

MONDAY 6 MARCH 2023

TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

I HEREBY SUMMON YOU TO ATTEND A **MULTI LOCATION** MEETING OF THE **CABINET** WHICH WILL BE HELD IN THE **CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL, CARMARTHEN. SA31 1JP AND REMOTELY AT 10.00 AM, ON MONDAY, 13TH MARCH, 2023** FOR THE TRANSACTION OF THE BUSINESS OUTLINED ON THE ATTACHED AGENDA

Wendy Walters

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

THE MEETING CAN BE VIEWED ON THE AUTHORITY'S WEBSITE VIA THE FOLLOWING LINK:-
[HTTPS://CARMARTHENSHIRE.PUBLIC-I.TV/CORE/PORTAL/HOME](https://carmarthenshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home)

Democratic Officer:	Janine Owen
Telephone (direct line):	01267 224030
E-Mail:	JanineOwen@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

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

CABINET

MEMBERSHIP – 10 MEMBERS

COUNCILLOR	PORTFOLIO
Councillor Darren Price	Leader
Councillor Linda Evans	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Homes
Councillor Glynog Davies	Education and Welsh Language
Councillor Ann Davies	Rural Affairs and Planning Policy
Councillor Philip Hughes	Organisation and Workforce
Councillor Gareth John	Regeneration, Leisure, Culture and Tourism
Councillor Alun Lenny	Resources
Councillor Edward Thomas	Transport, Waste and Infrastructure Services
Councillor Jane Tremlett	Health and Social Services
Councillor Aled Vaughan Owen	Climate Change, Decarbonisation and Sustainability

A G E N D A

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST**
- 3. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE CABINET HELD ON THE:-**
 - 3 .1 13TH FEBRUARY 2023** 5 - 14
 - 3 .2 20TH FEBRUARY 2023** 15 - 24
- 4. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE BY MEMBERS**
- 5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**
- 6. REGIONAL ADULT ADVOCACY STRATEGY** 25 - 68
- 7. ANY OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT BY REASONS OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES THE CHAIR DECIDES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY PURSUANT TO SECTION 100B(4)(B) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1972.**
- 8. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

THE REPORTS RELATING TO THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE NOT FOR PUBLICATION AS THEY CONTAIN EXEMPT INFORMATION AS DEFINED IN PARAGRAPH 14 OF PART 4 OF SCHEDULE 12A TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT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 CABINET RESOLVES PURSUANT TO THE ACT TO CONSIDER THESE ITEMS IN PRIVATE, THE PUBLIC WILL BE EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING DURING SUCH CONSIDERATION.
- 9. CARMARTHENSHIRE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR LEARNING (CSCFL) (FORMERLY THE MODERNISING EDUCATION PROGRAMME) YSGOL GWENLLIAN, KIDWELLY** 69 - 78
- 10. TYWI VALLEY SHARED USE ROUTE - LAND ACQUISITION AND THE USE OF COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER POWERS TO SUPPORT THE ACQUISITION OF LAND AND RIGHTS** 79 - 152

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CABINET

MONDAY, 13 FEBRUARY 2023

PRESENT: Councillor D Price(Chair)(In Person)

Councillors (In Person):

C.A. Davies

L.D. Evans

G. Davies

P.M. Hughes

G.H. John

A. Lenny

J. Tremlett

Councillors (Virtually):

A. Vaughan Owen

Also in attendance (Virtually):

Councillor D.M. Cundy

Councillor R. James

Also Present (In Person):

W. Walters, Chief Executive

J. Morgan, Director of Community Services

C. Moore, Director of Corporate Services

L.R. Jones, Head of Administration and Law

P.R. Thomas, Assistant Chief Executive (People Management & Performance)

G. Morgans, Director of Education & Children's Services

A. Williams, Director of Place and Infrastructure

D. Hockenhill, Marketing and Media Manager

S. Rees, Simultaneous Translator

L. Jenkins, Cabinet Support Officer

N. Daniel, Head of ICT and Corporate Policy

E. Bryer, Democratic Services Officer

M. Runeckles, Members Support Officer

K. Thomas, Democratic Services Officer

Also Present (Virtually):

S. Hendy, Member Support Officer

Chamber - County Hall, Carmarthen. SA31 1JP and remotely - 10.00 - 10.40 am

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor E. Thomas

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal interests.

3. TO SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON THE 30TH JANUARY 2023

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 30th January, 2023 be signed as a correct record.

4. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE BY MEMBERS

The Chair advised that three questions on notice had been submitted by members.

4.1. QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR ROB JAMES TO COUNCILLOR GARETH JOHN CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION LEISURE CULTURE AND TOURISM

'Can the Cabinet Member for Regeneration provide an update on the Levelling Up Fund Bids for Llanelli and confirm whether it is the intentions of the administration to resubmit the plans during phase 3?.'

Response by Councillor Gareth John – Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Leisure, Culture and Tourism:-

Thank you for the question. Since the question is specifically aimed at the levelling up fund, there's little I can add really to the statement I made at last Council where I announced that we'd been notified that the two applications, or bids, that we had submitted in respect of the fund, in respect of regenerating Llanelli Town centre and the improved transport links and interchange to and from the centre to the railway station and Pentre Awel had been unsuccessful. As I reported, there were apparently 525 applications, of which, 111 were awarded funding in round two, a total amount amounting to just over £2bn, and this amounts to a 1 in 5 success rate. Again, as I indicated at Council, we are, and we remain naturally disappointed with the news particularly given the clear need, the strength and quality of our submission and the vast amount of time and effort and indeed expense invested in submitting the application.

As I reported, we have requested, have been promised, and still await feedback with the aim of supporting future proposals and submissions bearing in mind as we know there will be a promised third round of the levelling up fund in due course. The only thing I would add is at no point was it indicated during any stage of the application process that the authority would be at any disadvantage during the second round of bidding as a result of having been successful in the first. This doesn't seem to be the case because analysing the awards thereafter it would appear that no authority that had been successful in the first round received bidding in the second round and there are only four local authorities in Wales that have had no success at the both rounds. And, as I indicated to Council, taking both rounds together, Carmarthenshire are second only to Cardiff on the total level of funding allocated to date.

We await the feedback as I indicated and we will then assess prior to resubmitting or amending our submission, if eligible, under the promised third round when we receive that feedback from the announcement. Thank you

Supplementary Question by Councillor Rob James:-

There was no supplementary question

4.2. QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR ROB JAMES TO COUNCILLOR ALUN LENNY , CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES

'Can the Cabinet Member for Resources state whether immediate action is being taken to end months of roadworks on Blue Street, Carmarthen, after businesses have been hit financially by the disruption, and will the Council engage with affected businesses to discuss compensation for loss of business'

Response by Councillor Alun Lenny – Cabinet Member for Resources:-

I'm very grateful to Councillor James for the opportunity to provide an update on the plan to improve Carmarthen bus station, which includes Blue Street, a scheme enabled through Welsh Government Support as part of its strategy to improve public transport infrastructure. The scheme will comply with the new transport strategy that sets out different ways to support public transport. It prioritises passengers and climate change as Lee Waters, MS Deputy Minister for climate change explained Last Wednesday. Once the work is finished, and I'll get to that in a moment, Carmarthen bus station will be a much more welcoming, engaging and safe place for passengers, including larger bus shelters in Blue Street with electronic boards providing bus times, as there are at railway stations. The work has already made Blue Street a more attractive street with new resurfacing of the pavements and safer places for pedestrians to cross the road. It will also be a much better link between the railway station and the Town. I must acknowledge that the development has not been without its difficulties and I fully appreciate that a few shops in Blue Street say it has adversely affected business. Unfortunately, the work was hampered due to late responses from utility providers. In other words, companies that could have wires or pipes underground. Work was also suspended between mid-November and early January so as not to disrupt local businesses over the Christmas period. Free parking was also provided in Blue Street car park during that period in order to alleviate the impact on businesses. It's true there had been some barriers to some businesses entrances for inevitable reasons but, that was probably only for a few hours and the contractor endeavoured to offer interim entrances to customers. Work on the pavement outside the shops has now been finished for a couple of weeks and it looks excellent and the work resurfacing the street itself will begin tonight. The work will take place overnight for four nights, weather permitting. Work will then continue to make significant improvements inside the existing bus station area which is away from the street. That will come to an end this spring. Carmarthen Town will then have a top class bus station and that should attract more passengers to Blue Street for the benefit of the shops there and, indeed, the town itself.

Turning briefly to the second part of the question, namely, the enquiry about compensation, there is no compensation scheme within the Non Domestic Rates system but, if individual businesses can prove they have suffered financial hardship it is possible that the Council could take that into account under what is called Section 13A. Officers would need to see bank accounts etc as evidence that the hardship was a direct result of the development work. But, I am confident that the owners of the shops in Blue Street will soon see that the current development, although temporarily troublesome creates a more thriving future for the businesses.

Thanks again for the question

Supplementary Question by Councillor Rob James:-

Can I thank the Cabinet member for that very detailed information. I'm sure as a local member he has also been contacted by said businesses regarding some of the disruption. Obviously, we welcome the development, it's just obviously, some of the disruption may be caused on some of the businesses. It's important that you highlighted Section 13A. Thank you for that.

Would you meet with myself and businesses that are affected, with Officers, to investigate whether there is opportunity for said businesses to actually apply under Section 13A for that remuneration sorry, compensation, for the disruption. Thankyou

Response by Councillor Alun Lenny – Cabinet Member for Resources

That would be subject to legal clearance I believe by our officers but, I will certainly consider that, if that is acceptable. Thank you

4.3. QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR ROB JAMES TO COUNCILLOR DARREN PRICE, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

'Would the Leader of Council agree with me that where a business has created accommodation – utilising an annexe, renovating a disused barn on a farm or other means – that this practice is not removing housing stock from local communities nor is it a second home in the traditional sense, and as such, should not be liable to any Council tax premium?

Response by Councillor Darren Price – Leader of the Council:-

Thank you for the question and I think it's a good opportunity really to try and explore some of the issues around this. As you will be aware we are consulting at the moment in terms of introducing a Council Tax Premium on both empty properties and second homes and that consultation continues and there will be a report coming to Cabinet and Council over the next few weeks so, its timely. Obviously, you are aware of the detail around this but, I thought it would be an opportunity just to set some context for others who are listening in and may not be as up to date in terms of the context. So, obviously, as I mentioned we are consulting. We have 2,000 empty properties across the county as things stand. We have around 1,000 second homes / holiday homes across the county as well. So, that means we have 3,000 properties across the county which either are not utilised at all or are under-utilised in some cases. The flip side to that, of course, is we know we have over 3,000 people waiting on the housing list and, I think that morally, there's a duty on us, and national government to try and get to grips with that situation and re-balance the market.

I think there's a unanimous view, I think, nationally that something needs to be done to tackle the problem of empty properties and second homes and, of course the Welsh Government have been clear following discussions with Plaid Cymru, and the inclusion of the Co-operation Agreement, that action needs to be taken on a whole range of issues. Clearly, the Minister, Julie James, is keen to make progress on this and she has been quoted continuously and I will quote her directly, just to provide some context. What she says is 'that the continuing rise of

house prices mean the people, especially younger generations, can no longer afford to live in the communities that they have grown up in. A high concentration of second homes or holiday lets can have a very detrimental impact on small communities and in some areas could compromise the Welsh language being spoken at a community level. That the urgency and gravity of the situation calls for further intervention which means real and ambitious actions are delivered at pace to inject fairness back into the housing system'. I've got to say that I agree whole heartedly with those sentiments. I think it's really important that the Welsh Government is taking action on a number of fronts to try and address this. One of the tools that they have given local authorities of course is the council tax premium. There was previously a decision to ensure that Councils could introduce a 100% council tax premium but that has since been increased to 300%. There are changes in terms of the planning process to ensure that the split and the clarity between a main dwelling, second homes and short-term holiday let is further refined in future and there are moves as well to develop a statutory licensing regime for holiday lets. I think that all of these measures are important, and they can't be looked at separately. They need to be looked at in the round.

I think it's also important to note that obviously local authorities across Wales are now looking at this. A number of Councils, for example Gwynedd and Pembrokeshire have already introduced Council Tax Premiums in these areas and have done for a number of years. But we now have a situation where Councils such as Rhondda Cynon Taf, Monmouthshire, Conway, Bridgend and ourselves of course are looking to introduce similar measures and, it's good to see councils across Wales taking positive action in that regards.

Turning specifically to the details in your question Rob, there are a number of exemptions which apply in terms of Council tax premiums, particularly with regards to second homes. There are seven classes in all which are exempt from a council tax premium:-

- The first one are dwellings being marketed for sale;
- The second one is dwellings being marketed for let;
- The third one, which reflects directly the question that you're posing this morning, is to annexes forming part of or, being treated as part of the main dwelling;
- Class four relates to dwellings which would be someone's sole or main residence were they not residing in armed forces accommodation. I think that's really important;
- Class five relates to occupied caravan pitches and boat moorings. They are exempt;
- Class six refers to seasonal homes where planning conditions prohibit year round occupation and, again, that refers to the reference you have this morning with regards to barns in many cases
- Class Seven relates to job related dwellings

So, there is a range of dwellings and properties which fall outside of the Council Tax Premium Regulations. The definition of a second home is 'a dwelling which is not a persons sole or main home and is substantially furnished. Dwellings where a planning condition prevents occupancy for a continuous period of at least 28 days in any twelve month period such as chalets and purpose built

holiday homes are included in this definition and such dwellings are entitled to as I mentioned Class six exemptions.

Turning to the barn example that you referenced there, you will be aware that there is common practice to grant planning permission for a residential development and restrict its occupancy to holiday accommodation use only. This can often be the case with barn conversions where the permission sought is for its use for holiday let purposes rather than permanent residential accommodation and, as mentioned, those are granted exemption under class three. However, if a barn has been converted, without the holiday accommodation use only restriction or for someone's sole or main residence then it would have to be classed as a second home or holiday let and, as such it would be eligible for a premium charge.

