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WEDNESDAY, 2 OCTOBER 2024

TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL

I HEREBY SUMMON YOU TO ATTEND THE **MULTI LOCATION MEETING OF CARMARTHENSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL** WHICH WILL BE HELD IN THE **CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, CARMARTHEN, SA31 1JP AND REMOTELY AT 10.00 AM, ON WEDNESDAY, 9TH OCTOBER, 2024** FOR THE TRANSACTION OF THE BUSINESS OUTLINED ON THE ATTACHED AGENDA

Wendy Walters

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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

THE MEETING CAN BE VIEWED ON THE AUTHORITY'S WEBSITE VIA THE FOLLOWING LINK:-
<https://carmarthenshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

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

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS.
3. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY)
4. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE LEADER, CABINET MEMBERS AND THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (IF ANY)
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8. TO CONSIDER THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CABINET IN RESPECT OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS
- 8.1 ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATOR REPORT 2023-2024 51 - 70
9. TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON THE 16TH SEPTEMBER 2024 71 - 74
10. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING NOTICES OF MOTION:-
- 10.1 NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLORS ALEX EVANS AND LOUVAIN ROBERTS

'This council objects to the decision made by Hywel Dda University Health board to cut the Minor Injuries Unit (MIU) at Prince Phillip Hospital in Llanelli from a 24/7 service to one that will only operate from 8am until 8pm for the next 6 months, starting from the 1st of November.

Having already lost its A&E service, a full-time MIU is the very least that the largest town in West Wales should expect in urgent care provision from Hywel Dda.

Also, the scaling back of this service could have a detrimental effect on urgent care waiting times for residents across Carmarthenshire, with residents of Llanelli and its wider area having to travel to Glangwili Hospital in Carmarthen over the coming months to access urgent care.

This council calls on Hywel Dda to urgently explore all options to fully staff the MIU at Prince Phillip Hospital and restore a 24/7 service. This council also calls on Welsh Government and the Welsh Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care to intervene on behalf of the residents of Llanelli if necessary.'

10.2 NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLORS ALUN LENNY AND DENISE OWEN

'Chancellor urged to put local council funding back on a firm foundation

Carmarthenshire County Council congratulates the Rt Hon Rachel Reeves MP on becoming the first woman to be appointed as Chancellor of the Exchequer in the UK Government.

We can empathise with her on taking on this challenging role as local councils who've had to cope with a disproportionate share of spending cuts during 14 years of ruthless Conservative Govt austerity. Carmarthenshire CC alone, due to chronic government under-funding, is now £120m worse off, in real terms, than we were a decade ago.

This is an extremely worrying time for all councils and their staff, with many now teetering on the brink of financial disaster. UNISON general secretary Christina McAnea has warned that "countless essential services and very many vital jobs are at risk, with terrible consequences for communities across Britain."

We urge the Chancellor in her forthcoming autumn budget to put local government funding back on a sustainable foundation, by drawing on the £10b available due to the Bank of England's decision to slow down the pace of its quantitative tightening programme.

Urgent extra revenue funding (via the Barnett Formula for Wales) is needed for such essential services as:

Social Care – for a population which includes an increasing percentage of older people who need residential and community care

Children's Services – facing unprecedented demand and critical financial pressures

Schools – struggling, or failing, to live within allocated budgets, resulting in impact on staffing levels and curriculum delivery

Highways – deteriorating following a decade's year-on-year cuts in maintenance budgets, as evidenced by the increasing number of potholes on our roads

We further urge the Chancellor to provide for inflationary pressures on local government budgets, and to ensure that pay settlements which are set centrally should be fully funded by central government.'

11. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (NONE RECEIVED)

12. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS:-

12 .1 QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR DERYK CUNDY TO COUNCILLOR GLYNOG DAVIES, CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND WELSH LANGUAGE

‘Regarding the original estimated Capital Spend on Heol Goffa which was originally set at £17 million pounds, £4.25 million being provided from the Carmarthenshire County Council’s Education Capital budget of £20.5 million and £12.75 million being provided by the Welsh Government to make up the difference, will this Administration still spend the ring fenced money of £4.25 million on projects to support High Dependency Need children in Education or will they use this money for other Capital Education projects that do not support our High Dependency Needs children.’

12 .2 QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR MARTYN PALFREMAN TO COUNCILLOR EDWARD THOMAS, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, WASTE AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

‘Can the Cabinet Member indicate whether he feels arrangements currently in place provide for fair and timely allocation of ‘spare seats’ on Carmarthenshire County Council School Transport for pupils that need them?’

13. TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING CHANGES TO MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES:-

13 .1 THE INDEPENDENT GROUP HAS NOMINATED COUNCILLOR DAI NICHOLAS TO TAKE THE VACANT SEAT ON THE CORPORATE PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14. MINUTES FOR INFORMATION (AVAILABLE TO VIEW ON THE WEBSITE)

14 .1 APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE A - 2ND JULY 2024

14 .2 PLANNING COMMITTEE - 12TH SEPTEMBER 2024

14 .3 DYFED PENSION FUND COMMITTEE - 19TH SEPTEMBER 2024

14 .4 MEMBER APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE - 19TH SEPTEMBER 2024

14 .5 GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE - 27TH SEPTEMBER 2024

COUNTY COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY, 11 SEPTEMBER 2024

PRESENT: Councillor H.L. Davies (Chair)

Councillors (In Person):

| | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|
| K.V. Broom | J.M. Charles | P. Cooper | D.M. Cundy |
| B. Davies | G. Davies | L. Davies | M. Donoghue |
| A. Evans | H.A.L. Evans | L.D. Evans | N. Evans |
| R.E. Evans | T.M. Higgins | J.K. Howell | P.M. Hughes |
| P. Hughes-Griffiths | J.D. James | M. James | B.W. Jones |
| A.C. Jones | D. Jones | G.R. Jones | H. Jones |
| A. Lenny | N. Lewis | K. Madge | D. Nicholas |
| D. Owen | M. Palfreman | B.D.J. Phillips | D. Price |
| E. Rees | H.B. Shepardson | E. Skinner | G.B. Thomas |
| M. Thomas | J. Tremlett | A. Vaughan Owen | P.T. Warlow |
| J. Williams | | | |

Councillors (Virtually):

| | | | |
|--------------------|------------------|---------------|----------------|
| S.M. Allen | L.R. Bowen | M.D. Cranham | S.A. Curry |
| A. Davies | W.R.A. Davies | T.A.J. Davies | C. Davies |
| K. Davies | LI.M. Davies | T. Davies | D.C. Evans |
| W.T. Evans | S. Godfrey-Coles | J.P. Hart | G.H. John |
| M.J.A. Lewis | A. Leyshon | A.G. Morgan | B.A.L. Roberts |
| E.M.J.G. Schiavone | J. Seward | R. Sparks | D. Thomas |
| E.G. Thomas | F. Walters | D.E. Williams | S. Williams |

Also Present (In Person):

W. Walters, Chief Executive
C. Moore, Director of Corporate Services
G. Morgans, Director of Education & Children's Services
P.R. Thomas, Assistant Chief Executive (People Management & Performance)
S. Murphy, Head of Law, Governance and Civil Services
J. Morgan, Head of Housing and Public Protection
R. Griffiths, Head of Place and Sustainability
D.W. John, Head of Environmental Infrastructure
G. Morgan, Head of Democratic Services
E. Evans, Principal Democratic Services Officer
C. Higginson, Media Manager
L. Jenkins, Cabinet Support Officer
S. Rees, Simultaneous Translator
A. Edwards, Electoral & Civil Registration Services Manager
R. Morris, Members Support Officer
K. Thomas, Democratic Services Officer

Also Present (Virtually):

D. Hall-Jones, Member Support Officer
M. Runeckles, Members Support Officer

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S. Davies, D. Harries, R. James and S. Rees

2. DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTERESTS.

| Councillor | Minute Number | Nature of Interest |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| W.E. Skinner | 10.1 – Parc – Y – Scarlets | Close personal friend is employed by Scarlets Regional Ltd. |
| W.E. Skinner, D. Thomas, D.C. Evans, P.T. Warlow, J. Williams, T. Davies, D. Cundy, M. Cranham, M. Charles, E.G. Thomas, G. John, M.J.A. Lewis, W.T. Evans, B.A.L. Roberts, E. Williams, M. Thomas, P. Cooper, H.A.L. Evans, J. Tremlett, W.R.A Davies, G. Davies, D. Phillips, P.H.Griffiths, A. Lenny, K. Howell, P.M. Hughes | 12.3 – Notice of Motion Proposed by Councillor Hefin Jones | Personal and Prejudicial - Receives the Winter Fuel Allowance |
| G. John, F. Walters, Andrew Davies, S. Williams, R. Evans, D. Owen, B. Jones, N. Lewis, H. Jones | 12.3 – Notice of Motion Proposed by Councillor Hefin Jones | Mother receives the Winter Fuel Allowance |
| L.M. Davies, L.D. Evans | 12.3 – Notice of Motion Proposed by Councillor Hefin Jones | Father receives the Winter Fuel Allowance |
| K. Madge, A. Evans, A.V. Owen, D. Price | 12.3 – Notice of Motion Proposed by Councillor Hefin Jones | Relatives receive the Winter Fuel Allowance |

