLPugh@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">HLPugh@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a>  <a href="mailto:CaPowell@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">CaPowell@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a>

**Governance & Audit Committee  
17 December 2021**

**Internal Audit Plan Update 2021/22**

**1. BRIEF SUMMARY OF PURPOSE OF REPORT.**

To provide Members with progress of the Internal Audit Plan. The following Reports are attached:

**REPORT A: Internal Audit Plan Progress Report for 2021/22**

An amendment has been made to the Internal Audit plan, with the requirement for Internal Audit to undertake work to assist with the payment of the Winter Fuel Support Scheme, this has been included on the plan in place of Cyber Security.

The rationale for removing Cyber Security from the current plan is that an Internal Audit review has only recently been concluded on Cyber Security (Final Report issued 25<sup>th</sup> June 2021), an Audit Wales review has been recently undertaken and a simulated phishing exercise is currently underway across the Authority to assist with training staff on Cyber Security. The proposal is to include Cyber Security on the Internal Audit Plan for 2022/23.

**REPORT B: Summary of Completed Final Reports Relating to Key Financial Systems**

A Summary of Final Reports for the Key Systems completed during the last Quarter is attached.

1.	NNDR
----	------

**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: H L Pugh – Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance

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

### Finance

Reviews carried out to ensure systems in place comply with the Authority's Financial Procedure Rules.

## CONSULTATIONS

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

Signed: H L Pugh – Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance

1. Scrutiny Committee: Not Applicable
2. Local Member(s): Not Applicable
3. Community / Town Council: Not Applicable
4. Relevant Partners: Not Applicable
5. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations: Not Applicable

### 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
Internal Audit Plan 2021/22	AC 26-03-21	<a href="#">Agenda for Governance &amp; Audit Committee on Friday, 26th March, 2021, 2.00 pm</a>

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INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2021/22									
2021/22	% Plan Completion to Date	52.0%							
Job No	Departments	Days Planned	Pre. Audit Meeting	Terms of Reference Issued	Commenced	Field Work Complete	Draft Report Issued	Complete / Final Report Issued	Assurance Rating / Engagement Type
<b>Fundamentals</b>									
1121001	Creditor Payments	30							
1121002	Expenditure	30	*	*	*	*			
1121003	NNDR	20	*	*	*	*	*	*	Acceptable
1121004	Payroll	30	*	*	*	*			
1121005	Travel & Subsistence	20	*	*	*	*			
	<b>Total Audit Days for Fundamentals</b>	<b>130</b>							
<b>Corporate Governance Assurance</b>									
2121001	Annual Governance Statement/Corporate Governance Arrangements	20							
2121002	Performance Management	20							
2121003	Welsh Language Standards	20							
7221002	Winter Fuel Support Scheme	15	*	/	*				
	<b>Total Audit Days for Corporate Governance Assurance</b>	<b>75</b>							
<b>COVID-19</b>									
3121001	Covid-19 Duplication Checks (NNDR and Self-Isolation Payments)	20	*	*	*				
3121002	COVID-19 Free School Meals Payments	20	*	*	*				
3121003	COVID-19 Systems and Processes	20	*	/	*				
3121004	COVID-19 Working Groups	20	*	/	*				
	<b>Total Audit Days for COVID-19</b>	<b>80</b>							
<b>Corporate Review Work</b>									
4121001	Brexit	20							
4121002	External Arrangements	20	*	*	*				
4121003	Contract Management	15							
4121004	Procurement	15	*	*	*	*	*	*	Acceptable
4121005	Safeguarding - Adults	10							
4121006	Safeguarding - Children	10							
4121007	Staffing Matters	20	*	*	*				
	<b>Total Audit Days for Corporate Review Work</b>	<b>110</b>							
<b>Counter Fraud</b>									
5121001	Fraud Prevention, Detection and Investigation	40	*	/	*				
5121002	National Fraud Initiative	30	*	/	*	*	/	*	Investigatory/Assurance
5121003	Proactive Fraud Testing	20	*	/	*				
	<b>Total Audit Days for Counter Fraud Work</b>	<b>90</b>							
<b>Grants &amp; Certification</b>									
6121001	Burry Port Harbour	10	*	/	*	*	/	*	Accounts Return

6121002	Children & Communities Grant	25	*	/	*	*	/	*	Certification
6121003	Education Improvement Grant - EOY	15	*	*	*	*	*	*	Certification
6121004	Education Improvement Grant - Q3	15							
6121006	Enable Grant	10	*	/	*	*	/	*	Certification
6121007	HSG - Homelessness	12	*	/	*	*	/	*	Certification
6121008	HSG - Rent Smart Wales	10	*	/	*	*	/	*	Certification
6121009	HSG - Supporting People	13	*	/	*	*	/	*	Certification
6121010	Local Authority Education Grant	20	*	/	*				
6121011	Other Grants (where assurance is required for sign-off)	20	*	/	*	*	/	*	Assurance for Sign Off
6121012	Wales Pension Partnership	5	*	/	*	*	/	*	Accounts Return
6121013	Post 16 Grant	10	*	/	*				
6121014	Pupil Deprivation Grant - EOY	15	*	*	*	*	*	*	Certification
6121015	Pupil Deprivation Grant - Q3	15							
6121017	Trust Funds - Arbour Stephens	5	*	*	*	*	/	*	Certification
6121018	Trust Funds - Dyfed Welsh Church Fund	5	*	*	*	*	*		
6121019	Trust Funds - Minnie Morgan	5	*	*	*	*	/	*	Certification
6121020	Trust Funds - Oriol Myrddin	5	*	*	*	*	/	*	Certification
6121021	Regional Development Co-ordinator Grant	5	*	/	*	*	/	*	Certification
	<b>Total Audit Days for Grants &amp; Certification</b>	<b>220</b>							
	<b>Chief Executive's Department (not incl IT)</b>								
7121001	Civil Registrations Service	10							
7121002	People Management & Performance	20							
7121003	Regeneration Kickstart	10	*	*	*				
7121003	Regeneration & Economic Development	10							
7121004	Surplus Properties	15							
	<b>Total Audit Days for Chief Executive's Department (not incl IT)</b>	<b>65</b>							
	<b>Chief Executive's Department: IT</b>								
7221001	Cloud Solutions	15	*	*	*				
7221003	Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity	15	*						
	<b>Total Audit Days for Chief Executive's Department: IT</b>	<b>30</b>							
	<b>Communities</b>								
7321001	Appointeeships	15							
7321002	Housing Voids	15	*	*	*				
7321003	Affordable Homes	15							
7321004	Leisure Centres	20	*	*	*				
7321005	Pembrey Ski Centre	5	*	*	*	*	*		
7321006	Social Care (Assignment to be agreed)	20							
	<b>Total Audit Days for Communities</b>	<b>90</b>							
	<b>Corporate Services</b>								
7421001	Financial Management Other	15	*	*	*	*			
7421002	Insurance	15	*	*	*				
	<b>Total Audit Days for Corporate Services</b>	<b>30</b>							



	<b>Education &amp; Children</b>								
7521001	Residential Units	15	*	*	*				
7521002	School Meals Allergens	15	*	*	*	*			
7521003	Schools (incl School Questionnaires)	40	*	/	*	*	*	*	
7521004	Welfare Cards Follow Up	10	*	/	*	*	*	*	
7521005	Welsh For Adults	10	*	*	*				
	<b>Total Audit Days for Education &amp; Children</b>	<b>90</b>							
	<b>Environment</b>								
7621001	Building Control	15	*	*	*	*	*		
7621002	Climate Change	15	*	*	*				
7621003	Environmental Enforcement (e.g. fly tipping)	10	*	*	*	*	*		
7621004	Fleet Management	10	*	*	*				
7621005	Highway Maintenance/Road Safety	10	*	*					
7621006	Property	15	*	*	*	*			
7621007	Waste	15							
	<b>Total Audit Days for Environment</b>	<b>90</b>							

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DEPARTMENT <b>Corporate Services</b>	AUDIT REVIEW <b>NNDR</b>	AUDIT REF <b>1121003</b>
<p><b>BACKGROUND</b></p> <p>The Authority is responsible for collecting approximately £45 million in National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) from approximately 7,500 commercial properties within the Authority's area.</p> <p><b>SCOPE</b></p> <p>The audit sought to ensure that procedures have been established and effective controls are in place for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charging &amp; Valuation Office (VO) Procedures.</li> <li>• Discounts and Reliefs.</li> <li>• Collections and Refunds.</li> <li>• Performance including performance indicators and reconciliations.</li> <li>• Management Arrangements.</li> </ul> <p><b>SUMMARY OF RESULTS</b></p> <p>It is pleasing to report that the majority of key controls are in place and are operating effectively.</p> <p>Some issues were, however, identified as a result of audit testing and are summarised below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ VO update reconciliations are undertaken by relevant officers, then checked and approved by the Local Taxation Team Leader. It was noted that, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, with all staff not being in the office, some reconciliations had not been signed by all parties. There were four occasions when the reconciliations had not been signed by the Local Taxation Team Leader.</li> <li>➤ The Collection Performance of the Authority is currently below target at 95.55%, with the collection figure declining for the last few years, with 2017/18 at 99.52%, 2018/19 at 98.08% and 2019/20 at 97.22%.</li> <li>➤ Covid Business Rate Relief applications were reviewed, with a small number of anomalies identified in the claims being paid. The anomalies related to payments which were initially awarded to exempt entities which were not entitled to claim; these anomalies have since been rectified.</li> </ul>		

<b>NUMBER OF RECOMMENDATIONS</b>		<b>OVERALL ASSURANCE</b>
Priority 1- Fundamental Weaknesses	<b>0</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>
Priority 2 – Strengthen Existing Controls	<b>2</b>	
Priority 3 – Minor Issues	<b>1</b>	

## GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE 17/ 12/ 2021

### AUDIT WALES REPORT: REGENERATING TOWN CENTRES IN WALES

**To consider and comment on the following issues:**

1. To consider the findings and recommendations of the Audit Wales national report.
2. To consider the Carmarthenshire County Council response to the recommendations of the national report relevant to the Council.

**Reasons:**

- We have a duty to consider regulatory report recommendations.

To be referred to Cabinet / Council for decision:    NO

**CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:-  
Cllr. Emlyn Dole (Leader)**

Directorate	Designations:	Tel Nos./ E Mail Addresses:
<b>Chief Executive's Department</b>		
Jason Jones	Head of Regeneration	<a href="mailto:JaJones@carmarthenshire.gov.uk"><u>JaJones@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</u></a>
<b>Report Author:</b>		
Stuart Walters	Economic Development Manager	<a href="mailto:SWalters@carmarthenshire.gov"><u>SWalters@carmarthenshire.gov.</u></a>

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE  
17/12/2021**

**Audit Wales Report: Regenerating Town Centres in Wales**

**BRIEF SUMMARY OF PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This national report contains calls for all levels of government to step up to help make town centres sustainable.

It concludes that:

- the growth in out-of-town retail, the progressive loss of ‘essential services’ from town centres – banks, post offices and public services – and the growth in online shopping have contributed to a steady decline in many town centres. And the pandemic has added to these problems.
- local authorities are well-placed to prioritise and lead on place planning but need to be clear on the purpose of their town centres and involve public sector partners, the third sector, town and community councils, communities and businesses in decisions. Valuing and using information to fully understand problems and identify the best solutions
- local authorities will also have to become increasingly more interventionist to address the challenges facing town centres.

The report makes 6 recommendations in total. Recommendations 4 and 6 are for Local Government and the others are for Welsh Government.

**Recommendation 4**

*The Welsh Government has provided all 22 local authorities with training on how best to use existing enforcement, financial assistance and debt recovery powers, but they are not being consistently nor effectively utilised to support regeneration. We recommend that local authorities take appropriate action, using these existing powers and resources available to achieve the best possible outcome for town centres by:*

- *using alternative methods of enforcement before using Compulsory Purchase Orders as a last resort;*
- *integrating enforcement strategies with wider departmental strategies across housing, environmental health, planning and regeneration teams to make more effective use of existing skills and resources; and*
- *ensuring there is capacity and the right expertise to use the full range of powers, working in collaboration with other councils to achieve good outcomes*

**Recommendation 6**

*Town centres are changing, and local authorities need to be receptive to these changes and plan to manage these shifts. We recommend that local authorities use our regeneration tool to self-assess their current approaches to identify where they need to improve their work on town-centre regeneration.*

A Carmarthenshire Action Plan response has been prepared and is attached with these papers.

**DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?**

**YES**

- 1 Audit Wales Report**
- 2 Carmarthenshire Action Plan response**

## 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**

Jason Jones - Head of Regeneration

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
<b>YES</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>

### 1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities

#### Corporate Strategy

The report's recommendations support the Corporate Strategy and our Well-being Objective - Create more jobs and growth throughout the county.

#### Regulatory Reports

- National/ Thematic reports are undertaken by regulators to look at all Councils in Wales (in an integrated programme of work consulted and agreed upon with local government) to identify best practice.
  - Most of these reports contain recommendations. Sometimes the recommendations are for Welsh Government and/or local government.
  - Not all recommendations contained in reports may apply to Carmarthenshire as in some instances we could be the area of best practice proposed, be already doing what is identified or it may not be applicable.
- All regulatory report recommendations are entered onto the Council's performance monitoring system (PIMS) and any reasons for discounting recommendations should be explained and recorded. Progress against recommendations is monitored and reported.
- All regulatory reports will now be considered by Corporate Management Team, Cabinet, Governance and Audit Committee and where appropriate relevant scrutiny committees.

#### Governance and Audit Committee

- The role of the Governance and Audit Committee is to review and assess the risk management, internal control, performance management and corporate governance arrangements of the Council, it is expected that the council's Governance and Audit Committee formally consider all reports of external review bodies – principally; Audit Wales, Estyn and the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW).
- As well as actively considering reports, committees are expected to assure themselves that there are arrangements in place to monitor and evaluate progress against any recommendations contained in them. The focus here should be on holding executives and officers to account to ensure that reports and recommendations have been acted upon.

#### Scrutiny

Some reports may also be relevant for consideration by scrutiny committees.

# CONSULTATIONS

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

Signed: Jason Jones - Head of Regeneration

- 1. **Scrutiny Committee** – N/A
- 2. **Local Member(s)** – N/A
- 3. **Community / Town Council** – N/A
- 3. **Relevant Partners** –

Audit Wales completed the review between October 2020 and May 2021.

**It used a range of methods:**

- **document review:** it reviewed national strategy, guidance, Welsh Government announcements and update reports, local authority plans, local and national performance reporting.
- **interviews:** it interviewed every local authority regeneration lead officer, members of staff of the Welsh Government’s regeneration team, a range of representative local, regional and national organisations including the Institute of Welsh Affairs, staff of several universities, One Voice Wales, Community Housing Cymru and the Bevan Foundation for example.
- **focus groups:** it held three focus groups with elected members from across Wales to discuss their town centres. • **data analysis:** it reviewed available data on town centres in Wales and drew on the work of Understanding Welsh Places, the Office for National Statistics and others.
- **surveys:** it ran four surveys with citizens, town-centre businesses, councillors (both principal and town and community) and local authority regeneration leads. The citizen and business surveys were provided online and supported by a series of social media campaigns to generate interest. A total of 1,984 citizens completed the survey and 442 businesses. It received 228 responses from councillors and 20 of the 22 councils completed the senior officer survey.
- **webinar:** it held a webinar to discuss our emerging conclusions in May 2021 and had attendance from over 160 people.

**5. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations** – All Departments have been consulted and have had the opportunity to provide comments on their performance and progress.

**CABINET PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S)  
AWARE/CONSULTED -YES**

Cllr. Emlyn Dole advised

**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
<u>Regenerating Town Centres in Wales – National Report</u>	



# Regenerating Town Centres in Wales

September 2021



This report has been prepared for presentation to the Senedd under section 145A of the Government of Wales Act 1998 and sections 41 and 42 of the Public Audit Wales Act 2004.

Audit Wales is the non-statutory collective name for the Auditor General for Wales and the Wales Audit Office, which are separate legal entities with their own legal functions. Audit Wales is not a legal entity. Consequently, in this Report, we make specific reference to the Auditor General or Wales Audit Office in sections where legal precision is needed.

If you require this publication in an alternative format and/or language, or have any questions about its content, please contact us using the details below. We welcome correspondence in Welsh and English and we will respond in the language you have used. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay.

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Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg

# Contents

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Key messages	7
Key facts	9
Recommendations	10
<b>Main report</b>	<b>13</b>
Past: How town centres have evolved in recent years	13
Present: Town centres today	25
Future: The challenge of regenerating town centres in the future	40
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>50</b>
Appendix 1	51
Appendix 2	52
Appendix 3	53
Appendix 4	55

## Wales is a country of small interdependent towns

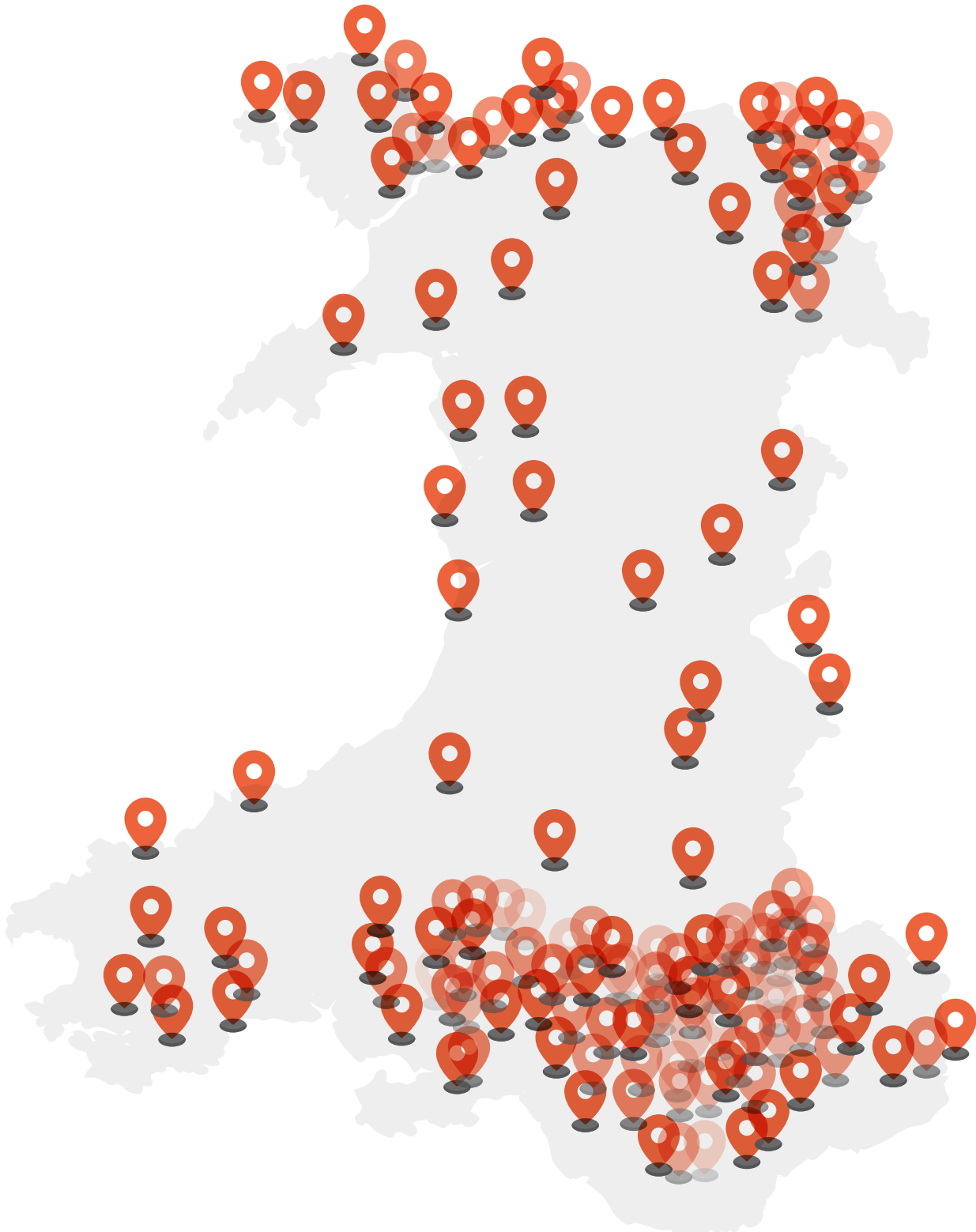
- 1 Wales is a nation of small towns. Towns are where people live, work and play. Town centres are historic and cultural centres. They have communal spaces, public art, and spaces to congregate. Town centres are where we see our most distinctive buildings and public realm. Just over 2.5 million people in Wales live in towns and cities<sup>1</sup> and towns remain at the heart of Welsh life and are places that people value and love. Using the Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research and Data (WISERD) and the Institute of Welsh Affairs Understanding Welsh Places research, there are 192 places in Wales that have 2,000 or more inhabitants that can be classed as a town or large village; places that people class as their 'local' town – **Exhibit 1**.



<sup>1</sup> [citypopulation.de/en/uk/wales/](http://citypopulation.de/en/uk/wales/) – settlements with a population of over 2,000 are included in this analysis. We have used the Understanding Welsh Places data as it enables the interdependency of towns to be better understood and demonstrated.

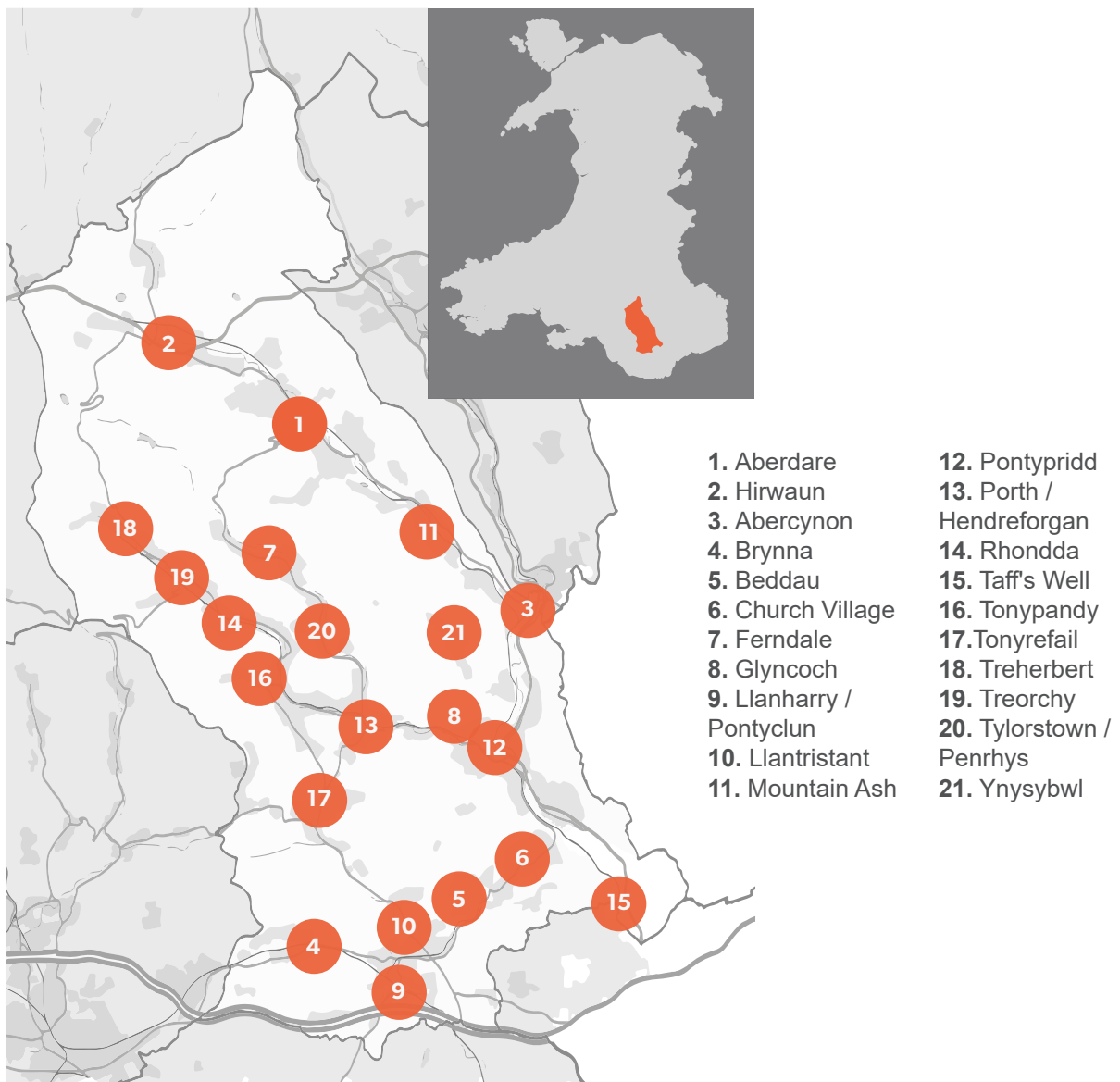
**Exhibit 1: the 192 places in Wales with 2,000 or more residents**

Wales is a country of small interdependent towns, villages and communities.



- 2 What a town has, and what it provides, reflects many different things; its geography and location, the relative affluence of the population, its infrastructure, amenities and accessibility. Towns will therefore have issues in common. But they will also have very different circumstances. No two places are the same and require different solutions to the challenges they face. The relationship between towns therefore varies. Some are more independent and less reliant on neighbouring towns because they have a good and wide range of services and jobs. Others are more dependent, because anchor institutions have disappeared over time, employment has moved away, and few essential services remain. In these dependent places, people are often reliant on accessing neighbouring towns for work, to buy goods, meet friends and use leisure and recreation services.

**Exhibit 2** provides an illustration of the interdependency of places within a local authority using Rhondda Cynon Taf as an example.





# Key Messages

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- 3 This report sets out the main findings from the Auditor General’s review of how local authorities are managing and regenerating their town centres. The evidence base for our review is set out in **Appendix 1**. We have concluded that **town centres are at the heart of Welsh life and can be vibrant and sustainable places, but addressing the many challenges they face requires brave decisions and ambitious leadership.**
- 4 In the last 75 years, nowhere has seen as much change as the high street. Traditionally, the location of all major activities, the high street has undergone rapid revolution and has been significantly impacted by societal and technological change.
- 5 Many of the challenges facing today’s high street are rooted in planning policy decisions of the Post World War II period. With the introduction of a new land use regime, local authorities were empowered to address war damaged urban areas. Between 1950 and 1980, local authorities prioritised regeneration of town centres creating new and greater retail space.
- 6 However, since then, the growth in out-of-town retail, the progressive loss of ‘essential services’ from town centres – banks, post offices and public services – and the growth in online shopping have contributed to a steady decline in many town centres. And the pandemic has added to these problems.
- 7 Overall, Welsh and local government have responded well to support town-centre businesses during COVID-19. The Welsh Government has also directly invested or levered in almost £900 million in the last seven years to help regenerate town centres. Despite this funding, town centres often struggle. Local authorities are the key public bodies to help regenerate town centres, but they often lack capacity and skills to deliver the sustainable regeneration needed. Powers that can help stimulate town-centre regeneration are not utilised effectively nor consistently.