So, all in all, Rob what I'm trying to say it's quite a complex situation. There are lots of things at play here. It's not just a case of the Council Tax Premium. The planning regime is really integral to this as we set out to implement the council tax premium but also as we look to develop the area in future years. I think it's fair to say that this has been an unregulated area for quite some time, but I think that the shape and the structure the Welsh Government are finally putting on the sector is to be welcomed. Finally, I would add that I wouldn't want to pre-empt any contribution in terms of the consultation, which is still on-going but, clearly when we look at this as a Cabinet we will ensure that all of this evidence is taken on board before reaching a decision. Thank you

Supplementary Question by Councillor Rob James:-

Thank you for that information. Over the last few weeks and months, I've been meeting with individuals who have been involved with the agri-tourism sector which, I believe, is an important sector for this Council. I believe we need to be supporting farm holders in diversifying their operations and I think operating holiday lets as part of that is an important step. Now, one of the things that has been told to me is that the changes to the occupancy rates i.e: I think it's 180 days that is needed to be classified as a viable business now by the Welsh Government due to changes recently means that they are liable to a big impact by this change in council tax. So, what I'm looking from you is a Leader, if I may is, just a commitment that we are seeking to protect agri-tourism in this council with any changes that we may look to bring in. Thank you

Response by Councillor Darren Price – Leader of the Council:-

Thank you Rob. The threshold is actually 182 days, not 180, but the point is well made. I think from the outset, it's important to state that our intention is not to have any negative adverse impact on the tourism industry. We absolutely recognise that the tourism sector is vital particularly, in some parts of the county and I think that the proposal that we've got out for public consultation at the moment reflects that. As I mentioned earlier, there is scope to introduce a 300% premium on second homes and we haven't suggested doing that as part of the consultation. We have suggested that a 50% or 100% contribution would be prudent. I think that's based on the learnings and the experience of other authorities that have already implemented this. As I mentioned it's been implemented in Gwynedd and Pembrokeshire for quite some time. Those are

areas that are really dependent on the tourism sector and I don't get the feedback from those areas that the premium at those levels has had a significant adverse impact on the tourism sector. But I think there's a wider point here that we need to be mindful of, and I think that the planning regime offers us an opportunity to get to grips with this over the coming years and that's around the supply of short term holiday let accommodation in the county. If we're finding that businesses across the county are struggling to meet that threshold, I think there's a discussion to be had then in terms of the supply of short term holiday lets and the sustainability of those businesses. But that's something we are keen to engage with the sector over the coming months and years. Thank you

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The Chair advised that no public questions had been received.

6. CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL CORPORATE STRATEGY 2022-27

The Cabinet considered the Council's Corporate Strategy 2022-2027, that included the Council's well-being objectives and setting out the direction of travel and priorities for the organisation over the period of the current administration, whilst also providing the delivery framework on the Cabinet's vision and commitments during the period. The new strategy would focus on a smaller number of population-based objectives whilst identifying the thematic priorities, service priorities and core business enablers that the Council would aim to progress during that period.

It was noted the proposed new Council well-being objectives were:-

1. Enabling our children and young people to have the best possible start in life (Start Well)
2. Enabling our residents to live and age well (Live and Age Well)
3. Enabling our communities and environment to be healthy, safe and prosperous (Prosperous Communities)
4. To further modernise and develop as a resilient and efficient Council (Our Council)

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL that the Council's Corporate Strategy 2022-2027 be approved.

7. COUNCIL TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY

The Cabinet considered the proposed Transformation Strategy that aimed to provide the strategic framework to underpin a programme of significant organisational change to support the Council in achieving its wider aims and objectives, as set out in within the Corporate Strategy (Minute 5 above refers). It also aimed to further accelerate the process of modernisation across the Council, thereby allowing it to continue delivering high-quality, cost-effective services within the context of a challenging external environment.

It was noted the Strategy encompassed the following 8 thematic priorities:-

- Workforce,
- Workplace,

- Efficiencies and value for money
- Income and commercialisation
- Service design and improvement
- Digital and customers
- Decarbonisation
- Schools

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Transformation Strategy be approved.

8. CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S SIGNING OF THE EDINBURGH DECLARATION

The Cabinet considered a report on a letter received from Julie James (WG Minister for Climate Change), sent in September 2021, to all Local Authorities in Wales seeking pledges of support for the Edinburgh Declaration that supported the development of the post 2020 global biodiversity framework i.e: “recognises the important role that sub-national governments play in supporting nature and biodiversity”

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED

- 8.1 That the Council sign the Edinburgh Declaration on Global Biodiversity and that the Cabinet Member for Decarbonisation, Climate Change and Sustainability sign the declaration;**
- 8.2 That officers ensure the due process for signing the Declaration is implemented and that the signing of the Edinburgh Declaration is publicised by the Council’s Marketing and Communications Team.**

9. HIGHWAY ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN - MAINTENANCE MANUAL PARTS 4.5, 4.6 & 4.7

The Cabinet considered a report on the adoption of sections 4.5 – 4.7 of the Highway Asset Management Plan – Maintenance Manual. While the Plan had been adopted by the Council’s former Executive Board in July 2018, Cabinet was informed that the maintenance manual which formed part 4 thereof, was being developed as a portfolio of specific manuals covering the management of a range of highway assets. Accordingly, Parts 4.1- 4.4 of the manual had been adopted in 2021, and sections 4.5 – 4.7, if adopted, would cover the aspects detailed below, with further sections being developed in future years:-

- Part 4.5 – Highway Drainage Management
- Part 4.6 – Geotechnical Management
- Part 4.7 – Highway Emergency Response.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that Parts 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7 of the Highway Asset Management Plan – Maintenance Manual be adopted.

10. PARTNERIAETH BUDGET 2022 -2023

The Cabinet was informed that the Legal Agreement relating to the establishment of the Partneriaeth Regional Education Consortium provided the following reserved matter to each of its constituent authority's "Approving the first Annual budget of the Partneriaeth and any subsequent Annual Budget which would exceed the scope of the authority delegated to the Joint Committee within its terms of Reference"

In accordance with that requirement, the Cabinet considered the Partneriaeth's first Annual budget, as endorsed by the Partneriaeth Joint Committee on the 29th April 2022.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED:-

- 10.1 To note the assumptions and estimates made in compiling the First Annual Budget for 2022-23 and approve the first Annual Budget for Partneriaeth Regional Education Consortium, including the contributions of each Council, which had been calculated in accordance with the terms of the legal agreement;**
- 10.2 To note that the Joint Committee had resolved at its meeting held on the 29th April, 2022 that the Lead Chief Finance Officer for Partneriaeth (Section 151 Officer of the Lead Council with responsibility for finance) was authorised to make amendments to the first Annual Budget for 2022-23 as assumptions and estimates were confirmed and that that position be approved.**
- 11. ANY OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT BY REASONS OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES THE CHAIR DECIDES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY PURSUANT TO SECTION 100B(4)(B) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1972.**

The Chair advised that there were no items of urgent business.

CHAIR

DATE

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CABINET

MONDAY, 20 FEBRUARY 2023

PRESENT: Councillor D. Price (Chair)

Councillors (In Person):

L.D. Evans

G. Davies

A. Lenny

E.G. Thomas

A. Vaughan Owen

Councillors (Virtually):

G.H. John

J. Tremlett

Also in attendance:

Councillor D.M. Cundy

Also Present (In Person):

W. Walters, Chief Executive;

C. Moore, Director of Corporate Services;

J. Morgan, Director of Community Services;

G. Morgans, Director of Education & Children's Services;

A. Williams, Director of Place and Infrastructure;

R. Hemingway, Head of Financial Services;

J. Jones, Head of Regeneration;

L.R. Jones, Head of Administration and Law;

D. Hockenhull, Marketing and Media Manager;

C. Higginson, Media Manager;

L. Jenkins, Cabinet Support Officer;

A. Eynon, Principal Translator;

M.S. Davies, Democratic Services Officer;

Also Present (Virtually):

J. Morgan, Head of Homes & Safer Communities;

E. Bryer, Democratic Services Officer.

Chamber, County Hall, Carmarthen and remotely: 10.00 am - 11.10 am

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. Davies and P.M. Hughes.

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal interests.

3. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE BY MEMBERS

The Chair advised that no questions on notice had been submitted by members.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The Chair advised that no public questions had been received.

5. REVENUE BUDGET STRATEGY 2023/24 TO 2025/26

The Cabinet considered a report providing the latest proposals for the Revenue Budget Strategy for 2023/24 and the following two financial years.

The report summarised the latest budgetary position and provided an update on the budget validation, spending pressures, the Welsh Government final settlement and the responses received to the budget consultation.

The Cabinet Member for Resources, in presenting the report, commented that whilst Welsh Government's final annual settlement figures would not be published until March 1st 2023 the key components of the Council's budget assumptions and allocations had been reviewed which had resulted in increased budget headroom. Some of the proposals within the original Budget outline had therefore been revisited and further options considered.

The full details of the provisional settlement had been included within the report, but the headline was on all Wales basis. RSG funding for Local Government had increased by 7.9%, with Carmarthenshire receiving an increase of 8.5%.

Whilst this had enabled the catastrophe Local Authorities had feared last November to be avoided very difficult decisions had still to be made. This year's budget choices were considered to be every bit as hard as during the very worst years of the austerity era.

The Cabinet Member for Resources referred to the fact that within the report the Director of Corporate Services had made some adjustments to some of the other figures within the strategy. This, he emphasised, was part of the normal routine, as more and clearer information became available. The current total validation added more than £30m to the budget.

The report maintained the pay assumption from 5% allowed for in next year for both NJC and teaching staff - this being the most significant validation included within the assumptions, and also the most uncertain. It was noted in the report that every 1% on the council's pay bill equated to £2.6m. With the level of industrial action across the wider public sector, the level of nationally set pay awards was the most significant validation included within the assumptions, and also the greatest risk factor.

The Cabinet Member for Resources referred to the consultations which had taken place on the budget proposals between December and January when more than 2,000 people had taken the trouble of completing the survey and sharing their views. He expressed his thanks to all who had taken part in the consultation or responded to the surveys, and in particular for the commitment and engagement of his fellow councillors who had participated in the budget seminars in such a positive spirit. He also thanked the 80 young people from local secondary schools who had visited County Hall to question cabinet members and officers and express their views on what the Council's priorities should be.

The Cabinet Member for Resources advised that a total sum of almost £1.8 million was available to make changes to next year's budget and he suggested that the best possible use be made of this sum by making the following

adjustments to the Budget Strategy which took account of the consultation process and responses to the feedback from both public and councillors:

Firstly, that £1.3million be provided to remove or reduce the 9 specific budget reductions detailed in paragraph 3.2.5 of the report which included:

- keeping St Clears Leisure centre open whilst the Authority worked with the community to set it on a viable financial path;
- restoring a quarter of a million pounds back to children's and youth services to invest in the prevention agenda;
- lessening the impact on both the school music service and learning disability services;
- reducing the financial ask on schools by £700,000, responding to what had been the strongest view given in the public consultation;
- deferring any changes to the rising 4s schools admission policy by a year to ensure wider consultation and allow the proper time to plan any possible changes.

He added that the proposal to charge for parking in nine car parks in smaller towns and villages had also been removed and that a case-for-case assessment would be made during the year.

Secondly, that £385,000 be used to support both hard working families and businesses by restricting the proposed increase in car park charges and school meals to 5%, which was half the current rate of inflation.

Thirdly, in responding to concerns over highways and town centres, that over a quarter-of-a-million pounds be allocated directly toward these priorities. It was recognised that Welsh Government had suffered a significant contraction in its capital budgets, and therefore some of the historical support provided for public realm works had sadly dried up in recent years – this council's choice would, he advised, at least be a partial mitigation. Rather than cut spending on street sweeping and so on, as previously proposed, more would be spent on keeping town centres cleaner and more attractive to visitors and residents alike.

Finally, and importantly, this left sufficient funding available for the council tax increase to be reduced to 6.8% for next year which, the Cabinet Board Member for Resources considered, struck the right balance in terms of protecting vital services which Carmarthenshire's citizens relied upon and looked to the council to deliver each and every day.

The Cabinet Board Member for Resources suggested that adopting these proposals allowed the Cabinet to present a fair and balanced budget to County Council and responded to the views fed back from the consultation. He advised that if all the proposals he had outlined were implemented a sustainable and viable Budget Strategy could be provided which:

- Responses to the consultation;
- Ensured, as far as possible, that service levels and standards were maintained;
- Recognised that residents were finding it hard in the current climate and ensured core services were protected;

- prepared, as far as was possible, the Authority for the uncertainties that may lie ahead.

He therefore moved that the proposed Budget Strategy, with the amendments he had referred to, be approved and recommended to County Council.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:-

- 5.1 To approve the Budget Strategy for 2023/24, which includes the amendments in paragraph 4.1.4 of the report;**
- 5.2 To approve the Band D Council Tax for 2023/24 of £1,490.97 (an increase of 6.8%);**
- 5.3 To approve the removal of specific savings proposals as identified in paragraph 3.2.5 of the report;**
- 5.4 To approve the restriction of income uplifts to school meals and car parks as identified in paragraph 3.2.5 of the report;**
- 5.5 To approve the discretionary allocation of pressures funding to highways and town centres as identified in paragraph 3.2.5 of the report;**
- 5.6 To approve the Medium Term Financial Plan which will form the basis of future years planning;**
- 5.7. That the Director of Corporate Services, in consultation with the Chief Executive, Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources, be delegated authority to make any amendments necessary as a consequence of the WG settlement due on 1st March 2023.**

6. FIVE YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAMME (COUNCIL FUND) 2023/24 TO 2027/28

The Cabinet considered a report which brought together the latest proposals for the Five-Year Capital Programme (Council Fund) 2023/24 to 2027/2028 taking into account the consultation exercise undertaken and the revenue implications arising from the capital programme.

The Cabinet Member for Resources, in presenting the report, stated that the new programme would see £265m of investment over the next five years, £73m of which was for improving school buildings, £27m for Regeneration projects to boost economic activity, £86m for City Deal backed projects (which included a new leisure centre for Llanelli) and £59m to improve local economic infrastructure and wider environment. He advised that the detailed provisional capital programme had been presented to the Corporate Performance and Resources Scrutiny Committee and, following concerns about the lack of provision for flood prevention and the lack of Welsh Government grant funding for decarbonisation measures, the programme had been revised to include further commitments in this area.