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

| | | |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| D. Jones | 12.3 – Notice of Motion Proposed by Councillor Hefin Jones | Personal and Prejudicial |
| R. Sparks, J. Seward, K. Davies, E. Rees | 12.3 – Notice of Motion Proposed by Councillor Hefin Jones | Personal and Prejudicial - Parents receive Winter Fuel Allowance |
| S. Curry | 12.3 – Notice of Motion Proposed by Councillor Hefin Jones | Personal and Prejudicial – Partner receives the Winter Fuel Allowance (Declaration made electronically) |
| E.G. Thomas | 12.3 – Notice of Motion Proposed by Councillor Hefin Jones | Personal and Prejudicial – Sister receives the winter Fuel Allowance |
| S.M. Allen, K. Madge, C.A. Jones | 12.3 – Notice of Motion Proposed by Councillor Hefin Jones | Personal and Prejudicial – Soon to be eligible to receive the winter Fuel Allowance |
| S. Godfrey-Coles, N. Evans, T.A.J. Davies | 12.3 – Notice of Motion Proposed by Councillor Hefin Jones | Personal and Prejudicial – Mother-in-Law receives the Winter Fuel Allowance |
| G. Davies | 12.3 – Notice of Motion Proposed by Councillor Hefin Jones | Personal and Prejudicial – Wife receives the Winter Fuel Allowance |
| M. Palfreman | 12.3 – Notice of Motion Proposed by Councillor Hefin Jones | Personal and Prejudicial – Parents-in-Law receive the Winter Fuel Allowance |
| W.E. Skinner | 14 – Petition | Sister and her family live in Llansteffan |
| C.A. Jones | 14 – Petition | Lives in Llansteffan opposite the Green. Has dispensation to speak and make written representations but not to vote |
| A Lenny | 14 – Petition | Close family members live on the Green in Llansteffan |

3. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY)

- The Chair referred to the array of events he, and his consort, had attended since the last meeting of the Council
- The Chair congratulated the athletes from Carmarthenshire who had recently represented Wales and Carmarthenshire at both the Olympics and Paralympics in Paris. He paid particular reference to:
 - Emma Finucane (cycling – 1 gold and 2 bronze medals),
 - Jess Roberts (Cycling team pursuit – Bronze medal)
 - Anna Hursey (TableTennis)
 - Matt Bush (Taekwondo – Gold medal)
 - Steffan Lloyd (pilot for fellow Welshman, James Ball, 1000m time trial – Gold Medal).

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

He also paid recognition to the all-important role of coaches, trainers, assistants and helpers from Carmarthenshire who had supported the athletes at the Games

- The Chair congratulated Sara Marie Nicholls who plays for Llandeilo Bowls and recently won the Welsh Ladies 2 Woods Singles and was part of the Welsh Team who won the Women's Triple competition in the European Championship
- Councillor H. Jones referred to the Council's previous meeting where the Chair had referenced the 'My Food Plate' event at Nantyci organised by the Carmarthenshire Young Farmers Club. He congratulated the YFC on reaching the short list of the Rural Youth Europe project award with the 'my food plate project' and second prize in the whole of Europe. This achievement further recognised the importance of a project like 'My Food Plate' and evidenced the excellent work of the YFC in Carmarthenshire. He extended his congratulations to the organisation

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE LEADER, CABINET MEMBERS AND THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (IF ANY)

The Cabinet Member for Resources informed the Council that as part of the preparations for the U.K. Government's Budget to be held on the 30th October, 2024, the Treasury had invited evidence and comments by the 10th September. Accordingly, he had submitted the following statement to the Treasury:

"Due to Conservative Government austerity measures, my council is £120m worse off in real terms than in 2010. Despite the most prudent financial management we need extra funding for essentials like social care, children's services, education and highways – the front line services that people depend on daily. Raising the Living Wage is welcomed, but that and other pay settlements must be fully-funded for the public sector, especially as the continued freeze of tax thresholds will raise an extra £30b by 2027-28 through fiscal drag, which will hit the lowest paid in particular.

Like all councils, we've made constant year on year efficiencies resulting in cuts to services. We're rapidly approaching an unsustainable position. Unless real extra funding is provided in the Autumn Budget, it's inevitable that many more councils will be issuing S114 notices.

While appreciating the UK Government's serious fiscal situation, seeking savings by squeezing public services would be devastating, and not an approach expected by a Labour Government. Further austerity would hit everyone, but especially the most vulnerable in society.

It's reported that the Chancellor is considering changing the Government's debt-to-GDP measure to exclude losses made by the Bank of England's bond-buying programme, resulting from quantitative easing to lower interest rates. It's calculated this would release up to £20b in fiscal headroom for the Government. If this action is taken, I urge the Chancellor to consider using a substantial part of that money (in our case via Welsh Government) to ease the unsustainable pressure on local authority budgets".

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

5. TO APPROVE AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THE 10TH JULY 2024

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 10th July, 2024 be signed as a correct record.

6. POLLING DISTRICT AND POLLING PLACE REVIEW 2023/24

Further to Minute 6 of the Council meeting held on the 24th January, 2024 the Council received the final proposals for the Polling District and Polling Place Review 2023/2024 which had been subject to public consultation and undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Representation of the People Act 1983.

References were made to the need to provide a polling station within the village of Cilycwm, access difficulties to the first-floor in the polling station within the Pwll Bowls Pavilion together with the location of C.C.T.V cameras within the Llannon Polling Station. The Council was assured those issues would be taken under review

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED

6.1 To approve the scheme of polling districts and polling places as set out in Appendix A to the report

6.2 That power to designate polling places is delegated to the Electoral Services Manager and that such power is to be exercised where the decision is required at short notice, and it is not possible to await a decision of the Council.

7. THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (DEMOCRACY) (WALES) ACT 2013 ("THE ACT")-COMMUNITY REVIEW

The Council was reminded that at its meeting held on the 28th February 2024 it had resolved, having considered draft recommendations of a review undertaken under Section 25 of the Local Government (Democracy)(Wales) Act 2013 to examine existing Town and Community Governance arrangements, to accept those recommendations and that they be published for consultation for a period of 6 weeks.

In accordance with that decision, the Council considered a report detailing the outcome of the consultations together with the final recommendations, as detailed within Appendix C to the report

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the proposals set out in Appendix C to the report be adopted by the Council as the final recommendations for the purposes of the reviews undertaken for:

- a) **Llangydeyrn Community Council and Llanelli Rural Council**
- b) **Llangydeyrn Community Council and Trimsaran Community**

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

- Council**
c) **Llangyndeyrn Community Council and Pontyberem Community Council**

8. APPOINTMENT OF A NEW CO-OPTED INDEPENDENT MEMBER OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Council considered a report recommending the appointment of Mr David Morgan as a co-opted member of the Standards Committee, following one of the existing co-opted members having left the Committee earlier in 2024. It was noted that following a formal recruitment process, undertaken in accordance with the procedures prescribed by regulations, a recruitment panel comprising three County Councillors, one Town/Community Councillor and a lay member, was recommending to Council the appointment of Mr David Morgan, a former police officer, as a co-opted member of the Standards Committee for a full initial term of office

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that Mr David Morgan be appointed as a co-opted member of the Standards Committee for a full initial term of office.

9. COMPOSITION OF THE COUNCIL'S SCRUTINY, REGULATORY AND OTHER COMMITTEES AND THE APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO SERVE UPON THEM

In line with the requirements of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) regulations 1990, as amended, and the Local Government Wales (measure) 2011, the Council considered a report detailing the outcome of a review of the composition of the Council's Scrutiny, Regulatory and other Committees following notification received that Councillors R. James and A. Leyshon had moved from the Labour Group to sit as Independent Unaffiliated Members.

RESOLVED, as a result of the changes to the overall political composition of the Council that:

- 9.1 To adopt the changes to the number of seats held by the Labour and Unaffiliated Members as detailed within Tables 1, 2, and 3 of the report.**
- 9.2 In accordance with Corporate Procedure Rule CPR 2 (2) (o) to approve changes in Committee membership as a result of recommendation 11.1 above (as detailed within the report).**
- 9.3 In accordance with Part 6 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 to note that the existing arrangements for the allocation of the 5 Scrutiny Chairs remains unchanged.**
- 10. TO CONSIDER THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CABINET IN RESPECT OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS**

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

10.1. PARC -Y- SCARLETS AGREEMENT

(NOTE: 1

1. Councillor W.E. Skinner, having earlier declared an interest in this item, re-declared that interest and left the meeting during its consideration.
2. The Chair welcomed Messrs N. Short, S. Munderack, Daniels and P. Morgan from Scarlets Regional Ltd who had been invited to make a presentation to the Council in support of its request for a restructure of its loan agreement)

Council was informed that the Cabinet, at its meeting held on 29th July, 2024 (minute 14 refers), had considered a report on a request received from Scarlets Regional Ltd to extend and restructure its outstanding loan with the authority.

The Council was appraised of the terms of the loan as set out within the report. In considering the Council's current position, it was advised that the loan was due to mature on 31 March 2023, however Scarlets Regional Ltd had indicated that they were unable to repay the loan at that point in time in one lump sum due to the significant impact on the Club emanating from the coronavirus pandemic, both in terms of costs, which included high inflation and significant loss in income, as was noted within the report.

The Cabinet Member for Resources provided an assurance to the Cabinet that the present interest-only loan had not resulted in any financial loss to the council taxpayers of Carmarthenshire; rather, taxpayers had been better off as the interest paid by the Scarlets had been favourable for the authority. The actual annual repayments for 2022-23 and 2023-24 amounted to £152k and £188k respectively.

In view of the significant economic impact of the Club on the County area, its sustainability was considered to be essential. It was reported that a recovery plan had been implemented and the Council had liaised with the Club to identify a suitable way forward, to enable the repayment of the loan and ensure the sustainability of the Club.