- 8 Town centre regeneration remains a national priority, but the Welsh Government's 'town-centre-first' policy is not yet fully embedded. This raises some questions about the strategies that are needed today to help create sustainable town centres. Often the starting point for discussions has been for government – national and local – to define the policies and instruments they propose to use to address the problems facing town centres. This has been the approach taken in Wales, but it has mostly fallen short of addressing the many problems in our town centres.
- 9 The challenges facing Wales following COVID-19 are unerringly similar to the regeneration of 1945 post-war Britain. National and local government need to deliver integrated solutions and make brave decisions going forward, providing honest, strong and dynamic leadership. Local authorities are well-placed to prioritise and lead on place planning, but need to be clear on the purpose of their town centres and involve public sector partners, the third sector, town and community councils, communities and businesses in decisions. Valuing and using information to fully understand problems and identify the best solutions have to be improved. Local authorities will also have to become increasingly more interventionist to address the challenges facing town centres.



# Key Facts

Between **2012** and **2020**, bank and building society branches reduced by **28.8%** falling from **695** to **495**. ATMs have fallen by **18%** in the last three years, down from **3,189** machines to **2,616**.



Since January 2020, **64** retail companies have failed, resulting in **6,882** stores closing and affecting **133,600** employees in Great Britain.

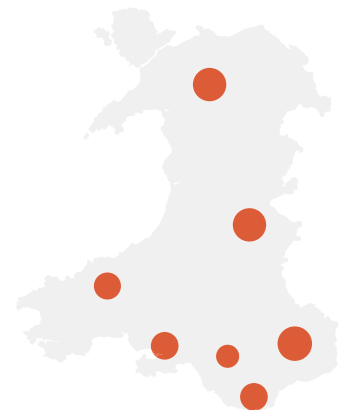


Since **2014**, the Welsh Government has invested and levered in just under **£900** million to help regenerate town centres.



There are **192** places in Wales with over **2,000** residents.

Post offices have marginally fallen by **3.9%** in the last decade and there are currently **925** branches across Wales.



In the last 12 months, online sales increased by **10%** in the UK, and their value by **30%**, an increase of **£23 billion**.



**One** in every **seven** shops on high streets in Wales is empty.

## Recommendations

- 10 Our recommendations are set out below. We expect each local authority to consider the findings of this review and our recommendations, and that its audit committee receives this report and monitors its response to our recommendations in a timely way.

### Exhibit 3: recommendations

#### Recommendations

---

- R1** Non-domestic rates have not been reviewed in recent years, and the levels charged do not reflect the current rents being achieved in many town centres. We recommend that the Welsh Government review Non-domestic Rates to ensure the system better reflects town-centre conditions when the payments holiday ends in March 2022.
- R2** Many town-centre businesses are impacted adversely by charging for car parking, access to public transport and poor transport infrastructure. We recommend that the Welsh Government work with local authorities to review transport challenges facing town centres and agree how best to address these.
- R3** The Welsh Government has directly provided and levered in just under £900 million through 13 funding schemes to help regenerate town centres. However, some aspects of the Welsh Government's management of the funding are considered problematic. To ensure local authorities are able to maximise the impact of funding and tackle the more difficult and longstanding problems that would help transform their town centres, we recommend that the Welsh Government:
- consolidate funding to reduce bureaucracy by streamlining processes and grant conditions and keeping requests for information and supporting materials to a minimum;

## Recommendations

---

- move away from annual bidding cycles to multi-year allocations; and
- rebalance investment from capital to revenue to help local authorities address staff capacity and skills shortages.

**R4** The Welsh Government has provided all 22 local authorities with training on how best to use existing enforcement, financial assistance and debt recovery powers, but they are not being consistently nor effectively utilised to support regeneration. We recommend that local authorities take appropriate action, using these existing powers and resources available to achieve the best possible outcome for town centres by:

- using alternative methods of enforcement before using Compulsory Purchase Orders as a last resort;
- integrating enforcement strategies with wider departmental strategies across housing, environmental health, planning and regeneration teams to make more effective use of existing skills and resources; and
- ensuring there is capacity and the right expertise to use the full range of powers, working in collaboration with other councils to achieve good outcomes.

**R5** The Welsh Government's 'Town Centres First' approach looks to put the health of town centres at the heart of the decisions taken by the Welsh Government, local authorities, the wider public sector, businesses and communities. This requires a high degree of integration between cross-cutting policy frameworks and decision making to promote town centres above much else. We recommend that the Welsh Government set out how it plans to deliver this in practice, its expectations of partners and the practical steps it will take to make this ambition a reality.

## Recommendations

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- R6** Town centres are changing, and local authorities need to be receptive to these changes and plan to manage these shifts. We recommend that local authorities use our regeneration tool to self-assess their current approaches to identify where they need to improve their work on town-centre regeneration (the tool is [here](#)).



# Past: How town centres have evolved over the years

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01

## Past policy choices, changing consumer expectations and technological advances are now adversely affecting many Welsh town centres

### Many of the challenges facing today's high street are rooted in planning policy decisions of the Post World War II period

- 1.1 How our town centres look today is rooted in decisions taken in the aftermath of World War II. Prior to the 1940s, town centres had a mix of social and economic functions – residential, commercial and non-commercial usage, social clubs and churches. Town centres were often vibrant places with people mixing and socialising throughout the day, evening and night. By 1945, however, many towns and cities in Great Britain were damaged and in poor condition as a result of the bombing campaigns of World War II.
- 1.2 In response, parliament introduced the Town and Country Planning Act 1947<sup>2</sup>. This Act enabled local authorities to forcibly acquire bomb-damaged areas for redevelopment on payment of compensation to owners. The Act required planning authorities to undertake a survey and devise a land development plan to include industrial sites, residential areas, public services and transport. Over time, this has developed into the comprehensive public planning system we know today.
- 1.3 Importantly, the new powers enabled local authorities to regenerate and repurpose their town centres. From the 1950s onwards, many local authorities embarked on ambitious development programmes using compulsory purchase powers<sup>3</sup> to acquire key sites and deliver them for new development. Town centres were seen as the most valuable area because of footfall, infrastructure, business activity, land and real estate values, services and non-domestic rates. And within town centres, it was shopping that had the greatest value on the high street.
- 1.4 Consequently, retail became a key driver of town-centre regeneration. By expanding central shopping districts, local authorities were able to generate more income through non-domestic rates and create wealth in towns by attracting more shoppers. However, the drive to redevelop and raise property values left town centres heavily dependent upon shopping. It changed high streets from vibrant 24-hour places into areas that increasingly had a limited purpose outside trading hours.

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2 [Town and Country Planning Act 1947 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

3 Compulsory purchase powers are an important tool to assemble the land needed to help deliver urban and rural regeneration, essential infrastructure, the revitalisation of communities, and the promotion of business, and lead to improvements in quality of life.

- 1.5 Ultimately, retail-led regeneration also created an oversupply of shops, because local authorities, not prevailing market conditions, determined whether or not major new shopping developments took place. The growth in town-centre shopping also resulted in competition between local authorities and towns to have the best shops and the leading retail chains. These were often seen as an important mark of 'status' and 'prosperity'. In some areas, such as South East Wales and the North Wales coastal strip more and more towns in a geographically small area redeveloped their town centres creating unsustainable levels of retail.
- 1.6 Whilst the growth in retail generated higher property values and non-domestic rates, retailing as a business is a poor option for economic regeneration. Jobs in the sector are generally low-skilled, low-paid, and often insecure. Innovations and new technologies are mostly used to minimise the numbers employed and drive down cost. And ultimately, retailing is about 'absorbing' disposable incomes in an area rather than 'creating' new wealth.

### **The growth in out-of-town retail has contributed greatly to the decline of town centres**

- 1.7 By the 1980s, retailing land and property in town centres were becoming increasingly more expensive, especially compared to cheap land on the outskirts of towns and cities. Non-domestic rates on the high street were also considered prohibitive for developers. Some town centres which had seen significant retail growth in the 1950s and 1960s were now in poor condition and in need of modernisation. These changes, coupled with a relaxation of planning laws in the 1980s<sup>4</sup>, encouraged out-of-town retailing.
- 1.8 Out-of-town retail had a number of distinct advantages. The improvements in the road network, the development of motorways and growth in car ownership<sup>5</sup>, made out-of-town shopping more attractive. They were much easier to access for shoppers, allowing people to drive quickly, and often with less congestion, to the retail park rather than travel to a town centre. Shoppers were able to visit several shops quickly and efficiently, often under one roof and protected from the elements. And with free parking and larger national chain stores, they offered more diversity and cheaper options than the traditional high street.

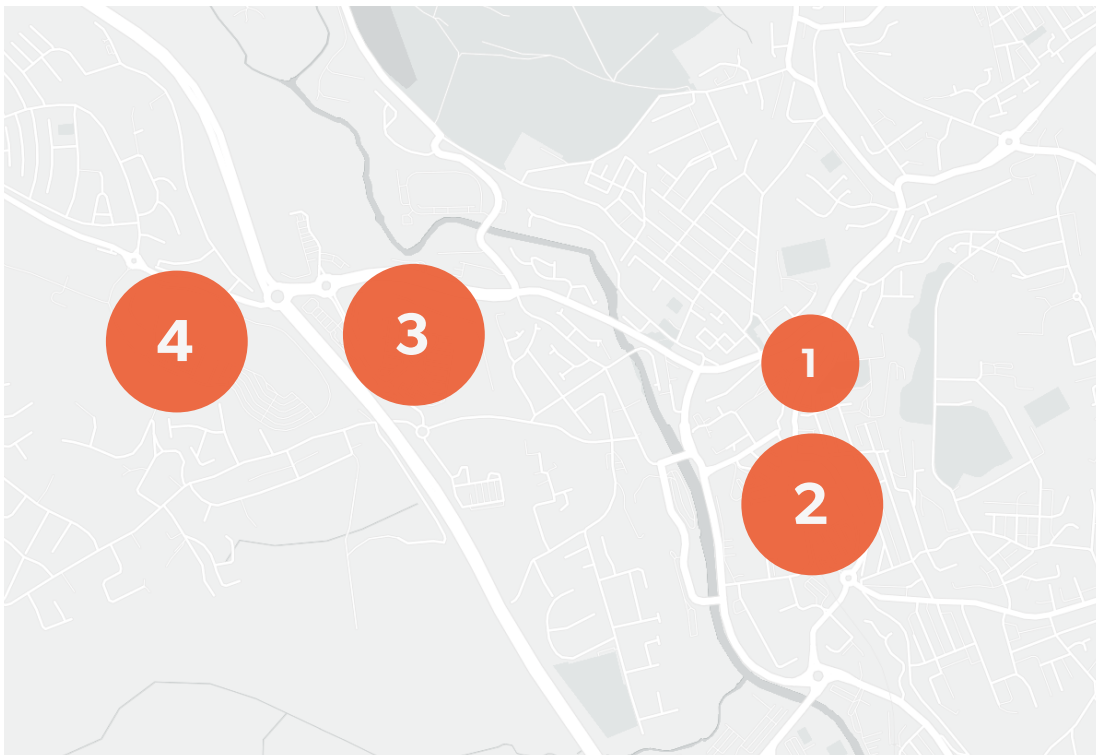
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4 M Ball, Birkbeck College University of London, [The 1980s Property Boom](#), 1993

5 The RAC estimates that in 1952 there were 2.5 million vehicles on Britain's roads. By December 2020, this had increased to 38.6 million licensed vehicles. Source: [Spaced Out](#) and [Motoring FAQs](#)

1.9 Unsurprisingly, the growth in out-of-town shopping adversely impacted town centres resulting in the ‘Doughnut Effect’ – the hollowing out of town centres as institutions, shops and businesses moved from the town centre to the edge of towns or ceased to operate. Previously thriving high streets now experienced increasing numbers of shop closures. Empty premises often became derelict and an eyesore, attracting anti-social behaviour. The businesses that remained often struggled and before long town centres were both unappealing places to trade from and visit. **Exhibit 4** provides an illustration of these changes using Merthyr Tydfil as an example.

#### Exhibit 4: Example of a changing town centre landscape - Merthyr Tydfil



1. Town Centre 1900's
2. Tydfil Square Shopping Centre 1980 and Beacon Place 2000
3. Cyfartha Retail 2005
4. Trago Mill 2016

#### Fewer and fewer ‘essential services’ remain in town centres

1.10 Many customers value face-to-face services and they are often seen as playing a vital role in community cohesion, particularly in town centres with few other amenities. Town centre decline is often mostly acutely felt with the loss or closure of anchor institutions on the high street, especially banks, building societies and post offices.



- 1.11 In recent years there has been a dramatic reduction in these essential services in town centres across Wales. Between 2012 and 2020, bank and building society branches in Wales reduced by 28.8%, falling from 695 to 495. The number of ATMs has also fallen by 18% in the last three years down from 3,189 machines in July 2018 to 2,616 in February 2021<sup>6</sup>. Post offices have marginally fallen by 3.9% in the last decade and there are currently 925 branches across Wales.
- 1.12 Both businesses (79%) and citizens (68%) we surveyed overwhelmingly noted that their local town centre lacked these essential services. The loss of physical banking services directly affects businesses. Less people visit town centres with no banks, building societies or post offices. Research shows that town-centre businesses have 20% greater profit when there is a bank and post office in their town centre. Small businesses are significant users of branches and a lack of access to branches can create problems for some micro businesses. Around 20% of small businesses with a turnover below £2 million use branches as their primary means of banking<sup>7</sup>.

### The continued growth in online shopping and changing shopper demands have adversely impacted town-centre retail

- 1.13 The internet has changed the way we shop. Even those of us who do not regularly buy online search online for prices, product specifications and availability before heading to the high street. Many of us find it easier to order goods and services through a website, unrestricted by store opening times and from the comfort of our home, rather than trawl through shelves in a shop. Retailers recognise that the internet is transforming the way that customers shop, re-shaping the high street as a result. **Exhibit 3** shows that in the last 12 months online sales increased by 10% in the UK, and their value by 30%, a growth of £23 billion.

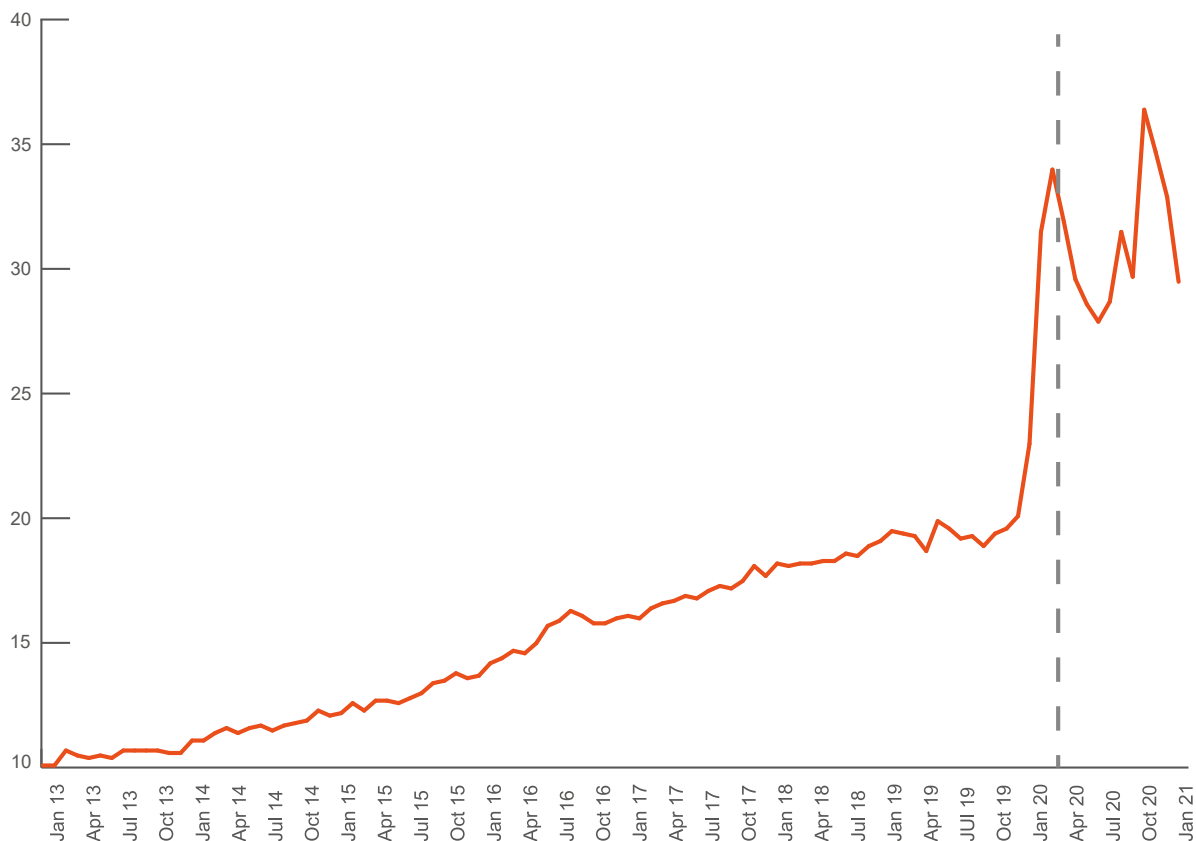
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6 House of Commons Library, [Bank branch and ATM statistics](#), 19 April 2021

7 Financial Conduct Authority, [When bank closures bite: the picture across the UK](#), 13 March 2019.

### Exhibit 5: internet sales as a percentage of total retail sales in the UK 2013-2021

Online and mobile sales doubled between 2013 and 2021.



Source: Office for National Statistics, [Retail Sales Index time series](#)

1.14 Research estimates that the value of online sales in 2021 is £141.3 billion<sup>8</sup>. Our surveys show that since the start of the pandemic, 89% of citizens have used online services more than previously and 74% of town-centre retail businesses introduced online services for the first time. The UK shops online more and uses mobile devices to shop more than any other European country<sup>9</sup>. Online shopping is well embedded in UK consumer behaviour and is anticipated to continue to grow, although in some areas of Wales quite large numbers of adults remain ‘offline’ rather than ‘online’<sup>10</sup>.

8 [UK Retail Ecommerce Sales, 2019-2024 \(www.emarketer.com\)](http://www.emarketer.com)

9 Centre for Retail Research, [Online: UK, Europe & N. America 2020 estimates](#)

10 The [Office for National Statistics](#) reports that whilst 8.7% of the UK population never or rarely uses the internet, Wales has some of the poorest levels of usage. In Powys, 20% of the population aged 16 and over have never used the internet or rarely do so (not accessed online services within three months) and 15% of people in the South Wales and Gwent valleys.

- 1.15 All of this has had and will continue to have a major impact on high street retail. Since January 2020, 64 retail companies have failed in Great Britain resulting in 6,882 stores closing and affecting 133,600 employees by May 2021<sup>11</sup>. Shopping centres have been particularly exposed to the effects of the pandemic, principally having a lower proportion of ‘essential’ retailing, more department stores and being exposed to greater levels of online competition. Research suggests a net loss of 402 national chain stores ceasing to trade in Wales during 2020<sup>12</sup>.
- 1.16 Between December 2017 and December 2020, empty retail units rose from 4.9% to 8.8% on retail parks; 11.2% to 12.5% on high streets; and 13.2% to 15.6% in shopping centres<sup>13</sup>. In April 2021, the British Retail Consortium reported that one in seven shops is now empty. This masks huge disparities. Attractive larger shopping destinations, whether in thriving urban centres, or affluent seaside towns are doing well. At the other end of the spectrum, smaller towns have even higher vacancy numbers and struggle to provide the quality of experience and convenience that shoppers want.
- 1.17 Growing vacancies also impact landlords, which can add further problems for town centres. The growth in vacancies can deter investors from creating new retail space or improving existing sites due to the drop in the likely rate of return. There is also a risk that sites will not be redeveloped because of fragmented ownership and other difficulties associated with their locations, particularly if inappropriate use change constraints are imposed by local authorities.
- 1.18 With the growth in online shopping, there has also been a more subtle change in other aspects of shopper behaviours. In the past retail, was mostly about buying essential goods – food and clothing – and convenience, being local, was key. In more recent years, retail has grown to focus on luxury and experience. More costly ‘luxury’ items such as SMART phones and personal computers, often have the best deals in bigger retail centres and are often not available in local towns. For some, shopping is also less ‘functional’ and has become a favourite hobby. A day-out activity centred on ‘experience’ and built around dining out, socialising, entertainment, meeting up with family and friends and attending events.
- 1.19 In a digitally dominated world, investing in digital infrastructure and basic skills can play a vital role in revitalising high streets. However, at this time, the offer in most of Wales’ town centres is not strong. Our citizen survey found that towns mostly lack an effective digital offer with poor connectivity, limited free and effective Wi-Fi. This puts people, especially younger people, off from visiting.

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11 Centre for Retail Research, [Who's Gone Bust in UK Retailing in 2019-2021?](#)

12 pwc, [Store Openings and Closures - 2021](#)

13 Research by Statista, available on their [website](#).

## **Non-domestic rates continue to make most town centres unattractive places to invest in, although the current payment ‘holiday’ is welcomed**

- 1.20 Non-domestic rates are an annual property tax paid on the rateable value of the property each business occupies. The rateable value is a notional figure calculated in terms of the likely rental of the property. Non-domestic rates revaluation normally takes place every five years and is conducted by the Valuation Office Agency. The most recent revaluation in Wales took effect in April 2017, and the next one is currently scheduled for 2023<sup>14</sup>. Some 113,100 properties are liable for non-domestic rates in Wales and contribute over a £1 billion annually to the Welsh Government’s budget<sup>15</sup>.
- 1.21 Businesses and council officers we surveyed and interviewed note the challenges created by the non-domestic rates regime. In recent years, some retailers have achieved big rent reductions as leases come up for renewal, or by renegotiating rents or using corporate voluntary arrangements. Indeed, research suggests that in towns with high retail vacancy rates, market conditions are so difficult that some have managed to get zero-rent deals. However, despite rents falling, rateable values remain at 2017 levels, and many noted that they do not reflect the reality and cost of trading on the high street today. To put it simply, high street retailers have historically paid more for something that is worth less, and the cost model no longer works for many retailers.
- 1.22 Non-domestic rates account for a disproportionately high percentage of total occupancy costs and are seen as a deterrent to new businesses and start-ups. Non-domestic rates are also disproportionately high for most retail businesses, which places them at a disadvantage compared to the e-commerce retail sector. The Centre for Retail Research estimates that store and shop-based retailers paid £7.168 billion in non-domestic rates in 2018-19, equivalent to 2.3% of their retail sales, whilst online retailers paid £0.457 billion, around 0.6% of online traders’ sales<sup>16</sup>.

1.23 There is a range of initiatives by the Welsh Government and local

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14 Senedd Research, [Business Rates: Frequently asked questions](#), 2018.

15 Senedd Research, [Business Rates: Frequently asked questions](#), 2018.

16 Centre for Retail Research, [Business Rates and the Future of the High Street](#)

authorities that provide non-domestic rate relief<sup>17</sup>. And, through 2020-21 and 2021-22, the Welsh Government has provided further support in response to coronavirus restricting trading, to the extent that over 70,000 businesses currently pay no rates at all<sup>18</sup>. This has been welcomed by businesses we surveyed. However, a number noted that when the pandemic concludes, and the business rate holiday is over, there is a need to create a level playing field with out-of-town retailers and online providers, both for non-domestic rates, but also charges like car parking. For instance, exploring innovative and flexible charging with lower pricing and 'connected value' such as varying charges based on visitor numbers to create more revenue.

## High Streets are more than just retail, but this is often overlooked

1.24 Whilst much of the debate has focussed on the decline of retail on high streets being the major issue of concern, town centres offer far more than just shops – **Exhibit 6**.

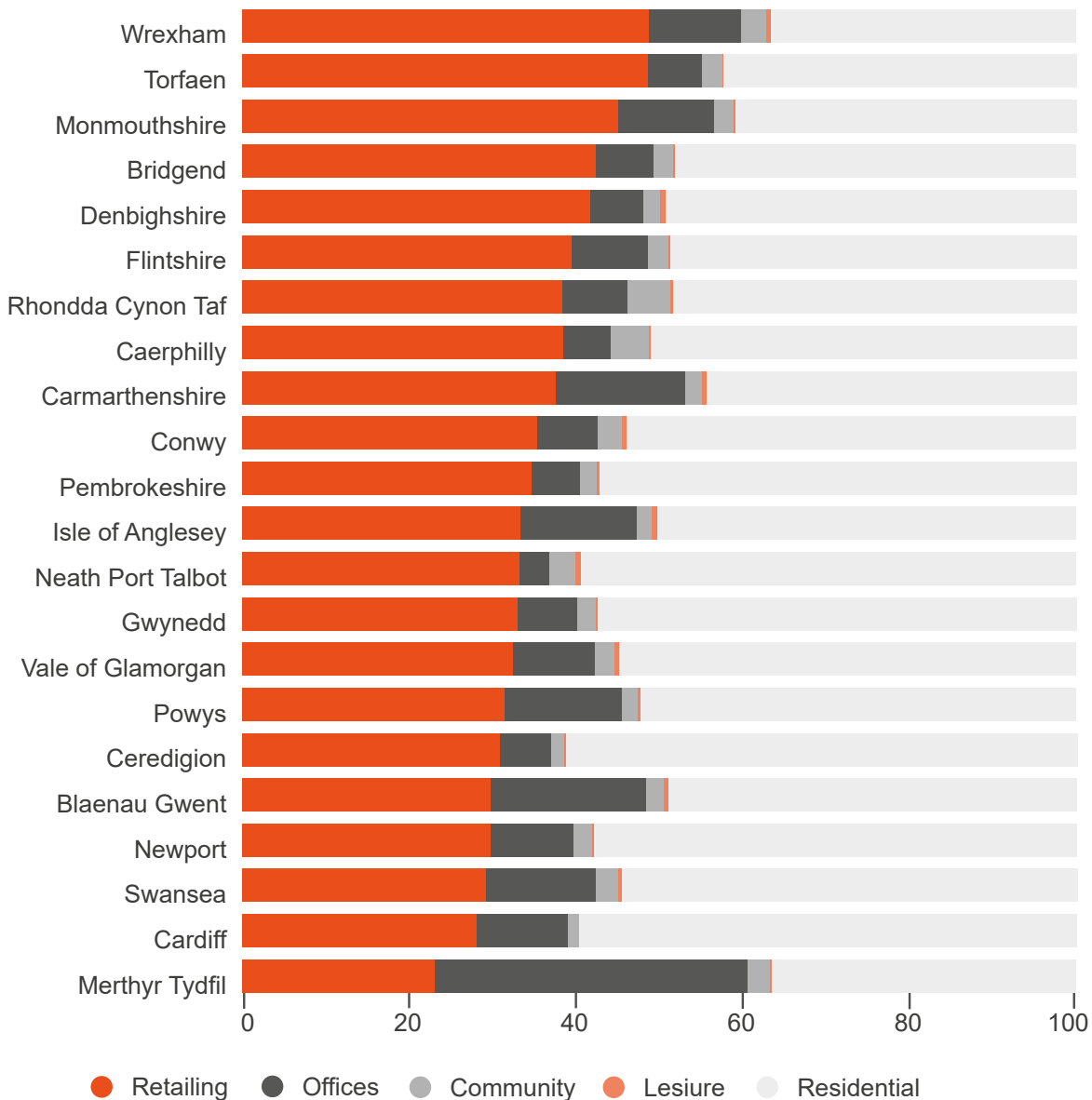
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17 Welsh Government: Business Wales, [Business Rates Relief in Wales](#)

18 Welsh Government, [Business rates holiday extended for 12 months](#), March 2021

**Exhibit 6: addresses on the high street, by land use category and local authority in March 2020**

Town centres are mostly residential but are often presented solely in terms of retail.