The Cabinet Member for Resources commented that the programme included three ongoing transformational projects, each focused on a different primary town area.

- a £19.6m hub (the former Debenhams Store) at the heart of Carmarthen Town Centre which will boost footfall in the town centre as we build back from the pandemic;

- £19m investment to complete the Twyi Valley Path between Carmarthen and Llandeilo;
- the construction phase of Zone 1 of the Pentre Awel development in Llanelli which would create five distinct buildings linked with a “street” space, comprising an aquatics centre, sports hall, multipurpose sports and fitness rooms and gym, education and training facilities, clinical delivery and research and innovation and business space.

In addition to these large flagship projects the Council would continue to support its programmes of investments in infrastructure and the authority’s property portfolio in year five of the programme. Support would also continue for Carmarthenshire’s Schools and Sustainable Communities for Learning. It was pointed out that feasibility works had been ongoing in the 2022/23 financial year on several schools and therefore those projects were not listed as part of this new programme. Furthermore the primary schools in Ammanford, which were part of the programme, were not, as yet, listed as they were part of Mutual Investment Model (MIM) bids and would therefore potentially be delivered in conjunction with partners in the private sector which would be funded through revenue in due course.

The Cabinet Member for Resources added that in addition to the flagship projects outlined, the Authority would seek to continue to support its ongoing rolling programmes of investments in the following infrastructure and the authority’s property portfolio in year five of the programme:

£2.5m for Disability Facilities Grants;
 £250k to improve Road Safety;
 £250k for highways drainage;
 £400k for Bridge Strengthening;
 £600k for ongoing Highway Refurbishment;
 £400k for Public Lighting;
 £500k for Education General Works including adaptations to comply with the Equalities Act;
 £2m for the Strategic Regeneration Project Fund;
 £3m for Capital Maintenance for investment in our property estate.

Collectively, over the next five years, investment in these rolling programmes would amount to over £48m.

It was considered that the proposed capital programme optimised the funding opportunities and maximised the funding from potential external sources. A combination of existing and new schemes in line with the corporate vision would develop the local economy, create jobs, and enhance the quality of life for Carmarthenshire’s citizens and visitors whilst safeguarding resources for future generations.

The Cabinet Member for Resources stated that County Council funding available for this programme was currently estimated at £168m and included borrowing, both supported and unsupported, reserves and direct revenue funding and Capital Receipts from the sale of surplus assets. Capital grants and contributions of £100m would come from external grant funding

bodies. As part of this year's settlement Welsh Government had provided indicative general capital funding figures up to 2024/25. This was reflected in the programme. Funding for years three, four and five of the programme was based on an assumed level of support equivalent to that received in 2024/25 going forward. It was pointed out that Welsh Government funding for 2023/24 was £55K less than previously expected. The overall level of assumed funding in the later years of the programme was slightly in excess of the current commitments. This uncommitted funding would allow flexibility to meet future pressures associated with rising costs and other challenges.

Cabinet was advised that officers would continue to monitor individual schemes and funding availability. Whilst both would need to be closely managed to ensure the schemes were delivered in full the programme was fully funded for the five years.

In conclusion the Cabinet Member for Resources believed that the Capital Programme, as outlined, sought to maximise opportunities and he therefore recommended its endorsement.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL THAT:-

- 6.1 the five-year Capital Programme and funding as detailed in Appendix A to the report, with 2023/24 being a hard budget and 2024/25 to 2027/28 soft/indicative budgets, be approved;**
- 6.2 the programme be reviewed, as is usual, if anticipated external or county council funding does not materialise;**
- 6.3 the Capital Strategy in Appendix C to the report be approved;**
- 6.4 the Director of Corporate Services, in consultation with the Chief Executive, Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources, be delegated authority to make any amendments to the programme necessary as a consequence of the final settlement from the Welsh Government due on 1st March 2023.**

7. TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY AND STRATEGY 2023-24

The Cabinet was reminded that as part of the requirements of the revised CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management, the Council had agreed to maintain a Treasury Management Policy detailing the policies and objectives of the Authority's treasury management activities and to also approve a Treasury Management Strategy annually before the start of the financial year to which it related. In addition, under the Local Government Act 2003, the Council was required to approve the Treasury Management Indicators for the coming year.

In accordance with the above requirements, the Cabinet considered the Council's Treasury Management Policy and Strategy for the 2023-24 financial year prior to its formal submission to the Council for final adoption.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL THAT:-

- 7.1 The Treasury Management Policy and Strategy for 2023-24 and the recommendations contained therein be approved;**
- 7.2 The Treasury Management Indicators, Prudential Indicators, Minimum Revenue Provision Statement, the Investment Strategy and**

recommendations therein be approved.

8. TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATOR REPORT 1ST APRIL 2022 TO 31ST DECEMBER 2022

The Cabinet considered an update report on the treasury management activities and the prudential indicators for the period 1st April 2022 to 31st December 2022.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Treasury Management and Prudential Indicator Report for 1st April 2022 to 31st December 2022 be received.

9. COMMUNITIES, HOMES AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE TASK AND FINISH GROUP REPORT – EMERGENCY SOCIAL HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY

The Chair of the Communities, Homes and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee presented, for Cabinet's consideration, a report on the findings and recommendations of the Task and Finish Group established by the aforementioned Committee to develop an Emergency Social Housing Allocations Policy to address the unprecedented demand being experienced for Social Housing at the present time. He thanked all members and officers who had been involved in preparing the report.

The Leader thanked the aforementioned Task and Finish Group for its report and advised that recommendations 1 and 2 would not require Council approval.

The Cabinet Member Homes and Deputy Leader proposed an amendment to recommendation 2 to replace the words 'approximately one year' with 'up to 18 months' and also recommended that arrangements be made for a Member Development Session on the Emergency Interim Social Housing Allocations Policy.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED

9.1 that the report and Recommendations of the Communities, Homes and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee's Task and Finish Group established to develop an Emergency Social Housing Allocations Policy be endorsed subject to the amendment outlined and to it being noted that approval of recommendations 1 and 2 by Council was not required;

9.2 arrangements be made for a Member Development Session on the Emergency Interim Social Housing Allocations Policy.

10. HOUSING SUPPORT PROGRAMME (HSP) STRATEGY 2022-26

The Cabinet considered a proposed Housing Support Programme (HSP) Strategy (2022 – 26) for Carmarthenshire which the Council was required to produce by Welsh Government. The strategy detailed the strategic priorities of Carmarthenshire County Council and its partner agencies for homelessness prevention and housing related support services over the coming 4 years (2022-26). It refreshed earlier priorities included in the Local Authority's former homelessness strategy, and the Housing Support Grant (HSG) Delivery Plan for 2021-22. Development of the priorities had been informed by a comprehensive

need assessment exercise which included direct engagement with stakeholders within the Local Authority, providers of support services and service users.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to approve the Housing Support Programme (HSP) Strategy (2022 – 26) for Carmarthenshire.

11. RAPID REHOUSING TRANSITION PLAN 2022-2027

The Cabinet considered a Draft Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan for 2022 – 2027, as required by Welsh Government, which contained a series of High-Level Actions that would enable the Council to transition to a Rapid Rehousing Approach to make homelessness in Carmarthenshire rare, brief, and unrepeatable. The development of Rapid Rehousing clearly placed an emphasis on the provision of housing as a *fundamental element* of recovery from homelessness which could not be resolved with housing alone. It was considered that for Rapid Rehousing to be a success the Council must work in partnership with key services such as health and criminal justice whilst also harnessing the expertise and knowledge of both the third sector and voluntary organisations which provide services that support and help tenants build confidence and a connection within a community.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the draft Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan and its Executive Summary be approved and that it be formally submitted to Welsh Government and published on the Council's Website following Welsh translation.

12. ANY OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT BY REASONS OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES THE CHAIR DECIDES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY PURSUANT TO SECTION 100B(4)(B) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1972.

The Chair advised that there were no items of urgent business.

13. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED, pursuant to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007, that the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item as the report contained exempt information as defined in paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

14. RURAL ESTATE UPDATE REPORT

Following the application of the public interest test it was **RESOLVED**, pursuant to the Act referred to in minute no. 13 above, not to publicise the content of the report as it contained exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information) (Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Act). The public interest test in respect of this report outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information contained therein as disclosure as disclosure would unfairly undermine the commercial interests of the Council and individual farmers.

The Cabinet received a report on the present status and condition of the County Council's Farm Estate following recent surveys and the implications of the introduction of The Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations 2021 which would involve farms having to upgrade slurry storage facilities to accommodate at least five months' worth of slurry. As a consequence Cabinet was invited to consider whether the County Council's previous decision (September 2019) to retain the County Farms should be revisited.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the County Farm Estate be retained and managed under the current policy whilst rationalising and considering development and sale opportunities as they arise.

CHAIR

DATE

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CABINET

13TH MARCH, 2023

REGIONAL ADULT ADVOCACY STRATEGY

Purpose:

To consider the Regional Adult Advocacy Strategy for West Wales (2023-2027).

Recommendations / key decisions required:

To seek endorsement of the strategy which seeks to shape the commissioning arrangements of Hywel Dda University Health Board, Carmarthenshire County Council, Ceredigion County Council and Pembrokeshire County Council in order to meet their statutory duties. However, more importantly it seeks to ensure that good quality advocacy is readily and equitably available to those who want, or need it, in the West Wales region of Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire.

Reasons:

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA) requires Local Authorities to commission Independent Professional Advocacy and to promote access to a range of advocacy provision.

Advocacy has an important role to play in relation to voice and control and underpinning the wider requirements of the Act in terms of well-being, safeguarding and prevention. It can greatly assist people to express their views and make informed choices, thereby ensuring they have access to relevant services.

(Ref: Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act Advocacy Code of Practice p.2)

Cabinet Decision Required YES – 13th March, 2023

Council Decision Required NO

CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:-

Cllr Jane Tremlett (Health & Social Services Portfolio Holder)

Directorate:

Communities

Name of Head of Service:

Chris Harrison

Report Author:

Joshua Summers

Designations:

Head of strategic joint commissioning

Regional Partnership Board Team

Tel:

Email addresses:

chris.harrison@pembrokeshire.gov.uk

jsummers@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

REGIONAL ADULT ADVOCACY STRATEGY

1. BRIEF SUMMARY OF PURPOSE OF REPORT.

The purpose of this report is to seek endorsement of a new regional adult advocacy strategy that has been developed with stakeholders through the Advocacy Working Group (Membership includes 3 local authorities, Health board and third sector).

The draft Regional Adult Advocacy Strategy seeks to shape our commissioning arrangements to meet requirements to ensure good quality advocacy is readily and equitably available to those who want, or need it, in the West Wales region of Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire.

This strategy is based on an extended period of engagement with citizens, especially those who engage with health and social care services, advocacy organisations, health and social care practitioners, statutory commissioners and other relevant stakeholders.

This Adult Advocacy Strategy has five priority areas, all aimed at improving outcomes for people who need advocacy. The priorities have been defined in the light of co-productive activity to date, engagement, the Regional Population Assessment, and in response to legislative requirements. They include:

- Priority 1. Maintain and develop further our co-productive approach
- Priority 2 Raise awareness of, and understanding of, advocacy.
- Priority 3. Ensure advocacy is easily accessible and equitably available
- Priority 4. Ensure advocacy is of a consistently high standard of quality
- Priority 5. Maintain specialisms and non-statutory forms of advocacy

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?

No – Attached –

- Our West Wales Adult Advocacy Strategy (2023-2027)

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: Chris Harrison

Head of Joint Strategic Commissioning

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

1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities

Supports policy objectives in relation to the delivery of the Social Services & Wellbeing Act (2014). Advocacy is recognised, in all recent health and social care legislation, as being fundamentally important in situations within which individuals and marginalised groups need support to have their voices heard and their rights respected. Advocacy is designed and delivered to facilitate participation by individuals and groups within the decisions and processes that affect their lives.

The strategy supports equitable access of advocacy provision throughout West Wales.

2. Legal

The Social Services and well-being (Wales) Act 2014 provides the statutory framework for improving the well-being outcomes of adults and children who need care and support and carers who need support. It has a particular focus on voice and control so people have control over their own care and support and can make decisions about it as an equal partner.

The provision of Independent Professional Advocacy (IPA) is a legislative requirement under Part 10 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act (SSWBA) 2014.

3. Finance

The resources to support Carmarthenshire commitment to this strategy will come from existing resources.

CONSULTATIONS

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

Signed: Chris Harrison

Head of Joint Strategic Commissioning

(Please specify the outcomes of consultations undertaken where they arise against the following headings)

1. Scrutiny Committee request for pre-determination	No
If yes include the following information: -	
Scrutiny Committee	N/A
Date the report was considered:-	N/A
Scrutiny Committee Outcome/Recommendations:- N/A	

2. Local Member(s) - N/A

3. Community / Town Council - N/A

4. Relevant Partners

This regional strategy has been developed based on extensive engagement including: people who use advocacy services, the West Wales Advocacy Network/advocacy providers, the third sector, HDdUHB, Carmarthenshire County Council social care practitioners & commissioning representatives.

5. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations - N/A

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

THESE ARE DETAILED BELOW

Title of Document	File Ref No.	Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014		https://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2014/4/contents Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 – Part 2 Code of Practice (General Functions part-2-code-of-practice-general-functions.pdf (gov.wales)
Part 10 Advocacy Code of Practice		https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-05/part-10-code-of-practice-advocacy.pdf
Advocacy Charter		https://qualityadvocacy.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Advocacy-Charter-A3.pdf
Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act (RISCA)		https://careinspectorate.wales/sites/default/files/2018-06/180606-risca-guide-en.pdf
West Wales Population Needs Assessment		www.wwcp-data.org.uk/population-needs-assessment
Welsh Language Measures		https://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/1/contents?lang=enhttps://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/1/contents?lang=en
National Outcomes Framework		https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-05/the-national-outcomes-framework-for-people-who-need-care-and-support-and-carers-who-need-support.pdf
The Well-Being of Future Generations Act		https://www.futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/
Statistical Focus in Rural Wales		https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2018-12/080515-statistical-focus-rural-wales-08-en.pdf
IMHA Code of Practice(incorporated into Mental Health(Wales) Act Code of Practice Chapter 6)		https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-03/mental-health-act-1983-code-of-practice-mental-health-act-1983-for-wales-review-revised-2016.pdf#:~:text=The%20Mental%20Health%20Act%201983%20Code%20of%20Practice,being%20laid%20before%20the%20National%20Assembly%20for%20Wales.
Code of Practice (incorporated into the Mental Capacity (Wales)Act Code of Practice chapter 10)		http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/Documents/744/Code%20of%20Practice%20E.pdf
Planning, Commissioning and Co-production, Care Council for Wales		https://socialcare.wales/cms_assets/hub-downloads/Planning_and_Commissioning_Resource_Guide_-_January_17.pdf
GTAP Commissioning Independent Professional Advocacy for Adults under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014		https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-cymru/documents/golden-thread-advocacy-programme/programme-documents/commissioning-ipa-framework-english-oct-19.pdf
West Wales Area Plan 2018-23		www.wwcp.org.uk › west-wales-area-plan

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2023 - 2027

Our West Wales Adult Advocacy Strategy

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Foreword

Advocacy is recognised, in all recent health and social care legislation, as being fundamentally important in situations within which individuals and marginalised groups need support to have their voices heard and their rights respected. Advocacy is designed and delivered to facilitate participation by individuals and groups within the decisions and processes that affect their lives.

This Adult Advocacy Strategy seeks to shape the commissioning arrangements of Hywel Dda University Health Board, Carmarthenshire County Council, Ceredigion County Council and Pembrokeshire County Council in order to meet their statutory duties. However, more importantly it seeks to ensure that good quality advocacy is readily and equitably available to those who want, or need it, in the West Wales region of Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire.

Increasingly, it is recognised that significant numbers of people who require health or social care services also need forms of support that allow them to have an equal voice and control of how these services are planned and provided. The range of advocacy provision in our region looks to address this key support need and also encourages the development of individuals' confidence and skills to participate and express their own voices and choices through self-advocacy.

There are certain groups within our communities who need a significant level of support to be able to have their voice heard and their rights and entitlements fully met. This includes people with specific difficulties expressing their wishes and preferences, for example but not restricted to, people with learning disabilities, people with autism, people with dementia, people with complex mental health issues, some people with multiple or sensory impairments and some carers. It is to those groups which this strategy sets out to shape our future commissioning and provision of advocacy.

We intend that, through working in partnership with our communities and stakeholders, we will, in the next five years, be able to shape, through our commissioning arrangements, how the most appropriate forms of advocacy in the region will meet the range of advocacy needs. We intend to build upon what is already a solid base of existing provision whilst looking to develop advocacy provision in areas that require development. We intend to prioritise advocacy support to those individuals and groups who most need it.

We look forward to meeting these important challenges to ensure that access to, and the quality of, advocacy provision in our region is of the highest possible standard and reflects what our communities need from advocacy provision.



Judith Hardisty
Chair, West Wales Regional Partnership Board

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BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

To set the overall context in which the Adult Advocacy strategy for West Wales will operate we undertook a review of Welsh legislation that impacts this area.

Social Services and wellbeing act

The Social Services and Wellbeing Act (2014) requires that the three regional Local Authorities must [commission statutory Independent Professional Advocacy](#) services and for the Local Authorities to promote access to the [spectrum of advocacy provision](#).

Advocacy should be considered as an inherent part of the Act to focus social care around people and their well-being. Advocacy helps people to understand how they can be involved, how they can contribute and take part and whenever possible, to lead or direct the process.

(Wales) Act Advocacy Code of Practice p.8

Social Services and Well-Being

The Social Services and Wellbeing Act (2014) places a lot of emphasis on voice and control for people who need care and support, and carers who need support.

Advocacy has an important role to play in relation to voice and control and underpinning the wider requirements of the Act in terms of well-being, safeguarding and prevention. It can greatly assist people to express their views and make informed choices, thereby ensuring they have access to relevant services.

Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act Advocacy Code of Practice p.2

National Outcomes Framework & Wellbeing of future generations

The National Outcomes Framework (Social Services) and the Well-being of Future Generations Act place the concept of individual voice and participation at the centre of the approach to achieving well-being in Wales.

**My voice is heard and listened to.
My individual circumstances are considered. I speak for myself and contribute to the decisions that affect my life or have someone who can do it for me.**

National Outcomes Framework statement relating to achieving personal well-being.p.5

Mental Health Act & Mental Capacity Act

There are similar requirements in the Mental Health Act and the Mental Capacity Act for the Hywel Dda University Health Board to commission Independent Mental Capacity Advocate and Independent Mental Health Advocate services across the region.

West Wales Population Needs Assessment & Area Plan

Effective commissioning needs to draw upon the information ascertained through [co-production](#) and the demographic data in the [West Wales](#) Area Plan 2018-23 and the West Wales Population Needs Assessment.

What Is Advocacy and Who Needs It?

A widely accepted definition of advocacy is set out below:

‘Advocacy is taking action to help people say what they want, secure their rights, represent their interests and obtain services they need. Advocates and advocacy schemes work in partnership with the people they support and take their side. Advocacy promotes [social inclusion](#), equality and social justice.’ [National Development Team for Inclusion](#) Advocacy Charter 2018



The diagram above, produced by the [Golden Thread Advocacy Project](#), illustrates the [spectrum of advocacy provision](#). Each form has particular benefits:

Type	Description
Self-Advocacy	When individuals represent and speak up for themselves
Informal Advocacy	When family, friends or neighbours supporting an individual in having their views wishes and feelings heard which may include speaking on their behalf.
Peer Advocacy	One individual acting as an advocate for others who shares a common experience/ background.
Collective Advocacy	Involves groups of individuals with common experiences, being empowered to have a voice and influence change and promote social justice.
Citizen Advocacy	Involves a one-to-one long-term partnership between a trained or supported volunteer citizen advocate and an individual.
Independent Volunteer Advocacy	Involves an independent and unpaid advocate who works on a short term, or issue led basis, with one or more individuals.
Formal Advocacy	May refer to the advocacy role of staff in health, social care and other settings where professionals are required as part of their role to consider the wishes and feelings of the individual and to help ensure that they are addressed properly.
Independent Mental Health Advocacy (Statutory)	Specially trained advocates who support people to speak up and have their voices heard around their mental health care and treatment. It is a type of statutory advocacy.
Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy (Statutory)	An Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA) helps people who lack capacity so that they can be involved in decisions that are being made on their behalf. It is for people who have been assessed as lacking the mental capacity to make a decision for themselves.
Independent Professional	Involves a professional, trained advocate working in a one-to-one partnership with an individual to ensure that their views

Advocacy (Statutory)	are accurately conveyed and their rights upheld. This might be for a single issue or multiple issues.
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There is an important distinction to be made between instructed and non-instructed advocacy. Instructed advocacy is when advocates are instructed by the individual, even if the latter didn't refer themselves to the advocacy services. Together, they are able to establish a relationship and identify the advocacy issues, goals and intended outcomes in accordance with the wishes/preference of the service user.

The non-instructed form of advocacy may be needed when matters of communication and capacity mean that instruction and expression of choices and concerns are not apparent. This would involve taking affirmative action with or on behalf of a person who is unable to give clear indication of their views or wishes in a specific situation. Non-instructed advocates seeks to uphold the persons right, ensure fair and equal treatment, ensure access to services, and make certain that decisions are taken with due consideration for their unique preferences and perspectives (Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014)

West Wales Position Statement

Key Stakeholders



There has been a coordinated focus on advocacy in West Wales for a number of years, with the Three Counties Advocacy Network having been in existence for over 12 years. Representing providers of both statutory and non-statutory advocacy services across Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire, the Network's aim is to improve, promote, and develop advocacy services whilst providing training opportunities for those services. This sits alongside an Advocacy Working Group which brings together the commissioners of advocacy services across West Wales, which include Carmarthenshire County Council, Ceredigion County Council and Pembrokeshire County Council. These relationships are demonstrated in the adjacent Venn diagram.

Regional Review

The original proposal was developed through a co-productive approach, as proposed by the [Golden Thread Advocacy Programme](#).

In 2017, the Three Counties Advocacy Network was awarded funding to undertake engagement work following a self-assessment exercise which identified areas for potential to improve practice, as part of the [Golden Thread Advocacy Programme](#). Engagement work, supported by the [West Wales Care Partnership](#), was undertaken with individuals, professionals, and other [stakeholders](#) from across the region, which included a survey (142 responses), five county events and one regional event.

This work, and the resultant report, culminated in the definition of and design of the proposed regional service model - key features include what was told to be important to those involved in the engagement: a single point of contract; local delivery; the continued recognition of specialisms (child protection, carers, learning disabilities); and the importance of linking with information, advice and assistance (IAA) services. The service model recognises the crucial role of [IPA](#) within a wider support context of non-statutory forms of advocacy. The so-called 'fried egg' model is presented below.

Three County Advocacy Network Proposal for IPA Framework - February 2019



	Supported groups or organisations in the wider network. Some may be working towards becoming IPA providers
	Generic and Specialist IA providers across the area meeting required standards for IPA
	Wider advocacy network including the Advocacy Strategy Network

Commissioning of [Independent Professional Advocacy Services](#)

In responding to the review, the local authorities in the Region agreed to jointly commission a single [IPA](#) service for adults (separate and distinct arrangements exist for children). This was influenced in part by the [West Wales Care Partnership's](#) commitment to regional commissioning, under Part 9 of SSWBA, and it was proposed that the service be supported by an associated pooled fund arrangement – made up of existing spend devoted to advocacy.

Whereas both Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire had existing contractual arrangements for the supply of advocacy, Ceredigion was providing ad hoc [IPA](#) on a 'spot-purchase' basis. The absence of existing contracts meant that arrangements for Ceredigion were a priority; and due to the risk of destabilising the market elsewhere, it was agreed to pilot the intended regional approach in Ceredigion initially, prior to wider rollout. The pilot approach also had an advantage in being an opportunity to assess (as then, unquantified) demand for [IPA](#), versus other types of advocacy.

The Ceredigion pilot commenced 1st October 2019, with the intention that subject to evaluation, a regional commissioning exercise would follow in 2020. However, the COVID pandemic which started in March 2020, has resulted in regional commissioning plans for the [IPA](#) service being delayed in to 2022

Commissioning of Independent Mental Health Advocacy and Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy

The Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA) service is a statutory role created under the Mental Capacity Act 2005. The IMCA service provides a safeguard for people who lack capacity to make important decisions. The IMCA role is to support and represent the person in the decision-making process. Essentially, they make sure that the Mental Capacity Act 2005 is being followed, when a decision needs to be made about a long-term change in accommodation or serious medical treatment.

The Act placed a duty on professionals. (Social Workers and/or Medical Staff) to appoint an IMCA for anyone who, aged 16 or over, has been deemed as lacking capacity and are unbefriended. IMCAs may also be involved in decisions concerning Care Reviews or Adult Safeguarding Cases. The IMCAs role is to support and represent the person who lacks capacity, therefore IMCAs have the right to see

relevant health and social care records and any reports provided by IMCAs must be considered as part of the decision-making process.

Mental Health Matters Wales provides the IMCA service within the Hywel Dda Health Board region. The IMCA contract sits with the Health Board on behalf of the region and Local Authorities, however work is currently ongoing to create a National All Wales IMCA contract which will be put to tender locally. Tenders should be ready by the summer with winning bidders notified by the autumn and a new contract to commence April 2024.

Commissioning of Community Advocacy Services

Hywel Dda University Health Board are recommissioning Community Advocacy across the West Wales region, with a view to provide Community Advocacy services for those who are experiencing low level Mental Health concerns.

Community Advocacy is to be community focused and is to support individuals to be heard and treated with respect to live within their community, safely, independently and feeling supported.

This type, and level of Advocacy, is to provide early support and early intervention in order to reduce pressures on Primary Care Services as well as reduce escalations of Mental Health concerns and demands on larger advocacy services.

Current regional provision of advocacy services

Across West Wales, advocacy provision can be broadly categorised as statutory and non-statutory provision. Building on work undertaken by the Three Counties Network, and noting the work outlined above, the current provision of advocacy services (June 2021) is as follows:

Service	Area	Commissioner	Provider (as at April 2021)
Independent Mental Health Advocacy	Carmarthenshire Ceredigion Pembrokeshire	Hywel Dda University Health Board	Advocacy West Wales
Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy	Carmarthenshire Ceredigion Pembrokeshire	Hywel Dda University Health Board	Mental Health Matters
Independent Professional Advocacy	Carmarthenshire Ceredigion Pembrokeshire	Regionally Commissioned by all 3 Local Authorities	3CIPA
Non-Statutory Advocacy	Carmarthenshire Ceredigion Pembrokeshire	N/A	Advocacy West Wales

Working Together – Our Shared Vision

Prior to the pandemic our vision for advocacy was as follows:

The [West Wales Care Partnership](#) will ensure equitable access to high quality advocacy in our area.

Since the pandemic and since this vision was drafted, a lot of work has been done to ensure equitable access to high quality advocacy in the region. A prime example of this work includes a jointly re-commissioned regional IPA service with a contractual framework.

Members of the Advocacy Working Group felt it was important that we kept this old vision in the final strategy as a means of highlighting distance travelled over the last 2-3 years in terms of regional advocacy provision.

Naturally, this vision is no longer suitable as it doesn't fit the aspirations held for advocacy services. Therefore, a new vision will be developed and will require a co-productive partnership with all key agencies, community forums and stakeholders to ensure that developments reflect the actions needed. This vision is to be agreed in a newly created regional advocacy steering group which will be set up in line with the publishing of this strategy.

All significant planning and development will be agreed within a co-productive regional advocacy steering group, terms of reference and membership to be developed, which will serve as a sub-group of the Commissioning Group which in turn acts on behalf of the West Wales Care Partnership (WWCP). The WWCP will have responsibility for ensuring this strategy meets our agreed aims.

Working with individuals who access care and support services, and their representatives will be central to our approach. The regional Advocacy Strategy Network (ASN), made up of local advocacy organisations, will be a key reference point for developments. It is essential that developments are not only co-produced but also collectively owned by all the different partners, stakeholders and people who use services.