The representatives of Scarlets Regional Ltd thereupon made a presentation to the Council on its financial position, resulting in its request for a loan restructure, its recovery plan together with its numerous community involvements

Members of the Council were afforded the opportunity of asking questions on the presentation following which it was:

RESOLVED that the following recommendations of the Cabinet be adopted:

“UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that a restructure of the loan be approved on the following basis:

“14.1 The term of the loan be extended for 15 years from 1 April 2023, on a repayment basis, with a 3 year deferral of payments. The value being £2.616m.

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

14.2 Repayment of the Loan Principal commences on the 1 April 2026 on an equal instalments basis, with the value being £218,000 per annum.

14.3 Interest continues to be chargeable and is charged at a rate of 2.2% above bank base rate”.

10.2. DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE (SPG) LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Council was informed that the Cabinet, at its meeting held on 29th July, 2024 (minute 8 refers), had considered a report on the council consulting on the draft Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) documents for the Revised Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan (LDP) 2018-2033 in respect of:

- Plastering, Rendering and Insulating Traditional Buildings: Guidance for Sustainability
- Carmarthenshire Shopfront Design Guide 2022
- Conservation Areas: An Essential Guide to their Enhancement

The draft SPG documents provided additional clarity on specific thematic policy areas to support implementation and provided guidance and elaborated upon the policies and provisions of the emerging Revised Local Development Plan at the point of its adoption. Each SPG for public consultation related to specific policy areas within the Adopted and Revised LDP but with a focus on Built Heritage and Conservation.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the following recommendations of the Cabinet be accepted:

“8.1 that the Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance, as set out in the report, be approved for publication for formal public consultation;

8.2 that delegated authority be granted to officers to update or amend any factual, typographical or grammatical errors”.

11. TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON THE 29TH JULY 2024

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the report of the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 29th July, 2024 be received.

12. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING NOTICES OF MOTION:-

12.1. NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLORS KEVIN MADGE AND TINA HIGGINS

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

Council considered the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillors K. Madge and T. Higgins:

““This motion is calling on the Cabinet to bring Garnant Workman's hall into public ownership and then demolishing the building using the land to extra care sheltered flats or housing for local people.

This building is the biggest eyesore in the Amman Valley and it is the biggest fire risk and a danger to local neighbours and residents.

Once again youngsters are risking their lives again and have broken into the building several times.

Over the last 10years trying to solve this problem has been like a game of ping pong it just keeps going back and forth between the Council and the owners and costing the ratepayers thousands of pounds”.

The motion was duly seconded.

The proposers and seconder of the Motion were afforded the opportunity of speaking in support thereof and outlined the reasons for its submission, as set out in the Motion.

A number of representations were made in support of / against the Motion.

RESOLVED that the Motion be not supported.

12.2. NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLORS ALED VAUGHAN OWEN AND MEINIR JAMES

Council considered the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillors A. Vaughan Owen and M. James:

“Fairtrade is a global movement that aims to ensure that producers in developing countries are paid a fair price for their goods, work under safe conditions, and engage in environmentally sustainable practices. By adhering to Fairtrade standards, farmers and workers can invest in their communities, improve their livelihoods, and build a more secure future. Fairtrade also empowers consumers to make ethical purchasing choices that support equitable trade relationships and contribute to the fight against global poverty and injustice.

This Council notes:

1. The longstanding commitment of Carmarthenshire County Council to the Fairtrade campaign, which has been instrumental in promoting fair and ethical trading practices within our community.
2. The importance and success of Fairtrade towns within Carmarthenshire, including a vast amount of schools and places of worship, which have

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

significantly contributed to raising awareness and support for Fairtrade principles among our residents.

This Council resolves to:

1. Reaffirm our commitment to supporting Fairtrade and the Fairtrade campaign within Carmarthenshire.
2. Recognise and celebrate the achievements of Fairtrade towns within our county, which have been pivotal in advocating for Fairtrade and ethical consumerism.
3. Support a Fairtrade Steering Committee, to oversee and coordinate Fairtrade activities and initiatives across Carmarthenshire.
4. Appoint a Cabinet Member as a Champion for Fairtrade, who will actively promote and advocate for Fairtrade principles and initiatives within the Council and the wider community.

By passing this motion, Carmarthenshire County Council will reinforce its commitment to ethical trade, support the well-being of communities both locally and globally, and continue to lead by example in promoting social and economic justice through the Fairtrade movement.

The motion was duly seconded.

The proposers and seconder of the Motion were afforded the opportunity of speaking in support thereof and outlined the reasons for its submission, as set out in the Motion.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Motion be supported and referred to the Cabinet.

12.3. NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLORS HEFIN JONES AND LINDA DAVIES EVANS

As a consequence of the earlier declarations of interest made in respect of this item rendering the Council inquorate, the Proposer of the Notice of Motion, with the consent of his Secunder, withdrew the Notice of Motion.

13. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

13.1. MS TARA-JANE SUTCLIFFE TO COUNCILLOR EDWARD THOMAS - CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, WASTE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

“With just over six months remaining until the extended deadline of 31st March 2025 for drawdown of the full £17.6m of funding from UK Central Government, what progress against schedule has been made by the Council in construction of the Towy Valley Cycle Path, have all the compulsory purchases now been concluded and what updated estimate has been made of the outstanding cost to be borne locally for work extending past this deadline?”

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

Response by Councillor Edward Thomas – Cabinet Member For Transport, Waste and Infrastructure Services:-

“I can now confirm that the Compulsory purchase process has been successfully completed, with all lands necessary to deliver the scheme now vested, and in the control of the Local Authority.

In respect of construction progress; the scheme has been divided up in to 10 separate construction sections which can run concurrently in order to expedite the scheme delivery. Works have been completed on section 3 (Nantgaredig), construction is well underway on section 10 (Ffairfach) and construction commenced on the 27th August on section 2 (Whitemill to Nantgaredig). All remaining sites are programmed to commence on or shortly after the 23rd September.

Our delivery programme remains such that all works will complete or substantially complete, including the purchase of 2 significant bridge structures by the March 31st 2025. We therefore remain confident that any residual spend past March 2025 that may be incurred, will be well within the existing £1.8m capital allocation already set out by Carmarthenshire County Council for the project”

Supplementary Question by Mrs Tara-Jane Sutcliffe:

“We’ve heard a lot in this meeting about unsustainable pressures on this local authority’s budget and I understand the Cabinet’s been discussing the need to find something like £20m of savings and that’s even with a future 4% increase to council tax. So, I just want to clarify that you’re saying that the cycle path will not add to these pressures on local finances and that additional liability for completion of construction beyond that £1.8m will not fall to local taxpayers”

Response by Councillor Edward Thomas – Cabinet Member For Transport, Waste and Infrastructure Services:-

“We remain confident that we will complete it on the due date and with the additional funds we have set aside”

14. PETITION

(NOTE:

1. Councillors W.E. Skinner and A. Lenny having earlier declared interests in this matter re-declared that interest and left the Council Chamber during its consideration
2. Councillor A.C. Jones, having earlier declared an interest in this meeting re-declared that interest. However, having received dispensation to speak and make written representations on this item but, not to vote, she remained in the meeting but did not vote thereon)

The Chair referred to the following petition received by the Council and advised that whilst it was being presented for consideration, the petitioner was not in attendance at the meeting having elected, in accordance with CPR 10.16, to formally present the petition to a meeting of the Cabinet. Accordingly, the Council

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

will be able to debate the matter and, thereafter, refer both the petition and its deliberations to the next meeting of the Cabinet.

“We the undersigned petition Carmarthenshire County Council to Scrap plans to charge for parking at Llansteffan beach front (both at the existing car park and the new one planned at the Northern end of the Green).

Converting the car parks at Llansteffan beach front from free to payment car parks will have far reaching and unintended adverse consequences. Most people will park wherever they can to avoid payment. On high days and holidays this ill-conceived idea will destroy the strip of Green at the front, clog up nearby roads, make the high street almost impassable for emergency vehicles, block the coastguards access and adversely affect local businesses. As there are no strategies in place to mitigate these inevitable consequences the plans for payment should be dropped. A simple cost benefit analysis would prove that free parking at Llansteffan would be the better long-term option.”

RESOLVED that in accordance with Corporate Procedure Rule 10.16, the petition be referred to the Cabinet for consideration.

15. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS:-

15.1. QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR KEVIN MADGE TO COUNCILLOR ALUN LENNY, CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES

“Could the cabinet member give a statement on the purchase of the former Wilko store at Friars Park in Carmarthen. With millions going to be spend on the Debenhams store in the next financial year and you have no money to invest in schools in Ammanford and Llanelli in addition to no funding for the Miner's theatre in Ammanford and other rundown buildings in other areas.

I challenge the cabinet member to say what is the cost of purchasing the old Wilkos for the ratepayers and who made the decision to purchase the store”.

Response by Councillor Alun Lenny – Cabinet Member for Resources

“I must thank Cllr Madge for his question Chair, as I'm delighted that he's given me the opportunity to set the record straight on a couple of misconceptions – beginning with the rather catch-all preamble in his question.

Quite frankly, to try and make a connection between the regeneration of the former Debenhams store and investment in schools is either an attempt to create political mischief, or demonstrates a shocking lack of understanding of basic capital investment. I'll be generous and say it's the former.

It's just not true Chair – to quote Cllr Madge – that we 'have no money to invest in schools in Ammanford and Llanelli.' There's a substantial pot of money in the MEP, as well you know. It's a question of spending it wisely in the face of rampant rising construction costs. But I won't be drawn into that debate further at this stage. That's something for another time.