Source: Office for National Statistics, [High streets in Great Britain](#), March 2020

- 1.25 This data, published by the Office for National Statistics drawing on land use categorisation<sup>19</sup>, shows that the amount of retail on high streets varies widely – ranging from roughly 50% of high streets in Wrexham to less than a third of premises on the high streets of the three main cities in South Wales. Merthyr Tydfil has less high street retail than any local authority area, where under a quarter of high street premises are shops. There are few local authorities with over 10% of their high streets accommodating offices, although in Merthyr Tydfil offices account for over a third of all properties on the high street.
- 1.26 Overwhelmingly, town centres and high streets are residential areas. At least a third of all addresses are homes, rising to over 50% of all high street addresses in 12 of the 22 local authorities. Town centres also account for a significant proportion of a local authority's total population, roughly a fifth in Cardiff and Newport, for example. The population of our high streets is overwhelmingly 'young' with the vast majority aged between 16 and 64. Importantly, students are also mainstays of town centres in university towns and cities, accounting for 41.3% of the population in Ceredigion, 23.1% in Cardiff and 17% in Gwynedd and Swansea.

### **Town centres are mostly geared for the daytime retail economy and mostly have a limited leisure, social and night-time offer**

- 1.27 Town centres are primarily configured for daytime services and the night-time offer is mostly underutilised. Our research found that roughly half of people live within a mile of their town centre (44%) and 86% within five miles. Before the pandemic, 82% of people visited their local town centre at least once a week and over half of these (60%) several times a week. Just over 40% of citizens visit their local town centre in both the working week and weekends and a similar number only in the working week. Less than 20% only visit their town centre at weekends.
- 1.28 Two-thirds of businesses operate both in the working week and at weekends. Just over a third during the working week only (34%) and 2% at weekends only. Most businesses (90%) work standard core hours – 9 am to 5 pm. Two-thirds of people regularly visited their town centres in the morning, just over half at lunchtimes, and just over half in the afternoons. Roughly a third of businesses work into the early evening (35%) and a smaller proportion later than 8 pm (15%). Less than a third of people visit town centres in the early evening and just over 10% after 8 pm (12%).

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19 The high street features data are provided by Ordnance Survey, including the proportion of addresses that are for residential, retail, leisure and recreation, offices or community usage. Retail usage for the Ordnance Survey high streets data is classified by land use type as defined by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Definitions are [here](#).

1.29 Overwhelmingly, survey feedback notes that local town centres do not have a good night-time offer. And these findings correlate strongly with the data set out in **Exhibit 6** above. Town centres across Wales offer little in the way of community use (defined as educational, institutional or religious buildings) and leisure (defined as indoor or outdoor recreation) services and facilities. No local authority has more than 5% of its high street with community buildings, and less than 1% of all Welsh town centres is turned over to leisure and recreation usage. With less demand for retail, community, leisure and recreation are obvious areas for growth.

### Many town centres are not easy to access

- 1.30 Much of Wales lacks efficient, affordable, accessible and comprehensive transport. Despite Welsh Government policy emphasising the importance of public transport being accessible and available, and a number of national initiatives to improve current provision, the reality for many people we surveyed is that networks and modes are not adequately linked in many towns across the country. This has led to a continued reliance on cars. Our surveys found that 73% of people regularly access their town centres by car, with less than 20% using public transport.
- 1.31 Survey respondents noted issues of concern with the availability of car parking, its cost and poor public transport alternatives as key barriers to visiting their town centres more frequently. Transport infrastructure – cycle ways, pavements and roads – were all identified as being in generally poor condition and in need of investment and upgrade. Overall, both businesses and people responding to our surveys flagged the continuing deterioration of roads and inadequate integrated public transport as major problems.





## **Present: Town centres today**

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**02**

## Businesses have been well supported during the pandemic, but local authorities often lack the skills, capacity and resources to help create sustainable town centres despite significant Welsh Government funding

### National and Local Government responded well supporting town-centre businesses during COVID-19, but it has created uncertainty for the future

- 2.1 The pandemic saw an overnight change in how people used town centres. Shoppers' spending and travel habits changed, and whilst demand for public services increased, many people took advantage of online platforms to access these. Most town centres were already having to adapt to a significant period of change before the pandemic, as they have done in the past, reflecting societal changes over decades. But rarely has such drastic change happened in a short period of time, as restrictions were imposed on movement and business operations nationwide.
- 2.2 Early on, restrictions led to a short-term change of habits, but we heard differing views over how long lasting this change will be, and this continues to be the subject of intense debate by economic analysts. COVID-19 dramatically reduced people visiting their town centres, with 91% we surveyed stating they visit less frequently than in the past. But our surveys also suggest a desire to return to previous habits, with the majority of businesses (61%) and citizens (57%) intending to operate/visit and use their town centre as they did before COVID-19. Only 8% of businesses and 13% of citizens see the pandemic as fundamentally changing how town centres will be used in the future.
- 2.3 Businesses have had to adapt quickly, and local and national government support had to be rolled out quickly and tailored accordingly. Besides the many challenges faced, the restrictions also created opportunities for businesses to adapt their operating model to reflect these changing habits. As lockdown restrictions began to ease, businesses that adapted benefitted from increased footfall, as people stayed local rather than travelling into cities for shopping, work and leisure.

- 2.4 We found that three-quarters of businesses diversified their offer to provide an online service, 35% offering home delivery and take away services; 21% introduced mobile services including pop ups; and 12% converted premises for alternative use or trade. It is uncertain if these shifts will reverse, and businesses will have to reflect on how they intend to operate post-pandemic.
- 2.5 Businesses also see government support as essential to help them recover, with 76% seeing the loss of Welsh Government support as a major risk. Positively, 90% of businesses have applied for and received emergency funding from the Welsh Government to help them survive the full impact of COVID-19<sup>20</sup>.

### **Local authorities introduced a range of measures to safely re-open town centres during the pandemic, but these choices adversely impacted some disabled people**

- 2.6 Stakeholders also recognise the good work of local authorities to make town centres safe. 92% of businesses and 82% of visitors feel safe visiting their local town centre and the majority that their town centre is clean and well maintained. However, 'red tape', unnecessary bureaucracy, over regulation and poor leadership at a national and local level are seen as major blocks by several businesses. This includes decisions on pedestrianisation, car parking charges and business rates. Roughly a third of businesses (36%) believe that local authorities need to become more agile in their decision making to help businesses recover, and a smaller proportion (15%) better at co-ordinating action on the high street.
- 2.7 Just over 10% of citizens responding to our survey considered themselves to have a disability. Roughly half of these stated that they been disadvantaged in the decisions taken by their local authority when reopening town centres. Two-thirds noted the closure of key facilities, such as toilets, as a deterrent to visiting their local town centre. Similarly, the creation of pedestrianised zones (46%) and social distancing in shops and cafes (43%) to help manage the flow of people were noted as discouraging disabled people to visit their high street.

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<sup>20</sup> This funding was made up of two 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 also introduced.

## The growth in home working in response to the pandemic has the potential to both benefit local town centres, but also reduce demand for businesses

- 2.8 There is evidence that retail spending has moved to local high street shops during the pandemic, mainly due to people shopping locally as they work from home<sup>21</sup>. This has had clear benefits for some town centres with more spending in the local economy. But with more people working from home, there is less need for office space which could impact town and city centre businesses.
- 2.9 This will be particularly challenging for struggling places, because office jobs – unlike retail jobs – are more likely to be higher-salaried jobs that contribute to places thriving and growing because of their ‘multiplier effects’: that they create additional jobs because employees use the shops and services in a high street or town centre. Research shows that skilled jobs or jobs in high-tech industries generate larger multipliers: an additional high skilled job creates an average of 2.5 jobs in the non-tradable sector; an additional tech sector job creates, on average, 1.9 jobs in the non-tradable sector<sup>22</sup>.
- 2.10 This could have one of two impacts on towns across Wales. Whilst people working from home could have a positive multiplier impact in some communities, they will also result in falling demand in the place from which they have relocated, because these jobs are not new, but employment displaced from elsewhere as a result of the pandemic.

## Large sums of money are being invested in regeneration, but it is questionable if this funding is helping to create sustainable town centres

- 2.11 The Welsh Government has prioritised investment in regeneration and continues to make available large sums of money; just under £900 million since 2014 – **Exhibit 7**. All local authorities have received funding, but the levels of investment vary widely. For example, the most recent allocation in 2020-21 saw funding to authorities range from £1 million to £13.6 million (See **Appendix 3**).

21 Centre for Cities, [How has spending recovered in our town and city centres?](#) September 2020

22 What works centre for local economic growth, [What does the evidence tell us about the employment multiplier effect?](#) March 2019

### Exhibit 7: Welsh Government regeneration funding since 2014

The Welsh Government continues to invest significant sums of money on regenerating Welsh town centres.

Period	Programme	Direct Welsh Government Funding	Enabled/ Levered-in Funding	Total Funding
2014-2017	Viable and Vibrant Places	£124 million	£320 million	£444 million
2014-2020	Town Centre Loans	£31.6 million <sup>23</sup>	–	£31.6 million
2017-2023	Building for the Future	£54 million <sup>24</sup>	£54 million	£108 million
2018-2021	Targeted Regeneration Investment	£100 million	£60 million	£160 million
2020-2021	Valleys Taskforce Towns funding	£3.7 million	–	£3.7 million
2020-2021	Transforming Towns (COVID-19 adaptation fund)	£5.3 million	–	£5.3 million
2014-2020	Transforming Towns Revenue Fund for LAs	£0.5 million	–	£0.5 million
2017-2023	Coastal Town Fund	£3 million	£8 million	£11 million
2018-2021	Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Fund	£5 million	£4 million	£9 million
2020-2021	Loan funding for use by local authorities	£18.4 million	–	£18.4 million

<sup>23</sup> Loan funding which is recycled. We have only included the actual amount allocated not the total recycled or it is assumed will be recycled.

<sup>24</sup> This includes European Regional Development Fund: Connectivity and Urban Development for the period 2017-2023.

Period	Programme		Direct Welsh Government Funding	Enabled/ Levered-in Funding	Total Funding
2020-2022	Additional funding for Town Centre Loans		£15 million	–	£15 million
2020-2021	Enforcement 'fighting fund'		£15.2 million	–	£15.2 million
2017-2023	Extension of capital grant for a further year (2021-22)		£41.8 million	£25.1 million	£66.9 million
<b>2014-2022</b>	<b>ALL</b>		<b>£383.6 million</b>	<b>£509 million</b>	<b>£892.6 million</b>

● Revenue ● Capital ● Both Revenue and capital ● Loans

Source: Welsh Government

- 2.12 Most of the senior officers we surveyed (91%) believe that the Welsh Government makes funding available to local authorities to support regeneration work. And all senior officers and just under two-thirds of councillors (63%) believe that their local authority is good at working with the Welsh Government to secure grant funding to support regeneration.
- 2.13 However, some aspects of the Welsh Government's approach to regeneration are considered problematic. Only 77% of senior officers believe that the Welsh Government provides them with the freedom to decide where they should spend money on regeneration and around two-thirds (59%) that the Welsh Government keeps its request for information and supporting materials to a minimum. The funding has been made available under 13 different streams, often with different priorities and grant conditions, although since 2020 funding has been reorganised into a single fund 'Transforming Towns'. The Welsh Government recognises there is more to do to streamline funding.

- 2.14 Many we interviewed and surveyed noted that the annual cycle of bidding does not support local authorities to tackle the more difficult and longstanding problems that would help transform their town centres. Funding is heavily focussed on capital and physical regeneration but often the challenge for local authorities is insufficient revenue to fund posts, especially town-centre management, marketing, data analysis, land assembly, and legal services to address problem buildings and land.
- 2.15 Despite significant levels of investment in recent years, its impact has been varied. Undeniably, improvements have taken place, but it has not helped to create more sustainable places. Those we interviewed acknowledged that too often the funding has focussed on a one-off major project or being allocated to street scene and public realm improvements. Undoubtedly these are important. But if they are not matched with comprehensive regeneration of other eyesore and derelict buildings and help tackle all empty land and premises then their overall benefit and impact are diminished.

### **Local authorities are the key agency in managing and regenerating town centres, but often struggle to create sustainable places**

- 2.16 The way that people shop has changed forever and large-scale re-modelling of many of our town centres is required if they are to survive and thrive in the 21st century. High streets and town centres need to be nurtured, and their regeneration planned and driven by a strategic approach. Whilst there are many stakeholders who have a role in regenerating town centres, local authorities are the key body.
- 2.17 They have a wide range of statutory powers that can determine the shape and environment of town centres: planning, transport, enforcement, town-centre management, trading standards, environmental health, licensing, housing, economic development and tourism, for example. Local authorities are accountable and have legitimacy to make decisions because members are elected to represent their local community and its people.

## **Most local authorities have prioritised town-centre regeneration, but plans often fall short of delivering the change needed to help create more sustainable places**

- 2.18 We found that the approach taken by local authorities to town-centre regeneration varies. Some have a single local-authority-wide strategy. Others specific town or town-centre plan(s). A number use their Wellbeing Plan to set their regeneration priorities working with the wider public sector partnership, whilst others draw on Place Plans<sup>25</sup> and the work of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)<sup>26</sup>. The majority of council officers we surveyed noted that they have a strategy (86%) for town-centre regeneration with associated actions to deliver against (82%). Every local authority has a local development plan<sup>27</sup> in place, or being adopted, and these are critical to the successful regeneration of town centres.
- 2.19 Many plans quite rightly highlight the important contribution regeneration can make to sustainable development and the wellbeing of future generations, in particular physical regeneration where local authorities generally have a strong track record. Most senior officers we surveyed believe that their past regeneration work has improved buildings in town centres (96%); safeguarded the heritage of buildings and towns (91%); and created new homes and improved existing ones (85%).
- 2.20 However, senior officers and councillors acknowledge that local authorities have not created more wealth, increased employment, apprenticeships or benefitted residents economically. Neither has physical regeneration work contributed to improving health nor reducing poverty. Actions have consequently fallen short of creating both sustainable and multi-functional town centres that contribute to improving wellbeing. Priorities still focus heavily on the benefits of physical improvements and are less clear on the wider wellbeing gains that regeneration can deliver.

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25 Place Plans are a mechanism introduced by the Welsh Government for communities to engage creatively with the planning process and for planners to support in place-making initiatives with local people.

26 BIDs are where local businesses lead and work together with partners to form a group to invest money and make improvements to specific areas such as town centres, by providing additional services above what is already available. (See **Appendix 4.**)

27 The Local Development Plan sets out local planning policies and identifies how land is used, determining what will be built where. Adopted local plans provide the framework for development across Wales and are developed and managed by the local planning authority.



2.21 As noted above, rapid change is taking place in our town centres and the full impact of COVID-19 is yet to be felt. Priorities for action that appeared reasonable 18 months ago no longer reflect the changes that are taking place and the challenges now needing to be addressed. Plans are not always reflective of the changed environment facing town centres and are often geared to the problems besetting our high streets of three to five years ago, not as they are now. This is important and poses a significant problem. Some have taken the opportunity to refresh their regeneration plans. For example, Carmarthenshire County Council's Restart, Revive, Renew recovery strategy, developed in response to the economic impact of COVID-19, provides a good summary of the 'live' challenges facing towns in the county.

### **Local authorities often lack the skills and capacity to deliver the town-centre regeneration Wales needs**

2.22 The pandemic has laid bare the need for comprehensive regeneration to make Welsh towns sustainable places. But the impact of ten years of austerity and reductions in local government funding has seen a depletion in regeneration capacity and skills. Local authorities accept the loss of knowledge, experience and skills as staff leave is a major risk. Just over half of councillors (56%) recognise that they do not have enough skilled officers to deliver regeneration. Whilst there has been some new recruitment – the employment of a Town Centre Officer in Blaenau Gwent, for example – the overwhelming story from our research is one of a large reduction in capacity.

2.23 Staff dealing with regeneration are rarely dedicated to only undertaking this work, and usually manage a range of different and competing priorities. Local authorities rarely have a standalone regeneration function, and staff with a role in regeneration are often spread across different services and teams: planning, housing, land and property, legal, valuation, economic development, and leisure for example. This can reduce the opportunity for cohesive action and weakens accountability. Regeneration is also now more challenging and requires creativity and the application of a more diverse skill set. **Exhibit 8** summarises the key skills required to deliver town-centre regeneration that we have identified in the course of this review.

### Exhibit 8 – the key skills required to deliver town-centre regeneration

Local authorities need to have the right skills in place before, during and after town-centre regeneration.

<h2>Before</h2> <hr/>		
Visioning skills	Land assembly	
Ambition	Project design	
Urban and Place Planning	Funding and financing	
Analysis and decision-making	Local employability development	
Legal expertise	Involvement and consensus building	
Use of enforcement powers and CPOs		
<h2>During</h2> <hr/>		
Brokerage skills	Low carbon design and decarbonisation retro fit	
Developer negotiation	Communication and information	
Conflict resolution	Leadership	
Project management	Data collection	
Procurement		
Supply chain development		
Monitoring		
<h2>After</h2> <hr/>		
Evaluation	Town Centre Management	
Reporting	Marketing	
Events management	Partnership working	
Dissemination of good practice	Data analysis	

2.24 Given this reduction in capacity, local authorities need to work more closely with a broad range of partners; the wider public sector, housing associations, the third sector, and Town and Community Councils, especially where their intervention might be of a smaller scale or plays to a specific set of skills and/or responsibilities. Regeneration also needs to be better integrated across policy agendas, public sector priorities and by more efficient cross-professional practice. City deals could help with some of this, but the City Deal staff we spoke to stressed that they are often focussed on 'macro' level regional economic development and regeneration issues, not 'micro' level town-centre regeneration, although the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal has identified town-centre regeneration on its forward work programme for 2022.




### **Local authorities are mostly not using their powers to enable town-centre regeneration**



- 2.25 Successful regeneration relies on local authorities involving the community, providing incentives for private developers to invest in the area, combined with effective use of enforcement powers. This balance of responsibilities promotes sustainable development whilst helping to ensure land and property owners keep their land or property in a suitable condition. Overall, local authorities are not providing these incentives or using the powers they have available to drive town-centre regeneration effectively and consistently.
- 2.26 Several powers already exist which enable councils to bring empty buildings or land back into use, clean up an area which causes an environmental health hazard, or force transfer of ownership of land or property through the use of a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO). We found most of these powers are underutilised, and senior officers we interviewed acknowledged that there is a lot more for local authorities to do in using their wide-ranging powers to stimulate town-centre regeneration. Prohibitive factors include the cost and time involved in using these powers and, overall, officers we interviewed noted that the enforcement regime is neither agile nor effective at tackling problems. In March 2021, the Welsh Government published new guidance to help make the compulsory purchase process more understandable and transparent<sup>28</sup>.
- 2.27 Councillors are especially critical of how well local authorities are performing in this regard. Just over two-thirds note that their council has not created town-centre development and/or investment zones, and 77% say they have not introduced incentives for town-centre development. 72% of councillors believe that their council is not proactively using enforcement powers to bring empty buildings or land back into use, whilst the vast majority (83%) say they are not proactively using CPOs to stimulate re-use of vacant and underused sites and buildings in town centres.

- 2.28 The Welsh Government has organised training for local authority councillors and officers to help ‘demystify’ enforcement powers to stimulate their use and application. Many of these do not require expensive and protracted action and can achieve the desired impact through a staged approach. **Exhibit 9** below sets out the options available to local authorities. These range from softer low-key and inexpensive actions to more intrusive and potentially costly last resort decisions. All options need to be pursued and setting out your stall early can change and influence landlord behaviour. In addition, the Welsh Government has set aside £15.2 million under its Empty Properties Enforcement Fund which is available to local authorities to support them to take enforcement action. Local authorities are required to submit an action plan to the Welsh Government detailing the properties they wish to take action against and the estimated funds they need.
- 2.29 From our review, it is clear that councils need to be joined up internally with policy aligned to deliver the right impact. If services – planning, environmental health, housing, property, land and legal – are not integrated, then local authorities will struggle to address these problems. Leadership and intent are essential.

## Exhibit 9 – powers available to tackle empty properties

Local authorities have a wide range of powers available to help them tackle empty and derelict eyesore buildings to regenerate town centres.

Approach	Timescale	Potential actions
 <p>Advice and guidance</p>	0 months to 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advice to landlords on options for sale, rent and ownership</li> <li>• List of agents to help sell/rent</li> <li>• Discounted fees through Auctioneer Scheme</li> <li>• Identify and list potential Investors/Developers</li> <li>• Use LA website to promote/advertise land/buildings for owners</li> </ul>
 <p>Softer Options</p>	6 months to 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List of approved Builders/Architects</li> <li>• Develop and provide for free composite Schedule of Works</li> <li>• Home Improvement Agency</li> <li>• Council-run Private Sector Leasing scheme</li> <li>• Social lettings scheme to match applicants to private rented homes</li> <li>• Public Request Ordering Proposals</li> <li>• Direct purchase by LA or RSL</li> <li>• LOTS and HARPS to create homes above shops</li> </ul>
 <p>Financial Assistance</p>	6 months to 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvement grants linked to nominations to properties</li> <li>• Loans for improvement work (interest free or interest bearing)</li> <li>• Commercial lending advice</li> <li>• Discount VAT and/or Capital Allowance schemes</li> </ul>

Approach	Timescale	Potential actions
 <p>Threat of enforcement</p>	<p>2 years or more</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S.215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990</li> <li>• S.77-79 of the Building Act 1984 – dangerous structures, ruinous and dilapidated</li> <li>• Housing Acts 1985 and 2004 – improvement notices, EDMOs, demolition and clearance</li> <li>• S.79-80 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 – statutory nuisance</li> <li>• S.4 of the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 – treat pests</li> <li>• S.29 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 – boarding up</li> <li>• Listed Buildings/Urgent Works notice</li> <li>• Public Health Acts 1936 and 1961 – filthy and verminous</li> <li>• Naming and shaming landlords (publicity)</li> </ul>
 <p>Debt Recovery</p>	<p>2 years or more</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council Tax, Statutory Debts or Business Rates debt recovery (Bankruptcy, charging orders or Bailiffs)</li> <li>• County Court or Enforced Sales Procedure</li> <li>• Council Tax Premiums on Long-term Empty and Second Homes</li> </ul>
 <p>Last Resort</p>	<p>2 years or more</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prosecution</li> <li>• Compulsory Purchase Order</li> <li>• Empty Management Dwellings Order</li> <li>• Enforced Sales Procedure</li> <li>• Direct Purchase</li> </ul>

Source: Welsh Government enforcement training given to local authorities

## Town centres can continue to play an important role at the heart of Welsh life, but local and national government need to drive an ambitious regeneration agenda to help create sustainable places

3.1 The pandemic has increased pressure on high street businesses already struggling, and store vacancy rates are expected to continue rise. However, opinions vary about the extent to which the pandemic will lead to long-term change in town centres. Some point to evidence of new trends towards localised shopping and resilient independent stores as a cause for optimism. Others that the decline of recent years will accelerate as we tackle the fallout of the pandemic. Clearly, there are challenges that need to be addressed. But there are also opportunities to exploit.

## The Welsh Government has prioritised regeneration of town centres in the recovery from the pandemic, but needs to ensure the town-centre-first approach is central to its wider policy agenda

3.2 The Welsh Government published COVID-19 Reconstruction: Challenges and Priorities in October 2020<sup>29</sup>. The plan has eight short-term priorities one of which (**Priority 4**) is town-centre regeneration. The Welsh Government has set out a series of actions to help address the steady decline of town centres and the impact of the pandemic. These include:

- a new ‘Strategic Sites Acquisition Fund’ to enable local authorities to acquire land and/or high street premises to revitalise town centres;
- delivering a ‘Town Centre First’ agenda, prioritising integrated health and social care hubs in town centres;
- launching a dedicated fund to create additional facilities on high streets, to help revitalise town centres;
- providing better access to open spaces;
- creating remote working hubs; and
- making sure public services are more accessible.

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29 Welsh Government, [COVID-19 Reconstruction: Challenges and Priorities](#), October 2020



## **Future: The challenge of regenerating town centres in the future**

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**03**



- 3.3 Town-centre regeneration remains a longstanding Welsh Government objective and has been reconfirmed as such in the recently published Programme for Government<sup>30</sup>. As noted earlier, much money has been set aside to support regeneration work under various initiatives in recent years. The Welsh Government's policy team for overseeing regeneration activity has, however, changed over this period, and local authorities are positive about their work and support. Many commented favourably on the support provided by the Welsh Government to local authorities to upskill and make better use of enforcement and legal powers to tackle longstanding blighted properties in town centres. Similarly, the more consultative and pragmatic approach to project development and sign-off was cited as evidence of improving responsiveness.
- 3.4 Key to the Welsh Government's regeneration work is its 'Town Centres First' approach, which looks to put the health of town centres at the heart of the decisions taken by the Welsh Government, local authorities, the wider public sector, businesses and communities. For example, encouraging the public sector to support towns by locating offices, facilities and services within them in order to drive footfall and create or sustain vibrancy. The approach therefore seeks to deliver the best local outcomes by aligning and integrating policies and resources to prioritise town centres.
- 3.5 Recent Welsh Government planning policy supports this direction of travel. For instance, **Planning Policy Wales – Edition 11**<sup>31</sup> has extensive content on the Welsh Government's vision for town centres, the assessments and tests that must be used to determine where retail and commercial development should go, and the town-centre focussed policies local authorities must work to implement. Similarly, **Update to Future Wales – The National Plan 2040**<sup>32</sup> includes a very strong town-centre-first policy approach.
- 3.6 This is a very ambitious agenda as it requires a high degree of integration between cross-cutting policy frameworks and decision making to promote town centres above much else. The challenge for Welsh Government is to ensure that all parts of their policy, funding and decision-making system are in sync and helping to deliver this ambition.
- 3.7 The Welsh Government is, however, only one of many players in this process and cannot create sustainable town centres without others playing their role, in particular local authorities and other public bodies. However, local authorities often lack capacity and skills to do everything and depend on others to get involved. But public sector partners are not joined up and integrated with local authorities and actively contributing to the town-centres-first agenda.

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30 Welsh Government, [Programme for Government 2021-2026](#), June 2021

31 Welsh Government, [Planning Policy Wales: Edition 11](#), February 2021

32 Welsh Government, [Future Wales: The National Plan 2040](#), February 2021

3.8 We have seen many examples of public bodies reducing their town-centre presence, moving more services online and to the periphery of towns. For instance, North Wales Police’s relocation of its Wrexham town-centre police station at Bodhyfryd to a new facility in Llay on the outskirts of the town in 2019. These are often done for valid reasons – better cost, better quality and better environmental impact. But they can also work against the town-centre-first agenda. The Welsh Government needs to get this policy framework right with buy-in from all key partners to enable ‘town centres first’ to work in practice.

**Many of the problems facing town centres can be addressed, but it requires national and local government to deliver integrated solutions and make brave decisions**

3.9 Retail remains important, but it is not the main purpose of town centres in the 21st century and needs to be replaced with other activities. This oversupply of retail is mostly being managed haphazardly in town centres and primarily as a result of company failures, shop closures, loss of anchor institutions, public sector relocation and changing shopper habits. Many of these decisions are commercial ones driven by profit and risk. Local authorities need to be receptive to these market trends and accept that town centres are changing and plan to help manage this shift. From our research, to help create sustainable town places requires local authorities to apply the four ‘I’s – **Exhibit 10**.