Underpinning these principles is the need for advocacy organisations to have both organisational governance and operational independence.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

This strategy is based on an extended period of engagement with citizens, especially those who engage with health and social care services, advocacy organisations, health and social care practitioners, statutory commissioners and other relevant [stakeholders](#). This engagement began in 2016 and continued through till 2019 and was led by the national [Golden Thread Advocacy Programme \(GTAP\)](#), a project funded by the Welsh Government, to develop effective Local Authority commissioning of the [Independent Professional Advocacy](#) services which are now a requirement under the Social Services and Well-Being Act (Wales).

The strategy will be framed by a set of nationally agreed advocacy principles set out in the Social Services and Well-Being Act (Wales) Advocacy Code of Practice:

Advocacy services should:

- be led by the views and wishes of the individual
- be champions of the individual's rights and needs
- be well publicised and easy to use
- work exclusively for the individual
- be well managed, prompt, responsive and provide value for money
- respect confidentiality
- have effective, accessible Compliments and Complaints procedures
- promote and monitor equality

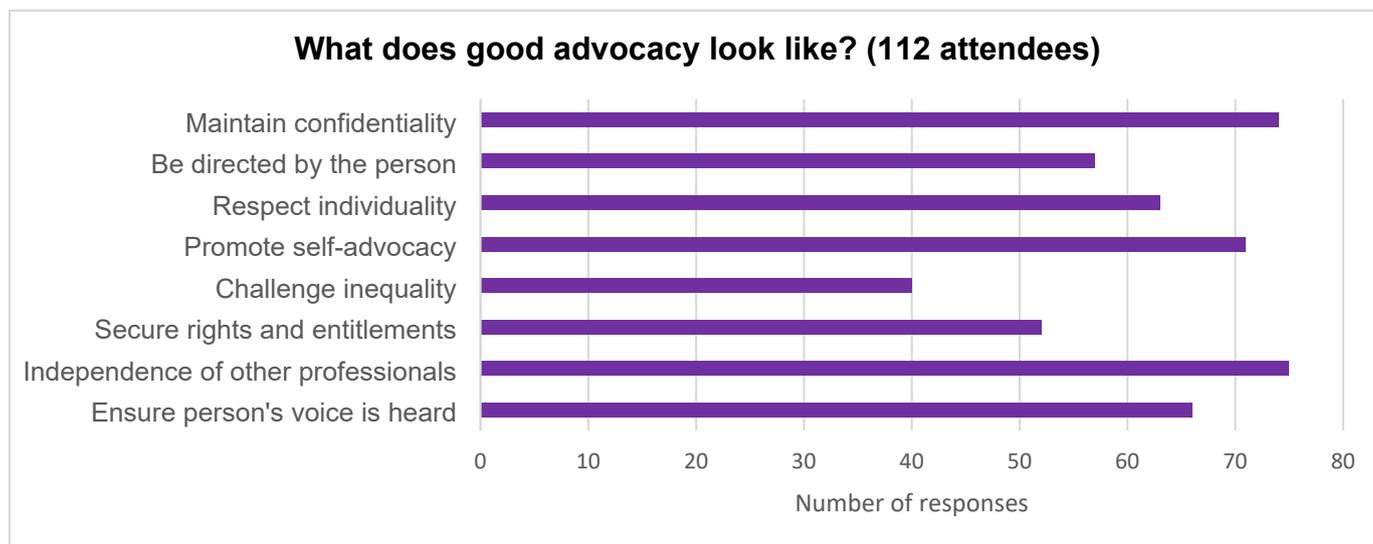
Working together with commissioners and the Three County Network, [Golden Thread](#) arranged a series of engagement events across the region and [service-user](#) groups which culminated in an Open event in Ceredigion in March 2019.

These events asked two questions:

1. What does good advocacy look like?
2. What is needed in terms of advocacy for West Wales?

What does good advocacy look like?

Recognising that this will mean different things to different people, there was general agreement that good advocacy should support people to have their voice heard, be independent, secure individual's rights and entitlements, challenge inequality, promote [self-advocacy](#), be directed by the person, be respectful of individuality and be confidential.



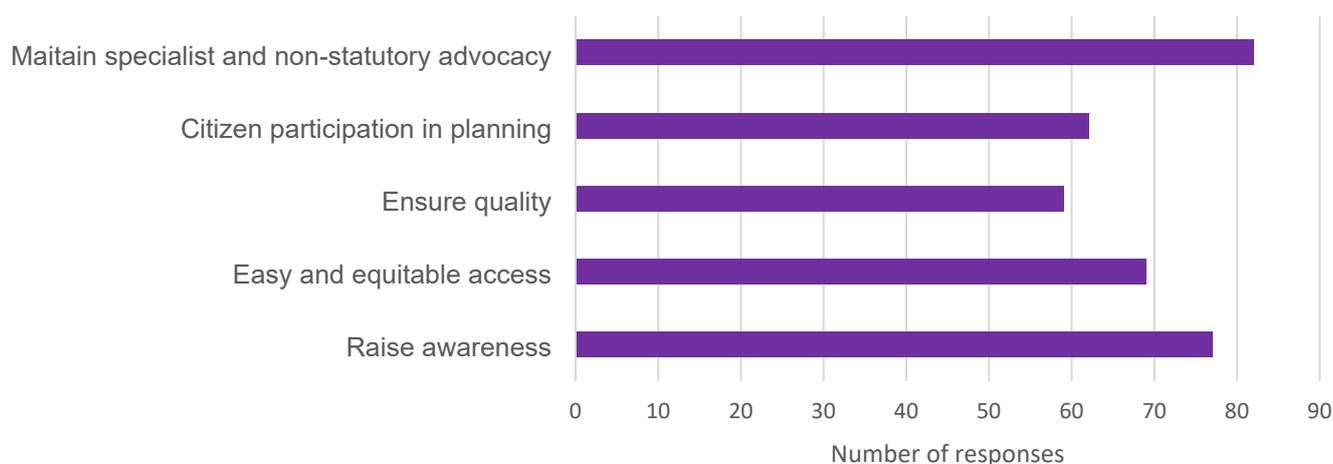
What is needed in terms of advocacy for West Wales?

Responses in relation to what is needed were quite diverse and differing priorities were identified from the different groups involved. However, it was possible to identify some shared themes from these responses which then informed the second phase of [co-production](#) engagement:

The need to:

1. Raise awareness amongst professionals and communities about the different forms of advocacy and the potential benefits of each.
2. Be able to access advocacy more easily and to make it equitably available across our region, particularly for individuals and groups who have to date not found it easy to access the right form of advocacy.
3. Ensure that the quality of advocacy services is of a high and consistent standard and that outcomes of advocacy can be effectively evaluated
4. Maintain and develop the full participation of citizens, communities and a range of organisational partners in how advocacy services are developed and delivered.
5. Support specialist and non-statutory forms of advocacy

What is needed in terms of advocacy for West Wales? (112 attendees)



Through 2020, a Project Lead within the [Regional Advocacy Development Project](#), held a series of individual discussions and focus groups exploring in more detail how these themes could translate into a detailed strategy.

When the COVID pandemic made it difficult to have face to face engagement further surveys and questionnaires were conducted. The WWCP is confident that sufficient information and views have been gathered to inform the strategic priorities. Ongoing [co-production](#) action planning will review and refine the strategy implementation as it evolves.

As we emerged from the COVID pandemic the Advocacy Working Group felt it was necessary to conduct further engagement again to not only bolster/supplement existing engagement but also ensure those closest to advocacy services have their voices highlighted prominently within the strategy. These were gathered via a series of virtual focus group events and also by attending existing forums/groups with stakeholders of advocacy provisions.

In this more recent engagement, responses from [service-users](#), carers, organisations delivering advocacy, other [stakeholders](#) and health and social care professionals showed a significant level of agreement on key priorities. These aligned closely with the five key findings from the earlier [GTAP](#) engagement.

What service-users said there is a need for:

In addition to the [GTAP](#) findings, a significant number of [service-users](#) expressed the preference to receive advocacy from a family member or close friend. They felt that if there was a need for an independent advocate, they should be allowed sufficient time to develop trust and that this would require a reasonable amount of time.

“My family help me to explain to Social Workers and Doctors the sort of help I want”

- Diane

“I need an advocate who takes time to get to know me”

- Matthew

“I want to speak up for myself most of the time. I only want support on the big decisions in my life”

- Gregg

What individual organisational stakeholders said was needed.

In addition to the [GTAP](#) findings a significant number of people from organisations felt the strategy needed to reference the need for greater co-operation and collaboration between advocacy organisations and related organisations providing [Information, Advice and Assistance](#) as a way of improving outcomes for people.

“Most advocacy is good but it’s not easy for people to find the right advocacy for them”

- Mary

“People would get better outcomes if advocacy, advice and other forms of support were better joined up”

- Paul

What advocates and their managers said was needed

In addition to the [GTAP](#) findings:

More secure and longer term-funding arrangements as a means of sustainable service planning.

The introduction of an [‘active offer’](#) approach to accessing advocacy. [Active offer](#) is a more facilitative approach taken by professionals when discussing the engagement of advocacy support.

“If more people were given good and timely information about advocacy, we could provide better advocacy support to those who most need it”

- Kelly

“I get frustrated that we are not able to make long-term plans to develop our service because our contract is short term and insecure”

- Jason

“Social Workers should always consider if a person would benefit from advocacy support”

- James

What professionals working in health and social care said was needed.

In addition to the [GTAP](#) findings:

The ability to deal with the complexity of advocacy need in relation to:

- Having well-resourced services that can cope with increases to demand on services
- Able to be flexible and responsive to deal with specialist and unknown issues arising in the future

““have we got enough advocates for in advocacy services to actually match? If you like the referrals that are coming in, it's about capacity”

- Susan

“Even before COVID, we had issues with things like access to carers assessments and backlog of waiting lists for carers assessments”

- Lorraine

General view of what is working well and what needs to change

From those people who had received advocacy support there was a very positive view of the benefits it had delivered. Of the forty-three people who had received advocacy support within our survey, only one said that it was not entirely helpful.

Once they were aware of the availability of advocacy support and how to access it, they felt things worked well. They felt that they would return for further advocacy support when they needed it and were also more confident to self-advocate.

"I feel much more confident to let people know what I want"

- Sarah

"I know where to go if I need advocacy again"

- Ben

The key challenge individuals felt was gaining initial access to the right type of advocacy support and at the right time. They felt that much more focus on providing information about advocacy and making it easier to access was crucial.

What Are We Going to Do?

This Adult Advocacy Strategy has five priority areas, all aimed at improving outcomes for people who need advocacy. The priorities have been defined in the light of co-productive activity to date, engagement, the Regional Population Assessment, and in response to legislative requirements.

The strategy will promote and support a shared commitment amongst key partners to implement developments equitably across the region.

Our five key priorities are.

The need to:

Priority 1. Maintain and develop further our co-productive approach

Priority 2 Raise awareness of, and understanding of, advocacy.

Priority 3. Ensure advocacy is easily accessible and equitably available

Priority 4. Ensure advocacy is of a consistently high standard of quality

Priority 5. Maintain specialisms and non-statutory forms of advocacy

Priority 1. Maintain And Develop Further Our Co-Productive Approach

Why is it important?

[Co-production](#) is central to the way the Welsh Government requires all health and social care services to be planned, commissioned, and delivered.

[Social Care Wales](#) (formerly known as the Care Council for Wales), Planning, Commissioning and [co-production](#) Code of Practice defines [co-production](#) as **'the concept of genuinely involving people and communities in the design and**

delivering of public services, appreciating their strengths and tailoring approaches accordingly.'

Voice, participation and responsibility will each lead to ensuring that action planning will reflect developments that all partners and [stakeholders](#) will feel that they have shared and collective control and ownership of.

It is important that those providing advocacy services are fully engaged in the detail of action planning, tendering and commissioning arrangements as they are uniquely placed in terms of their specialist knowledge and experience. Ensuring effective communication, engagement, reflection and learning helps to ensure that commissioning teams are fully informed of the practical application of advocacy and how positive outcomes are best achieved.

Closer collaboration and integration within health and social care planning is considered essential by the Welsh Government in terms of offering better outcomes for individuals and communities.

The WWCP is fully committed to ensure that the development and implementation of this strategy, through its associated action plan, will be maintained and strengthened.

What is the situation in West Wales?

The Regional Advocacy Strategy Network, which represents regional advocacy organisations, has established links with the [WWCP](#). The Network has been a key reference point in the development of this strategy and will have a significant ongoing role in action planning decisions. There has been active co-operation between the Network and Regional Commissioners through a process of effective communication, engagement, reflection and learning in the recent tendering of advocacy services which has led to improvements in service specifications, delivery and evaluation.

The Hywel Dda University Health Board (HDUHB) is a key partner in the [WWCP](#). In terms of the strategy, appropriate levels of collaboration and integration between the Board and the three Local Authorities are agreed within the [WWCP](#) decision-making framework.

What will we do?

We will through co-produced action plans:

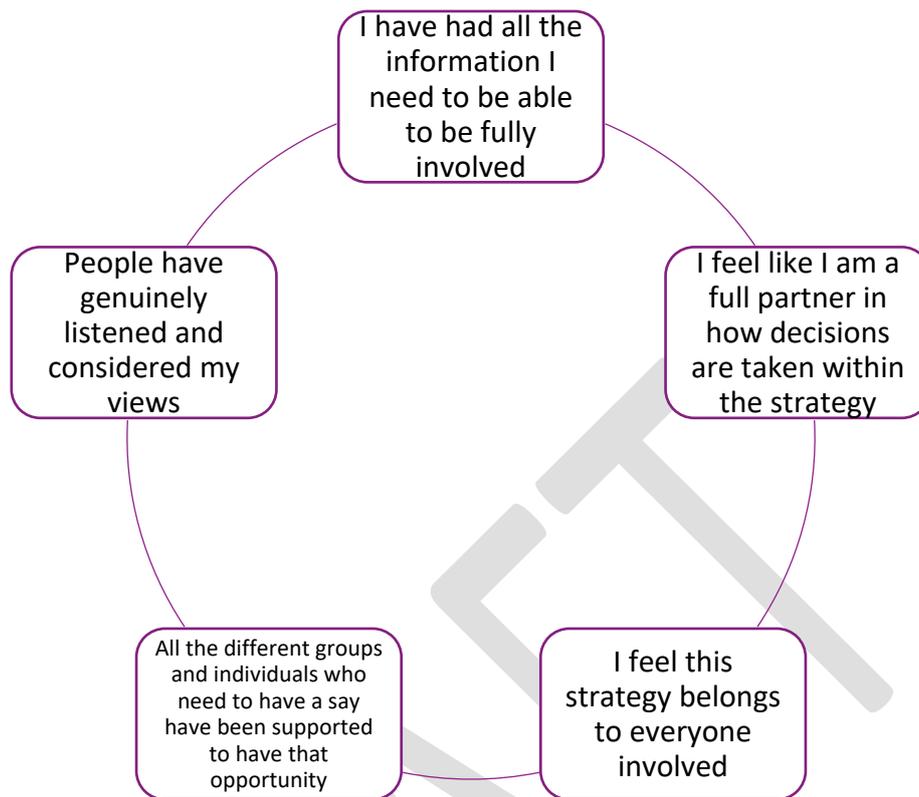
1. Ensure the necessary structures will be supported to develop a culture of effective and meaningful co-production ensuring broad representation of stakeholders across the region who can inform and shape decision-making reflecting what matters most

2. Adopt principles of effective communication, engagement, reflection and learning to shape and inform the approach to commissioning and tendering
3. strengthen the link between the [WWCP](#) and the Regional Advocacy Strategy Network
4. explore opportunities for closer collaboration and integration in advocacy planning and commissioning arrangements between statutory bodies

What will success look like?