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

Turning to the purchase of the former Wilko store, which is the subject of this question, since Cllr Madge was reported as being ‘very angry’ about it in one local paper. The Wilko store in Carmarthen was amongst the 400 stores that closed last autumn after the company, founded in 1930, became the latest of many leading high street chains to go into administration due to financial and supply issues.

When the building came on the market its purchase was discussed at length by the Cabinet and Regeneration Officers. Buying it had several things going for it, Chair. We already own the car park, which has room for 250 cars. The building is in a prime site in Carmarthen town centre and we were anxious not to see it being left empty.

I can’t divulge the purchase price at this stage for commercially confidential reasons. As former Leader of Council, surely Councillor Madge should know that. All I can tell him is that a new school would cost many, many times more than what we paid for the Wilko store – which was also substantially grant aided, by the way.

Unlike the other examples he gives in his question, this is an Invest to Save venture. The council will let it out to tenants, who’ll be paying us an annual rent, which will bring us an income. It also means that the council can choose what type of business we’d like there. We’re already in discussions with interested retail parties, and I’m confident that in due course we can announce who they are and how many jobs they’ll be creating, which will be to the benefit of all within commuting distance of our county town.

Supplementary Question by Councillor Kevin Madge

“The Poundstretcher store in Ammanford was offered to you at a six-figure sum. You will do this in Carmarthen but when it comes to the Aman Valley when you are offered a building where we want regeneration you refuse to buy it. So, the question is “Why do you treat one area different from another”?

Response by Councillor Alun Lenny – Cabinet Member for Resources

“As you know there is a masterplan for Ammanford. There are discussions going on now and feasibility studies being made. Two developments will be announced in due course. As you also know, levelling up money has been used on a substantial street scene improvement in the Town. It’s not a matter at all of treating one town differently to another.

15.2. QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR KEVIN MADGE TO COUNCILLOR EDWARD THOMAS, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, WASTE AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

“Can the cabinet member set out the approach to grass verge cutting and spraying weed killer on highways in the Amman Valley this summer”?

Response by Councillor Edward Thomas – Cabinet Member for Transport, Waste and Infrastructure Services

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

“The County Council’s Highway Service manages an annual programme for highway verge mowing and weed spraying to ensure a cost-effective service that safeguards highway users. Rural verges receive a single swathe cut each year to prevent vegetation encroachment, maintain visibility and provide pedestrian space. Additional mowing is done at junctions and bends for better visibility.

Urban verges are also cut once a year with extra mowing at junctions and bends.

Both urban and rural mowing are carried out by contractors selected through a competitive tendering typically from June to September / October. The Council aims to enhance biodiversity in accordance with the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 by maintaining green corridors and scheduling specific verge cuts to encourage certain species.

The Highways Team also conducts annual weed-spraying along urban roads and footways using approved chemicals starting around April / May with repeat applications as needed. They also treat invasive species like Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam over a 4-year period.

This year a resource issue with a verge mowing contractor affected the schedule in the Amman Valley and Llanelli area, but additional resources were brought in to bring it back on track.

Supplementary Question by Councillor Kevin Madge

“Can we look at not cutting the grass at the end of August, and the weedkiller needs to be done in May because of Global warming because Global warming is making the weeds grow from February on and we need to tackle the weeds more earlier but the grass verges need to be done earlier. That’s the question because of tourism. If we want to bring in tourists into the valley we need the valley to look tidy That’s the question, can we make some of these decisions much earlier.

Response by Councillor Edward Thomas – Cabinet Member for Transport, Waste and Infrastructure Services

“Councillor Madge, I’m sure we can look at this and I’m sure the officers will be able to prepare it and obviously, it’s a matter we can discuss at the scrutiny committee”

16. TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING CHANGES TO MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES:-

16.1. THE PLAID CYMRU GROUP HAS NOMINATED COUNCILLOR EMLYN SCHIAVONE TO REPLACE COUNCILLOR CARYS JONES ON THE EDUCATION, YOUNG PEOPLE AND WELSH LANGUAGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that Councillor Emlyn Schiavone replace Councillor Carys Jones on the Education, Young People and Welsh Language Scrutiny Committee.

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

16.2. THE PLAID CYMRU GROUP HAS NOMINATED COUNCILLOR DENISE OWEN TO REPLACE COUNCILLOR CARYS JONES ON THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that Councillor Denise Owen replace Councillor Carys Jones on the Planning Committee.

16.3. THE INDEPENDENT UNAFFILIATED MEMBERS HAS NOMINATED COUNCILLOR STEVE WILLIAMS TO REPLACE COUNCILLOR SEAN REES ON THE EDUCATION, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE WELSH LANGUAGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that Councillor Steve Williams replace Councillor Sean Rees on the Education, Young People and Welsh Language Scrutiny Committee.

16.4. THE LABOUR GROUP HAS NOMINATED COUNCILLOR PHILIP WARLOW TO REPLACE COUNCILLOR PETER COOPER ON THE DYFED PENSION FUND COMMITTEE

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that Councillor Philip Warlow replace Councillor Peter Cooper on the Dyfed Pension Fund Committee.

17. TO ELECT THE CHAIR OF THE EDUCATION, YOUNG PEOPLE AND WELSH LANGUAGE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOLLOWING A VACANCY MID-TERM

The Council, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4 (2), considered one nomination received for the election of Chair of the Education, Young People and Welsh Language Scrutiny Committee following a mid-term vacancy.

Following a vote, it was

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that Councillor E. Schiavone be elected Chair of the Education, Young People and the Welsh Language Scrutiny Committee.

18. TO ELECT THE VICE- CHAIR OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE FOLLOWING A VACANCY MID-TERM

The Council, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4 (2) considered one nomination received for the election of Vice Chair of the Planning Committee following a mid-term vacancy.

Following a vote, it was

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that Councillor M. Charles be appointed Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee.

19. MINUTES FOR INFORMATION (AVAILABLE TO VIEW ON THE WEBSITE)

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

The Chair stated that the minutes outlined on the agenda under items 19.1 – 19.11 were available for information on the Council website.

CHAIR

DATE

Note: These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

COUNCIL 9TH OCTOBER 2024

STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023-2024.

Purpose:

To receive the Annual Report of the Council's Standards Committee

Recommendations / key decisions required:

None

Reasons:

The Committee has a statutory duty to present an annual report to Full Council

Cabinet Decision Required NO

Council Decision Required NO

CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:- Not applicable

Directorate: Chief Executives

Name of Head of Service:

Stephen P Murphy

Report Author:

Robert Edgecombe

Designations:

Head of Law
Governance and Civil
Services

Legal Services Manager

Tel:01267 224018

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COUNCIL
9TH OCTOBER 2024

STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023-2024

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires Standards Committees to report to Full Council on an annual basis.

The Act requires the report to contain certain information regarding the activities of the committee during the year and to provide an assessment as to whether the Group Leaders on the Council have complied with their duties under the 2021 Act to

1. Take reasonable steps to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by the members of their group and;
2. Co-operate with the Council's Standards Committee in the exercise of the Standards Committee's functions.

A copy of the Annual report is attached for approval

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?

YES

IMPLICATIONS

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

Signed: **Stephen P Murphy** **Head of Law Governance and Civil Services**

| | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities | Legal | Finance | ICT | Risk Management Issues | Staffing Implications | Physical Assets | Bio-diversity & Climate Change |
| NONE | NONE | NONE | NONE | NONE | NONE | NONE | NONE |

CONSULTATIONS

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

Signed: **Stephen P Murphy** **Head of Law Governance and Civil Services**

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. Scrutiny Committee request for pre-determination | NO |
|------------------------------------------------------------|----|

2. Local Member(s)

Not applicable

3. Community / Town Council

Not applicable

4. Relevant Partners

Not applicable

5. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations

Not applicable

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S) AWARE/CONSULTED | Not applicable |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------|

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

| Title of Document | File Ref No. | Locations that the papers are available for public inspection |
|-----------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Legal Department File | DPSC-222 | County Hall, Carmarthen. |

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STANDARDS COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

Foreword

1. Period Covered by the Report
2. Terms of Reference
3. Membership of the Committee
4. Referrals from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
5. Notices issued by the Adjudication Panel for Wales
6. Cases Closed by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
7. Applications for Dispensation
8. Code of Conduct Training
9. Whistleblowing Policy
10. Code Compliance by Town and Community Councils
11. Group Leaders Duty
12. Other Activities
13. Conclusion

Foreword by Chair of Standards Committee

It is my pleasure to present to Full Council the annual report for the Standards Committee, covering the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024.

As Councillors you will know that the law requires every County and County Borough Council in Wales to establish and maintain a Standards Committee. Such committees are responsible for overseeing standards of conduct for elected members of both the principal council and the constituent community and town councils within the principal council's area.

In performing this role, the Committee receives and determines applications for dispensation from elected members in relation to the Code of Conduct and adjudicates upon code complaints referred to the Council by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

In addition, the Committee also receives reports in relation to the operation of the Council's whistle-blowing policy.

This is the second annual report presented by the Standards Committee in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 which placed new duties upon political group leaders to promote compliance with the code by their group members. This Act also placed a requirement upon Standards Committees to report on how well group leaders have complied with those duties and our findings in this regard can be found at section 9 of this report.

Mary Dodd

Chair – Carmarthenshire County Council Standards Committee

1. PERIOD COVERED BY THE REPORT

This report covers the activities of the Standards Committee during the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024.