**Exhibit 10: the four ‘I’s of town-centre regeneration**



Source: Audit Wales

# Intention

**Local authorities need to be clear on the purpose of their town centres and provide honest, strong and dynamic leadership to address the challenges they face**

- 3.10 Local authorities know their towns and are crucial in leading, planning and implementing change to address the problems they face. As we have seen in earlier sections of this report, local authorities control key levers that can help create sustainable places. They have the legal powers to facilitate change, they have access to resources and have policy ‘infrastructure’ to draw on to deliver improvement. Importantly, they are also community leaders.
- 3.11 Local authorities need to therefore have a clear vision for the future of their town centres backed up by a plan for change. Importantly, they need to clearly set out their ambitions for their towns and show drive and direction. If local authorities are not committed to improving town centres, pledging resources and leading regeneration then it is hard to justify why others – businesses, social enterprises and public sector partners – should invest time, effort and money in doing so. Ambition encourages involvement, which leads to ideas which can attract funding. With so much uncertainty, now is the time to be bold and ambitious and to do different things and things differently.
- 3.12 The needs of towns are different and will therefore require different solutions. Local authorities need to ensure they have the right information to be able to identify the responses needed. It is clear that there is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ solution. Every town has to play to its local strengths and develop specific plans that reflect its unique situation. For those towns facing the greatest challenges, it is difficult to see successful regeneration happening without strong local authority involvement to steer activity, but also in use of powers from assembly of sites to assistance in funding.
- 3.13 However, local authorities need to also look at their area as a whole when prioritising regeneration and consider the interdependency of towns. As we have seen above, towns in Wales are co-dependent and serve different purposes. Regenerating independent places is more likely to make a greater economic and social impact than investing in dependent places. Towns with greater levels of independence provide core services for others and for scalability are a more attractive prospect for investment. And, with the advent of greater joint working through the creation of Corporate Joint Committees<sup>33</sup> there will be opportunities to strengthen regional strategic development planning, transport planning and promoting the economic wellbeing of areas.

- 3.14 High streets are getting smaller, shrinking into a central core, and local authorities need to be honest and open about this. Whilst retail should still be a focus, property must provide retailers with stores they need today, not 30 years ago. Smaller, more flexible units at ground floor level, with shorter leases – or even pop-up shops. Peripheral areas, where there is an excess of empty shops, must be restructured to enable their redevelopment for alternative uses – housing, community, recreation and leisure – to help deliver a more compact and sustainable high street.
- 3.15 Local authorities need to consider not only how town centres generate economic benefits, but also how they can help improve the health and wellbeing of people and enhance the local environment. With less demand for physical retail, local authorities need to consider alternative uses such as more housing, focussing on the heritage of their towns by encouraging new arts, cultural and leisure services and widening out the community and public realm benefits. Focussing on green and blue infrastructure – creating parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, street trees, allotments, green roofs and walls and sustainable drainage systems – is an obvious area for growth.
- 3.16 Local authority senior officers and councillors we surveyed noted that the traditional decision-making model for overseeing regeneration is neither agile nor streamlined enough to keep pace with this rapidly changing world. Plans need to therefore be dynamic ‘living’ entities; developed and managed flexibly; subject to rigorous and regular evaluation; and adjusted to address problems in the moment not of the past. Based on our review, these are all areas where the success and impact of past approaches to regeneration often fall short.

## Involvement

**Local authorities are well-placed to prioritise and lead on place planning, but communities and businesses need to be fully involved**

- 3.17 High streets and town centres are at the heart of the community, but without communities being involved, regeneration will go nowhere. Ultimately, people make the high street. Local authorities need to tap into local communities to find out what they want from their town centres and involve them in determining how empty retail space is used.

- 3.18 Historically, this has been a challenge. Our survey of senior officers, councillors and businesses found that councillors and the Welsh Government have more influence on local regeneration than any other stakeholder. Housing associations and public sector partners play an important role and also have greater influence than town and community councils and the third sector. However, residents – the people who live in our towns – were uniformly seen as having little or no influence over regeneration. Where it happens, it usually takes the form of consulting on established priorities and falls well short of people helping to identify, shape and agree solutions. This is a major failing.
- 3.19 Many citizens responding to our survey show a high degree of realism, acknowledging that towns change and do not stay the same. Regeneration is seen positively as something leading to improvement and not to be shied away from. They are stakeholders – the key stakeholders – but are often on the periphery of discussions and decisions. Without people owning regeneration plans then they are not going to succeed.
- 3.20 Community involvement in regeneration can come in many forms. Two of the more successful involvement initiatives have been the use of Place Plans, introduced under the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, and Business Improvement Districts (BIDs):
- **Place Plans:** Traditionally, planning authorities will consult with the local community as part of the approval process for an individual application. Place planning is a much more inclusive and longer-term process, capitalising on existing community resources to generate ideas and turn these into local priorities. With a good place plan, local authorities have an ongoing forum to test regeneration proposals, long before decisions are made, and ensure any proposals reflect the needs and wants of the local community.
  - **Business Improvement Districts:** A BID is where local businesses lead and work together with partners to form a group to invest money and make improvements to a specific area such as town centres, by providing additional services above what is already available. BIDs can also be thematic, such as supporting the digital sector. A BID is set up through a legal ballot process – all businesses that pay business rates within the area, vote for or against a proposal document that sets out project activities and its aim to drive local economic regeneration of the specific area. If a vote is successful, all businesses will pay an extra amount referred to as a ‘levy’ on top of their business rates. The levy is then used to fund the projects in the proposal document. BIDs can be set up to run for up to five years and must then re-ballot.

3.21 Both of these approaches enable local communities to be more involved in the local planning decision-making process and we found some good approaches. For instance, the positive work of the Love Treorchy BID<sup>34</sup>, the Place Plan developed by Newtown and Llanllwchairan Town Council<sup>35</sup> and the work of the Altrincham Landlords Forum<sup>36</sup>. These are all good examples of how an involved community can shape regeneration, building on the goodwill of local citizens and businesses to enhance their local area.

## Informed

### **Local authorities need to value and use data to better understand their town centres and the impact of past regeneration projects to determine future priorities**

3.22 Officers we interviewed acknowledge that they lack key information and data to help them understand the dynamics of the ‘market’ in their town centres. Footfall and empty properties are the most frequently cited and used metrics, but these tell you nothing of the impact of visitors to town centres – how much they spend, how often they return and why – nor retail profit margins and rental values. Data where it exists is focused on individual towns. Understanding the catchment demographics and shopping patterns for towns, and their regional interconnectedness, is weak. Local authorities have a key part to play in strengthening the quality and scope of data and would benefit from forging stronger partnerships with data specialists.

3.23 Digital data offers insight on travel movements, parking, mobile phone activity, social media interaction and Wi-Fi usage, and can provide cost-effective insights about the changing use of town centres. However, the collection and use of digital data as a way of increasing understanding, targeting, marketing and monitoring change do not figure strongly in many town-centre action plans we reviewed. Overall, we found that national and regional research that can help shape public sector and business strategies on town centres are widely available, but often not used<sup>37</sup>.

34 [lovetreorchy.co.uk](http://lovetreorchy.co.uk)

35 Newtown Town Council, [Newtown and Llanllwchaiarn Place Plan](#)

36 [Altrincham Forward Newsletter February 2013](#)

37 There is a wide range of useful data that can be drawn on including [Understanding Welsh Places](#), [CoStar](#), [Centre for Retail Research](#), [Centre for Cities](#) and [Centre for Towns](#) to name a few.

- 3.24 Evaluating past regeneration schemes is a powerful improvement mechanism. Specifically in the context of regenerating town centres, evaluating what works and what does not is essential learning for the future. It provides good evidence for impending funding bids, informs policy development and enables an authority to understand the impact of regeneration on key targets and outcomes. Evaluation is at the heart of accountability and enables an assessment of whether the targeting of resources and interventions are value for money.
- 3.25 Overwhelmingly, our interviews and surveys found that local authorities do not fully evaluate their management and delivery of past regeneration programmes to help shape new plans. This is partly a reflection of inadequate information to judge regeneration in the round, and partly a result of reduced capacity. Irrespective, it also highlights poor use of resources. Since 2014, nearly £900 million has been invested or levered in to regenerating town centres, but it has fallen short in helping to create sustainable places. There is an imperative to therefore use what investment there is to best effect. More thought (and resource) needs to be given to learning and evaluation within local authorities to maximise the benefits of this investment.

## Intervention

### **The changing face of town centres requires local authorities to become more interventionist**

- 3.26 A lot of the actions needed to help create sustainable town centres cannot happen without some form of local authority intervention. However, local authorities have to involve citizens, local businesses and landlords to create a vision for their town, building trust and only then use their powers as leverage to intervene. In many cases, the combined threat of enforcement, along with the chance to be part of a strong vision can result in landlords and landowners voluntarily making changes required without the need for any formal action. From our research we have seen good examples of how local authorities are leading and intervening to create positive change – **Exhibit 11**.



## Exhibit 11: local authorities need to become more interventionist to help create sustainable town centres

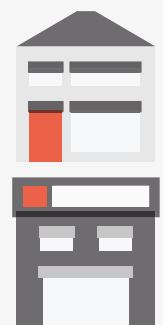
### Working more closely with partners to address problems of fragmented ownership and confronting this issue head on.

If landlords believe in your vision, the choice for them is obvious. The impact of Trafford Council's public realm transformation project and strategy for Altrincham enabled the council to tackle the complex problem of ownership and bring about positive change on the ground creating a more vibrant and diverse town centre. The council recognised that they had to lead and to take a whole town-centre approach facing the difficult issues head on if they were going to succeed.



### Becoming adept at land acquisition and assembly through better and more consistent use of enforcement powers, both compulsory and voluntary purchase powers.

Enforcement can be very effective as a threat without necessarily having to see it through, when used alongside a clear vision and strong ambitions for the future. Stockton-on-Tees has suffered a similar fate to countless high streets up and down Wales. Stockton Council has met this challenge head on acquiring the rundown Castlegate shopping centre, hotel and multistorey carpark and plans to replace it with a riverside park, part of its longer-term vision of creating a stronger leisure and recreation focus in the town centre. Refocussing the town centre around the river to reconnect with the town's heritage is key and supports the council's green infrastructure agenda.





**Creating the correct regulatory context by integrating land use planning and urban regeneration policy with more flexibility in planning to allow a broader range of uses to tackle empty retail and rundown buildings.**

Mixed space hubs have been successful. The more successful spaces have a mixture of redevelopment, new development, start-ups, independent businesses and arts/heritage projects, all managed by the local community. For instance, the Midsteeples Quarter, Dumfries, a community benefit society redeveloping empty High Street properties to create a new neighbourhood with a mix of uses built on principles of local prosperity and wellbeing. Key to its success has been flexibility from the local authority in how it applies its land use planning and development control responsibilities to encourage urban renewal.



Source: Audit Wales



# Appendices

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- 1 Audit Methodology**
- 2 The number of towns, villages and communities in Wales with more than 2,000 residents in each local authority**
- 3 Welsh Government funding to local authorities in 2020-21 for town-centre regeneration**
- 4 Business Improvement Districts**

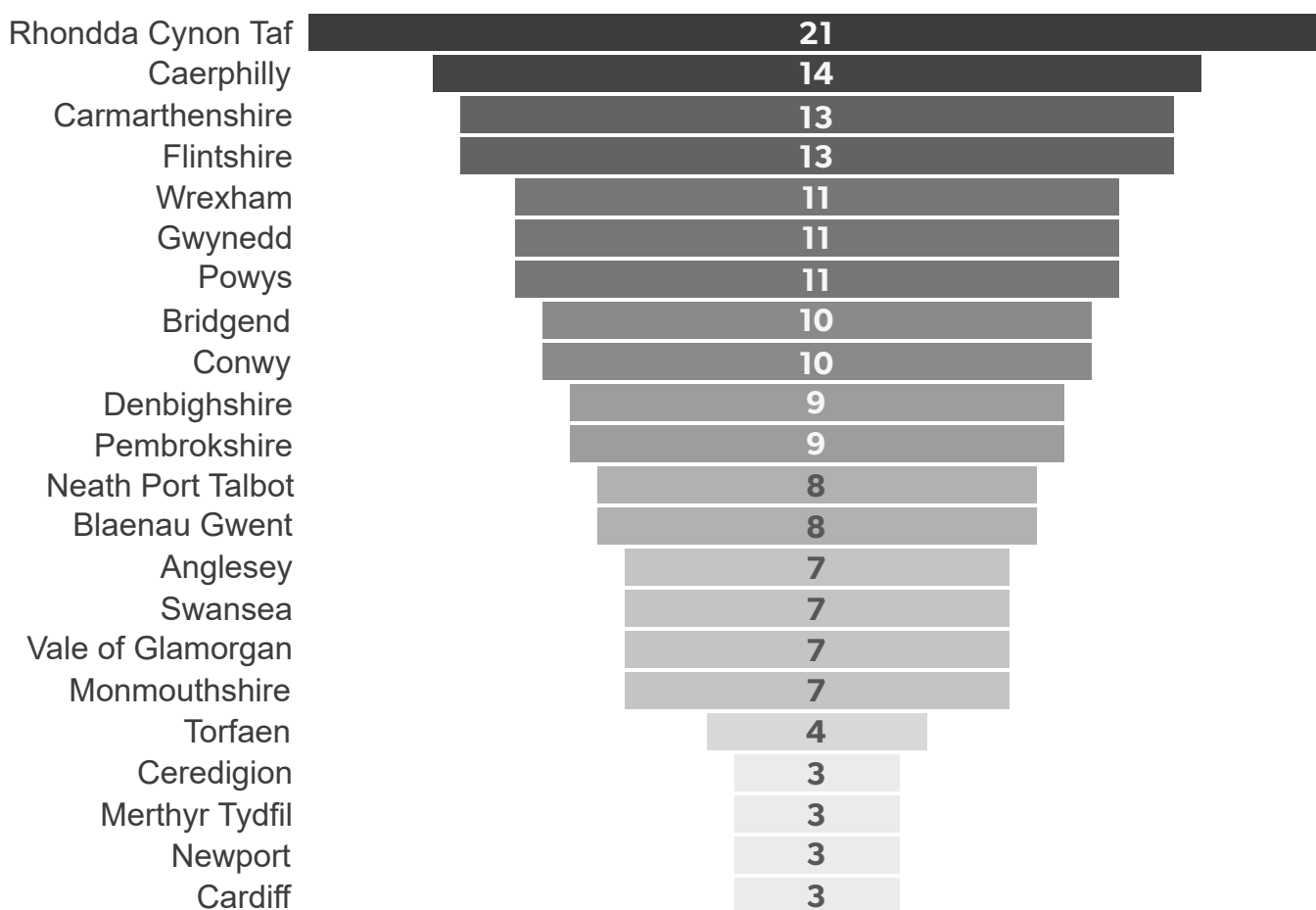
# 1 Audit Methodology

We completed our review between October 2020 and May 2021. We used a range of methods:

- **document review:** we reviewed national strategy, guidance, Welsh Government announcements and update reports, local authority plans, local and national performance reporting.
- **interviews:** we interviewed every local authority regeneration lead officer, members of staff of the Welsh Government's regeneration team, a range of representative local, regional and national organisations including the Institute of Welsh Affairs, staff of several universities, One Voice Wales, Community Housing Cymru and the Bevan Foundation for example.
- **focus groups:** we held three focus groups with elected members from across Wales to discuss their town centres.
- **data analysis:** we reviewed available data on town centres in Wales and drew on the work of Understanding Welsh Places, the Office for National Statistics and others.
- **surveys:** we ran four surveys with citizens, town-centre businesses, councillors (both principal and town and community) and local authority regeneration leads. The citizen and business surveys were provided online and supported by a series of social media campaigns to generate interest. A total of 1,984 citizens completed our survey and 442 businesses. We received 228 responses from councillors and 20 of the 22 councils completed the senior officer survey.
- **webinar:** we held a webinar to discuss our emerging conclusions in May 2021 and had attendance from over 160 people.

## 2 The number of towns, villages and communities in Wales with more than 2,000 residents in each local authority

See our [data tool](#) for the full information.



Source: Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research and Data/  
 Institute of Welsh Affairs, [Understanding Welsh Places](#), December 2020.  
 release. Analysis by Audit Wales

### 3 Welsh Government funding to local authorities in 2020-21 for town-centre regeneration

Council	Allocation
Swansea	£13,685,106
Newport	£9,519,515
Neath Port Talbot	£7,651,128
Wrexham	£7,320,131
Powys	£6,756,572
Blaenau Gwent	£6,226,708
Caerphilly	£6,167,264
Gwynedd	£5,906,725
Pembrokeshire	£5,471,983
Denbighshire	£4,805,649
Merthyr Tydfil	£4,665,766
Cardiff	£4,210,229
Isle of Anglesey	£4,067,000
Rhondda Cynon Taf	£3,623,725
Conwy	£3,147,125
Carmarthenshire	£3,116,103

<b>Council</b>	<b>Allocation</b>
Ceredigion	£2,807,136
Vale of Glamorgan	£2,067,500
Bridgend	£1,981,305
Flintshire	£1,965,309
Monmouthshire	£1,422,000
Torfaen	£1,000,025
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£107,584,004</b>

Source: Welsh Government

## 4 Business Improvement Districts

There are 18 BIDs in Wales.

Operating	Feasibility Stage	Terminated 2021
Aberdare	Newtown	Neath
Aberystwyth	Wrexham	
Bangor		
Caernarfon		
Cardiff		
Carmarthen		
Ebbw Vale (industrial BID)		
Llanelli		
Merthyr Tydfil		
Newport		
Pontypridd		
Port Talbot		
Rhyl		
Swansea		
Treorchy		



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Audit Wales National Report: [Regenerating Town Centres in Wales](#)

September 2021

#	Report Recommendation /Proposal for Improvement	Council action planned in response to the recommendations/proposals for improvement issued by the	Target date for completion of Actions	Responsible Officer	PIMS Ref No
R1	Non-domestic rates have not been reviewed in recent years, and the levels charged do not reflect the current rents being achieved in many town centres. <b>We recommend that the Welsh Government</b> review Nondomestic Rates to ensure the system better reflects town centre conditions when the payments holiday ends in March 2022.	This recommendation is for Welsh Government	Non applicable	Non applicable	Non applicable
R2	Many town-centre businesses are impacted adversely by charging for car parking, access to public transport and poor transport infrastructure. <b>We recommend that the Welsh Government</b> work with local authorities to review transport challenges facing town centres and agree how best to address these	This recommendation is for Welsh Government	Non applicable	Non applicable	Non applicable
R3	The Welsh Government has directly provided and levered in just under £900 million through 13 funding schemes to help regenerate town centres. However, some aspects of the Welsh Government’s management of the funding are considered problematic. To ensure local authorities are able to maximise the impact of funding and tackle the more difficult and longstanding problems that would help	This recommendation is for Welsh Government	Non applicable	Non applicable	Non applicable

#	Report Recommendation /Proposal for Improvement	Council action planned in response to the recommendations/proposals for improvement issued by the	Target date for completion of Actions	Responsible Officer	PIMS Ref No
	<p>transform their town centres, <b><u>we recommend that the Welsh Government:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consolidate funding to reduce bureaucracy by streamlining processes and grant conditions and keeping requests for information and supporting materials to a minimum</li> <li>• consolidate funding to reduce bureaucracy by streamlining processes and grant conditions and keeping requests for information and supporting materials to a minimum;</li> <li>• move away from annual bidding cycles to multi-year allocations; and</li> <li>• rebalance investment from capital to revenue to help local authorities address staff capacity and skills shortages.</li> </ul>				
R4	<p>The Welsh Government has provided all 22 local authorities with training on how best to use existing enforcement, financial assistance and debt recovery powers, but they are not being consistently nor effectively utilised to support regeneration. <b><u>We recommend that local authorities</u></b> take appropriate action, using these existing powers and resources available to achieve the best possible outcome for town centres by:</p>	<p>Carmarthenshire have completed the training provided and subsequently developed an Empty Property Action Plan for enforcement within town centres linked to the Transforming Towns agenda. Carmarthenshire have an Enforcement Group in place, made up of officers from Regeneration, Property, Housing, Building Control, Legal, Council Tax, Business Rates, Planning and Public Health. Going forward, the group will aim to use their resource and intervention to action relevant requirements in relation to empty properties within the County. The Empty Property Action Plan and supporting detail is in the process of gaining political sign off before a final version can be provided to Welsh Government for consideration. Following</p>	Ongoing	Jason Jones/ Jonathan Morgan	

#	Report Recommendation /Proposal for Improvement	Council action planned in response to the recommendations/proposals for improvement issued by the	Target date for completion of Actions	Responsible Officer	PIMS Ref No
		which Carmarthenshire will gain access to the loan funding made available by the Empty Property Management Fund to utilise necessary enforcement powers where appropriate.			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• using alternative methods of enforcement before using Compulsory Purchase Orders as a last resort;</li> </ul>	As an Authority we will look to use a range of alternative enforcement methods using the loan funding prior to resorting to Compulsory Purchase Orders as a tool of last resort where appropriate	Ongoing	Jason Jones/ Jonathan Morgan	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• integrating enforcement strategies with wider departmental strategies across housing, environmental health, planning and regeneration teams to make more effective use of existing skills and resources; and</li> </ul>	The multi-disciplinary Enforcement Group team that includes Regeneration, Property, Housing, Building Control, Legal, Council Tax, Business Rates, Planning and Public Health represents many departments in the authority and representatives will bring their skills and resources to deliver the Empty Property Action Plan, and will integrate all respective strategies accordingly.	Ongoing	Jason Jones/ Jonathan Morgan	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensuring there is capacity and the right expertise to use the full range of powers, working in collaboration with other councils to achieve good outcomes.</li> </ul>	Capacity and expertise in this field will be drawn from a range of departments within the authority through the Carmarthenshire Enforcement Group. Collaboration with other councils will be carried out as and when necessary.	Ongoing	Jason Jones/ Jonathan Morgan	
R5	The Welsh Government's 'Town Centres First' approach looks to put the health of town centres at the heart of the decisions taken by the Welsh Government, local authorities, the wider public sector, businesses and communities. This requires a high degree of integration between cross-cutting policy frameworks and decision making to promote town centres above much else. <b><u>We recommend that the Welsh Government</u></b> set out how it	This recommendation is for Welsh Government	Non applicable	Non applicable	Non applicable

#	Report Recommendation /Proposal for Improvement	Council action planned in response to the recommendations/proposals for improvement issued by the	Target date for completion of Actions	Responsible Officer	PIMS Ref No
	plans to deliver this in practice, its expectations of partners and the practical steps it will take to make this ambition a reality.				
R6	Town centres are changing, and local authorities need to be receptive to these changes and plan to manage these shifts. <b>We recommend that local authorities</b> use our regeneration tool to self-assess their current approaches to identify where they need to improve their work on town-centre regeneration ( <a href="#">the tool is here</a> ).	Regeneration have led in the preparation of town centre recovery plans for Ammanford, Carmarthen and Llanelli, which are currently in draft form, and are due to go out for final consultation in the next few months. In addition, Regeneration have been leading on developing the “Ten Towns” plans. All these plans have acknowledged the changes occurring in town centres that have been accelerated by the pandemic, Brexit and other market forces. Moving forward we will make use of the regeneration tool to support our work where necessary.	Plans to be endorsed Q3 2021/22	Jason Jones	15142 15146

# GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE

17/12/2021

## Progress on Regulatory Report Recommendations

### Purpose

To outline progress on regulatory report recommendations.

### To consider and comment on the following issues:

1. To note and receive the report.

### Reasons:

Under the Local Government Act (Wales) 2011- Audit Committee are required to follow up regulatory report recommendation. Paragraphs 9.16 to 9.19.

Relevant scrutiny committee to be consulted: NO

To be referred to the Cabinet / Council for decision: N/A

CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:- Cllr Mair Stephens

Directorates:	Designations:	Tel Nos. / E-Mail Addresses:
Chief Executive's / Corporate Services		
<b><u>Names of Heads of Service:</u></b>		
Noelwyn Daniel	Head of ICT & Corporate Policy	01267 246270 <a href="mailto:NDaniel@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">NDaniel@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a>
Helen Pugh	Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance	01267 246223 <a href="mailto:HLPugh@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">HLPugh@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a>
<b><u>Report Authors:</u></b>		
Robert James	Strategic Performance Manager	01267 224486 <a href="mailto:RNJames@Carmarthenshire.gov.uk">RNJames@Carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a>

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE  
17/12/2021**

**Progress on Regulatory Report Recommendations**

To outline progress on regulatory report recommendations.

**Introduction**

1. The Council monitors regulatory report recommendations on its Performance Information Monitoring System (PIMS).
2. Contained within the report are:
  - new recommendations that have arisen over the last year
  - on-going recommendations from past reports that are still active
  - recommendations that have been completed and closed during the last year
3. There are two main types of report:
  - National reports. Sometimes recommendations made in these reports will not apply to Carmarthenshire e.g. the best practice being recommended may already be established practice.
  - Local reports specific to Carmarthenshire County Council.
4. Some regulatory report recommendations are extremely long and detailed. Some have been summarised for the purposes of this report. The original full recommendations can be viewed in the original reports.
5. In the Wales Audit Office report on Audit Committee Effectiveness (July 2018), there was a Proposal for Improvement that we should strengthen arrangements for tracking actions taken to address recommendations in regulatory reports. This process addresses this proposal.

**Note:**

**Audit Wales – Review of Planning Services- Carmarthenshire County Council July 2021**

- This report and Action Plan was received by Governance and Audit Committee at its meeting of 24th September 2021.
- The report has 17 Recommendations and many more sub recommendations.
- Progress is being reported to an Intervention Assurance Board chaired by the Chief Executive which monitors and challenges progress in implementing the action plan.
- At present a consolidated progress document is being used to monitor progress. This will be transferred into PIMS when appropriate.

**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: Noelwyn Daniel, Head of ICT & Corporate Policy

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

### 1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities

The Wales Audit Office review of *Audit Committee Effectiveness* (July 2018) identifies the core functions of the Audit Committee, one of which concerns monitoring.