- The contributions of citizens, [service-users](#) and carers will be acknowledged and valued
- Decision-making within action-planning to implement the strategy will have been significantly informed by citizens, particularly [service-user](#) groups and carers
- There will be a flow of relevant information between the different groups and structures within [co-production](#) including the Advocacy Strategy Network (ASN), service user groups etc.
- A culture of responsibility and ownership will have been created within the [co-production](#) partners.
- There will be regular engagement between the [WWCP](#) and the Regional Advocacy Strategy Network
- Building on the new regionally commissioned IPA services by ensuring we are working collaboratively to develop service

People receiving advocacy will say?



Priority 2: Raise Awareness Of, And Understanding Of, Advocacy.

Why is this important?

Advocacy provides an essential support service allowing people's voice to be heard, their rights protected and their entitlements to be secured. Raising awareness, and understanding of advocacy, will promote improved access to advocacy, especially for those who need it most.

Our engagement clearly evidenced that there is not always awareness and understanding of the different forms of advocacy, their functions and the benefits that each can offer. There is significant scope to develop both awareness and understanding within professional disciplines, [service-users](#) and key [stakeholders](#).

This commitment to further develop awareness of, and understanding of advocacy, will offer increased opportunities for individuals, especially those in most need, to access the right form of advocacy and in that way ensure that their voices are heard, their rights respected, and their entitlements secured. It is important to remember the correlation between awareness/promotion of advocacy and the number of referrals a service will receive. Advocacy providers must be supported to create well-resourced services that has the capacity to meet this additional demand.

What is the situation in West Wales?

The provision of informational and marketing materials by each advocacy organisation which relates to their own services is apparent but more general awareness and understanding could be further developed.

The rurality of our region presents particular challenges in terms of being able to reach out equitably to isolated individuals, groups and communities in terms of awareness-raising.

There are a range of different advocacy organisations in the region offering different forms of advocacy and this [spectrum of advocacy provision](#) does present challenges in terms of understanding and awareness. [Service-users](#) and professionals have awareness of advocacy services to which they have familiarity and contact but may be unaware of other provision that could also be appropriate.

There is scope for staff working for care providers, including residential and nursing homes, to have a better understanding of advocacy services.

There is scope for advocacy organisations and organisations providing [Information, Advice and Assistance](#) to work more collaboratively to raise awareness and understanding.

What we will do?

We will through a co-produced action plan:

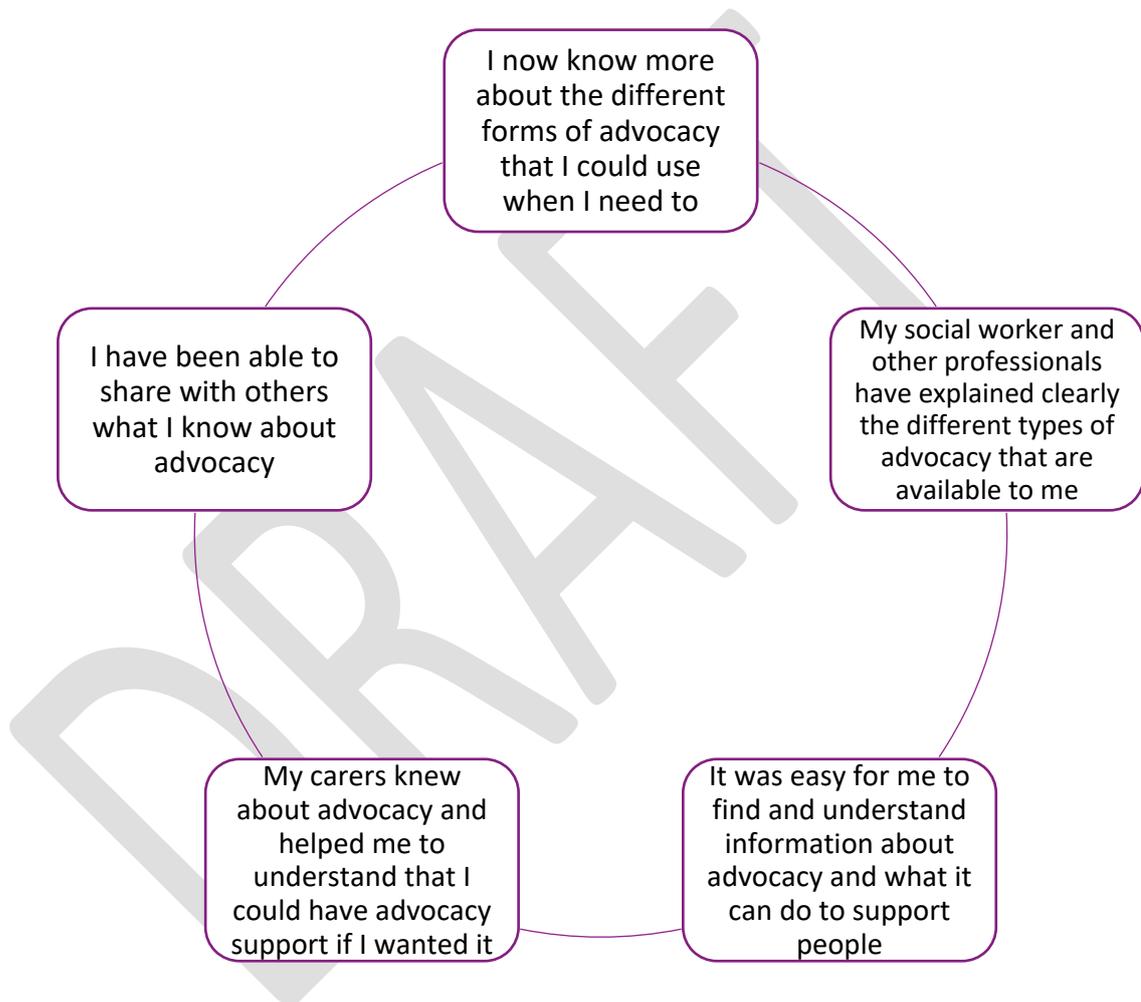
1. Agree a shared and structured approach to raising awareness and understanding of advocacy amongst citizens, [service-user](#) groups, health and social care professionals, care providers and other relevant [stakeholders](#).
2. Explore opportunities for using creative approaches to awareness-raising, including the range of digital platforms
3. Ensure that commissioned advocacy services provide information in the most accessible formats
4. Support & promote collaborative arrangements between advocacy organisations and those organisations offering [Information, Advice and Assistance](#)

What will success look like?

- There will be improved and updated informational materials in a range of accessible formats covering the [spectrum of advocacy provision](#) which will be widely distributed.

- Other creative approaches, including digital platforms, will have been further developed
- All relevant professionals will have an awareness and understanding of advocacy provision and its functions
- Those who are eligible to access advocacy support will know what the different types of advocacy can offer

People receiving advocacy will say?



Priority 3: Ensure Advocacy Is Easily Accessible and Equitably Available

Why is this important?

For advocacy to be able to provide support to those who need it most, it must be easy to access and equitably available.

Our [co-production](#) engagement identified that it was not always easy for people who would benefit from advocacy to get in touch with the most appropriate advocacy

organisation to support them. It was also clear that advocacy services were not always equitably distributed across the region. A more equitable geographical spread of the range of advocacy services, would allow individuals from different [service-user](#) groups to access advocacy support more locally.

The various engagement events evidenced that whilst there is a range of provision available, some people find it difficult to navigate to find the service that is right for them.

A key requirement in the Social Services and Well-Being Act Advocacy Code of Practice is for advocacy services to be engaged at an early stage in social care processes as an aspect of the 'preventative agenda'. This requires referrals from professionals being made at the earliest possible time allowing advocacy support to be meaningful and effective by ensuring that an individual's voice is heard when it most matters and to prevent issues escalating.

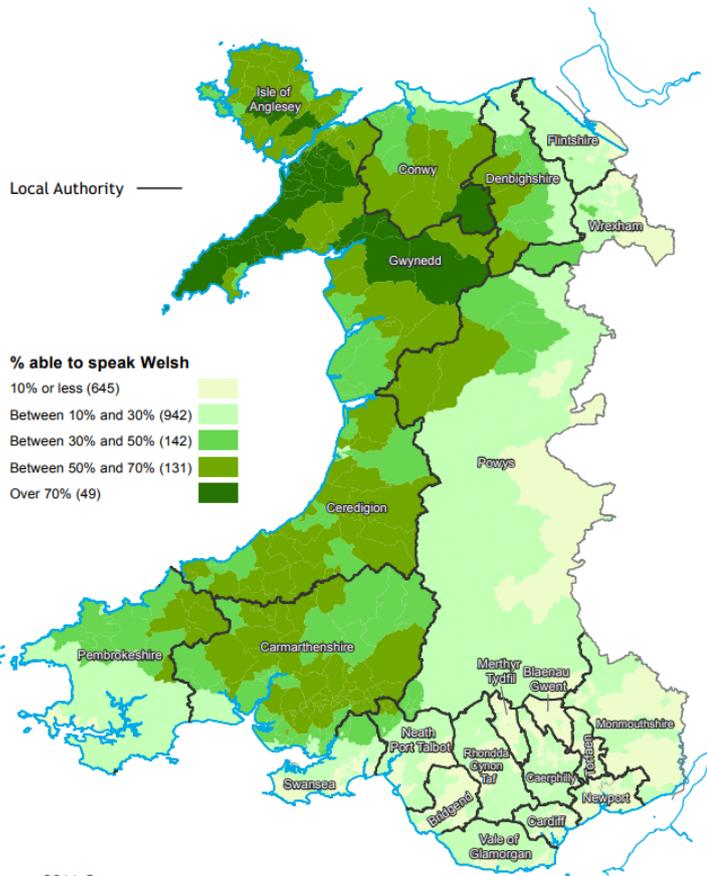
Similarly, [the Act](#) stresses the key role of advocacy support in [Safeguarding](#) processes and how advocacy referrals need to be made at the early stage of involvement to allow individuals the support they need to fully participate in decision-making and to achieve the most positive person-centred outcomes. A consistent and equitable approach to engaging [Independent Professional Advocacy](#) at the right time is essential.

Situation in West Wales

Advocacy provision in West Wales is relatively well established in our region, particularly in relation to specialist support for people with learning disabilities and people with mental health needs. For other [service-user](#) groups and carers generic [IPA](#) services are now in place and becoming established. This means that for most people who require advocacy, services are available.

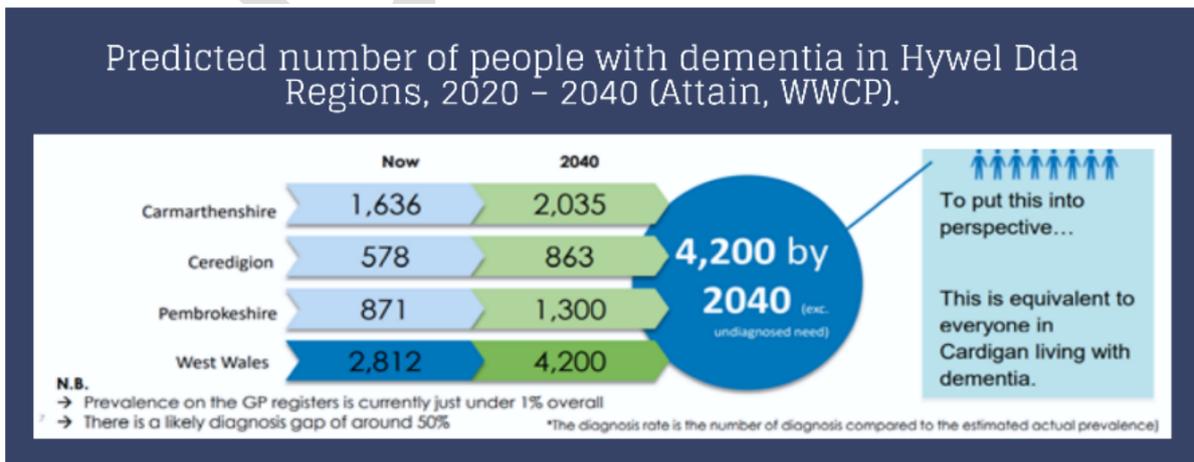
The predominantly rural nature, demography and geography of our region poses some challenges to facilitating physical access to most community-based health and social care services, including advocacy.

Similarly, we have significant numbers of Welsh speakers in our region and for our advocacy services to provide equitable access there is a need to ensure that advocacy services can be accessed through the Welsh language.



% of Welsh Speakers in Wales (Population Census, 2011)

The most significant factor identified in the [West Wales Population Assessment](#) is the growing numbers of older people likely to need some level of support services and specifically a sharp increase in the projected number of people with dementia. These demographic changes are most significant in isolated rural areas. These demographic changes will also increase the number of people becoming unpaid carers. These changes are likely to require a greater focus on access to advocacy services for older people and carers in the region and particularly in the more rural areas.