During this period the committee met a total of 6 times.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The role and functions of the committee as set out in the constitution of the Council are:

- To promote and maintain high standards of conduct by councillors and co-opted members.
- To assist councillors and co-opted members to observe the Members' Code of conduct.
- To advise the Council on the adoption or revision of the Members' Code of Conduct
- To monitor operation of the Members' Code of Conduct

- To advise, or arrange training for councillors and co-opted members on matters relating to the Members' Code of Conduct
- To grant dispensations to councillors and co-opted members where they have a personal and prejudicial interest under the Members' Code of Conduct
- To deal with reports from the Adjudication Panel for Wales and reports from the Monitoring Officer or the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
- The exercise of the above functions in relation to Town and Community Councils in the county
- To receive annual reports on the operation of the Council's Whistleblowing Policy

3. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

The Panel consists of 9 members, 3 County councillors, 1 Community councillor and 5 co-opted members.

There was one change to the co-opted members of the committee during the period covered by this report as the former Committee Vice-Chair Mrs Julie James left the committee in February 2024. I would like to thank Mrs James for all her hard work over the years.

The co-opted members were.

Mrs Mary Dodd (Chair)
 Mrs. Julie James (Vice-chair) (until February 2024)
 Mrs. Daphne Evans (Vice-Chair since March 2024)
 Mrs. Caryl Davies
 Mr. Frank Phillips

A public recruitment exercise is underway to fill the vacancy created by the departure of Mrs James.

The Community Council member of the committee is Councillor Philip Rogers (St. Clears Town Council)

There was also a change to the County Council members during the year with Councillor Rob James leaving the committee in February 2024.

The County Council members of the committee during the period covered by this report were.

Councillor Betsan Jones
 Councillor. Gareth Thomas
 Councillor. Rob James (until February 2024)

Councillor Philip Warlow has since been appointed to replace Councillor James.

4. Referrals from The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

No new referrals were received from the Ombudsman during the year.

As indicated in the 2022-2023 Annual Report the committee met in April 2023 to conclude proceedings in relation to a referral received from the Ombudsman in 2022. This resulted in a period of suspension of the member from their role as a Town Councillor.

5. Notices Received from the Adjudication Panel for Wales

No notices were received from the Adjudication Panel for Wales pursuant to Chapter 4 of Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 during the period covered by this report.

6. Cases closed by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

During the period covered by this report the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales considered and closed a total of xx code of conduct complaints against councillors from Carmarthenshire. The breakdown of these cases is shown in the table below.

| COUNCIL | Decision not to Investigate | No Action (Following Investigation) | Referred to Standards Committee | Total No. of Complaints Closed |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Carmarthenshire County Council | 12 | 1 | 0 | 13 |
| Ammanford Town Council | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Llanelli Town Council | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Llanelli Rural Council | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Llangennech Community Council | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------|----|---|---|----|
| Llannon Community Council | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Llanseteffan & Llanybri Community Council | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Pembrey & Burry Port Town Council | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Total | 21 | 2 | 0 | 23 |

There may however also be complaints currently with the Ombudsman awaiting determination.

The committee continues to be satisfied that most councillors do comply with the code and that where allegations of breach are made, they are usually unfounded or are not considered by the Ombudsman to be sufficiently serious to warrant enforcement action.

7. APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION

The Committee considered 23 applications for dispensation from County and Community and Town Councillors during the year, all of which were either granted or partly granted.

The grounds upon which the Committee may grant a dispensation are set out in the Standards Committees (Grant of Dispensations) (Wales) Regulations 2001.

The Committee continues to approach each application with a presumption in favour of granting a dispensation wherever practicable, particularly in relation to granting a dispensation to speak only.

Details of the applications that have been dealt with can be viewed as part of the minutes of the meetings of the Committee which are accessible on Carmarthenshire County Council's website www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk.

8. CODE OF CONDUCT TRAINING

Two Code of Conduct Training sessions were held for Town and Community Councillors during the period covered by this report. These were held on the 12th June and 24th July 2023. The June session was a hybrid event and the July session online only. In total over 80 people attended these sessions.

9. WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

The Committee has oversight of the authority's Whistleblowing Policy. The process is regulated by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which protects against dismissal and other detriment for workers who disclose information in the public interest in prescribed circumstances to prescribed persons.

The number of whistleblowing complaints recorded during the period of this report are set out below.

| New Complaints | Complaints carried over from 2022/23 | Cases Concluded | Cases Continuing |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |

The number of complaints continues to be consistent with those received by other local authorities.

The Committee also reviewed the Whistleblowing Policy during the period covered by this report.

10. CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLIANCE BY TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCILS

The committee again received a report regarding the extent to which Town and Community Councils within the County are complying with the Code of Conduct. The report contained data relating to:

- Code complaints
- Dispensation requests
- Declaration of interests
- Code Training
- The adoption of Council training plans

No obvious patterns or trends could be discerned from the data. Overall levels of compliance with the code appeared to be good. However the Committee was disappointed

that only half of councils had adopted and published a training plan in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

11. GROUP LEADERS DUTY

As indicated in the foreword to this report the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 places new duties on political group leaders and requires Standards committees to monitor and report on their performance of these duties.

The group leaders' duties are.

- To take reasonable steps to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by the members of their group
- To co-operate with the council's standards committee in the exercise of the standards committee's functions

The Council has 3 political group leaders. These are

- Councillor Darren Price (Plaid Cymru)
- Councillor Deryk Cundy (Labour)
- Councillor Jane Tremlett (Independent Group)

Summary of steps taken by the Standards Committee

The Council's 3 political group leaders were reminded of these duties during the year and were asked to provide a report setting out how they had complied with those duties by the 5th April 2024. All Group Leaders were also provided with a template report for them to use if they wished and given an opportunity to comment upon the assessment criteria that the Committee proposed to utilise.

The Standards Committee also met with 2 of the Group Leaders (Councillors Price and Cundy) on the 22nd April 2024. The meeting with Councillor Tremlett has been re-scheduled to the 9th September 2024

Summary of reports received from the Group Leaders

Cllr Darren Price – Plaid Cymru Group

Cllr Price provided a report which confirmed that 7 complaints had been made to the Ombudsman against members of the Plaid Cymru Group during the period covered by the

report, none of which had been upheld. He also confirmed that one group member had been referred to the local resolution process for low-level complaints between members.

Councillor Price confirmed that 31 out of 38 group members (82%) had now attended the code training since the May 2022 elections and that the remaining 7 members, 6 had attended code training previously.

Councillor Price has himself attended Code of Conduct Training since the May 2022 elections.

Cllr Deryk Cundy – Labour Group

Councillor Cundy only became leader of the Labour Group in February 2024 and his report was therefore understandably limited in scope. Councillor Cundy confirmed that all members of the Labour Group had received code training and that he had personally emphasised to group members the importance of compliance with the code of conduct. Councillor Cundy confirmed that he was not aware that any complaints had been made to the Ombudsman regarding Labour Group Members since he had come group leader.

Councillor Cundy has attended code of conduct training since the May 2022 elections.

Cllr Jane Tremlett – Independent Group

Councillor Tremlett provided a report which confirmed that no code of conduct complaints had been made against members of the Independent Group during the period covered by the report.

Councillor Tremlett has attended code of conduct training since the May 2022 elections.

Assessment of the extent to which political group leaders have complied with their duties under the Act.

Following consideration of the reports submitted by the Group leaders, and the meeting with Councillors Price and Cundy the committee is satisfied that all three group leaders have satisfied their duties under the 2021 Act.

Summary of any action taken following consideration of the Group Leaders reports

The committee has resolved to take the following actions

- To meet with Group leaders on an annual basis
- To arrange refresher code of conduct training for County Councillors midway through their electoral term.
- To provide Group Leaders with information regarding latest code of conduct cases published by the Ombudsman and the Adjudication Panel for Wales, for dissemination to their group members.

12. OTHER ACTIVITIES

In addition to the above activities the Committee also:

- Received and considered case decisions of the Adjudication Panel for Wales
- Received and considered case decisions made by other Standards Committees in Wales

Where appropriate the Committee has identified points of learning and best practice and has taken them into account in their own decision making and included them in the training referred to in paragraph 5 above.

13. CONCLUSION

The committee had a very busy year, and I am grateful to my fellow committee members for their valuable contributions throughout.

There have been generally good levels of compliance with the Code of Conduct exhibited by Councillors across the County and the levels of complaints remain low. However as the 2 disciplinary cases in 2022-2023 highlighted, councillors cannot afford to be complacent and should be conscious of their duties under the code at all times.

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COUNCIL

9 OCTOBER 2024

GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

Recommendations / key decisions required:

To receive the report.

Reasons:

There is a requirement for an Annual Report to be produced.
The report is being presented to the Council to provide assurance on the work of the Governance & Audit Committee in ensuring transparency, accountability, and effective governance.

Relevant scrutiny committee to be consulted: N/A

Cabinet Decision Required: N/A

Council Decision Required: N/A

CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Cllr A Lenny

Directorate:

Corporate Services

Name of Head of Service:

Helen Pugh

Report Author:

David MacGregor

Designation:

Head of Revenues &
Financial Compliance

Chair of Governance & Audit
Committee

E Mail Address:

HLPugh@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**COUNCIL
9 OCTOBER 2024**

GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

There is an expectation/requirement that an Annual Report be produced each year reflecting on the range of issues considered by the Governance & Audit Committee, and the effectiveness of its work. This is the first of such reports and mainly reflects on the Committee's performance in the 2023/24 municipal year.

The report is being presented to the Council to provide assurance on the work of the Governance & Audit Committee in ensuring transparency, accountability, and effective governance.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?