The report makes 5 Proposals for Improvement one of which concerns tracking progress:-  
*Proposal 3: Ensure that all Audit Committee members have access to full versions of all internal audit and external regulatory and audit reports, and strengthen arrangements for tracking actions taken to address the recommendations they include.*

### 2. Legal

The Local Government Act (Wales) 2011 – Statutory Guidance identifies that Audit Committee should:-

- *receive the reports from external auditors and follow up their recommendations for the year.*

## CONSULTATIONS

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

Signed: Noelwyn Daniel, Head of ICT & Corporate Policy

1. Local Member(s) NA

2. Community / Town Council NA

3. Relevant Partners NA

4. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations NA

**CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO  
HOLDER(S) AWARE/CONSULTED**

Not Applicable

Include any observations here

**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
Audit Committee Effectiveness- Carmarthenshire County Council- July 2018.		<a href="#">Link</a>
Statutory Guidance from the Local Government Measure 2011 Chapter 9		<a href="#">Link</a>





## REGULATORY RECOMMENDATIONS ANNUAL REPORT 2021

(as at Q2 2021 on on-going, new and completed recommendations)

FOR AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE 17<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2021

REGULATORY RECOMMENDATIONS		
	NO.	%
<b>OFF TARGET</b>	4	6%
<b>ON TARGET</b> (COMBINED – ONGOING, NEW & COMPLETED)	64	94%
ON TARGET (ON-GOING & NEW)	40	63%
ON TARGET (COMPLETED)	24	37%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>68</b>	

# INDEX

		<b>Page</b>
<b>OFF TARGET RECOMMENDATIONS</b>		3
<b>ON TARGET RECOMMENDATIONS</b>		4
<b>REGULATOR</b>	<b>REPORT</b>	
Audit Wales Local Report	WAO/LOC: Evaluation of the Council’s review of people performance management 2017 (April 18)	4
Audit Wales Local Report	WAO/LOC: Audit Committee Effectiveness (July 18)	4
Audit Wales National Report	WAO/NAT: Local Government Services to Rural Communities (Nov 18)	5
Audit Wales National Report	WAO/NAT: How Local Government Uses Data (Dec 18)	6
Audit Wales Local Report	WAO/LOC: Well-being of Future Generations: An examination of 'Start Well - Help children to live healthy lifestyles' (Feb 19)	7
Audit Wales National Report	WAO/NAT: The Effectiveness of Local Planning Authorities in Wales (June 19)	8
Audit Wales Local Report	WAO/LOC: Review of Risk Management Arrangements (July 19)	9
Audit Wales National Report	WAO/NAT: Progress in implementing the VAWDASV Act (Nov 19)	10
Audit Wales National Report	WAO/NAT: ‘Raising Our Game’ - Tackling Fraud in Wales (July 20)	11
Audit Wales National Report	WAO/NAT: Rough Sleeping in Wales – Everyone’s Problem; No One’s Responsibility (July 20)	13
Care Inspectorate Wales National Report	CIW/NAT: National review of care homes for people living with dementia (Sep 20)	14
Audit Wales National Report	AW/NAT: Commercialisation in Local Government (Oct 20)	16
Audit Wales Local Report	AW/LOC: Review of Waste Services – Carmarthenshire County Council (July 21)	17
Audit Wales Local Report	AW/LOC: Regenerating Town Centres in Wales (Sep 21)	20

# OFF TARGET

WAO/NAT: How Local Government Uses Data (Dec 18)			
Action	14408	Target date	31/03/2021 (original target 31/03/2020)
Action promised	Data Protection Responsibilities: LA's: to provide refresher training to service managers to ensure they know when & what data they can & cannot share; & review/update data sharing protocols to support services to deliver their data sharing responsibilities		
Comment	Content on sharing personal data was intended to be included in Data Protection sessions to be offered to service/third tier managers during Q1/Q2 2021/22. However, due to competing demands on officer time, no further progress has been made on this action as at the end of Q2.		
Remedial Action	This action will be progressed during Q3/Q4.		
Service Head: Noelwyn Daniel		Performance status: Off target	

WAO/NAT: Rough Sleeping in Wales – Everyone's Problem; No One's Responsibility (July 20)			
Action	14761	Target date	31/03/2022 (original target 31/03/2021)
Action promised	Intelligent use of data: Use data to plan the right future services, and to put in place effective data sharing protocols to ensure they respond effectively and safely to people sleeping rough. We recommend: ii) review and update data sharing protocols to ensure they support services to deliver their data sharing responsibilities effectively		
Comment	We are currently looking at best practice across Wales.		
Remedial Action	We will be discussing data sharing protocols with our Partners at our next virtual Homelessness forum taking place on 16th November. We will report back to the Homelessness forum on 11th January 2022 with the aim to implement the protocol by March 2022.		
Service Head: Jonathan Morgan		Performance status: Off target	
Action	14762	Target date	31/03/2022 (original target 31/03/2021)
Action promised	Intelligent use of data: Use data to plan the right future services, and to put in place effective data sharing protocols to ensure they respond effectively and safely to people sleeping rough. We recommend: iii) introduce a single data capture & risk assessment process to help support safe decisions making in dealing with people sleeping rough		
Comment	Risk assessments are already in place as part of our case management and the placement of individuals in temporary accommodation.		
Remedial Action	As the current risk assessment is generic and not specific to Rough Sleepers we will work with Partners as part of the data sharing protocol process to develop an appropriate risk assessment that can be used by the authority and its Partners.		
Service Head: Jonathan Morgan		Performance status: Off target	

## CLOSED @ 31/03/21

WAO/LOC: Service User Perspective Review: Online Services (May 19)			
Action	14300	Target date	30/09/2021 (original target 31/03/2020)
Action promised	Service user involvement: The Council should develop a systematic approach to involving service users in the future design and development of its online/channel shifted services.		
Comment	Due to the pandemic, we have had to re-evaluate how we involve service users in design and development, a lot of our planned activities are no longer possible. We continue to evaluate feedback from the website and digital processes and use this information to improve our digital services. We actively ask for feedback at every opportunity. We had considered digital solutions such as Useberry and Hotjar to enable us to assess user journeys, identify weak spots etc. however we do not have the resources in place to make the most of these tools.		
Remedial Action	Although we take customer feedback very seriously and act on this as soon as possible we cannot currently involve them in the design process. In the current situation IT/M&M cannot prioritise this due to the volume of work that's being delivered, engaging services users would slow this down significantly. In the long term, to deliver this we'd need additional resources and budget.		
Service Head: Deina Hockenhuil		Performance status: Off target - Closed	

# ON TARGET

**COMPLETED @ 31/03/21**

WAO/LOC: Evaluation of the Council's review of people performance management 2017 (April 18)			
Action	13648	Target date	30/04/2021 (original target 31/03/2019)
Action promised	In line with recommendations of the Internal Audit Review of Declaration of Interests, Gifts and Hospitality 2017, the guidance on declarations of interest should be reviewed and, if appropriate, updated		
Comment	This is now complete. A new Code of Conduct guidance document for staff has been developed and a dedicated page on our intranet is now live. We have also introduced an online facility for staff to declare interests, gifts and hospitality.		
Service Head: Paul R Thomas		Performance status: On target - Completed	

**COMPLETED @ 30/09/21**

WAO/LOC: Audit Committee Effectiveness (July 18)			
Action	13637	Target date	31/03/2021 (original target 31/03/2019)
Action promised	Ensure that all Audit Committee members have access to full versions of all internal audit and external regulatory and audit reports, and strengthen arrangements for tracking actions taken to address the recommendations they include		
Comment	The tracking of recommendations and actions is done through PIMS, with annual reports taken to the Governance & Audit Committee on the progress of actions to address internal and external recommendations. Full Internal Audit reports are provided to the Chair and Vice Chair of Governance & Audit Committee on a monthly basis, ensuring reports are received by them in a timely manner.		
Service Head: Helen Pugh		Performance status: On target - Completed	
Action	13638	Target date	31/03/2021 (original target 01/06/2019)
Action promised	Improve the information provided to Audit Committee by: ensuring that reports give enough context and background for committee members to understand the key risks and issues; ensuring that reports are more specific about what action the Audit Committee needs to take in order to discharge its core functions		
Comment	Reports provided to the Governance & Audit Committee are thorough and include sufficient context and information. Reports are specific about what action the Committee needs to take in order to discharge its core functions		
Service Head: Helen Pugh		Performance status: On target - Completed	

**COMPLETED @ 31/03/21**

WAO/NAT: Local Government Services to Rural Communities (Nov 18)			
Action	14405	Target date	31/03/2020
<b>Action promised</b>	Councils provide a more effective response to the challenges faced by rural communities		
<b>Comment</b>	<p>The Authority is firmly committed to delivering the rural Ten Towns initiative which aims to support the regeneration needs of its key market towns. External consultants were commissioned to identify local needs and to develop economic growth plans for the respective towns. An economic impact assessment of how the pandemic has impacted on the respective towns has also been undertaken. The draft plans have been considered by the Business, Economy and Communities task group. Wider public consultations were undertaken during February/March through virtual meetings and on-line platforms. Copies of the draft plans were also circulated to town councils and were made available for local residents and businesses to view. Draft plans for Kidwelly and Cross Hands will be completed by the end of May.</p> <p>To assist in the delivery of the ten towns economic recovery plans, the Authority has secured LEADER funding to appoint Market Town Officers whose role will be to provide support in taking specific actions forward. A number of key themes have emerged including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Smart towns</li> <li>- Business sites and premises</li> <li>- Meanwhile uses/business hubs</li> <li>- Developing the distinctiveness and tourism potential of rural market towns</li> <li>- Community led energy initiatives</li> </ul> <p>Funding has been secured to take forward initiatives in areas such as community led energy, digital smart towns and promoting the tourism potential of our rural market towns.</p> <p>The Authority has also ringfenced funding via its capital programme to take forward some of the aspirations of the Ten Towns initiative.</p> <p>Rural businesses in the creative and food sectors have also benefitted from grant support of more than £449,000 via the ARFOR scheme.</p>		
<b>Service Head:</b> Jason Jones	<b>Performance status:</b> On target - Completed		

<b>WAO/NAT: How Local Government Uses Data (Dec 18)</b>			
<b>Action</b>	14407	<b>Target date</b>	31/03/2020
<b>Action promised</b>	Data Culture: LA's need: to have a clear vision that treats data as a key resource; to establish corporate data standards & coding; to undertake an audit; & create a central integrated customer account as a gateway to services		
<b>Comment</b>	Council Performance Management Framework has been updated with a focus on use, analysis and presentation of data as part of performance management. A new Data Insight section has been established as part of the Corporate Policy, Performance and Partnership Team with a new Data Insight Manager currently being recruited.		
Service Head: Noelwyn Daniel		Performance status: On target	
<b>Action</b>	14409	<b>Target date</b>	31/03/2020
<b>Action promised</b>	Upskill staff: LA's: to identify staff who have a role in analysing & managing data to remove duplication & free up resources to build & develop capacity in data usage; & to invest & support development of staff data analytical, mining & segmentation skills		
<b>Comment</b>	Team review completed and a new Data Insight section was established on 1 October 2021 as part of the Corporate Policy, Performance and Partnership Team. A new Data Insight Manager currently being recruited and further progress will be taken forward on the Council's use of data and information over coming months.		
Service Head: Noelwyn Daniel		Performance status: On target	
<b>Action</b>	14410	<b>Target date</b>	31/03/2020
<b>Action promised</b>	Data-driven decision-making culture: LA's: to set data reporting standards to ensure minimum data standards underpin decision making; and to make more open data available		
<b>Comment</b>	Team review completed and a new Data Insight section was established on 1 October 2021 as part of the Corporate Policy, Performance and Partnership Team. A new Data Insight Manager currently being recruited and further progress will be taken forward on the Council's use of data and information over coming months.		
Service Head: Noelwyn Daniel		Performance status: On target	

**WAO/LOC: Well-being of Future Generations: An examination of 'Start Well - Help children to live healthy lifestyles' (Feb 19)**

<b>Action</b>	14298	<b>Target date</b>	31/03/2020
<b>Action promised</b>	Corporate: Develop a system to provide assurance at a corporate level that the Council is considering the five ways of working in the actions to deliver the well-being objectives		
<b>Comment</b>	<p>A new Integrated Impact Assessment takes into account the 5 ways of working and a revised cover sheet will be introduced. These are due to be introduced as part of committee reports early 2022. ICT and Corporate Policy have developed the template, guidance and a digital form. A series of training workshops have been held for Heads of Service, departmental co-ordinators, Democratic Services and report authors. The Integrated Impact Assessment is currently working its way through the Democratic Process. The Assessment includes the key areas of Five Ways of Working, Equalities, Welsh language, GDPR, Socio-economic Duty, United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child, the Environment Act, Biodiversity and the Council's Net Zero Carbon Commitment.</p> <p>Departmental and Divisional Business Plans contain a section on the 5 ways of working that prompts action for improvement and these actions are cross referenced to the Well-being Objectives.</p>		
Service Head: Noelwyn Daniel		Performance status: On target	

**COMPLETED @ 31/03/21**

<b>Action</b>	14291	<b>Target date</b>	31/03/2020
<b>Action promised</b>	Long-Term: Review what data is currently available and identify what additional information is needed to evidence progress towards achieving outcomes / impact in the longer term		
<b>Comment</b>	Reviewing available data suggests that the current success measure used within the WBO, % of obesity in 4/5 year olds as measured by Health cannot be replicated in older age groups by the Local Authority. Other measures used in our reporting, including numbers of children actively engaging in physical activity, are the best data currently available. We will continue to monitor what other information is available.		
Service Head: Gareth Morgans		Performance status: On target - Completed	
<b>Action</b>	14296	<b>Target date</b>	31/03/2020
<b>Action promised</b>	Involvement: Identify and address any gaps in the groups / forums of young people used for consultation and engagement to ensure they are fully inclusive		
<b>Comment</b>	During the Pandemic period we have been continuing to recruit Carmarthenshire Young Council Members via word of mouth and they are attending regular digital meetings, we have recently recruited young people who have English as an additional language etc trying to ensure CYC is as diverse as possible.		
Service Head: Gareth Morgans		Performance status: On target - Completed	

**COMPLETED @ 30/06/21**

<b>Action</b>	14297	<b>Target date</b>	31/03/2020
<b>Action promised</b>	Collaboration: Further engagement with schools to maximise the benefit of using school buildings for out of hours activities / community benefit		
<b>Comment</b>	<p>Community activity is considered as part of all developments considered within the Modernising Education Programme. Most recently, the redevelopment of the former Ysgol Pantycelyn has been completed for occupation by Ysgol Rhys Prichard. This development included a dedicated community wing.</p> <p>Due to the restrictions implemented as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic, schools closed for two periods, March 2020 to June 2020 and December 2020 to February 2021. Some school buildings were used as childcare hubs for key workers or to distribute Free School meals parcels until they increased operations on 29th June 2020. All school buildings and sites have been risk assessed in order for them to be operational to deliver educational provision. Since 29th June, other than breakfast and after school clubs, school buildings have not been available for out of hours activities / community benefit. This situation continued after the schools re-opened in September. As the Spring term starts schools slowly re-opened but no out of hours activities are possible due to COVID restrictions.</p>		
Service Head: Gareth Morgans		Performance status: On target - Completed	

**COMPLETED @ 30/09/21**

<b>Action</b>	14295	<b>Target date</b>	26/11/2021 (original target 31/03/2020)
<b>Action promised</b>	Involvement: Undertake an Equality Impact Assessment on the step		
<b>Comment</b>	Following an internal meeting with the policy team, it is concluded that work on developing WBO2 Start Well - Help children live healthy lifestyles, within the Corporate strategy fully integrates with the aims of the Well-being of future generations Act 2015. Similarly, the steps taken to address these high level objectives by way of Actions and measures are clearly defined in respective business departmental and divisional business plans, which also cross-reference and align with the principles of the WBFG Act. Equality Impact assessments are undertaken by service areas on key actions that may affect the public, and the new Corporate Strategy will be subject to a high level Integrated Impact Assessment in due course.		
Service Head: Ian Jones		Performance status: On target - Completed	

WAO/NAT: The Effectiveness of Local Planning Authorities in Wales (June 19)			
<b>Action</b>	14471	<b>Target date</b>	31/12/2021 (original target 31/03/2020)
<b>Action promised</b>	Local Planning Authorities improve the effectiveness of planning committees by: reviewing their scheme of delegation to ensure planning committees are focussed on the most important strategic issues relevant to their authority		
<b>Comment</b>	The review of the scheme of delegation is being finalised and is pending deliberation at County Council in late 2021.		
Service Head: Noelwyn Daniel		Performance status: On target	
<b>Action</b>	14514	<b>Target date</b>	31/03/2022 (original target 31/03/2020)
<b>Action promised</b>	Local Planning Authorities: improve transparency and accountability by holding planning meetings at appropriate times, rotating meetings to take place in areas which are subject to proposed development, webcasting meetings and providing opportunities for stakeholders to address committee meetings		
<b>Comment</b>	Webcasting already undertaken with stakeholders are allowed to speak subject to the relevant protocol. Webcasting negates the need to move planning committee around. It is noted that varying the times might prove be problematic as the meetings are quite often lengthy dependent on the number and complexity of applications being considered. The matter may be further considered in light of any future demand and access issues and would require further investigation. As to the benefits for virtual/remote Planning Committee meetings the response to Covid-19 prompted adaptation in how committees are held and has included virtual meetings. This has enabled third parties to also join the meetings to provide their representations remotely increasing accessibility.		
Service Head: Noelwyn Daniel		Performance status: On target	
<b>Action</b>	14519	<b>Target date</b>	31/03/2022 (original target 31/03/2021)
<b>Action promised</b>	Local Planning Authorities improve the effectiveness of planning committees by enforcing the local planning authorities' standards of conduct for meetings		
<b>Comment</b>	The role of the planning committee will be reinforced through quarterly reporting of core planning performance measures including planning appeals. The reporting of performance is to be a standing item on the agenda to ensure appropriate awareness of decision making outcomes.  The responsibilities under the standards of conduct is conveyed through the legal officers advice to committee.		
Service Head: Noelwyn Daniel		Performance status: On target	



WAO/LOC: Review of Risk Management Arrangements (July 19)			
Action	14302	Target date	26/03/2022 (original target 31/03/2020)
Action promised	Procedures and Guidance: The Council should develop suitable procedures and guidance to underpin its risk management strategy to ensure that risk management is consistently embedded across the organisation.		
Comment	Draft Risk Management toolkit presented to the Risk Management Steering Group on 29 April 2021. Feedback requested from the group and draft Toolkit sent to all members of the group. Detailed discussion on the content of the Toolkit took place in the Risk Management Steering Group meeting held on 30 July 2021. Original deadline missed as staff redeployed to support covid related services.		
Service Head: Helen Pugh		Performance status: On target	
Action	14303	Target date	31/03/2022 (original target 31/03/2020)
Action promised	Risk Appetite: The Council should define its corporate risk appetite to ensure that it manages risks and opportunities effectively.		
Comment	A training programme / workshop provided by the Authority's Insurer, has been identified. Following dates and workshops have been arranged: 30th September 2021 - CMT & HoS – workshop to understand risk and to establish what is our risk appetite. 26th October 2021 – Cabinet - Risk Workshop 3rd November 2021 – Staff – Risk workshop – understanding risk, understand roles, process 18th November 2021 – Governance & Audit Committee – Risk awareness session.		
Service Head: Helen Pugh		Performance status: On target	
Action	14305	Target date	31/03/2022 (original target 31/03/2020)
Action promised	Roles & Responsibilities: The Council should review and clarify the roles and responsibilities of: Managers, Staff, Risk Champions, The Risk Management Steering Group in its risk management arrangements		
Comment	The Risk Management toolkit lays out the roles and responsibilities of the various parties involved in risk management. Terms of Reference for the Risk Management Steering Group and Contingency Planning have been developed and were presented to the Risk Management Steering Group on 29 April 2021. Detailed discussion on the content took place in the Risk Management Steering Group meeting held on 30 July 2021. The Terms of Reference for both Property and Transport groups will be discussed, agreed and finalised in the October 2021 meetings.		
Service Head: Helen Pugh		Performance status: On target	
Action	14306	Target date	31/03/2022 (original target 31/03/2020)
Action promised	Risk Management System: The Council should: clarify system it is using to identify & capture risks to ensure consistency in approach across the organisation; & review the information recorded on risk registers throughout the organisation to ensure information is up to date, complete, & has enough detail to ensure risks can be appropriately managed		
Comment	JCAD CORE upgrade completed and access provided to all users. Risk Management Officers have met with JCAD and another Local Authority using the same system to learn from their experiences in order to maximise the effectiveness of the upgraded system. Workshops and training arranged for relevant staff to attend with a view to remind all of the approach to identifying, defining, recording and managing risks.		
Service Head: Helen Pugh		Performance status: On target	
Action	14307	Target date	31/03/2021 (original target 31/03/2020)
Action promised	The Council to Improve Effectiveness by: training staff; regularly seeking assurance on effectiveness of all aspects of its arrangements & acting on findings; & embedding process for identifying lessons learned & sharing good practice across organisation		
Comment	Workshops and training arranged for relevant staff to attend with a view to remind all of the approach to identifying, defining, recording and managing risks. Risk Steering Group agenda now includes feedback on completed risk bids, to ascertain if the risk posed has been addressed, how it's been addressed and if there are any lessons learnt. The bid forms are currently being updated to incorporate a section on what risks are mitigated and how, and how after completion it can be demonstrated. This will be presented to the working groups for sign off in the October 2021 round of meetings.		
Service Head: Helen Pugh		Performance status: On target	

## COMPLETED @ 31/03/21

Action	14304	Target date	31/03/2021 (original target 31/03/2020)
Action promised	Performance Management: The Council should further align its risk management arrangements with its performance management arrangements.		
Comment	Corporate Risk Register reviewed by CMT every two months and every 6 months by Audit Committee. Corporate & Service Risk Registers are discussed by CPWG on a quarterly basis.		
Service Head: Helen Pugh		Performance status: On target - Completed	

**COMPLETED @ 31/03/21**

<b>WAO/NAT: Progress in implementing the VAWDASV Act (Nov 19)</b>			
<b>Action</b>	14527	<b>Target date</b>	31/03/2021
<b>Action promised</b>	To support victims and survivors to access and use services we recommend that public bodies: a) produce comprehensive and relevant information in a variety of media on the full range of services available to protect and support victims and survivors;		
<b>Comment</b>	The Regional Communication and Engagement Subgroup is now established. Key messaging aligned to 5 Key themes have been identified and will be delivered via virtual, pre-recorded learning sessions across the whole region. We have a regional pathway to support document in place and published on the RSB website, this has a consistent route to support services across the whole region. We have also completed an assessment of existing communication and engagement frameworks within MWW and Nationally. this will now inform the MWW Regional frameworks for communication and engagement.		
<b>Service Head: Avril Bracey</b>		<b>Performance status: On target - Completed</b>	
<b>Action</b>	14528	<b>Target date</b>	31/03/2021
<b>Action promised</b>	To support victims and survivors to access and use services we recommend that public bodies: b) create a joint pathway to access services and support for both victims and professionals and advertise access arrangements widely		
<b>Comment</b>	The Regional Communication and Engagement Group is now established. We have a Regional Pathway to Support Document which ensures a consistent route to support services across the region. This document has been shared across the partnership and stakeholders and is published on the RSB website.		
<b>Service Head: Avril Bracey</b>		<b>Performance status: On target - Completed</b>	
<b>Action</b>	14529	<b>Target date</b>	31/03/2021
<b>Action promised</b>	Authorities: a) ensure staff who are likely to come into contact with victims and survivors have appropriate VAWDASV training;		
<b>Comment</b>	The Regional Training Subgroup is well established with representation across all relevant agencies and the specialist sector. We have a centralised reporting framework into Welsh Government. We have a Regional Training Plan which now includes Covid-19 specifically developed virtual Ask and Act delivery materials. We have also completed a TNA across the specialist providers to ensure groups 4 and 5 of the NTF are met.		
<b>Service Head: Avril Bracey</b>		<b>Performance status: On target - Completed</b>	
<b>Action</b>	14533	<b>Target date</b>	31/03/2021
<b>Action promised</b>	LA's review their commissioning arrangements to: a)remove duplication & overlap between different approaches in authority & partners; b)rationalise administration arrangements; c)streamline & standardise commissioning arrangements; d)set appropriate performance measures, targets & benchmarks to judge impact & outcome of commissioned services		
<b>Comment</b>	The Regional VAWDASV Commissioning subgroup is established with Regional Membership. TOR and action plan has been completed. Regional Commissioning document is now published in relation to VAWDASV on the RSB website. Design and Development of a Regional Service Specification is complete including outcomes framework. This service specification outlines common commissioning principles, regional outcomes and standardises commissioning of VAWDASV services across Mid and West Wales.		
<b>Service Head: Avril Bracey</b>		<b>Performance status: On target - Completed</b>	

WAO/NAT: 'Raising Our Game' - Tackling Fraud in Wales (July 20)			
Action	14750	Target date	31/03/2021
<b>Action promised</b>	Policies & Training: Staff working across the Welsh public sector should receive fraud awareness training as appropriate to their role in order to increase organisational effectiveness in preventing, detecting & responding to fraud.		
<b>Comment</b>	Fraud and Cyber Awareness Training took place in October/November 2020. Face-to-Face training was not undertaken during 2020/21 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Appropriate training to re-commence when possible. A Fraud E-learning module is being explored.		
Service Head: Helen Pugh		Performance status: On target	

**COMPLETED @ 30/09/21**

<b>Action</b>	14746	<b>Target date</b>	31/03/2021
<b>Action promised</b>	Leadership & Culture: All public bodies should champion the importance of a good anti-fraud culture & actively promote its importance to give confidence to staff & members of the public that fraud is not tolerated		
<b>Comment</b>	The Councils Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Strategy has been and will continue to be actively promoted. Fraud and Cyber awareness training took place in October/November 2020. The Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Annual Report for 2020/21 has been published and presented to CMT on 24th June 2021, the report was presented to the Governance and Audit Committee on 16th July 2021.		
Service Head: Helen Pugh		Performance status: On target - Completed	
<b>Action</b>	14747	<b>Target date</b>	31/03/2021
<b>Action promised</b>	Risk Man & Control Framework: All public bodies should undertake comprehensive fraud risk assessments, using appropriately skilled staff & considering national intelligence as well as organisation-specific intelligence.		
<b>Comment</b>	The Fraud Risk Register has now been developed and is continually monitored and reviewed		
Service Head: Helen Pugh		Performance status: On target - Completed	
<b>Action</b>	14748	<b>Target date</b>	31/03/2021
<b>Action promised</b>	Risk Man & Control Framework: Fraud risk assessments should be used as a live resource & integrated within the general risk management framework to ensure that these risks are appropriately managed & escalated as necessary.		
<b>Comment</b>	The Fraud Risk Register has now been developed and is continually monitored and reviewed.		
Service Head: Helen Pugh		Performance status: On target - Completed	
<b>Action</b>	14749	<b>Target date</b>	31/03/2021
<b>Action promised</b>	Policies & Training: All public bodies need to have a comprehensive & up-to-date set of policies & procedures which together represent a cohesive strategy for identifying, managing & responding to fraud risks.		
<b>Comment</b>	The Councils Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Strategy was approved by Audit Committee on the 16th October 2020. The Strategy has been, and will continue to be actively promoted. Fraud and Cyber Awareness Training took place in October/November 2020. The Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Annual Report for 2020/21 has been published and presented to CMT on 24th June 2021, the report was reported to the Governance and Audit Committee on 16th July 2021.		
Service Head: Helen Pugh		Performance status: On target - Completed	
<b>Action</b>	14751	<b>Target date</b>	31/03/2021
<b>Action promised</b>	Policies & Training: Cases where fraud is identified & successfully addressed should be publicised to re-enforce a robust message from the top that fraud will not be tolerated.		
<b>Comment</b>	The Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Annual Report for 2020/21 has been published and presented to CMT on 24th June 2021, the report was reported to the Governance and Audit Committee on 16th July 2021. A number of successful prosecutions have been publicised during 2020/21. Publication of successful cases will continue.		
Service Head: Helen Pugh		Performance status: On target - Completed	
<b>Action</b>	14753	<b>Target date</b>	31/03/2021
<b>Action promised</b>	Capacity & Expertise: All public bodies should have access to trained counter-fraud staff that meet recognised professional standards.		
<b>Comment</b>	The Authority currently has adequately qualified staff in place to appropriately deal with counter fraud work, investigations and sanctions. Further staffing resources have been considered, however, at this time it is not deemed necessary to make changes to the staffing structure.		
Service Head: Helen Pugh		Performance status: On target - Completed	
<b>Action</b>	14754	<b>Target date</b>	31/03/2021
<b>Action promised</b>	Capacity & Expertise: All public bodies should consider models adopted elsewhere in the UK relating to the pooling /sharing of resources in order to maximise the availability of appropriately skilled staff.		
<b>Comment</b>	The Authority currently has adequately qualified staff in place to appropriately deal with counter fraud work, investigations and sanctions. Liaison with neighbouring Authorities has taken place to establish how others resource the function. At this time, it is not deemed necessary to make changes to the staffing structure at Carmarthenshire County Council.		
Service Head: Helen Pugh		Performance status: On target - Completed	