West Wales Population Assessment (2022)

What we will do?

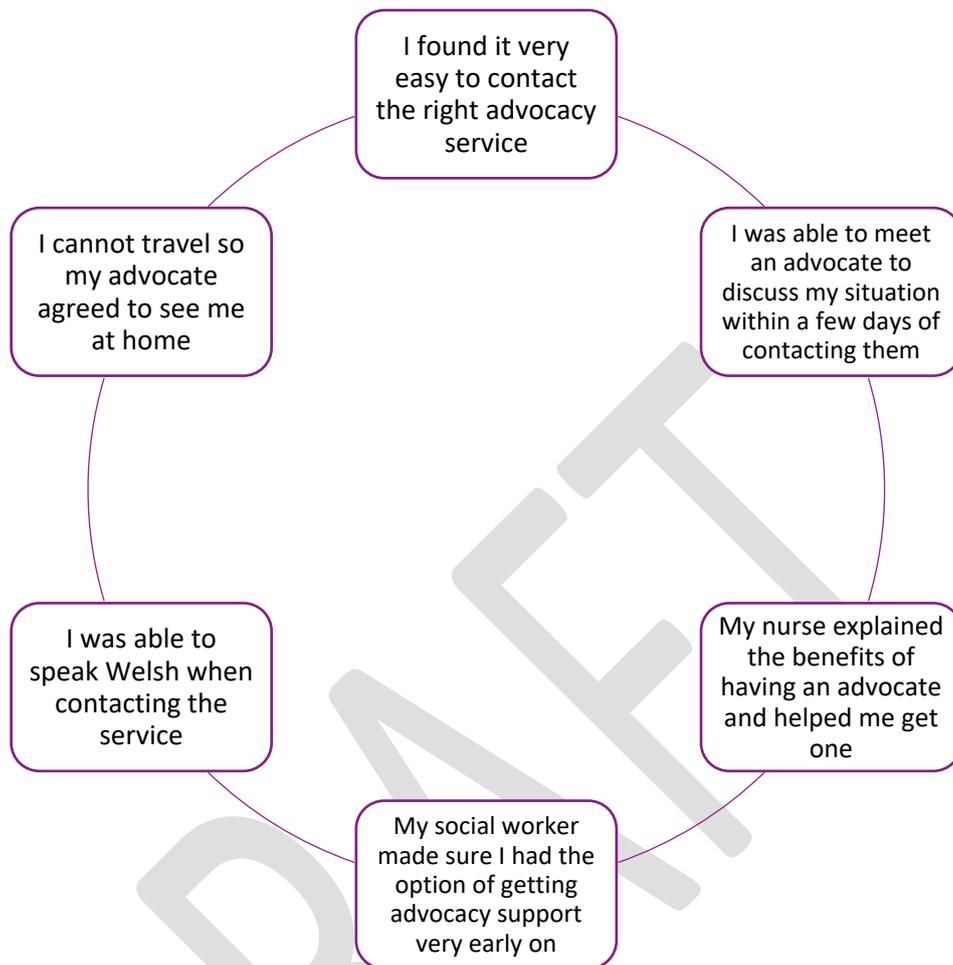
We will through a co-produced action plan:

1. Ensure improved access to advocacy provision and ensuring people who need it most can access it in a way suitable for them e.g. In Welsh, in person, online etc.
2. Develop an '[active offer](#)' approach to be employed by professionals which promotes and facilitates contact with an advocate so they can explain the support they can offer
3. Ensure that there will be equitable access to advocacy across our region taking into account the rurality and demography of our region
4. Evaluate the most effective referral '[gateways](#)' that facilitate ease of access

What will success look like?

- There will be easy ways by which people can access the form of advocacy that is right for them through the most effective referral '[gateway](#)' or '[gateways](#)'
- Advocacy will be made available at the earliest and most supportive time through the '[active offer](#)' approach
- People who prefer to access advocacy through the medium of Welsh can do so equitably
- People living in rural areas will have easy and equitable access to advocacy

People receiving advocacy will say?



Priority 4: Ensure Advocacy Is of a Consistently High Standard of Quality

Why is it important?

To achieve consistently positive outcomes for those receiving advocacy support there needs to be consistently high standards of quality in terms of governance and service delivery.

This priority was most significantly highlighted by organisations providing advocacy and other third sector organisations within the engagement process and is also key legal requirement on statutory bodies that commission advocacy services. A number of respondents felt that the quality of advocacy provision in the region was inconsistent and that all advocacy providers should have governance and delivery arrangements that met the highest standards.

Within the independent advocacy sector there has been a long-standing commitment to ensuring the quality of their advocacy. What has emerged over recent years has been the establishment of standards, as defined in the sector's own Advocacy Charter and Code of Practice and more recently the standards set out in the SSWBA Advocacy Code of Practice.

The key tool of quality assurance within independent advocacy is the [Quality Performance Mark\(QPM\)](#) which is independently assessed and awarded by the [National Development Team for Inclusion](#) (Advocacy) and this assurance is supported by the vocational [advocacy qualification](#) framework for advocates created by [Social Care Wales](#).

It is intended, in the near future, commissioned [Independent Professional Advocacy](#) will come within the [Regulation and Inspection of Social Care in Wales Act \(RISCA\)](#), once a framework can be agreed. When legally required this framework will need to be adopted within the strategy.

All forms of advocacy need to be able to evidence quality also need to evidence positive outcomes deriving directly, or indirectly, from their engagement. Outcome's frameworks and indicators vary across services and this does not always present an accurate comparative picture across services. There is scope for development and standardisation of [outcomes monitoring](#) and reporting in commissioned advocacy.

Quality in service delivery relies upon a reasonable period of service continuity. This allows for effective service delivery planning. Short term contractual arrangements do not support the development of quality in service delivery or accessibility. Contracts do need to be monitored and reviewed and periodically re-tendered. However, these processes should support the need to maintain quality in service delivery through a considered approach to appropriate continuity.

All advocacy services need to have systems that deal effectively with complaints and comments, as well as compliments. These systems, as a method of service improvement and learning from mistakes and successes, are a necessary aspect of quality.

The situation in West Wales

Most currently commissioned independent advocacy services in West Wales have either been awarded the [QPM](#) or are registered and working towards an award. Similarly, most also employ advocates who have achieved the appropriate independent [advocacy qualification](#) for their particular role, or, are registered and working towards the award. Support has been available through till Spring 2021, through the Advocacy Development Project, for those organisations that intend to register for both the [QPM](#) and their advocates for the relevant qualification.

[Outcomes monitoring](#) arrangements across commissioned advocacy services are inconsistent and there is scope for some degree of standardisation whilst

recognising that different services do meet different statutory functions and have different service specifications.

Some advocacy organisations have established arrangements for ongoing service improvement but there is some scope for the [WWCP](#) to support all advocacy organisations to focus on both quality assurance and service improvement.

There are issues of service continuity, especially in respect of non-statutory and specialist advocacy and there is scope for further consideration of how to balance tendering compliance and service continuity.

The [WWCP](#) is committed to ensure that all commissioned [Independent Professional Advocacy](#) along with other advocacy provisions in the region will be of a consistently high standard. This will ensure that all people receiving [Independent Professional Advocacy](#) support can expect a good quality service, wherever they live in the region

What will we do?

We will through co-productive action plans:

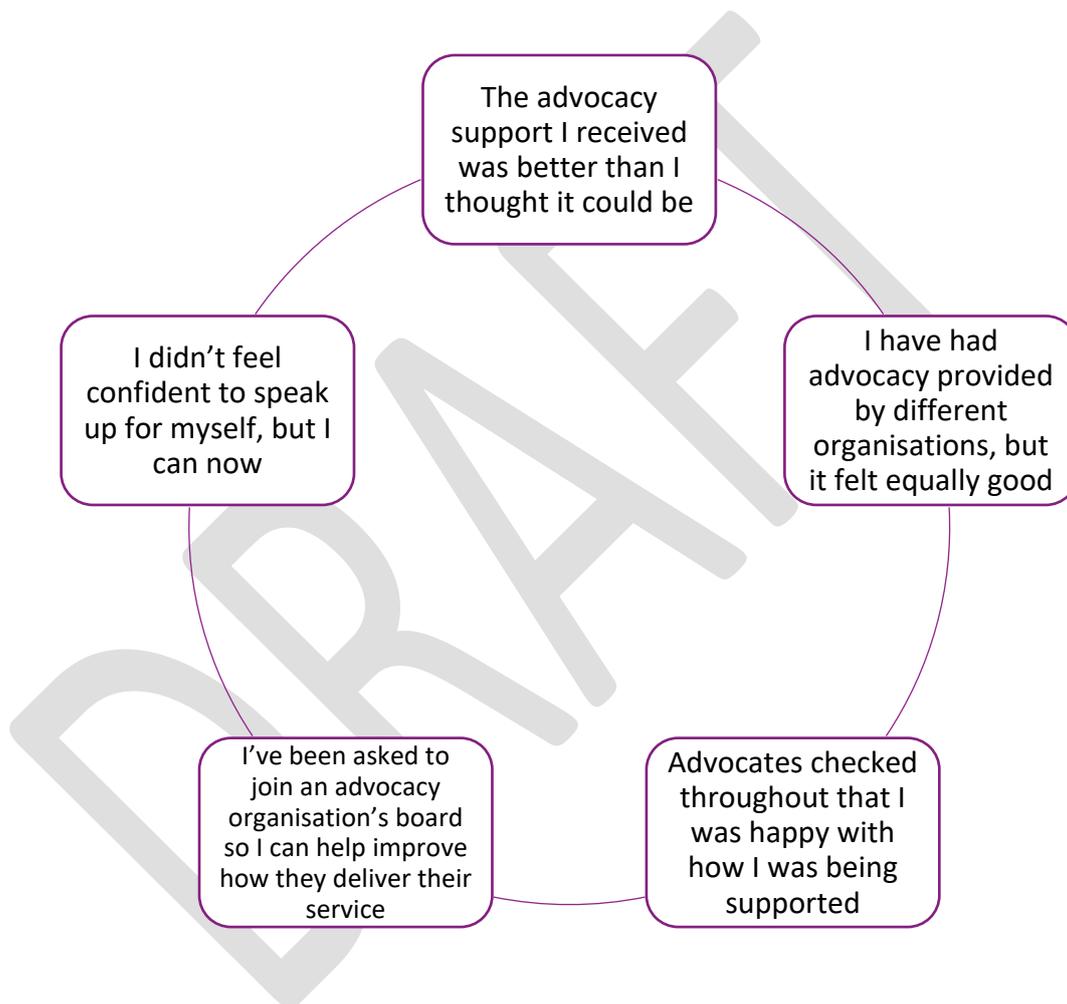
1. Commission sustainable independent advocacy services that can evidence and assure the quality of their governance and practice arrangements through recognised external quality assurance and practice competency systems.
2. Introduce the necessary quality assurance within commissioning arrangements required by any future [RISCA](#) advocacy framework
3. Support developments in the advocacy sector that progress service improvements in terms of quality and best practice, including in relation to learning from mistakes and complaints.
4. Introduce more standardisation in [outcomes monitoring](#) across the region and across comparable advocacy services

What will success look like?

- All commissioned independent advocacy will meet recognised quality assurance and practice competency standards.
- A culture of service improvement will be supported across all advocacy services
- Appropriate consideration will be given to service continuity in the tendering and contracting of commissioned advocacy services
- Any future requirements for advocacy commissioning under [RISCA](#) legislation will be fully introduced and embedded.

- A more robust and standardised approach to the [outcomes monitoring](#) and reporting of commissioned independent advocacy services will be introduced and embedded.
- All commissioned advocacy services will have effective systems for dealing with complaints and learning from mistakes.
- A high number of trained advocates to cope with high capacity and demand

People receiving advocacy will say?



This priority has been developed to encompass two issues raised throughout stakeholder engagement. Firstly, recognising the full spectrum of advocacy services and how we need to develop it equitably with partners. Secondly, the importance of collaboration between different providers on the advocacy spectrum to collectively share knowledge, skills, capacity and experience.

Why is this important?

There are a wide range of circumstances within which people need advocacy support and many of these are not addressed or best met through statutory advocacy provision. Similarly, many individuals and groups get the best outcomes when this is delivered through specialist provision. In delivering advocacy services we must ensure that individuals retain voice, choice and control over as many aspects of their lives as they can, for as long as they can. This can be achieved through a person-centred approach which understands each individual's personal circumstances, their history, future aspirations and what is important to them.

This strategy recognises there needs to be an appropriate balance between generic and specialist advocacy and similarly between statutory and non-statutory advocacy and that [service-users](#) should be able to have choice of which service provides their advocacy support.

Co-ordination and collaboration is needed to ensure that people receive the most appropriate form of advocacy to meet their particular needs and offer choice of provision.

Specialisms are particularly important in respect of [service-user](#) groups who have different communication needs, such as, people with learning disabilities, autistic people and people from the deaf signing community. Non-statutory mental health advocacy relies upon advocates having very specific knowledge of legal frameworks and services to be able to provide the best quality of advocacy support.

Non-statutory advocacy, both commissioned and grant-funded, is very important as it could provide advocacy support in the aspects of people's lives that statutory advocacy was not directly commissioned to address. It also allows issues to be addressed that prevent escalation in people's issues which then require statutory interventions. Non-statutory independent advocacy is also better placed to provide the enduring advocacy relationships that best facilitate empowerment and the capacity to self-advocate.

[Self-advocacy](#) groups, especially for people with learning disabilities, promote and facilitate the ability to self-advocate and as a result allows more participation in decisions impacting on their lives. This allows for more effective co-produced care planning and also promotes the prevention and [safeguarding](#) agendas.

Independent Advocacy often provides significant support to parents when engaged in child protection and legal hearing processes. As identified in the consultation exercise with advocates, this specialist work involves having knowledge of [safeguarding](#) and legal processes to be able to provide these parents the best possible support at these difficult times in their lives - “not forgetting the huge amount of work that I think all the advocate to do at the moment with child protection cases and parents going through child protection” (Stacey, Advocate)

What is the situation in West Wales?

The situation in West Wales offers both specialist and non-statutory advocacy for some [service-user](#) groups but not all. This seems to reflect the significant demands for these services from active community groups, such as, the learning disabilities and mental health communities.