YES

IMPLICATIONS

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

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

| | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities | Legal | Finance | ICT | Risk Management Issues | Staffing Implications | Physical Assets | Bio-diversity & Climate Change |
| NONE | NONE | YES | NONE | YES | NONE | NONE | NONE |

Finance

Strong systems of risk management, financial management and performance management help to prevent poor decision making. The Governance and Audit Committee has oversight of both Internal and External Audit; Internal Audit reviews are carried out to ensure systems in place comply with the Authority's Financial Procedure Rules.

Risk Management Issues

CIPFA's Position Statement applicable to Audit Committees in Local Authorities and the Police (2022), states that the purpose of the Governance and Audit Committee is:

'To provide an independent and high-level focus on the adequacy of governance, risk and control arrangements. The committee's role in ensuring that there is sufficient assurance over governance risk and control gives greater confidence to all those charged with governance that those arrangements are effective.'

CONSULTATIONS

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

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

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

CABINET PORTFOLIO HOLDER AWARE/CONSULTED:

Yes

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 |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Governance & Audit Committee Terms of Reference | G&AC - TOR | Council Constitution - G&AC TOR |

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Cyngor Sir Gâr

Carmarthenshire County Council

Governance & Audit Committee

Annual Report 2023/24

June 2024

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1. Foreword by Chair of Governance & Audit Committee

1.1 Every local authority must get the basics of good governance right; this includes having effective structures, robust systems and procedural frameworks, promoting constructive and appropriate behaviours.

1.2 The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 included provision for Governance and Audit Committees to be established by each of the 22 Principal councils and made it mandatory for one third of the membership of these committees to be 'lay' persons. Carmarthenshire County Council responded positively and promptly to these new requirements; its arrangements are fully compliant with the legislation.

1.3 It is pleasing to report that elected and lay members of the Committee work well together. Since the inception of the new arrangements, all members have contributed positively and constructively; they engage with the matters on the agenda for each meeting and there is no discernible difference in their approach.

1.4 Members and senior officers always need to be able to ask difficult questions and constructively challenge each other. The ongoing pressures on local authority budgets in all parts of the UK are well documented, and impact on their capacity to maintain service delivery and respond to threats and challenges.

1.5 Strong systems of risk management, financial management and performance management help to prevent poor decision making. The Governance and Audit Committee has oversight of both internal and external audit; it helps ensure that there are adequate arrangements in place for both internal challenge and public accountability.

1.6 There is now also an expectation/requirement that an Annual Report be produced each year reflecting on the range of issues considered by the Committee, and the effectiveness of its work. This is the first of such reports and mainly reflects on the Committee's performance in the 2023/24 municipal year.

2. Role of the Governance & Audit Committee

2.1 The Terms of Reference of the Governance and Audit Committee are set out in the Council's constitution; an extract of these is provided as Appendix 1.

2.2 The Committee has a continuous role in the process of securing 'good governance'. The core purpose of a Governance and Audit Committee is to provide independent assurance on the adequacy of the risk management framework and associated control environment. It provides independent scrutiny of the authority's financial and non-financial performance to the extent that it affects its exposure to risk and weakens the control environment, and to oversee the financial reporting process.

2.3 In carrying out its work, the Committee has regard to the guidance published by various external bodies and organisations, including the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA).

2.4 In 2022, CIPFA published its Position Statement applicable to Audit Committees in Local Authorities and the Police which states that the purpose of the Governance and Audit Committee is:

'To provide an independent and high-level focus on the adequacy of governance, risk and control arrangements. The committee's role in ensuring that there is sufficient assurance over governance risk and control gives greater confidence to all those charged with governance that those arrangements are effective.'

2.5 The Committee has a well established and positive relationship with the Council's external and internal auditors. Careful consideration is always given to the reports they both produce; this work assists the Committee to be satisfied that risks are being managed, and internal controls are preventing waste of resources and fraud.

3. Effectiveness of the Governance & Audit Committee

3.1 The Committee ensures that its forward work programme for the forthcoming financial year is considered each year at the March meeting and is in accordance with the Terms of Reference. The most recent forward work programme was approved in March 2024 - [REPORT.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#)

3.2 A key responsibility of the Committee is to scrutinise and consider the Annual Statement of Accounts for the Council, The Dyfed Pension Fund and the Council's Annual Governance Statement. To assist members in this task, a briefing/workshop session was held in July 2023 which provided an opportunity for the draft statements to be explored and explained in detail, prior to being presented to the Committee in a formal meeting. This approach was also followed with the Council's draft Annual Report.

3.3 Examples of where the Committee 'added value' in 2023/24 can be demonstrated through their constructive review and challenge of the following matters:

- Complaints Annual Report
- Corporate Safeguarding reports
- Corporate Risk Register
- Annual Governance Statement
- Council's Annual Report

Challenges to the content and the procedures in place were posed by the Committee and improvements were suggested. Where appropriate, changes were then made and members comments for delivering further improvement in the future were taken on board.

3.4 During the course of the last year, and to seek assurance on specific issues, the Committee requested follow up reports on significant matters including 'Cyber Security' and 'Housing Rent Arrears'. In both instances, members were pleased with the quality of the follow up reports and the additional information that had been provided.

3.5 Throughout the year, the Committee routinely receives reports on reviews undertaken by the Council's auditors. The range of reports produced by Internal Audit provide members with assurance on work undertaken to evaluate the effectiveness of risk management, internal controls, and governance. The Chair and Vice Chair receive copies of all the reports produced by Internal Audit and review these; the Committee receives some of these reports 'by exception', ie where significant weaknesses in the internal control environment had been found.

3.6 The Committee also give careful consideration to the key reports from Audit Wales, such as those that address the accuracy and quality of the Financial Statements, and the outputs from work undertaken as part of their 'Performance' Audit work programme.

3.7 Monitoring reports are received from the corporate 'PIMS' system on the progress being made with actions arising from recommendations made in reports from all the Regulatory bodies.

3.8 In July 2023, the Committee commenced consideration of an 'Action Log' to assist with monitoring of the Committee's own recommendations.

4. **Committee Membership and Attendance**

4.1 The Council's constitution provides that the Governance & Audit Committee shall be consisted of twelve members: eight Councillors, and four Lay Members. At the time of writing this report, there was one elected member vacancy, and it is anticipated that this will be filled early in 2024/25.

4.2 The Committee is supported by Council Officers, principally the Director of Corporate Services (s151 Officer), Head of Financial Services, Head of Revenues & Financial Compliance, Corporate Policy & Partnership Manager and Democratic Services.

4.3 The Governance and Audit Committee met on 5 occasions during the Municipal year 2023/24. The meeting agendas, minutes and recordings can be located at: [Browse meetings - Governance & Audit Committee](#).

4.4 Committee Member attendance for 2023 /24 is summarised as follows:

| | Attendance | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|------------|--------|-----------|--------------|----------------|-------------|---------|
| | Possible | Actual | 2023/2024 | | | | |
| | | | 14 July | 29 September | 27 October | 15 December | 8 March |
| Independent Lay Members | | | | | | | |
| David MacGregor (Chair) | 5 | 5 | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Julie James | 5 | 5 | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Karen Jones | 5 | 4 | √ | X | √ | √ | √ |
| Malcolm MacDonald | 5 | 5 | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Councillors | | | | | | | |
| Cllr. Kim Broom | 5 | 5 | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Cllr. Karen Davies | 5 | 4 | √ | √ | X ^B | √ | √ |
| Cllr. Lewis Davies | 1 | 1 | √ | Vacancy | | | |
| Cllr. Alex Evans | 5 | 5 | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Cllr. Giles Morgan (Vice Chair) | 5 | 4 | X | √ | √ | √ | √ |

| | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cllr. Philip Warlow | 5 | 4 | √ | X | √ | √ | √ |
| Cllr. Elwyn Williams | 5 | 5 | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Cllr. Janet Williams | 5 | 4 | √ | X | √ | √ | √ |

β – Cllr. Terry Davies attended in Cllr. Karen Davies' absence.

5. **Training and Development activity to support the Committee Members**

5.1 The following development sessions/ detailed review sessions were held during 2023/24.

| Month | Session |
|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| May 2023 | Governance & Audit Committee Self -assessment session |
| May 2023 | Background on Corporate Annual report |
| June 2023 | Risk Development Session (joint for Cabinet and G&AC members) |
| July 2023 | Detailed review Statements of Accounts |
| July 2023 | Detailed Review Annual Governance Statement |
| July 2023 | Detailed Review Corporate Annual Report |
| March 2024 | WLGA Essentials / Alarm: Risk Management for Councillors (Governance and Audit) |

5.2 During October 2023, the Chair of the G&AC attended the All Wales Chair's & Vice Chair's meeting facilitated by the WLGA.

5.3 Development sessions presently arranged for 2024/25 are as follows:

- Attendance by the Chair, Head of Service and Principal Auditor at 'Audit Wales Good Governance Exchange – Effective Audit Committees'
- Detailed review of the Statement of Accounts
- Detailed Review of the Annual Governance Statement
- Detailed Review of the Corporate Annual Report
- Meet the Auditors

6. **Performance evaluation**

6.1 The Committee carried out a self-assessment during May 2023. In preparation for the event, members were individually asked to complete a self-assessment questionnaire, built around CIPFA guidance. This event was well attended and the Action plan from this session is attached as Appendix 2.