<b>Action</b>	14758	<b>Target date</b>	31/03/2021
<b>Action promised</b>	Reporting & Scrutiny: Audit committees must become fully engaged with counter-fraud, providing support & direction, monitoring & holding officials to account.		
<b>Comment</b>	The Council's Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Strategy was approved by Audit Committee at its meeting on 16th October 2020. The Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Annual Report for 2020/21 has been published and presented to CMT on 24th June 2021, the report was reported to the Governance and Audit Committee on 16th July 2021.		
Service Head: Helen Pugh		Performance status: On target - Completed	
<b>Action</b>	14759	<b>Target date</b>	31/03/2021
<b>Action promised</b>	Capacity & Expertise: All public bodies need to build sufficient capacity to ensure that counter-fraud work is resourced effectively, so that investigations are undertaken professionally & in a manner that results in successful sanctions against the perp		
<b>Comment</b>	The Authority currently has adequately qualified staff in place to appropriately deal with counter fraud work, investigations and sanctions. Further staffing resources have been considered, however, at this time it is not deemed necessary to make changes to the staffing structure.		
Service Head: Helen Pugh		Performance status: On target - Completed	

<b>WAO/NAT: Rough Sleeping in Wales – Everyone’s Problem; No One’s Responsibility (July 20)</b>			
<b>Action</b>	14760	<b>Target date</b>	31/03/2022 (original target 31/03/2021)
<b>Action promised</b>	Intelligent use of data: Use data to plan the right future services, and to put in place effective data sharing protocols to ensure they respond effectively and safely to people sleeping rough. We recommend: i) invest in data analytical skills to better understand the current situation and predict future demand to prevent future homelessness		
<b>Comment</b>	Weekly reporting is in place which allows us to better understand the current situation and any emerging trends. Rough sleepers are reported every two weeks to Welsh Government as part of a regular liaison meeting. Members of the Housing Support Grant team are in attendance at the meeting to identify any support needs.		
Service Head: Jonathan Morgan		Performance status: On target	
<b>Action</b>	14763	<b>Target date</b>	30/09/2021 (original target 31/03/2021)
<b>Action promised</b>	Integrated services to tackle complex needs: By responding to people in crisis, often deal with issues in isolation & rarely address fundamental cause. Requires responsive service delivery models, We recommend public bodies use our complex needs self-reflection tool to improve how they can jointly address complex needs in the future		
<b>Comment</b>	We will use the data we gather on homeless presentations together with the information gathered from risk assessments to work with partners to jointly address complex needs in the future. This will be discussed in the January 2022 homelessness forum attended by both public bodies and the 3rd sector.		
Service Head: Jonathan Morgan		Performance status: On target	

CIW/NAT: National review of care homes for people living with dementia (Sep 20)			
Action	15233	Target date	31/03/2022
Action promised	R1 - Choice, people need clearer information about the location and types of service available. Commissioners need to address the gaps in care home provision		
Comment	Information about all older adult care homes in the Region, including those for Dementia, is available through <a href="http://findaplace.wales">http://findaplace.wales</a> . Developed by the West Wales Care Partnership, the site has extensive up-to-date information about care homes: including size; number of beds; facilities and current vacancies. Continue to promote use of Findaplace by brokerage teams and the public.		
Service Head: Chris Harrison		Performance status: On target	
Action	15234	Target date	31/03/2022
Action promised	R2 – Training - providers of carer services and commissioners need to ensure that training supports the delivery of person – centred care. Training should involve people living with dementia who can describe their experience of care		
Comment	<p>Carmarthenshire SCWWDP Dementia and Person-centred training:</p> <p><b>2021/22:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduction to MCA (including DoLS and LPS)</li> <li>Assessing Capacity under the MCA</li> <li>- Determining Best Interests under the MCA</li> <li>- Additional training on LPS and DoLS will be organised and offered to care home managers and deputies once the relevant Codes of Practice and Regulations have been published.</li> <li>- SCWWDP are Currently working with CCC older people service to create dementia lead (manager) and champions (senior staff) within each setting to strengthen support and understanding for all staff. Dementia Interpreter train the trainer from Training 2 care is to be provided.</li> <li>- Created training plan and engaged suppliers for new staff cohort on Dementia Fulfilled Lives project, with 18 staff trained.</li> <li>- Dignity in Care course delivered to 22 staff to focus on Person-centred care approach.</li> </ul> <p><u>Further Actions:</u></p> <p>In relation to the Mental Capacity Act and rights-based care, Carmarthenshire offer a range of training to care home managers and deputies with the expectation that they will cascade the information to care staff via their internal training arrangements. These courses have been booked will be delivered later in 2021/22</p> <p><b>2020/21:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Webpage created for dementia during and post covid available to all external providers via the extranet link here - <a href="https://ourpeople.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/our-people/learning-and-development/supporting-care-services-during-covid-19/dementia/">https://ourpeople.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/our-people/learning-and-development/supporting-care-services-during-covid-19/dementia/</a> – including link to SCW Dementia covid page Dementia and Covid-19   Social Care Wales. You tube clips, nutrition and eating difficulties, anxiety etc. other downloadable information shared via the 'Dementia Learning coordinators network'.</li> <li>- Dementia training for social care, delivered via webinar session during national Covid 19 Lockdown, included Meaningful Engagement in Dementia Care, Person centred care, Dementia Foundation Awareness training with 118 staff attending.</li> </ul> <p><b>2019/20:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A large number of courses were delivered up to and during the national response to the Pandemic in this year. Training delivery changed at this time from face-to-face session to webinar-based training in line with social distancing rules. Training courses delivered and commissioned included 'Positive Risk Taking in dementia Care', 'Determining Best Interest under the Mental Health Act' and several Virtual Dementia Experience sessions via the dementia bus across the county supported experiential learning for care staff, including all catering staff of older people care settings. The SCWWDP delivered Dementia briefing sessions and Person-centred care courses with a focus on individuals with dementia in Domiciliary settings and 4 x Dignity and Respect in Dementia Care courses. In total 371 staff attended these events.</li> <li>- Senior staff attended the 'End of life care and dementia' course in Dec. 2019 course, and the Wales International Dementia Conference in Feb. 2020 via zoom.</li> <li>- Engaged with 'PocketMedic' research around short training films being developed to support dementia training for care staff.</li> </ul> <p><b>2018/19:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 10 Senior staff from residential services undertook specialist Dementia Care courses via FE college at level 5.</li> <li>- 57 residential staff undertook training on managing medication with service users with Dementia.</li> <li>- A specialist course around the topic of learning Disability &amp; Dementia was attended by 37 staff from both Learning Disability and Adult Residential services.</li> <li>- 139 staff attended Meaningful Engagement &amp; Dementia courses, delivered by SCWWDP team members.</li> <li>- Assessing People with Dementia under the MCA was attended by 25 staff from social work teams.</li> </ul> <p>The first cohort of Dementia specialist Domiciliary care staff working for the Fulfilled Lives project undertook training this year. Staff included social workers, external care agencies and CCC Domiciliary workers, with 20 in total attending the modular course.</p> <p><b>May 2018</b> – Award winning Belonging training delivered at the Torch Theatre, attended by senior staff from CCC services.</p>		
Service Head: Chris Harrison		Performance status: On target	
Action	15235	Target date	31/03/2022
Action promised	R3 – Environment -providers and Commissioners should work together to ensure new homes are designed and built to improve outcomes and enable effective care, informed by evidence		
Comment	<p>ACTION PLAN RESPONSE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* An investment programme to update and modernise homes, taking into consideration relevant best practice for people living with and caring for individuals with dementia.</li> <li>* To provide a safe, modern environment and ensuring that prior to any investment research and interaction with relevant parties takes place.</li> </ul>		
Service Head: Chris Harrison		Performance status: On target	

<b>Action</b>	15236	<b>Target date</b>	31/03/2022
<b>Action promised</b>	R4 - Welsh Language - providers and Commissioners must gather better information about the Welsh Language skills of the workforce; educators should work to upskill the current workforce		
<b>Comment</b>	<p>Carmarthenshire has a Welsh Language Board for housing and social care which is chaired by the Head of Adult Social Care. Representatives from older people's services attend the board which oversees the More than Just Words strategy. The board has oversight of the Welsh Language Skills of the workforce and is promotes training at all levels across the organisation.</p> <p><b>FURTHER ACTIONS:</b> A workshop is being held on 6th October 21 to refresh the board's priorities and forward workplan</p>		
<b>Service Head:</b>	Chris Harrison	<b>Performance status:</b>	On target
<b>Action</b>	15237	<b>Target date</b>	31/03/2022
<b>Action promised</b>	R6 – Rights - there is a lack of understanding about mental capacity with a need to upskill staff in the context of rights-based approaches to care and support		
<b>Comment</b>	<p>Carmarthenshire County Council offers a rolling programme of training relating to the Mental Capacity Act to internal and external staff, which are always well attended. Examples of the training offered includes: MCA- overview, Assessing Mental Capacity under MCA, MCA legal updates, BIA (MCA/DoLS), AMHP forum, Assessing Children and Young People under MCA. In addition to the rolling programme of training Carmarthenshire Council supports an annual cohort of staff to complete a Level 7 (Masters) course – Assessing Decision Making Capacity, delivered and accredited by Swansea University.</p> <p>Audits are routinely undertaken to ensure practitioners apply a rights-based approach to care and support, including safeguarding interventions and Deprivation of Liberty arrangements. The MCA/Dols team in Carmarthenshire has developed professional expertise in this area and use this to upskill practitioners.</p> <p>The forthcoming Liberty Protection Safeguards will provide further opportunities to reinforce the importance of rights based interventions.</p> <p><b>FURTHER ACTIONS:</b> Carmarthenshire County Council has recently applied for Welsh Government funding to support MCA training for at least 400 staff. If successful, this training will be delivered prior to April 2022.</p>		
<b>Service Head:</b>	Chris Harrison	<b>Performance status:</b>	On target
<b>Action</b>	15238	<b>Target date</b>	31/03/2022
<b>Action promised</b>	R7 - Multi-disciplinary support - there is a need to improve support from mental health services and effective admission and discharge from hospital		
<b>Comment</b>	<p>The regional dementia strategy outlines an Integrated Dementia Wellbeing Pathway, which highlights support options available for people at different stages of dementia.</p> <p>Working across community, services and care home settings, the multi-disciplinary Dementia Wellbeing Community Team (DWCT) includes dementia leads for psychology, occupational therapy, pharmacy, diet and speech and language therapy. It has been established to provide system leadership for dementia. At the heart of the DWCT approach is the 'Stepped-Care' approach, where initial intervention is recognised as 'everyone's business', with escalation to increasingly specialist support only accessed when necessary.</p> <p><b>FURTHER ACTIONS:</b> Continue to implement the 'Stepped-Care' model across older adult care homes in Carmarthenshire.</p>		
<b>Service Head:</b>	Chris Harrison	<b>Performance status:</b>	On target

Objective: AW/NAT: Commercialisation in Local Government (Oct 20)			
<b>Action</b>	14916	<b>Target date</b>	31/03/2022
<b>Action promised</b>	We will ensure that the TIC Income Thematic Workstream is focussed on the development of a more commercial approach across the organisation, and will aim to implement the outcomes and recommendations of the Audit Wales Review of Commercialisation in Local Government.		
<b>Comment</b>	The findings of the Wales Audit Review - 'Commercialisation in Local Govt' has been considered by the TIC Income Workstream. The toolkit included within the report has been used to support a self-assessment exercise by the workstream. A similar exercise will now be arranged for the Heads of Service forum and the findings from these exercises will then be used to inform a discussion at CMT and with elected members. It is hoped that this will help clarify the Council's ambitions in this area and what capacity/skills the Council possesses or requires to further progress this agenda.		
Service Head: Paul R Thomas		Performance status: On target	



AW/LOC: Review of Waste Services – Carmarthenshire County Council (July 21)			
Action	15215	Target date	31/12/2021
Action promised	R1: Garden Waste-The Council should identify performance measures for its garden waste service and ensure effective oversight of performance in this area by senior officers and Members		
Comment	<p><b>ACTION PLAN RESPONSE:</b> The viability and performance of the service will be reviewed annually at the end of the collection season. Options to be explored:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow unfettered expansion in terms of customers.</li> <li>• Alternatively, consider capping the number of customers to match the available established resource.</li> <li>• Allow surplus from "in-profit" years to be ring fenced and taken forward to the following financial year to cover any operating cost deficit in the following year.</li> </ul> <p><b>PROGRESS OF THE ABOVE:</b> To be undertaken at the end of season.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove the current 15% discount for a single full payment and apply a 10% discount instead. This would improve service viability and could go part way to sustaining additional resources when customer numbers grow.</li> </ul> <p><b>PROGRESS OF THE ABOVE:</b> The options for changing the subscription charge to be considered as part of the annual budget and charges setting process.</p> <p>Performance measures to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No of customers retained from the previous season.</li> <li>• Financial viability of service.</li> </ul>		
Service Head: Ainsley Williams		Performance status: On target	
Action	15216	Target date	31/03/2022
Action promised	R2: CWM Environmental Ltd - Ensure that there is a risk register for CWM		
Comment	<p><b>ACTION PLAN RESPONSE:</b> * Risk Register to be approved by CWM Board by 31st December annually.</p> <p><b>PROGRESS:</b> Action agreed with CWM MD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Company Risk register to be presented to shareholder group alongside 3-year Business Plan prior to 31st March 22 and annually thereafter</li> </ul> <p><b>PROGRESS:</b> Company Risk register to be presented to the Shareholder Board annually Shareholder reserved matters to be kept under review</p>		
Service Head: Ainsley Williams		Performance status: On target	
Action	15217	Target date	31/07/2021
Action promised	R3: CWM Environmental Ltd-Ensure that it (Council) undertakes effective oversight of CWM's performance and associated risks, including at relevant committees such as overview and scrutiny		
Comment	<p><b>ACTION PLAN RESPONSE:</b> Shareholder Board report to Executive board 6 monthly (together with report from Company MD as required)</p> <p><b>PROGRESS:</b> Complete – reports/meeting already scheduled. Already scheduled as a regular report to Shareholder Board and to PEB/EB, that collectively provide governance of CWM from a Council perspective</p>		
Service Head: Ainsley Williams		Performance status: On target	
Action	15218	Target date	31/07/2021
Action promised	R4: CWM Environmental Ltd-Develop a contingency plan for dealing with any consequences in the event CWM becomes financially unviable		
Comment	<p><b>ACTION PLAN RESPONSE:</b> Should the company become financially unviable then as shareholder the Council could take any one of, or a mix of the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide short term financial support</li> <li>- Replace or augment the management of the company</li> <li>- Step in and deliver the services directly</li> <li>- Subject the service to competition</li> </ul> <p><b>PROGRESS:</b> Complete - measures identified are currently in place. Council is already guaranteeing the aftercare liability for the Nantycaws site and this is supported by £1.5m cash held in a joint ESCROW account.</p>		
Service Head: Ainsley Williams		Performance status: On target	
Action	15219	Target date	31/03/2022
Action promised	R5: Fly-tipping-Develop and implement an agreed plan to sustainably address the high number of fly-tipping incidents		
	<p><b>ACTION PLAN RESPONSE:</b> * The Council is in the process of formalising its Local Environmental Quality (LEQ) Plan. There is currently full engagement with the Welsh Government led national initiative called Caru Cymru. The aim of</p>		

<b>Comment</b>	<p>the plan is to put measures in place from a communications, education and physical cleansing activity with the aim of preventing or reducing litter. In addition, the Council will work with community groups to remove fly-tipped waste.</p> <p>PROGRESS ON THE ABOVE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- LEQ Plan currently progressing through the political approvals system.</li> <li>- Caru Cymru projects being progressed</li> </ul> <p>* Review CCC's current fly-tipping removal gang resource levels; potentially expand to two gangs for the County - Llanelli and Carmarthen.</p> <p>* Resource to be costed.</p> <p>* Creation of new Waste Warden posts being considered to deal with kerbside waste transgressions.</p> <p>* Reconvene internal LEQ group and focus action on a prioritised basis within the group.</p> <p>* Participate in Environment &amp; Public Protection Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Review on fly-tipping from a Council-wide perspective.</p> <p>PROGRESS ON THE ABOVE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- T&amp;F Scoping is underway involving the Planning section, Environmental Health Section and Waste Section.</li> </ul>		
Service Head: Ainsley Williams		Performance status: On target	
<b>Action</b>	15220	<b>Target date</b>	31/03/2022
<b>Action promised</b>	R6: Fly-tipping-Report corporately on a fuller set of performance measures for fly-tipping, including the number of incidents, to enable senior officers and Members to have more effective oversight of the problem and to drive improvement		
<b>Comment</b>	<p>ACTION PLAN RESPONSE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Review the way incidents of fly-tipping are recorded and identify all potential reporting sources to ensure multiple reports of the same incident are identifiable.</li> <li>* Rationalise data capture and filter out duplicate reporting.</li> <li>* Develop wider performance indicators.</li> </ul> <p>PROGRESS ON THE ABOVE:</p> <p>To be commenced Q3/Q4</p>		
Service Head: Ainsley Williams		Performance status: On target	
<b>Action</b>	15221	<b>Target date</b>	31/03/2022
<b>Action promised</b>	R7(1): Waste Strategy-All elements of the waste hierarchy need to be considered, including prevention		
<b>Comment</b>	<p>ACTION PROGRESS RESPONSE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* A review of our waste service strategy is currently in progress and will include reference to hierarchy and circular economy (CE)</li> <li>* A separate CE Strategy will also be developed with a specific CE Project Officer employed</li> </ul> <p>PROGRESS:</p> <p>Waste collection strategy outlook and detail for future collections currently being taken through the political system</p>		
Service Head: Ainsley Williams		Performance status: On target	
<b>Action</b>	15222	<b>Target date</b>	31/03/2022
<b>Action promised</b>	R7(2): Waste Strategy-It integrates its strategy with other related projects and plans e.g. regeneration, enforcement and fly-tipping		
<b>Comment</b>	<p>ACTION PLAN RESPONSE:</p> <p>Incorporate wider links to environmental management into the Waste Strategy Plan</p> <p>PROGRESS:</p> <p>Waste collection strategy outlook and detail for future collections currently being taken through the political system</p>		
Service Head: Ainsley Williams		Performance status: On target	
<b>Action</b>	15223	<b>Target date</b>	31/03/2022
<b>Action promised</b>	R7(3): Waste Strategy-It has clear and sustainable plans for financing its strategy (including contingency plans if Welsh Government funding is not available)		
<b>Comment</b>	<p>ACTION PLAN RESPONSE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Financial position to be clarified within the Waste Strategy Report. Continue dialogue with WG on support for future waste strategy.</li> <li>* Detail of support to be worked through as approval in principle has been provided.</li> </ul> <p>PROGRESS:</p> <p>Waste collection strategy outlook and detail for future collections currently being taken through the political system</p>		
Service Head: Ainsley Williams		Performance status: On target	
<b>Action</b>	15224	<b>Target date</b>	31/10/2021
<b>Action promised</b>	R7(4): Waste Strategy-It devotes sufficient time to consult the public on its proposed changes to waste collection arrangements		
<b>Comment</b>	<p>ACTION PLAN RESPONSE:</p> <p>Outcome of the engagement exercise to be included in the waste strategy report as part of the considerations for the new strategy</p> <p>PROGRESS:</p> <p>Public engagement exercise completed in July 21</p>		
Service Head: Ainsley Williams		Performance status: On target	
<b>Action</b>	15225	<b>Target date</b>	30/06/2022
<b>Action promised</b>	R7(5): Waste Strategy-It develops and implements an engagement strategy focussing on the behavioural change required for the successful launch and adoption by the public of its new strategy (the Welsh Government Blueprint collection model)		

<b>Comment</b>	ACTION PLAN RESPONSE: Identify resource requirements and programme of public engagement prior to implementation of changes PROGRESS: - Engagement resource identified. Recruitment to follow. - Engagement plan being developed.		
Service Head: Ainsley Williams		Performance status: On target	
<b>Action</b>	15226	<b>Target date</b>	31/03/2022
<b>Action promised</b>	R8(1): Business Plan-Set out clear accountable actions for its waste service which are specific measurable and timebound		
<b>Comment</b>	ACTION PLAN RESPONSE: Specific actions to be developed in line with proposed waste strategy PROGRESS: To be commenced once actions are set		
Service Head: Ainsley Williams		Performance status: On target	
<b>Action</b>	15227	<b>Target date</b>	31/03/2022
<b>Action promised</b>	R8(2): Business Plan-Include performance measures that re linked to the actions which have clear targets and success actions		
<b>Comment</b>	ACTION PLAN RESPONSE: Specific actions to be developed in line with proposed waste strategy PROGRESS: To be commenced once actions are set		
Service Head: Ainsley Williams		Performance status: On target	

AW/LOC: Regenerating Town Centres in Wales (Sep 21)			
Action	15142	Target date	31/03/2023
Action promised	Development of recovery and growth plans for Ten Rural Market Towns and to commence delivery of interventions identified		
Comment	Growth plan teams have been established in 9 of the areas with one further team to be established over the coming weeks. The growth plan teams have been meeting to discuss and prioritise applications for consideration under the Capital investment fund that is being made available as well as the Leader innovation grant. Each of the growth plan teams have been invited to submit an initial expression of interest for both pots of funding by the end of November. 2 of the 3 Rural Market Town Officers have been in post since the beginning of September. We have recently gone out again to appoint the 3rd officer.		
Service Head: Jason Jones		Performance status: On target	
Action	15146	Target date	31/03/2023
Action promised	Review existing town centre master-plans for 3 primary town centres & produce Recovery Master-plans. Commence delivery of short, medium & strategic interventions. Projects: Carmarthen Hwb, CRF - Revitalise Rhydamman; Towns & Growth; Llanelli		
Comment	Draft recovery plans have been developed for Ammanford, Carmarthen and Llanelli, in partnership with town task forces/ forum. The plans are due to be considered by Preliminary Cabinet and have been endorsed by Regeneration Scrutiny Committee. Further public consultation is scheduled on the plans during October/ November after which time they will be presented to Cabinet for final consideration. Funding bids have been submitted under the UK Government's Community Renewal Fund (CRF) and it's Levelling up Fund, and we are currently awaiting decisions on the applications submitted. A total of 13 applications have been submitted under the CRF fund and includes the following projects from Regeneration, Carmarthenshire Towns Recovery and Growth Pilot, Supporting the Welsh Language in Business and Communities, Revitalise Rhydamman, Business Bank Sir Gar and Regenerating Llanelli. Under the Levelling Up Fund, Carmarthenshire have led on 2 bid submissions. Firstly the Tywi Valley Path from Llandeilo to Carmarthen and secondly a joint bid with Pembrokeshire County Council for new Public Service Hwbs in Carmarthen and Pembroke town centres. Decisions on each of these funds is expected later in the autumn.		
Service Head: Jason Jones		Performance status: On target	
Action	15228	Target date	31/03/2023
Action promised	The Welsh Government has provided all 22 local authorities with training on how best to use existing enforcement, financial assistance and debt recovery powers, but they are not being consistently nor effectively utilised to support regeneration		
Comment	ACTION PLAN RESPONSE: Carmarthenshire have completed the training provided and subsequently developed an Empty Property Action Plan for enforcement within town centres linked to the Transforming Towns agenda. Carmarthenshire have an Enforcement Group in place, made up of officers from Regeneration, Property, Housing, Building Control, Legal, Council Tax, Business Rates, Planning and Public Health. Going forward, the group will aim to use their resource and intervention to action relevant requirements in relation to empty properties within the County. The Empty Property Action Plan and supporting detail is in the process of gaining political sign off before a final version can be provided to Welsh Government for consideration. Following which Carmarthenshire will gain access to the loan funding made available by the Empty Property Management Fund to utilise necessary enforcement powers where appropriate.		
Service Head: Jason Jones		Performance status: On target	
Action	15229	Target date	31/03/2023
Action promised	Recommend that LA's take appropriate action, using existing powers and resources available to achieve the best possible outcome for town centres by: A. using alternative methods of enforcement before using Compulsory Purchase Orders as a last resort;		
Comment	ACTION PLAN RESPONSE: As an Authority we will look to use a range of alternative enforcement methods using the loan funding prior to resorting to Compulsory Purchase Orders as a tool of last resort where appropriate		
Service Head: Jason Jones		Performance status: On target	
Action	15230	Target date	31/03/2023
Action promised	Recommend that LA's take appropriate action, using existing powers and resources available to achieve the best possible outcome for town centres by: B. integrating enforcement strategies with wider departmental strategies across housing, environmental health, planning & regeneration teams to make more effective use of existing skills & resources;		
Comment	ACTION PLAN RESPONSE: The multi-disciplinary Enforcement Group team that includes Regeneration, Property, Housing, Building Control, Legal, Council Tax, Business Rates, Planning and Public Health represents many departments in the authority and representatives will bring their skills and resources to deliver the Empty Property Action Plan, and will integrate all respective strategies accordingly.		
Service Head: Jason Jones		Performance status: On target	
Action	15231	Target date	31/03/2023
Action promised	Recommend that LA's take appropriate action, using existing powers and resources available to achieve the best possible outcome for town centres by: C. ensuring there is capacity and the right expertise to use the full range of powers, working in collaboration with other councils to achieve good outcomes		
Comment	ACTION PLAN RESPONSE: Capacity and expertise in this field will be drawn from a range of departments within the authority through the Carmarthenshire Enforcement Group. Collaboration with other councils will be carried out as and when necessary		
Service Head: Jason Jones		Performance status: On target	

<b>Action</b>	15232	<b>Target date</b>	31/12/2021
<b>Action promised</b>	Town centres are changing, and LA's need to be receptive to these changes and plan to manage these shifts. We recommend that LA's use our regeneration tool to self-assess their current approaches to identify where they need to improve their work on town-centre regeneration (Linked 15142 + 15146)		
<b>Comment</b>	ACTION PLAN RESPONSE: Regeneration have led in the preparation of town centre recovery plans for Ammanford, Carmarthen and Llanelli, which are currently in draft form, and are due to go out for final consultation in the next few months. In addition, Regeneration have been leading on developing the "Ten Towns" plans. All these plans have acknowledged the changes occurring in town centres that have been accelerated by the pandemic, Brexit and other market forces. Moving forward we will make use of the regeneration tool to support our work where necessary.		
<b>Service Head:</b> Jason Jones	<b>Performance status:</b> On target		

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## Governance & Audit Committee 17 December 2021

<b>GOVERNANCE &amp; AUDIT COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME</b>		
<b>Recommendations / key decisions required:</b> To receive the report.		
<b>Reasons:</b> Annual Forward Work Programme to inform Members of the expected Agenda Items for the 2021/22 Governance & Audit Committee Cycle.		
<b>Relevant scrutiny committee to be consulted:</b> N/A		
<b>Cabinet Decision Required:</b> N/A		
<b>Council Decision Required:</b> N/A		
CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Cllr D Jenkins		
<b>Directorate:</b> Corporate Services  <b>Name of Head of Service:</b> Helen Pugh  <b>Report Author:</b> Caroline Powell	<b>Designation:</b> Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance  Principal Auditor	<b>Tel No.:</b> 01267 246223  <b>E Mail Address:</b> <a href="mailto:HLPugh@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">HLPugh@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a>  <a href="mailto:CaPowell@carmarthenshire.gov.uk">CaPowell@carmarthenshire.gov.uk</a>

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE  
17 DECEMBER 2021**

**Governance & Audit Committee Forward Work Programme**

To provide Members with a Forward Work Programme for the 2021/22 Governance & Audit Committee cycle to ensure that all appropriate Committees have a published up to date programme owned by the Committee Members.