The balance between statutory and non-statutory and between specialist and generic is felt by the learning disabilities and mental health communities to be appropriate.

Other [service-user](#) communities’ advocacy needs are addressed within generic and statutory services. Our engagement indicates that there needs to be further consideration of this balance, when considering how to shape advocacy services for other [service-user](#) groups. These groups are now starting to become more aware of the potential benefits of specialist and non-statutory advocacy. This was most notable amongst carers responses through our engagement, in particular carers of older people with dementia. Projections suggest a significant increase in the demand for dementia services, including advocacy in the lifetime of the strategy.

There are established learning disabilities [self-advocacy](#) groups operating in the region but this is not currently equitably available across the region.

Required advocacy support for parents in child protection processes is available but there is an indication that specialist provision would produce better outcomes.

What will we do?

We will through co-produced action plans:

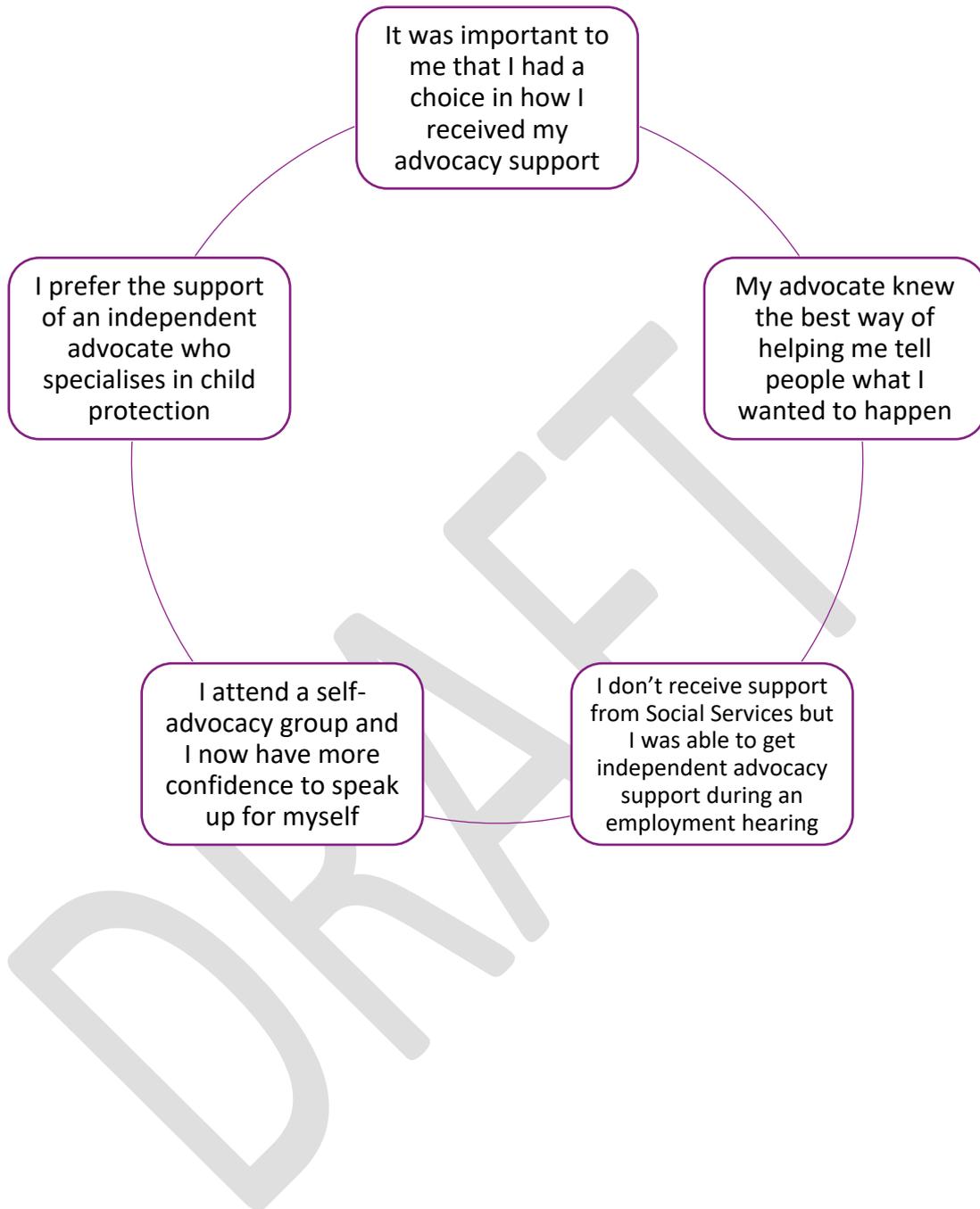
1. Ensure an appropriate balance between generic and specialist and statutory and non-statutory advocacy provision across all [service-user](#) groups in the region.
2. Ensure that people can access the most appropriate form of advocacy to meet their particular needs and offer choice.

3. Ensure that those with complex communication needs will be provided with the most appropriate form of independent advocacy support
4. Develop and support [self-advocacy](#) groups
5. Assess the need for a specialist independent advocacy service to support parents involved in child protection processes that have difficulties understanding key information

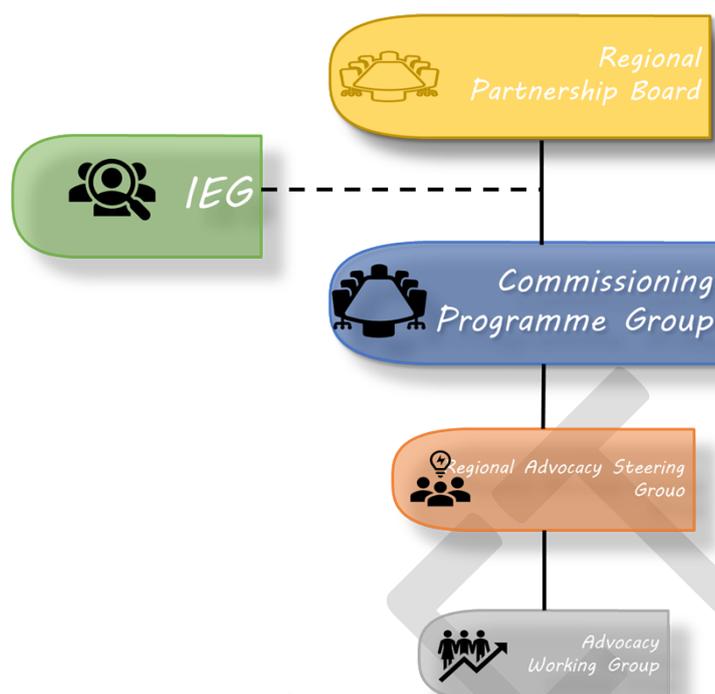
What will success look like?

- There will be a range of specialist and generic provision available to reflect differences in individual need and choice.
- Non-statutory advocacy will be maintained and developed as required to best meet community need
- Individuals with complex communication needs will have access to specialist advocacy services that can best meet their communication needs.
- Endeavour to support the full spectrum of advocacy services such as [Self-advocacy](#)
- If the needs analysis indicates the need for a specialist advocacy service for parents involved in child protection processes, who need support to understand key information, a service will be commissioned

People receiving advocacy will say?



Reporting Our Progress



In line with this strategy a new regional advocacy steering group will be set up to oversee and scrutinise the progress made against the regional adult advocacy strategy. The group is to design and deliver a comprehensive regional implementation plan with clear and measurable actions to shape and guide regional advocacy in West Wales. The plan should align with the National Outcomes Framework (Social Services), the Regional Outcomes Framework and the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

This action plan will be regularly monitored and revised in the light of progress and new opportunities for improving outcomes for users of advocacy services - as part of an on-going commitment to working co-productively with users and providers.

The new regional advocacy steering group will be directly account to the Commissioning Programme Group who, on behalf of the West Wales Regional Partnership Board, will oversee the implementation of this strategy:

- Receiving and scrutinising regular progress reports from the Advocacy Working Group.
- Ensuring [WWCP](#) recognition of successes and issues for resolution.
- Ensuring co-productive contract monitoring arrangements are in place, where providers and users are active participants.
- Ensuring this strategy has the profile and resources for effective implementation.

Reports will be made to Hywel Dda University Health Board and the local authorities of Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire.

Glossary

Term	Acronym	Explanation
<i>the Act</i>		Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA)
<i>'Active offer'</i>		the process by which professionals facilitate a meeting between a person and an advocate allowing the advocate to fully explain their role and allow the person to decide if they would want advocacy support.
<i>Advocacy qualification</i>		the award given to independent advocates that evidences that they are appropriately trained and competent to practise independent advocacy, including any specialist areas, e.g. mental health
<i>the Code</i>		Part 10 of the Act, Code of Practice (Advocacy) updated 2019, which sets out the requirements on local authorities in relation to advocacy services
<i>Co-production</i>		the process of enabling citizens and professionals to work together in equal partnership, to share power and responsibility for decision-making and planning.
<i>Commissioning/commission</i>		the process by which Health Boards and Local Authorities identify needs then plan and review services they want other agencies to provide.
<i>Golden Thread Advocacy Programme</i>	GTAP	The Project funded by the Welsh Government and delivered by AgeCymru to support the commissioning of advocacy in Wales and in particular the Independent Professional Advocate services across Wales.
<i>Independent Professional Advocate</i>	IPA	a form of independent advocacy defined in the Code and delivered by qualified advocates working within quality assured organisations. There are certain circumstances when Local Authorities should instruct IPAs and others when they must, as set out in the Code.
<i>Information, Advice and Assistance</i>		services designed to identify the support people can access to prevent

		them needing a higher level of support in the future.
<i>Instructed Advocacy</i>		an advocate acts solely on the instruction and direction of the person being supported.
<i>National Development Team for Inclusion</i>	NDTi	an organisation that promotes best practice in terms of social inclusion. It administers the Advocacy Quality Performance Mark.
<i>Non-instructed Advocacy</i>		the person cannot provide instruction and the advocate strives to ensure decisions or actions taken on their behalf respect their rights and entitlements and take account of their known preferences and lifestyles.
<i>Outcomes monitoring</i>		the processes by which the intended benefits of an action are assessed and reviewed.
<i>Quality Performance Mark</i>	QPM	the process by which advocacy organisations evidence that their services operate to a high standard
<i>Referral ‘gateway’</i>		the way that people wanting to access a service are able to make first contact.
<i>Regional Advocacy Development Project</i>		a Project funded by the WWCP to support the development of advocacy in the region
<i>Regulation and Inspection of Social Care</i>	RISCA	the process by which organisations providing social care support are registered to ensure that they are providing quality services
<i>Self-advocacy</i>		the ability of a person to effectively share with others the things that are important to them and how they wish to receive services. Self-advocacy is promoted within all forms of advocacy but has a specific focus within self-advocacy groups.
<i>Service-user</i>		a person in receipt of, or eligible for, support or care services
<i>Safeguarding</i>		the process of protecting children and vulnerable adults from harm, abuse or neglect and an ongoing education process designed to facilitate the identification of the signs and risks relating to abuse.
<i>Social Inclusion</i>		the process of supporting people and communities to be able to participate in decisions and actions affecting their lives.

Social Care Wales		<i>the social care workforce regulator in Wales who has responsibility for building confidence in the workforce and leading and supporting improvement in social care.</i>
Stakeholder		Any person or organisation that have an interest or involvement with an issue, e.g. Carers Forums, Peoples First Groups, etc.
Statutory		Processes that are required under legal frameworks and arranged and/or delivered by Public Bodies, e.g. Local Authorities, Health Boards, etc.
Spectrum of advocacy provision		The different types of advocacy including advocacy provided by; family and friends, social care and health professionals, volunteer advocates, collective self-advocacy and paid independent advocates.
West Wales Care Partnership	WWCP	A regional collaboration between the three West Wales Local Authorities, Hywel Dda University Health Board and also third sector, independent sector, service-user and carer representatives. Its role is to implement the transformation and development of health and social care in line with the intentions of the Social Services and Well-Being Act (Wales) 2014
West Wales Population Assessment		an overview of the population and demography of the region used to predict the future necessary service changes to meet the future needs of the population
West Wales		the three counties of Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire

References and Links

Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2014/4/contents>

Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 – Part 2 Code of Practice (General Functions

<part-2-code-of-practice-general-functions.pdf> (gov.wales)

Part 10 Advocacy Code of Practice

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-05/part-10-code-of-practice-advocacy.pdf>

Advocacy Charter

<https://qualityadvocacy.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Advocacy-Charter-A3.pdf>

Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act (RISCA)

<https://careinspectorate.wales/sites/default/files/2018-06/180606-risca-guide-en.pdf>

West Wales Population Needs Assessment www.wwcp-data.org.uk/population-needs-assessment

Welsh Language Measures

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/1/contents?lang=en><https://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/1/contents?lang=en>

National Outcomes Framework <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-05/the-national-outcomes-framework-for-people-who-need-care-and-support-and-carers-who-need-support.pdf>

The Well-Being of Future Generations Act <https://www.futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/>

Statistical Focus in Rural Wales <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2018-12/080515-statistical-focus-rural-wales-08-en.pdf>

IMHA Code of Practice(incorporated into Mental Health(Wales) Act Code of Practice Chapter 6)

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-03/mental-health-act-1983-code-of-practice-mental-health-act-1983-for-wales-review-revised-2016.pdf#:~:text=The%20Mental%20Health%20Act%201983%20Code%20of%20Practice,being%20laid%20before%20the%20National%20Assembly%20for%20Wales.>

Code of Practice (incorporated into the Mental Capacity (Wales)Act Code of Practice chapter 10) <http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/Documents/744/Code%20of%20Practice%20E.pdf>

Planning, Commissioning and Co-production, Care Council for Wales

https://socialcare.wales/cms_assets/hub-downloads/Planning_and_Commissioning_Resource_Guide_-_January_17.pdf

GTAP Commissioning Independent Professional Advocacy for Adults under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-cymru/documents/golden-thread-advocacy-programme/programme-documents/commissioning-ipa-framework-english-oct-19.pdf>

West Wales Area Plan 2018-23

www.wwcp.org.uk > [west-wales-area-plan](#)

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Agenda Item 9

By virtue of paragraph(s) 14 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 10

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