6.2 In July 2023, the Committee considered the report titled "An External Assessment of Carmarthenshire County Council's Internal Audit Service". In 2013, the new 'Public Sector Internal Audit Standard' introduced a requirement for an external assessment of all internal audit services to be undertaken by a qualified Independent Assessor at least once every five years. The findings of the recent assessment provided reassurance to the Committee and confirmed that it could continue to have confidence in the quality of the work undertaken by the Council's internal audit service.

6.3 Senior representatives of both Audit Wales and the Council's Internal Audit Service routinely attend meetings of the Committee to present reports and observe the proceedings. All members of the Governance and Audit Committee value the open and constructive relationship that exists with the Council's external and internal auditors.

6.4 It is considered good practice for members of the Committee to have an informal private discussion with the auditors annually; this offers all parties with an opportunity to discuss relevant issues including working relationships. The most recent 'Meet the auditor session' was held in December 2023.

7. Forthcoming challenges

7.1 Reports in the media over the past few years suggest that all 'principal' local authorities across the UK face challenges in meeting the needs of their communities and maintaining standards in the delivery of core services. Regrettably, the serious 'failure' of a local authority is no longer a rare event.

7.2 The above point reinforces the need for Members and officers to work collaboratively to support good governance and robust financial management.

7.3 The Governance and Audit Committee needs to continue to focus on risk management, using the Annual Internal Audit Plan to consider major strategic risks and other critical operations.

7.4 It is important to maintain and further develop the Council's healthy relationships with Audit Wales and other regulatory bodies.

Appendix 1

Extract from Constitution – Terms of Reference for Governance & Audit Committee

| Committee | Functions | Delegation of Functions |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <p>Governance & Audit Committee 8 members + 4 Lay Persons</p> | <p>(1) to review and scrutinise the Authority's financial affairs, (2) to make reports and recommendations in relation to the authority's financial affairs, (3) to review and assess the risk management, internal control and corporate governance arrangements of the authority, (4) to make reports and recommendations to the authority on the adequacy and effectiveness of those arrangements, (5) to oversee the authority's internal audit & risk management arrangements including: (a) monitoring the adequacy & effectiveness of Internal Audit & Risk Management and the extent to which Management fulfil their responsibilities for ensuring an adequate control environment exists throughout the organisation; (b) approving the Authority's Audit Charter; (c) receiving an Annual Internal Audit Plan from the Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance and monitoring progress against the Plan; (d) receiving an Annual Internal Audit Report from the Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance at the end of the audit year; (e) receiving and considering major internal audit findings and recommendations; (f) receiving the minutes of the Authority's Risk Management Steering Group and receiving reports in relation to significant risks identifying significant control failings or weaknesses, their potential or real impact and the corrective action required or being taken; (g) monitoring Management's response to major findings and the implementation of key recommendations (h) review the assessment of fraud risks and potential harm to the Council from fraud and corruption. (i) monitor the counter fraud strategy, actions and resources. (6) to oversee the authority's external audit arrangements, including (a) monitoring the adequacy and effectiveness of the External Audit service and to respond to its findings;</p> | |

| | | |
|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| | <p>(b) discuss with the external auditor the nature and scope of the audit of the County Council's services & functions, and consider the external audit fee and terms of engagement;</p> <p>(c) receiving and considering external audit reports and management letters and advising Full Council as appropriate;</p> <p>(d) monitoring Management's response to the external auditor's findings and the implementation of the external auditor's recommendations</p> <p>(7) To review and assess the authority's ability to handle complaints effectively and to make reports and recommendations in relation to the authority's ability to handle complaints effectively</p> <p>(8) to approve the financial statements prepared by the Authority</p> <p>(9) to scrutinise the Authority's Annual Statement of Accounts and any supplementary statements as required by the Accounts & Audit (Wales) regulations eg. Annual Governance Statement</p> <p>(10) to approve the Dyfed Pension Fund's Annual Statement of Accounts</p> <p>(11) to consider and approve amendments to the Contract Procedure Rules</p> <p>(12) to consider and approve amendments to the Financial Procedure Rules</p> <p>(13) to interview applicants for the position(s) of Lay Member(s) of the Committee and to recommend an appointment (s) to the Council</p> | |
|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|

Appendix 2

Governance & Audit Committee (G&AC) Self-Assessment undertaken 25th May 2023 – Position as at April 2024

Action Plan

| Ref. | ACTION | PROGRESS | Responsible Officer(s) | Target Date | Status |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| SA1 | G&AC Annual Report to be published | | Chair of Governance & Audit Committee | July 2024 | |
| SA2 | G&AC Annual Report could be presented to full Council | | Chair of Governance & Audit Committee | TBC | |
| SA3 | G&AC has a decision-making role on the Statement of Accounts | Monitoring officer opinion confirmed legality of Council's arrangements. | Head of Revenues & Financial Compliance | 30 June 2023 | Complete |
| | ACTION - Head of Revenues & Financial Compliance to clarify this. | Extract from CIPFA's Position Statement: Audit Committees in Local Authorities and Police 2022 | | | |
| SA4 | Consideration be given to G&AC Chair attending 'Chairs & Vice Chairs of Scrutiny' | | Chair of Governance & Audit Committee | Annually arranged by DSU | Complete |
| SA5 | Management and Committee Structure of CCC to be shared with G&AC Members | CCC Committee Structure and CCC Management Structure shared with G&AC, by e-mail | Principal Auditor | 30 June 2023 | Complete |
| SA6 | Refer to 2022 CIPFA guidance to ensure training/support has covered the areas set out in the guidance | CIPFA assessment of needs and skills pulled together. Suggest that we have individual skills / knowledge gap assessment carried out to ensure that relevant training is provided. | Head of Revenues & Financial Compliance | 30 June 2023 | Complete |
| SA7 | Include Action Log on agenda of all G&AC Meetings | Action Log to be included on the agenda of the July meeting, and at each meeting thereafter | Principal Auditor | 14 July 2023 | Complete |
| SA8 | Revisit the Audit Wales Report on AC Effectiveness to assess current position and ensure actions to address any issues raised have been appropriately implemented. | Five proposals for improvement raised by Audit Wales. All of which have been completed. Areas covers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Annual Governance Statement Regular reporting of Corporate Risk register to the Committee | Head of Revenues & Financial Compliance | 30 June 2023 | Complete |

| | | | | | |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports are more specific for Committee responsibilities • Strengthen arrangements of tracking recommendations • Conflict of interest of the Head of Revenues and Financial Compliance responsibilities mitigated | | | |
| SA9 | Consideration of a scheduled break (10 mins) during long meetings. | | Chair of Governance & Audit Committee / DSU | 14 July 2023 | |
| SA10 | Presenting Officers to be offered guidance on presenting to the Committee, to ensure reports are not simply read through, but an overview of any such report is provided instead. | Guidance is offered to Presenting Officers as and when required. | Head of Revenues & Financial Compliance | As and when required | Complete |
| SA11 | Action plan to be published following the self-assessment review undertaken on 25 May 2023. | Action plan developed. | Principal Auditor | 30 June 2023 | Complete |
| SA12 | CIPFA guidance mentions members of Policy & Resources not to be members of the G&AC – clarity to be sought on whether this refers to P&R Scrutiny, or a separate Policy & Resources Committee. | Clarity received that this refers to Policy & Resources Committees, which are different to Scrutiny Committees. The CIPFA guidance states that being a member of other committee, such as Scrutiny, as well as G&AC can add value... <i>“An overlap with other committee roles such as scrutiny or standards is not necessarily a problem. It can add value by bringing knowledge of activity in these areas into the committee. Those who are members of other committees should take care to not blur their roles.”</i> | Head of Revenues & Financial Compliance | 30 June 2023 | Complete |

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COUNCIL

9TH OCTOBER 2024

ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATOR REPORT 2023-2024

Cabinet Recommendations

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL that the Annual Treasury Management and Prudential Indicator Report for 2023-2024 be approved.

Reasons:

To comply with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management in the Public Sector.

Cabinet Decision Required YES

Council Decision Required YES

CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:- Cllr. A. Lenny

Directorate: Corporate Services

Name of Director: Chris Moore

Report Author: Anthony Parnell

Designations:

Director of Corporate Services

Treasury and Pension Investments Manager

Tel/ Email address:

Tel: 01267 224120 E Mail: CMoore@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01267 224180 E Mail: AParnell@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATOR REPORT 2023-2024

The Council adopted the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy and the five year capital programme for 2023-2024 on the 1st March 2023. This Annual Report lists the activities that took place in 2023-2024 under the headings of:

- Investments
- Borrowing
- Security, Liquidity and Yield
- Treasury Management Prudential Indicators
- Prudential Indicators
- Leasing
- Rescheduling

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?

YES

IMPLICATIONS

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

Signed: **C Moore** **Director of Corporate Services**

| Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities | Legal | Finance | ICT | Risk Management Issues | Staffing Implications | Physical Assets | Bio-diversity & Climate Change |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| YES | NONE | YES | NONE | NONE | NONE | NONE | NONE |

1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities

Within the requirements of the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy Report 2023-2024

3. Finance

The authority's investments during the year returned an average rate of 4.76%. Total investment balance at the year-end amounted to £161m.

£10m of new PWLB borrowing was taken during the year. Long term debt outstanding at the year-end amounted to £410.12m.

CONSULTATIONS

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

Signed: **C Moore**

Director of Corporate Services

1. Scrutiny Committee request for pre-determination

No

2. Local Member(s) N/A

3. Community / Town Council N/A

4. Relevant Partners N/A

5. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations N/A

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

YES

**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 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services - Code of Practice Revised 2017 | | County Hall, Carmarthen |

CABINET
DATE:
16TH SEPTEMBER 2024

**ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND
PRUDENTIAL INDICATOR REPORT
2023-24**

1. Introduction

The Treasury Management Policy and Strategy for 2023-24 was approved by Council on 1st March 2023. Section B 1.1(2) stated that a year-end annual report would be produced.