The following Report is attached:  
Forward Work Programme

**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: H L Pugh – Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance**

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>

**CONSULTATIONS**

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

**Signed: H L Pugh – Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance**

- 1. Scrutiny Committee: Not Applicable**
- 2. Local Member(s): Not Applicable**
- 3. Community / Town Council: Not Applicable**
- 4. Relevant Partners: Not Applicable**
- 5. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations: Not Applicable**

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

**THERE ARE NONE**



Subject area and brief description of nature of report	Lead Department	Responsible Officer	Dec-21	Mar-22	Jul-22	Sep-22
Appointment of Audit Committee: - Chair - Vice Chair	Corporate Services	Governance & Audit Committee			✓	
Annual Audit Report	Corporate Services	Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance			✓	
Forward Work Programme	Corporate Services	Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance	✓	✓	✓	✓
Internal Audit Plan Update	Corporate Services	Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance	✓	✓	✓	✓
Internal Audit indicative three year plan	Corporate Services	Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance		✓		
Assurance Reviews: - Fundamental financial systems - 3* reports	Corporate Services	Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance	As Required			
Progress Report - Delivery of External Audit Recommendations	ICT & Policy	Performance Planning Section	✓			
Progress Report - Delivery of Internal Audit Recommendations	Corporate Services	Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance		✓		
Internal Audit Progress Updates requested by Audit Committee:	Corporate Services	Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance	As Required			
Progress reports as requested by Audit Committee						
- Strategic Commissioning of Accommodation Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities	Communities	Head of Mental Health and Learning Disabilities		✓		
- Ensuring effective People Management	Chief Executives	Assistant Chief Executive	✓			
- Review of Planning Services	Environment	Interim Head of Planning	✓	✓	✓	✓
- Review of Waste Services	Environment	Head of Waste and Environmental Services		✓	✓	✓
- Schools' Deficits and Surpluses	Education & Children	Head of Education and Inclusion Services			✓	
Approval of Audit Charter	Corporate Services	Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance	As Required			
Approval of Strategies / Rules & Regulations	Corporate Services	Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance	As Required			
Annual Anti-Fraud and Corruption Report	Corporate Services	Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance			✓	
Receive the Corporate Risk Register	Corporate Services	Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance		✓		✓
Opportunity for Members to discuss Risks	Corporate Services	Risk owners		✓		✓
Receive the Annual Complaints Report	ICT & Policy	Corporate Policy & Partnership Manager			✓	
Statement of Accounts including Annual Governance Statement for Carmarthenshire County Council - To be received - To be approved	Corporate Services	Head of Financial Services			✓	✓
Statement of Accounts including Annual Governance Statement for Dyfed Pension Fund - To be received - To be approved	Corporate Services	Head of Financial Services				✓ ✓
Burry Port Harbour Accounting Statement - To be received - To be approved	Corporate Services	Head of Financial Services			✓	✓
Audit enquiries to those charged with governance and management for: - Carmarthenshire County Council - Dyfed Pension Fund	Corporate Services	Head of Financial Services				✓
Single Tender Action	Corporate Services	Director of Corporate Services	As Required			
Minutes for noting: - Grants Panel - Corporate Governance Group - Risk Management Steering Group	Corporate Services	Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance Head of Financial Services	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Audit Wales:</b> - Audit Plan Update	Corporate Services	Audit Wales	✓		✓	✓
- Financial Statements – ISA260 Report presented to those charged with Governance in relation to the Statement of Accounts for: o Carmarthenshire County Council o Dyfed Pension Fund						✓ ✓
- Annual returns – Reports re independent examination for: o Burry Port Harbour Authority						✓
- Letter of Representation o Carmarthenshire County Council o Dyfed Pension Fund						✓ ✓
- Annual Audit Letter o Carmarthenshire County Council				✓		
- Audit Plans, including information on fees o Carmarthenshire County Council o Dyfed Pension Fund				✓		

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Governance & Audit Committee Training / Informal Sessions

Subject area and brief description of session	Lead Department	Responsible Officer(s)													
			Summer 2019	Autumn 2019	Winter 2019	Spring 2020	Summer 2020	Autumn 2020	Winter 2020	Spring 2021	Summer 2021	Autumn 2021	Winter 2021	Spring 2022	Summer 2022
Meeting with Auditors	Corporate Services	Director Corporate Services Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance		✓		✓		✓				✓			
Governance & Audit Committee - Self Assessment	Corporate Services	Director Corporate Services Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance												✓	
Risk Register	Corporate Services	Director Corporate Services Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance			✓	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	
Risk Management & Risk Appetite	Corporate Services	Director Corporate Services Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance											✓		
Statement of Accounts & Annual Governance Statement	Corporate Services	Director Corporate Services Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance	✓					✓				✓			✓
Fraud Awareness	Corporate Services	Director Corporate Services Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance						✓							
Local Authority Trading Companies	Corporate Services	Director Corporate Services Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance												✓	

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## Governance & Audit Committee 17 December 2021

<b>Minutes of relevant Groups to the Governance &amp; Audit Committee</b>		
<b>Recommendations / key decisions required:</b> Minutes to be received.		
<b>Reasons:</b> Terms of Reference for the Governance & Audit Committee stipulate that minutes of the Grants Panel, Corporate Governance Group and Risk Management Steering Group be received by the Governance & Audit Committee.		
<b>Relevant scrutiny committee to be consulted:</b> N/A		
<b>Cabinet Decision Required:</b> N/A		
<b>Council Decision Required:</b> N/A		
CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Cllr D Jenkins		
<b>Directorate:</b> Corporate Services		
<b>Name of Head of Service:</b> Helen Pugh	<b>Designation:</b> Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance	<b>Tel No.:</b> 01267 246223
<b>Report Author:</b> Helen Pugh		<b>E Mail Address:</b> HLPugh@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE  
17 DECEMBER 2021**

**Minutes of relevant Groups to the Audit Committee**

To provide Members with minutes from supporting Governance Groups for information.

The following Minutes are attached:

- Risk Management Steering Group
- Corporate Governance Group Minutes
- Grants Panel Minutes

**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: **H L Pugh – Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance**

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>

**CONSULTATIONS**

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

Signed: **H L Pugh – Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance**

- 1. Scrutiny Committee: Not Applicable**
- 2. Local Member(s): Not Applicable**
- 3. Community / Town Council: Not Applicable**
- 4. Relevant Partners: Not Applicable**
- 5. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations: Not Applicable**

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

**THERE ARE NONE**

## RISK MANAGEMENT STEERING GROUP

**Minutes of Meeting held on**

**Thursday, 11<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

**Via Microsoft Teams**

<b>Members Present:</b>			
Helen Pugh (Chair)	Corporate Services	Corporate Services Risk Champion	HLP
Cllr David Jenkins	Executive Board Member (Corporate Services)	Executive Board Risk Champion	DJ
Simon Davies	Education & Children	Education & Children Risk Champion	SD
Richard Stradling	Communities	Communities (Leisure) Risk Champion	RS
Alan Howells	Environment	Environment Risk Champion	AH
Richard Davies	Communities	Communities (Social Care) Risk Champion	RD
Julie Standeven	Corporate Services	Principal Risk Officer	JS
Jackie Bergiers	Chief Executive's	Lead Business Partner (H&S)	JB
Geraint Jones	Marsh UK Ltd		GJ

<b>Item No</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Apologies</b> Jonathan Fearn – Chair of Property & Liability Risks Working Group Stephen G Pilliner – Chair of Transport Risks Working Group Sue P John – School Organisation & Admissions Manager, Education & Children	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Minutes of Last Meeting</b> The Minutes of the Risk Management Steering Group Meeting held on Friday, 30 <sup>th</sup> July 2021 via Teams, were confirmed as a true record.	
<b>2.1</b>	<b>Matters arising from Risk Management Steering Group Minutes.</b>	
<b>2.1.1</b>	<b>Alarm Receiving Centre</b> JS advised that representatives from the Council's Risk Management and Property Compliance Teams had met with Delta Wellbeing to discuss the provision of an Alarm Receiving Centre approved by the Council's Property Insurers. Delta Wellbeing to provide documentation / information for the Insurers consideration. Action Plan / update to be provided at next meeting.	<b>JS</b>

<b>2.1.2</b>	<b>Water Safety Equipment</b> JB advised that the review of water safety equipment had been delayed by the pandemic. Site visits now completed and report to be issued by the end of 2021. Actions to be implemented prior to the 2022 summer season. Update to be provided at next meeting.	<b>JB/RS</b>
<b>2.1.3</b>	<b>Mod.Gov</b> Use of the Mod.Gov platform for the RMSG meetings being investigated as an alternative to Microsoft Teams. Update to be provided at next meeting.	<b>JS</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Minutes of Property &amp; Liability Risks Working Group Meeting – 6<sup>th</sup> October 2021</b> The Minutes were noted.	
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Matters arising from Property &amp; Liability Risks Working Group Minutes</b>	
<b>3.1.1</b>	<b>Property Claims</b> JS advised that training was provided on Wednesday, 20 <sup>th</sup> October 2021 by the Council’s property claims loss adjusters to clarify aspects of claims settlements. Property and Risk Management officers were in attendance and the training was well received.	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Minutes of Contingency Planning Working Group Meeting – 13<sup>th</sup> October 2021</b> The Minutes were noted.	
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Matters arising from Contingency Planning Working Group Minutes</b>	
<b>4.1.1</b>	<b>Departmental Business Continuity Plans</b> HLP advised that Departmental Business Continuity Plans are to be reviewed with special attention to long term incidents such as Covid-19. All updated BC Plans will be uploaded to the Emergency Planning Teams Channel.	
<b>4.1.2</b>	<b>Emergency Planning Work Plan 2021-23 / Emergency Planning Learning and Development Prospectus 2021 23</b> HLP advised that the EP Work Plan and L&D Prospectus will be included as standing Agenda items at all Contingency Planning Working Group meetings.	
<b>4.1.3</b>	<b>Corporate / Service / Project Risk Registers</b> HLP advised that the Corporate Risk Register was reviewed by Corporate Management Team every 2 months and received by Governance & Audit Committee every 6 months. The Corporate Risk Register also feeds into the newly established Performance Management Framework and the first exercise will be reported to Corporate Management Team on the 18 <sup>th</sup> November 2021. Changes are being implemented to the review / reporting process of the Corporate Risk Register, with nominated officers in each department inputting updates directly to the dedicated risk software. HLP wished to raise awareness that the software is also available to record project risk registers. Agreed actions:	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact Project Manager to set-up of Better Ways of Working Project Risk Register in the dedicated risk software</li> <li>• Contact Head of Access to Education to set-up Modernising Education Programme Project Risk Register in the dedicated risk software</li> </ul>	<p><b>HLP</b></p> <p><b>JS</b></p>
<b>5.</b>	<p><b>Minutes of Transport Risks Working Group – 1<sup>st</sup> November 2021</b> The Minutes were noted.</p>	
<b>5.1</b>	<b>Matters arising from Transport Risks Working Group</b>	
<b>5.1.1</b>	<p><b>Zurich Municipal Motor Vehicle Grading Report</b> JS advised that the Fleet Manager and Lead Officer Operational Training were preparing a response to the review completed by the Authority’s fleet insurers. Council officers to meet with the fleet insurers to discuss. Update to be provided at next meeting.</p>	<b>SGP</b>
<b>5.1.2</b>	<p><b>Minibus D1 Licence</b> JS advised that the comprehensive review of the category D1 licence requirements following the introduction of minibus “lite” vehicles was ongoing. The Transport Risks Working Group had resolved that whilst the review was ongoing the current Council policy applies i.e. drivers of Council minibuses must have a category D1 licence. Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check with Fleet Manager that guidance note has been issued to schools</li> </ul> <p>Update to be provided at next meeting.</p>	<b>JS</b>
<b>6.</b>	<p><b>Audit Wales – Review of Risk Management Arrangements</b> HLP delivered a progress report in relation to the proposals for improvement identified by Wales Audit Office. Agreed actions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Risk Management Toolkit was accepted by the Group subject to minor amendments. Document to be referred to Corporate Management Team for information.</li> <li>• The RMSG and Working Group Terms of Reference were accepted by the Group subject to the addition of a requirement to review annually. Documents to be referred to Corporate Management Team for information.</li> <li>• Appointment of Departmental Risk Champions and Deputy Risk Champions to be formalised.</li> <li>• Review/update RM Bid Application Form</li> <li>• Risk Management training programme identified via the Council’s Insurers delivered to Corporate Management Team, the Cabinet, Governance &amp; Audit Committee and key officers with responsibility for risk. Workshop session for Corporate Management Team to develop a Risk Appetite Statement scheduled for 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2022.</li> <li>• RMSG requested that a workshop training session be arranged for key officers to develop their skills in the practical application of risk management.</li> </ul>	<p><b>HLP/JS</b></p> <p><b>HLP/JS</b></p> <p><b>JS</b></p> <p><b>JS</b></p> <p><b>JS</b></p>
<b>7.</b>	<p><b>TIC Review</b> HLP advised that a TIC Review of Risk Management Arrangements had commenced and the Terms of Reference of the review had been</p>	

	made available to the Group. The fieldwork would be undertaken during November & December 2021. Final Report and recommendations to be issued January 2022.	
<b>8</b>	<b>Bids for Financial Assistance</b>	
<b>8.1</b>	<b>E&amp;C – Burry Port Community Primary School</b> This Departmental bid related to the provision of a falconry service to prevent gulls nesting on the school roof. It was agreed that the Departmental bid (i.e. 50% of the estimated cost) be approved in principle subject to further investigation of alternative control methods.	<b>SD</b>
<b>8.2</b>	<b>E&amp;C – Johnstown Primary School</b> This Departmental bid related to the installation of security improvements at Johnstown Primary School. It was agreed that the Departmental bid (i.e. 50% of the estimated cost) be approved.	
<b>8.3</b>	<b>Extension of RM Bid 372 – Bryngwyn School</b> This Departmental bid related to the installation of safety improvements at Bryngwyn School. It was agreed that 50% of the additional cost be approved.	
<b>9.</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>	
<b>9.1</b>	<b>Risk Management Bid Review</b> It was agreed that a representative from QE High School be invited to the next Risk Management Steering Group to provide a review of the risk management bid for the funding of Phase 1 and 2 of the anti-bullying toilet facilities at the school.	<b>JS</b>
<b>10.</b>	<b>Next Meeting</b> January / February 2022 via Microsoft Teams – exact date to be advised	

## Minutes of the Corporate Governance Group

17<sup>th</sup> September, 2021

10.00 am – 11:30 am

Virtual Meeting: Teams

### Present:

Cllr. David Jenkins (DJ)	Executive Board Member (Resources) (Chair)
Helen Pugh (HP)	Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance
Paul Thomas (PT)	Assistant Chief Executive
Linda Rees Jones (LRJ)	Head of Administration and Law
Alison Wood (AW)	People Services Manager
Gwyneth Ayers (GA)	Corporate Policy & Partnership Manager
Ruth Morgan (RM)	Senior Administrative Officer

### Apologies:

Cllr. Mair Stephens (MS)	Executive Board Member (HR)
Chris Moore (CM)	Director of Corporate Services
Randal Hemingway (RH)	Head of Financial Services
Noelwyn Daniel (ND)	Head of ICT
Cllr. Tina Higgins (TH)	Councillor

Item No.	Discussion / Action	Responsible Officer
1.	<p><b><u>Apologies</u></b> As noted above.</p>	RM
2.	<p><b><u>Minutes of previous Meetings dated 28<sup>th</sup> May, 2021 and Matters Arising</u></b> It was confirmed, the Minutes were a correct record.</p> <p><b><u>Matters Arising</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Updated Code of Corporate Governance – (HLP)</u></b> CCG had been approved by the Audit Committee and was now closed and finalised.</li> <li>• <b><u>Revised Handling Personal Data Policy – (GA)</u></b> The Policy has now been approved and communications to be circulated to key staff and Board Members in due course.</li> <li>• <b><u>CCTV Policy (Internal Council System) – (GA)</u></b> GA thanked the Risk Management Steering Group for funding the post and 3 candidates were scheduled for interviews on Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> of September, 2021.</li> </ul>	

3.	<p><b><u>AGS – Update on Actions – (All)</u></b>  A group discussion had been carried out in terms of reviewing / updating the current Actions and HLP updated the AGS master template accordingly.</p> <p>Chair confirmed, all group members were happy to accept the Report.</p> <p><b><u>AGS – Final version included in the Statement of Accounts</u></b>  Chair confirmed, all group members were happy to accept the Report.</p>	
4.	<p><b><u>Internal Audit Draft Report – AGS – (HLP)</u></b>  The Report and Action Plan was discussed and recommendations had been addressed by group members. HLP updated the group’s responses via the draft Report during the meeting.</p> <p>HLP to forward the revised Report to Meirwyn Thomas and cc. Board Members in order for the Report to be finalised.</p>	
5.	<p><b><u>Building a Better Council – (Decision to remove the Agenda Item, required from the Group) – (All)</u></b>  The Group agreed, the agenda item would be raised as and when deemed necessary.</p>	
6.	<p><b><u>Information Governance – Verbal Update – (GA)</u></b>  GA confirmed, a data breach had been reported to the Commissioner’s Office during the summer, relating to a potential breach in St. David’s Park and the Information Commissioner’s response being, no further action was required. However, internal arrangements were being looked at, to ensure the situation did not occur again.</p> <p>For information purposes, GA informed the group, due to a recent restructure within her team, as of 1<sup>st</sup> of October, 2021 the Information Governance Team would now report directly to John Williams, ICT Operations &amp; Governance Manager.</p> <p><b><u>Information Governance – Informal Group Actions/Minutes – (Last meeting had to be cancelled therefore no minutes to share)</u></b>  As stated above.</p>	

7.	<p><b><u>Performance and Governance of Principal Councils (Local Government and Elections Bill (Wales) on Chapter 6) – Verbal Update – (GA)</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Performance Management Framework</u></b> Currently in the process of finalising a draft Performance Management Framework. Draft to be circulated to all departmental DMTs during October and to be submitted to CMT and Cabinet during November for approval.</li> </ul> <p>Framework document to be shared with the group at the next meeting by GA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Regulatory Reports</u></b> A new approach has been implemented on how regulatory reports are being published as oppose to previously (ie. Reports submitted directly to Audit Committee). Process being now, Reports to be forwarded to CMT and Pre-Cabinet prior to the Governance and Audit Committee. Audit Wales, Estyn and CIW Reports to be included also.</li> </ul> <p>A Carmarthenshire Response Plan is to be developed for any national and local Reports and the recommendations from those Reports will be monitored through PIMS and reported to CMT, Pre-Cabinet and the Governance and Audit Committee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Risk Training – Facilitated Sessions – (HLP)</u></b> Facilitated sessions are to be carried out by an external provider (ie. the Organisation’s Insurer). The Facilitator to accommodate the following Officers/Sessions:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CMT and HoS</li> <li>- Cabinet Members</li> <li>- Members of staff who are responsible for collating and manage risk(s)</li> <li>- Training Session of Awareness for the Governance and Audit Committee</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>HLP to arrange for GA to be invited to the CMT / Cabinet and Members of Staff facilitated sessions.</p>	
8.	<p><b><u>Regulations to establish Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) – Verbal Update – (LRJ)</u></b></p> <p>LRJ provided the following updates for the group’s information:-</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statutory Officers have now been agreed at Officer level.</li> <li>• Chris Moore to take the lead as a Section 151 Officer for the Local Authority's CJC.</li> <li>• Neath &amp; Port Talbot C.C., responsible for the Monitoring Officer Scrutiny functions.</li> <li>• Pembroke C.C., responsible for the Governance and Audit Committee function.</li> <li>• Continue to finalise how many Committees are required to sit under the main CJC.</li> <li>• Budget to be set by 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2022.</li> <li>• Uncertain if there would be an opportunity for employees to be seconded.</li> </ul>	
9.	<p><b><u>CRWG – Verbal Update – (LRJ)</u></b> The following items had been raised during a CRWG meeting dated the 16<sup>th</sup> of September, 2021.</p> <p><b><u>New Local Government and Elections Wales Act</u></b> The changes which required to be modified to reflect the new Act, had now been completed.</p> <p><b><u>Revising the Scheme of Delegation to Officers</u></b> The revised Report had been submitted to CRWG.</p> <p><b><u>Changes to the Protocol on the Public and Town and Community Councils</u></b> Process to be put in place for only 2 Objectors be entitled to speak during a Planning Committee meeting.</p>	
10.	<p><b><u>Monitoring outputs of Carmarthenshire CC led projects</u></b> The group considered and AGREED, the above agenda item would not be a standard item but would be included as an Agenda item every 6 months.</p>	
11.	<p><b><u>Planning Service Governance Arrangements – (HLP)</u></b> HLP enquired, as a governance group, whether the group had a role in relation to the above.</p> <p>The following had been AGREED and raised:-</p> <p><b><u>Intervention Board</u></b> It had been AGREED, as Chair of the Intervention Board, Noelwyn Daniel to report to the group and provide updates accordingly.</p>	

	<p><b><u>Council Meeting – 15/09/21</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Chair of Planning</u></b> A Notice of Motion had been submitted for the Chair of the Planning Committee to publish monthly reports of awaiting applications and enforcements. However, it had been declined.</li> <li>• <b><u>Release of Report</u></b> Leader agreed to release Report for all members of Council to have sight of. Report being stored in the document library.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Head of Planning</u></b> To reflect the wider corporate objectives, an advert for the new role of Head of Place and Sustainability has been published and the closing date being 27<sup>th</sup> of September, 2021 with a view to the scheduled Appointments Panel to meet, 1<sup>st</sup> week of November.</p>	
12.	<p><b><u>Any Other Business</u></b> No other items had been raised by group members.</p> <p>Chair thanked all present for their attendance and contribution and called the meeting to a close at 11:30 am.</p>	

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**ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT – Actions Update @ December 2021**

<i>UPDATE ON OUTSTANDING GOVERNANCE ISSUES IDENTIFIED IN PREVIOUS ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENTS</i>					
<b>SOURCE</b>	<b>ISSUES</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER</b>	<b>ACTIONS/PROGRESS</b>		<b>STATUS</b>
AGS 2017/18 No.6	Monitor and evaluate People Strategy Group/Work stream actions relating to AW People Performance Management recommendations.	Assistant Chief Executive – People Management	March 2020	Consolidating learning and moving forward. PSGB Group has met through COVID19, but revaluation of way forward needed.	<p>On going Currently in discussions with IIP – high level review for further accreditation planned. Steering group is refocusing its objectives.</p> <p>IIP meetings held in November / early December. 6<sup>th</sup> formers event done. Aiming for gold – workplan to be put in place. Empowerment &amp; wellbeing being two main focus. Reconfigure the group to align with expectations.</p>

AGS 2019/20 No.7	To ensure appropriate governance arrangements are in place to assess impact and use of resources with partners to deliver the Pentre Awel project.	Head of Regeneration / Director of Corporate Services	March 2021	The Board received the risk register at each meeting and risks considered. Governance being part of the consideration.	<p>Closed</p> <p>Governance arrangement in place. Formal structure now in place for contractors work through into the county council's project group and this reports to project board and overall governance board. Structure shared with CGG.</p>
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<p>AGS 2019/20 No.8</p>	<p>Ensure Employment Policies reflect any new legislation such as exit payment cap, reclaiming exit payments etc.</p>	<p>People Services Manager</p>	<p>March 2021</p>	<p>Ongoing – On 12/2/21 the UK Government repealed the exit pay cap provisions. We await new legislation and will update policies accordingly.</p> <p>The legislation is likely to come back in the Autumn. Waiting for this, following these policies will be reviewed and updated where required.</p>	<p>2021/22</p> <p>Exit pay cap legislation was due in December but has not been received – likely now to be 2022.</p> <p>ACAS compliant policies in place.</p>
<p>AGS 2019/20 No.13</p>	<p>Implement appropriate changes in respect of the governance arrangements of the Local Authority Companies in response to the Governance Review Report.</p>	<p>Corporate Management Team</p>	<p>June 2021</p>	<p>Democratic decision has been taken to put one company into dormancy. Decision has been taken that reports from the other two companies to be presented to Cabinet on 6 monthly basis.</p>	<p>CWM updates commenced - reported recently to CMT in December 2021 – to be next taken to Pre Cabinet.</p> <p>TIC review being undertaken on Llesiant.</p> <p>Governance update review to be carried out early 2022.</p>
<p>AGS 2020/21 No.1</p>	<p>Review Staff Travel Policy</p>	<p>People Services Manager</p>	<p>April / May 2021</p>	<p>Draft presented to CMT 16<sup>th</sup> September 2021</p> <p>Principles agreed and consultation now will commence with TU. Following which the policy will go back to CMT and follow through the political process.</p>	<p>Consultation to be completed by end of 2021</p> <p>Meeting TU - 16<sup>th</sup> January 2022.</p> <p>Final versions will then go to CMT and then through the political process.</p>

AGS 2020/21 No.2	Implement The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act requirements	Corporate	May 2022	The elements that have not been implemented to date have a timetable that needs to be met to deliver the Act's requirement / timescale.	Ongoing  Elements of performance & governance implemented. Elections – in hand
AGS 2020/21 No. 3	Develop governance arrangement around the better ways of working once plan is in place – for officers	Chair of Better Ways of Working Strategic Group	2021/22	Facilitated sessions underway for each HoS teams.  3 sub groups in place reporting into Strategic group.  Communications plan being drawn up for the project  Two pilots to commence on hybrid working.	Ongoing  Two pilots in place.  Each service is now collating information to determine the practicalities / operational needs.  Also working ongoing with other public sector bodies – joint working.
AGS 2020/21 No. 4	Develop governance arrangement around the better ways of working once plan is in place – for Members	Chair of Better Ways of Working Strategic Group / Head of Legal and Democratic Services	2021/22	Dem services cttee have put a working group together  Engagement with all the groups underway.  Next step is to survey the members and collate their views.	Ongoing  Information now being pulled together to determine the practicalities / operational needs
AGS 2020/21 No.5	Recruit lay members for Audit Committee	Head of Legal and Democratic Services / Director of Corporate Services / Head of Revenues & Financial Compliance	2021/22	Awaiting Clarity on interpretation of the Act from WG. Job specification being reviewed	Job Specification drawn up Job advert drafted – both to be presented to Governance & Audit Committee for approval 17 <sup>th</sup> December 2021.

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<b>MINUTES OF THE GRANTS PANEL MEETING HELD ON 7<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2021 VIA TEAMS</b>		
<b>PRESENT:</b>	Randal Hemingway, Head of Financial Services Caroline Powell, Principal Auditor, Internal Audit (IA) Rhian Phillips, Economic Development Area Manager Nia Thomas, Chair of PWG, Education & Children (Revenue) Les James, Chair of PWG, Communities Alan Howells, Chair of PWG, Environment Delyth Thomas, Grants Compliance Officer	
<b>APOLOGIES:</b>	Helen Pugh, Head of Revenues & Financial Compliance Simon Davies, Chair of PWG, Education & Children (Capital) Stuart Walters, Economic Development Manager Helen Morgan, Economic Development Manager	
	SUBJECT	ACTION
1.0	<p><b><u>Minutes of the last meeting</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minutes were agreed subject to an amendment being actioned and approved by the Head of Financial Services</li> </ul>	
2.0	<p><b><u>Matters Arising</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The service level agreement with Hywel Dda LHB for Wanless (Money Transfers) is currently being redrafted. A letter is to be sent from Hywel Dda LHB to the Authority which will cover the financing and delivery arrangements that were in place for 2020/21. Update to be provided at the next Grants Panel meeting.</li> <li>The approval for an exemption to apply restrictions on properties relating to the Childcare Offer Small Grant Scheme funded by WG has been approved by the Director of Corporate Services.</li> <li>No updates have been received to date regarding the audit requirements for the COVID 19 grants managed by the Authority and those administered on behalf of Welsh Government.</li> <li>A guidance note has been provided by Audit Wales on how grant monies received and issued by the Authority as agency payments are to be reported in the Statement of Accounts.</li> <li>The document retention guidance for European funded projects has been reviewed by the Economic Development Area Manager, Grants Compliance Officer and the Records Management Officer. It has</li> </ul>	DT

	<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
	<p>been agreed by the Records Management Officer that the introduction of SharePoint will meet the requirements as detailed in the guidance. SharePoint is a web-based collaborative platform that integrates with Microsoft Office and is used as a document management and storage system which will provide the required audit trails for managing documents on an electronic basis.</p>	
3.0	<p><b><u>Audit Wales - Update</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The audit programme for the 2020/21 audits remains the same as 2019/20. Audits include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Housing Benefits</li> <li>○ NDR</li> <li>○ Teacher's Pension</li> <li>○ Wanless (Money Transfers)</li> <li>○ Pooled Budgets</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The 2019/20 return for Pooled Budgets has yet to be submitted for audit.</li> <li>• It's anticipated that the audits of the NHS and local authority accounts will impact on 2020/21 grants audit programme.</li> </ul>	RH
4.0	<p><b><u>Internal Audit (IA) - Update</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grant audit work as part of the 2021/22 plan has started. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Children &amp; Communities</li> <li>○ Local Authority Education Grant</li> <li>○ Enable Grant</li> <li>○ Supporting People</li> </ul> </li> <li>• It's also noted that the Pupil Deprivation Grant and Education Improvement Grant for 2020/21 has been extended to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021.</li> </ul>	
5.0	<p><b><u>Project Working Groups</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minutes of PWG meetings were circulated to Grants Panel members for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Education &amp; Children (Capital): 27/01/21</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

	<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Education &amp; Children (Revenue): 2/11/20, 10/12/20, 24/2/21</li> <li>○ Communities: 27/01/21, 24/3/21</li> <li>● A number of issues were raised by the chairpersons of the PWGs, and these included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Management of grant underspends due to the COVID 19 crisis</li> <li>○ Managing the impact of funding from WG grants after the COVID 19 crisis e.g. Homelessness</li> <li>○ Management of grant funding where grants have been awarded by WG to the Authority at the last minute</li> <li>○ Management of grant funding that has been extended into 2021/22</li> <li>○ Awaiting guidance from WG relating to changes in the way grants are administered for 2020/21 grant awards due to the COVID 19 crisis and how these changes will be incorporated in the 2021/22 grant awards</li> <li>○ Concerns regarding the supply and increase cost of materials for grant funded construction projects and the impact on the Authority. This impacts on project deliverability and meeting grant timelines.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
7.0	<p><b><u>European Grants Update</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A schedule of all current European grant funded projects was presented to Grants Panel. The total estimated project costs approved and in development is £49.6m with grant of £32.6m.</li> <li>● The Authority has now received approval for the Economic Acceleration &amp; Regeneration Through Innovation project (EARTH) which is a regional project led by Carmarthenshire County Council in partnership with Pembrokeshire County Council, Neath Port Talbot Council and Swansea Council.</li> <li>● The Growing Green Infrastructure project to be led by Neath Port Talbot of which the Authority is a partner, has not yet been approved. This project application is under the Rural Development Programme.</li> </ul>	

	<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The EOI for the Food COVID Recovery Plan project under the Rural Development Programme has been approved. The full application is due to be submitted in August 2021. The project is to appoint officers to support the supply chain food procurement and food distribution modules across the county.</li> <li>An update was provided to Grants Panel on the amount of grant income outstanding to the Authority for European grant funded projects. The total amount claimed to date is approximately £17.3m with a total of £2.7m grant income outstanding. Main reasons are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Claims recently submitted</li> <li>Claims submitted to the lead partner where a claim has not yet been submitted/finalised by the funding body</li> <li>Potential delays due to the impact of the WEFO grant retention rules</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
8.0	<p><b><u>New &amp; Proposed Project</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food Poverty Grant (£102K) which is a WG grant awarded via the WLGA for both revenue and capital spend. The project intends to provide third-party grants for the community to access.</li> <li>An application for the Allotment Support Grant (£39K) which is WG funded and covers 9 individual projects has been submitted by the Authority.</li> </ul>	
9.0	<p><b><u>AOB</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Within the Grants Manual there is a requirement to complete a grant project proposal form (GPPF) so that internal approval is sought before a project application proceeds. The online system is no longer working, interim arrangements will need to be put in place until a new online system is developed by IT.</li> </ul>	RP
10.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Date of next meeting – 2:00pm on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2021 via Teams</li> </ul>	



<b>MINUTES OF THE GRANTS PANEL MEETING HELD ON 11<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2021 VIA TEAMS</b>		
<b>PRESENT:</b>	Randal Hemingway, Head of Financial Services Caroline Powell, Principal Auditor, Internal Audit (IA) Rhian Phillips, Economic Development Area Manager Nia Thomas, Chair of PWG, Education & Children (Revenue) Les James, Chair of PWG, Communities Alan Howells, Chair of PWG, Environment Delyth Thomas, Grants Compliance Officer Anwen Worthy, Audit Lead, Audit Wales	
<b>APOLOGIES:</b>	Helen Pugh, Head of Revenues & Financial Compliance Simon Davies, Chair of PWG, Education & Children (Capital) Stuart Walters, Economic Development Manager Helen Morgan, Economic Development Manager	
SUBJECT		ACTION
1.0	<p><b><u>Minutes of the last meeting</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minutes were agreed.</li> </ul>	
2.0	<p><b><u>Matters Arising</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The service level agreement with Hywel Dda LHB for Wanless (Money Transfers) is still being redrafted. Details to be forwarded to Head of Financial Services who will contact the respective Head of Service.</li> <li>• SharePoint is currently being rolled out across all departments. Grants Panel requires an understanding and assurance on the implementation of SharePoint for European funded projects to ensure that we are compliant and have the appropriate accessibility to documents to support audits now and in future years. A specific agenda item to be included in the March Grants Panel meeting.</li> <li>• The WG grant conditions do not stipulate on how long the Authority is required to retain all documentation relating to grant funded project. WLGA to be contacted for advice on this matter and to raise the issue with WG.</li> <li>• The 2019/20 return for Pooled Budgets has now been submitted to Audit Wales for auditing and supporting documentation has been uploaded onto the Council file plan.</li> <li>• Interim arrangements have been established to adopt a manual work flow relating to the grant project proposal form (GPPF) replacing the proposed</li> </ul>	<p>DT/RH</p> <p>DT</p> <p>RH</p>

	<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
	online approval system.	
3.0	<p><b><u>Audit Wales - Update</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was confirmed that work will commence on the 2020/21 audit programme at the end of October. Audits will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Housing Benefits</li> <li>○ NDR</li> <li>○ Teachers Pension</li> <li>○ Wanless (Money Transfers)</li> <li>○ Pooled Budgets (for 2019/20 &amp; 2020/21)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• No further updates have been received regarding the audit requirements for the COVID 19 grants managed by the Authority and those administered on behalf of Welsh Government.</li> </ul>	
4.0	<p><b><u>Internal Audit (IA) - Update</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A summary was provided on the audit of the 2020/21 Education grants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Education Improvement Grant - completed</li> <li>○ Pupil Deprivation Grant has started – completion date due 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021</li> <li>○ Local Authority Education Grant has also started – completion date due 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021</li> <li>○ Post 16 Grant is due to commence shortly - completion date due 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The audits for the following 2020/21 Housing grants have been completed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Housing Support Grant which includes Supporting People, Rent Smart Wales, Homelessness Prevention</li> <li>○ Enable</li> <li>○ Supporting People Regional Development Co-ordinator</li> <li>○ COVID 19 Homelessness &amp; Housing Support Services Phase 2</li> <li>○ COVID 19 Homelessness Prevention &amp; Innovation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

	<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The audit on the Children &amp; Communities grant for 2020/21 has been completed.</li> <li>• Work is currently underway to collate a list of all grants awarded for 2021/22 in the Homes &amp; Safer Communities Division.</li> <li>• IA have been notified that the following Housing grants for 2021/22 which potentially will require auditing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Tenancy Hardship</li> <li>○ Homelessness &amp; Housing Related Services Phase 2 Funding – Training Flats Programme Grant</li> <li>○ Homelessness &amp; Housing Related Services - Empty Properties Grant</li> </ul> </li> <li>• A review to be undertaken on which grants are required to be audited by IA and which grants require assurance work for the 2022/2023 Audit Plan.</li> <li>• A meeting to be arranged to discuss the audit requirements for the education revenue grants.</li> </ul>	<p>CP</p> <p>CP/NT</p>
5.0	<p><b><u>ERW (Education through Regional Working) Update</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ERW Consortia led by Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC) has ended 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021</li> <li>• A new education partnership/regional consortia commenced 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021. The partnership includes CCC, PCC and Swansea Council.</li> <li>• Grants that were awarded via ERW will now be awarded directly to each local authority for 2021/2022. CCC is required to act as a broker for grant monies due to individual schools.</li> <li>• The audit requirements under the new arrangements will be clarified when the Terms &amp; Conditions have been received.</li> </ul>	

	<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confirmation of the arrangements in place for the new consortia and the audit requirements to be discussed at next Grants Panel meeting.</li> </ul>	NT/CP
6.0	<p><b><u>Grants Register 2021/22</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A draft register was presented to the meeting detailing current grant funded projects. Details to be reviewed with any updates/amendments to be forwarded to the GCO.</li> </ul>	Chairs PWGs
7.0	<p><b><u>Project Working Groups</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minutes of PWG meetings were received: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education &amp; Children (Capital): 23/3/2021 &amp; 27/7/2021</li> <li>Education &amp; Children (Revenue): 29/4/2021</li> <li>Communities: 28/7/2021, 22/9/2021</li> <li>Chief Executive's: 23/3/2021</li> <li>Environment: 28/7/2021</li> </ul> </li> <li>The following updates were provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WG required the Authority to provide a procurement register for all RDP funded projects before any further claims are submitted. Any future procurement process will require WG sign off before the spend is included in a grant claim</li> <li>Grants management training to be undertaken for new employees in Chief Executive's</li> <li>The online system for the PDG Access grant was launched at the start of the academic year. There has been a significant increase in the number of applications following the change in eligibility requirements as advised by WG. Evidence to support the purchase of uniforms is no longer required.</li> <li>Concerns were noted on the delays in the recruitment of staff and the impact this may have on the delivery of grant funded projects</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

	<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
8.0	<p><b><u>European Grants Update</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A schedule of all current European grant funded projects was presented to Grants Panel. The total estimated project costs approved and in development is £49.4m with grant of £32.5m.</li> <li>• An update was provided to Grants Panel on the amount of grant income outstanding to the Authority for European grant funded projects. The total amount claimed to date is approximately £16.7m with a total of £1.4m grant income outstanding.</li> <li>• The Connecting Green Infrastructure project led by Neath Port Talbot with the Authority as a partner, has now been approved. The CCC element of the project is £295K and is 100% funded under the Rural Development Programme.</li> <li>• The Authority is awaiting a decision on the full application submitted for the Food COVID Recovery Plan project under the Rural Development Programme.</li> </ul>	
9.0	<p><b><u>Successor Schemes Update</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Projects applications under the Community Renewal Fund &amp; Levelling Up Fund were submitted in June 2021. The Authority is still awaiting a decision.</li> </ul>	
10.0	<p><b><u>New &amp; Proposed Project</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Authority has submitted a bid into the WG Local Broadband Fund. The bid is to support digital connectivity projects within rural Carmarthenshire.</li> </ul>	
11.0	<p><b><u>AOB</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work is still being undertaken by the TIC Team on the use of electronic signatures. Both Adobe sign and DocuSign are being reviewed as options for use by the Authority. Until this has been resolved it is important that any document requiring approval is</li> </ul>	

	<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
	<p>forwarded to the funding authority direct from the email address of the authorising officer. The Financial Procedure Rules will be updated accordingly when the use of electronic signatures has been approved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The impact on grants and the introduction of the new regional corporate joint committees by WG has yet to be assessed. These are expected to be in place from April 2022.</li> </ul>	
12.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Date of next meeting – 10:00am on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2021 via Teams</li> </ul>	

## GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE

12 OCTOBER 2021

**PRESENT:** Councillor T.M. Higgins (Chair)

**Councillors:** A.G. Morgan, K.V. Broom, K. Davies, G.H. John, B. Thomas and D.E. Williams

**Co-opted Member:**

Mrs. J. James

**Also present as an observer:**

Councillor D.M. Jenkins – Executive Board Member for Resources.

**In attendance from Audit Wales:**

J. Garcia, N. Jenkins, A. Worthy and A. Lewis.

**The following Officers were in attendance:**

C. Moore, Director of Corporate Services;

R. Hemingway, Head of Financial Services;

H. Pugh, Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance;

A. Williams, Head of Waste and Environmental Services;

C. Powell, Principal Auditor;

A. Parnell, Treasury & Pension Investments Manager;

M. Evans Thomas, Principal Democratic Services Officer [Assisting];

R. Morris, Member Support Officer [Webcaster];

K. Thomas, Democratic Services Officer [Assisting];

J. Owen, Democratic Services Officer [Minute Taker];

S. Rees, Simultaneous Translator;

K. Evans, Assistant Democratic Services Officer [Observer].

**Virtual Meeting: 10:00am - 12:47am**

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Apologies were received from Councillor B.A.L. Roberts.

At this point the Chair, on behalf of the Committee wished to express her sincere condolences on the passing of Councillor Roberts' husband.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS.**

Councillor	Minute Number	Nature of Interest
T. Higgins	3 – Dyfed Pension Fund Statement of Accounts (including 3.1 – 3.4)	Member of the Pension Fund
K. Broom	3 – Dyfed Pension Fund Statement of Accounts (including 3.1 – 3.4)	Member of the Pension Fund
K. Davies	3 – Dyfed Pension Fund Statement of Accounts (including 3.1 – 3.4)	Member of the Pension Fund
G. John	3 – Dyfed Pension Fund Statement of Accounts (including 3.1 – 3.4)	Member of the Pension Fund

E. Williams	3 – Dyfed Pension Fund Statement of Accounts (including 3.1 – 3.4)	Member of the Pension Fund Chair of the Dyfed Pension Fund Committee
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### 3. DYFED PENSION FUND STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

(NOTE: Councillors T. Higgins, K. Broom, K. Davies, G. John and E Williams had earlier declared an interest in the following items 3.1 – 3.4.]

#### 3.1. DYFED PENSION FUND AUDIT OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS REPORT

The Committee received for consideration the report of Audit Wales on the audit undertaken of the Dyfed Pension Fund Accounts. The report considered whether the financial statement gave a true and fair view of the financial position of the Dyfed Pension Fund at 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2021 and its income and expenditure during that year.

The Committee was pleased to note that Audit Wales intended to issue an unqualified audit opinion on the accounts which would be issued as soon as the Letter of Representation had been provided. The Committee was also pleased to note that there were no misstatements identified in the financial statements which remained uncorrected.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.**

#### 3.2. LETTER OF REPRESENTATION TO AUDIT WALES DYFED PENSION FUND

The Committee was advised that in accordance with the Statement of Auditing Standards (SAS440 – Management Representations) Audit Wales required a Letter of Representation to be prepared on an annual basis by the Director of Corporate Services and signed by the aforesaid Officer and the Chair of the Audit Committee. In addition, Audit Wales required the Committee responsible for approving the accounts under Regulation 8 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations to formally acknowledge the response.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Letter of Representation to Wales Audit from the Director of Corporate Services and the Chair of the Audit Committee to Audit Wales in relation to the Dyfed Pension Fund be acknowledged.**

#### 3.3. AUDIT ENQUIRIES TO THOSE CHARGED WITH GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Committee received the Authority's responses to Audit Wales on a number of governance areas that impacted on the audit of the financial statements. Those considerations were relevant to both the Dyfed Pension Fund's management and 'those charged with governance' (the Audit Committee). The information provided informed Audit Wales' understanding of the Dyfed Pension Fund and its business processes and supported its work in providing an audit opinion on the 2020-21 financial statements.



**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to approve the responses to the requests made of both management and the Audit Committee as detailed in the report.**

### **3.4. DYFED PENSION FUND ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2020-2021**

The Committee received the Dyfed Pension Fund Annual Report and Accounts for 2020-21, in accordance with the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014. The Dyfed Pension Fund Annual Report and Accounts was presented to the Governance and Audit Committee for approval.

The following observations/issues were raised on the report:-

- Reference was made to the Committee Members record of attendance. A concern was raised in relation to the limited Committee Membership of the Dyfed Pension Fund Pension Committee and the observation that one of its members had been absent for several meetings. The Director of Corporate Services stated that by calling on the nominated substitute, the Dyfed Pension Fund Committee had been able to continue to conduct its business as normal. It was explained that it was necessary to have a nominated substitute in order to ensure a consistent level of knowledge on the subject matter was maintained. This was achieved through regular training in accordance with the training plan. Furthermore, assurance was provided that the Councillor had now returned normal duties following a period of illness.
- In recognising that 2020/21 had been a challenging year, Members acknowledged that despite this, it was pleasing to note that the Fund had accomplished a successful return.
- Clarity was sought on the reference to 'undecided leaver' within the Scheme Membership section of the report. The Head of Financial Services explained that the term referred to an individual who had left their employment and was awaiting processing.
- The Director of Corporate Services, in response to a query regarding commercial property, explained that area was being closely monitored. In addition, it was reported that in association with the pandemic, town centres had not been heavily invested in and consequently the impact had not been significant.

In order to provide further clarity in relation to commercial properties, the Treasury and Pension Investments Manager added that property managers diversify their investments across the entire portfolio in a balanced approach whilst proactively reviewing the percentage allocated to each separate sector.

- In response to a query was raised in relation to the timeframe of completed and outstanding cases as stated in the report, the Head of Financial Services explained that the position of the cases were reported to Dyfed Pension Fund Committee which provided confidence in that the throughput of cases being processed was acceptable.

- In response to a query, the Director of Corporate Services reported that he was satisfied with the divestment rate to date and explained that members of the Dyfed Pension Committee and Officers had a prejudicial duty and a responsibility to ensure that pensions were available for members upon retirement. Members were informed that whilst the movement in terms of divestment was balanced and was being carried out at an acceptable pace, it would however be difficult to divest without the support and cooperation of Investment Managers. In addition, it was reported that Investment Managers were actively preparing to pursue funds that had a zero or low carbon footprint, which in terms of pool funds became a complex matter to manage.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Dyfed Pension Fund Annual Report and Accounts 2020-21 be approved.**

#### **4. AUDIT WALES - CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL REVIEWS:-**

##### **4.1. FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY REPORT**

The Committee considered the Audit Wales - Financial Sustainability report presented by Mr Jason Garcia. The report was based on the financial year 2020/21. It was reported that Audit Wales had undertaken a thematic all-Wales Financial Sustainability review of Local Authorities and had undertaken an assessment as financial sustainability continued to be a risk to Councils putting in place proper arrangements to secure value for money in the use of resources.

The following observations/issues were raised on the report:-

- Reference was made to the All-Wales Thematic Review. In terms of the position and of other councils it was asked if the report was available to be viewed. Mr Garcia recommended that Committee Members had sight of the national report and further advised that in order to gain further context Members should also consider the 2 reports that was issued in September 2021; 1) Financial Sustainability and 2) Picture of Public Services. It was reported that the overall conclusion was that Councils had received a significant additional funding to be able to deal with the pandemic, however it was noted that the future sustainability of the sector remained to be a challenge against a backdrop of other financial pressures.

The Director of Corporate Services stated that he would circulate the link to the All-Wales Thematic Review to Members for information.

In addition, the Director of Corporate Services informed Members that Officers were proactively seeking to make efficiencies in the region of £5m per year which was undoubtedly going to be a challenge over the next 2 years due to the continued response to the pandemic.

- It was asked if an action plan would be developed to capture the savings and actions cited within the report which would enable the necessary monitoring. The Director of Corporate Services stated that the delivery of the planned savings would automatically be placed into the budget process which was currently being developed. In addition, the Director of Corporate Services explained the governance structure in relation to the budget and the annual savings monitoring process to Members.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Audit Wales - Financial Sustainability Report be received.**

#### **4.2. REVIEW OF WASTE SERVICE, JULY 2021**

The Committee considered the Audit Wales – Review of Waste Service presented by Mrs Alison Lewis. The purpose of the audit was to review whether the Council has in place proper arrangements to plan and deliver its waste services sustainably. The report summarised the main findings arising from the audit undertaken by Audit Wales of the Council’s Waste Services.

Appended to the report was a draft action plan which aimed to address the 8 key recommendations as a result of the audit findings. The report sought the Committee’s approval of the draft action plan which had been set out in preparation of formal submission to Audit Wales.

The following observations/issues were raised on the report:-

- In relation to the ongoing concern regarding the matter of fly-tipping, it was raised that there was additional concern in relation to potential fly-tipping due to the proposed changes to waste collection services in future.
- Reference was made to the section within the report which states that the Council does not report the actual number of fly-tipping incidents or its relative performance against other councils. However, concern was raised that Councils in Wales report their fly-tipping incidents differently and therefore the figures were not consistent or a true reflection of incidents. It was suggested that a report on the progress of the action plan be added to the Committee’s Forward Work Programme in 6 – 12 months’ time.

As fly-tipping was a national issue, it was asked if the national database used to capture and record incidents could be standardised? Reference was made to Exhibit 5: Fly-tipping incidents by Local Authority 2019-20 within the report, which illustrated that fly-tipping was a national problem. It was reported that one of the primary reasons could be attributed to Carmarthenshire recording all its fly-tipping incidents within the County, whereas this may differ from other Councils recording methods. In light of this, it was commented that the information depicted in the graph may not be a true reflection of the number of fly-tipping incidents in comparison with the other 22 Local Authorities in Wales and the validity of the data provided was questioned.

The Head of Waste and Environmental Services reported that discussions were currently taking place via the WLGA, specifically on the subject of fly-tipping. It was explained that the issue was not directly attributed to the database itself but was primarily attributed to inconsistency of particulars being recorded for each Council.

- It was expressed that whilst acknowledging that fly-tipping across the County was a significant problem, it was pleasing to affirm that Officers and operatives were efficient in managing the clearance of fly-tipping.
- In response to a query in relation to the implementation of the new Waste Strategy, the Head of Waste and Environmental Services explained that the new waste strategy, subject to it being adopted by Cabinet, would be implemented in a 2-phase approach. The first phase would be a transitional step to weekly recycling collections of blue bags (with a 3-weekly collection of black bags and glass) in Autumn 2022 and the second phase would enable the full implementation of the kerbside-sort methodology in Spring/Summer 2024.
- A concern was raised that whilst the action plan put before the Committee for approval addresses the Audit Wales' recommendations at a very high-level, the plan did not include the level of detail required to understand how the actions would be carried out. The Head of Waste and Environmental Services confirmed that a more extensive action plan would underpin this action plan and would be monitored via the internal performance monitoring system (PIMS) and the departmental business plans.
- In response to a concern in respect of the actions that were illustrated in red within the action plan as not being commenced and others that were in progress (amber), the Head of Waste and Environmental Services stated that in relation to performance indicators, the ones currently reported were mainly national indicators that were set by Welsh Government and performance was measured accordingly. Consideration would now be given to additional local indicators. In terms of progressing the forward waste strategy, it was explained that this could not be progressed with confidence until Welsh Government had indicated their willingness to support the strategy financially. An agreement in principle of £14.6m funding support from the Welsh Government has now been received and would now enable the strategy to be further developed in more detail, having set out the wider principles. To date, the Council had operated its waste services without the amenity of supplementary capital support and therefore without Welsh Government funding, implementation of such a significant change, at a large cost, to a kerbside sort methodology in accordance with Welsh Government's preferred "blueprint" method would not have been possible. Furthermore, the funding in principle agreement was received after the audit took place hence the timing and the status of the strategy action plan items being shown as "in progress".

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that;**

**4.2.1 the Review of Waste Service, July 2021 be received;**

**4.2.2 the draft action plan as set out in the preparation of formal submission to Audit Wales be approved;**

**4.2.3 an update on the progress of the action plan be included on the Governance and Audit Committee's Forward Work Programme.**

**5. CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S CORPORATE RISK REGISTER 2020/21**

The Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance highlighted that the title on the agenda should read Carmarthenshire County Council's Corporate Risk Register **2021/22**.

The Committee received for consideration the Corporate Risk Register 2021/22 which was maintained to evaluate the Council's exposure to key strategic risks.

The Committee noted that subsequent to its previous consideration, the following risk reference had been removed from the register:-

- CRR190047 - Ability to deal with the social, economic and operational impacts of the COVID 19 outbreak on the Division, Department and County and;
- CRR190059 - Meeting statutory planning delivery targets

With the addition of the following service risk associated with the impact of workforce planning and recruitment issues generally, as well as specific areas of recruitment particularly in relation to social workers, care staff and the lack of availability of domiciliary care.

The following observations/issues were raised on the report:-

- It was commented that the risk register received was easier to read and included more detail and that it was an improvement on previous reiterations of the register.
- Reference was made to risk CRR190006 – Ensuring effective people management. In acknowledging that many staff members were now working from home and the strong emphasis on well-being for staff, an update on the new appraisal process was requested. The Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance explained that a new appraisal approach system had recently been implemented. The new appraisal method had been transformed to support a more positive approach by including an improved narrative and encouraged conversation. In accordance with the request, the Committee accepted the offer to include an update on the Effective People Management Strategy on the Committee's Forward Work Programme.

- In reference to the identified recruitment challenges, it was acknowledged that Hywel Dda University Health Board were recruiting independently, and concern was raised that this could be in direct competition with the Council. The Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance explained that the issues within social care was being managed and monitored through the provision of two meetings per week and comprised of a broad representation. The Head of Financial Services added that the meetings were part of the Gold Command structure affording the Council to work jointly with the Health Board to address common recruitment issues. In addition, assurance was provided in that the advertisements for both social and domiciliary care were being advertised on a continuous basis.
- Reference was made to risk CRR190006 – Deliver Effective Safeguarding Arrangements – Children. Strong concerns were expressed that the Corporate Parenting Panel had not met. It was asked why this was the case, particularly as the virtual means to meet was available. The Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance stated she would make enquiries and inform the Committee in due course.
- Reference was made to risk CRR190034 – Cyber Risk. It was asked when the contingency and continuity plans were tested last. The Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance stated that she would arrange for the Committee to receive further narrative on this matter by e-mail.
- In response to a query, the Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance explained that the risk associated with the current supply chain shortages and delivery was captured on the risk register, however the recent escalation of power failures and the increased costs was not included, and this would be considered at corporate management level.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that**

- 5.1 Carmarthenshire County Council's Corporate Risk Register 2021/22 be received;**
- 5.2 an update on the progress of the Effective People Strategy be included on the Governance & Audit Committee's Forward Work Programme.**

**6. INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN UPDATE 2021/22**

The Committee considered a progress report on the implementation of the 2021/22 Audit Plan

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the 2021/22 Internal Audit Plan update report be received.**

**7. GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered the proposed Forward Work Programme for the 2021/22 Audit Committee Cycle detailing the items to be presented to Committee at scheduled meetings during the forthcoming year.

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report be received.**

**8. MINUTES OF RELEVANT GROUPS TO THE GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the Corporate Governance Group held on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2021, be received.**

**9. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD ON 24<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2021**

**UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on the 24<sup>th</sup> September, 2021 be signed as a correct record.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**CHAIR**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**DATE**

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# Agenda Item 12

By virtue of paragraph(s) 12, 13 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007.

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# Agenda Item 13

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