This report meets the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management, (the Code), and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities, (the Prudential Code) and outlines the Treasury Management activities in 2023-24 financial year.

2. Investments

One of the primary activities of the Treasury Management operation is the investment of surplus cash for which the Authority is responsible. As well as the Authority's own cash the County Council invests School Funds, Trust Funds and other Funds, with any interest derived from these investments being passed over to the relevant Fund.

All surplus money is invested daily with the approved counterparties either via brokers on the Money Markets or direct. The security of the investments is the main priority, appropriate liquidity should be maintained and returns on the investments a final consideration. It continues to be difficult to invest these funds as the market continues to be insecure and as a consequence appropriate counterparties are limited.

For 2023-24 investments to individual counterparties were limited to:

| | Maximum to Lend £m |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Upper Limit Any one British Bank and Building Society with a credit rating of at least F1, P-1 or A-1 short term or AA-, Aa3 or AA- long term | 10 |
| Middle Limit Any one British Bank and Building Society with a credit rating of at least F1, P-1 or A-1 short term | 7 |
| UK Banks Part Nationalised Included as investment counterparties, as long as they continue to have appropriate UK Government support | 7 |
| Any one Local Authority | 5 |
| Any one AAA Rated Money Market Fund | 10 |
| Debt Management Office | 125 |

The total investments at 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024 are shown in the following table:

| Investments | 01.04.23 | | | | 31.03.24 | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|------------|
| | Call and notice | Fixed Term | Total | | Call and notice | Fixed Term | Total | |
| | £m | £m | £m | % | £m | £m | £m | % |
| Banks | 27.50 | 14.00 | 41.50 | 28 | 27.50 | 7.00 | 34.50 | 21 |
| Building Societies | 0.00 | 7.00 | 7.00 | 5 | 0.00 | 7.00 | 7.00 | 4 |
| Money Market Funds | 40.00 | 0.00 | 40.00 | 27 | 45.00 | 0.00 | 45.00 | 28 |
| DMADF (DMO) | 0.00 | 20.00 | 20.00 | 13 | 0.00 | 54.50 | 54.50 | 35 |
| Local Authorities | 0.00 | 40.00 | 40.00 | 27 | 0.00 | 20.00 | 20.00 | 12 |
| TOTAL | 67.50 | 81.00 | 148.50 | 100 | 72.50 | 88.50 | 161.00 | 100 |

The total investment figure of £161.00m at 31st March 2024 includes £72.45m Swansea Bay City Deal.

An analysis of the daily cash schedules indicates that the minimum balance lent over the twelve month period was £148.50m and the maximum balance lent was £226.50m. The average balance for the year was £198.11m.

The total investments made by the Council and repaid to the Council (the turnover) amounted to £1,727.50. This averaged approximately £33.04m per week or £4.72m per day. A summary of the turnover is shown below:

| | £m |
|------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Total Investments 1st April 2023 | 148.50 |
| Investments made during the year | 870.00 |
| Sub Total | 1018.50 |
| Investments Repaid during the year | (857.50) |
| Total Investments 31st March 2024 | 161.00 |

The main aim of the Treasury Management Strategy is to manage the cash flows of the Council and the risks associated with this activity. Lending on the money market secures an optimum rate of return, allows for diversification of investments and consequently reduction of risk, which is of paramount importance in today's financial markets.

For the period under review the average "90-day un compounded SONIA rate" was 4.83% whereas the actual rate the Council earned was 4.76%, a marginal under performance of 0.07%.

This under performance can be quantified as £134k less than interest earned compared to the average rate above.

The gross interest earned on investments for 2023-24 amounted to £9.389m, which was more than the estimated figure of £0.500m. The Bank of England Official rate was increased from 4.25% to 5.25% during 2023-24.

The income from investments is used by the Authority to reduce the net overall costs to the Council taxpayer.

3. Security, Liquidity and Yield (SLY)

Within the Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2023-24, the Council's investment priorities are:

- Security of Capital
- Liquidity and
- Yield

The Council aims to achieve the optimum return (yield) on investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity. In the current economic climate it is still considered appropriate to keep investments short term to cover cash flow requirements.

Attached at Appendix 1 is a list of the individual investments held as at the 31st March 2024 together with their credit ratings, historic risk of default and the risk weighting attached to each investment.

4. Borrowing

As Members are aware the Authority has a capital investment programme. For 2023-24 actual capital expenditure was £131.80m. This was financed from:

| | £m |
|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Borrowing | 23.84 |
| Grants and Contributions | 92.24 |
| Usable Capital Receipts Applied | 0.44 |
| Revenue and Reserves | 15.28 |
| Total | 131.80 |

Under the Treasury Management Strategy it was resolved:

- To borrow to meet the funding requirements of the Authority, after allowing for capital grants, capital receipts and capital contributions, and to stay within the Prudential Indicators to ensure affordability, prudence and sustainability.
- To borrow when interest rates are at their most advantageous, after considering cash flow requirements.

The following loans were borrowed during 2023-24 to fund the capital programme:

| Loan Reference | Amount (£m) | Interest Rate | Start Date | Period | Maturity Date |
|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|---------------|----------------------|
| PWLB 685874 | 10.00 | 4.41% | 21st December 2023 | 49.5 yrs | 28th September 2073 |
| Total | 10.00 | | | | |

The total loans outstanding at 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024 were:

| Loans | Balance at 01.04.23 £m | Balance at 31.03.24 £m | Net Increase/ (Net Decrease) £m |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) | 397.61 | 397.45 | (0.16) |
| Market Loan | 3.00 | 3.00 | 0.00 |
| Salix, Invest-to-Save, HILS & TCL | 9.96 | 9.67 | (0.19) |
| Total | 410.57 | 410.12 | (0.35) |

The total external interest paid in 2023-24 amounted to £16.49m, which compares favourably with the budget of £19.29m. The savings have arisen due to under borrowing on the capital programme and borrowing at lower than anticipated interest rates.

5. Treasury Management Prudential Indicators

Under the requirements of the Prudential Code of Practice for Capital Finance in Local Authorities, the Council are required to set a number of treasury management prudential indicators for the year 2023-24. The indicators set and the performance against those indicators is shown below:

5.1 The estimated and actual interest exposure limits as at 31st March 2024 were:

| | Estimate 31.03.24 £m | | | Actual 31.03.24 £m | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| | Fixed Interest Rate | Variable Interest Rate | Total | Fixed Interest Rate | Variable Interest Rate | Total |
| Borrowed | 464.00 | 3.00 | 467.00 | 407.12 | 3.00 | 410.12 |
| Invested | (50.00) | (50.00) | (100.00) | (88.50) | (72.50) | (161.00) |
| Net | 414.00 | (47.00) | 367.00 | 318.62 | (69.50) | 249.12 |
| Proportion of Total Net Borrowing | 113% | (13%) | 100% | 128% | (28%) | 100% |
| Limit | 150% | 5% | | 150% | 5% | |

5.2 Maximum principal sums invested > 365 days

| | 2023-2024 Limit £m | 2023-2024 Actual £m |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Maximum principal sums invested > 365 days | 10 | NIL |

5.3 Interest rate exposure limits

| | 2023-24 Limit £m | 2023-24 Actual £m |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Limits on fixed interest rates based on net debt | 518.00 | 318.62 |
| Limits on variable interest rates based on net debt | 52.00 | (69.50) |

5.4 The upper and lower limits set for the maturity structure of borrowing along with the actual maturity structure as at 31st March 2024.

| | Estimated Upper Limit 2023-2024 % | Estimated Lower Limit 2023-2024 % | Actual 31.03.24 % |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Under 12 months | 15 | 0 | 2.27 |
| 12 months to 2 years | 15 | 0 | 2.12 |
| 2 years to 5 years | 50 | 0 | 5.91 |
| 5 years to 10 years | 50 | 0 | 9.04 |
| 10 years to 20 years | 50 | 0 | 20.38 |
| 20 years to 30 years | 50 | 0 | 22.55 |
| 30 years to 40 years | 50 | 0 | 20.65 |
| 40 years and above | 50 | 0 | 17.08 |
| Total | | | 100.00 |

Details of the above maturity structure are shown below:

| Loan Maturities | PWLB Debt | Average Interest Rate | Market Loans/ Invest to Save/Salix/ HILS/TCL | Average Interest Rate | Total Debt Outstanding |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | £m | % | £m | % | £m |
| Before 1st April 2025 | 9.00 | 5.25 | 0.29 | 0 | 9.29 |
| 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026 | 8.41 | 4.19 | 0.29 | 0 | 8.70 |
| 1st April 2026 to 31st March 2029 | 23.38 | 4.19 | 0.87 | 0 | 24.25 |
| 1st April 2029 to 31st March 2034 | 32.86 | 4.11 | 4.22 | 0 | 37.08 |
| 1st April 2034 to 31st March 2044 | 79.60 | 4.28 | 4.00 | 0 | 83.60 |
| 1st April 2044 to 31st March 2054 | 92.50 | 4.37 | 0 | 0 | 92.50 |
| 1st April 2054 to 31st March 2064 | 81.70 | 4.51 | 3.00 | 4.72 | 84.70 |
| After March 2064 | 70.00 | 2.38 | 0 | 0 | 70.00 |
| Total as at 31.03.24 | 397.45 | | 12.67 | | 410.12 |

6. Prudential Indicators

6.1 Affordability

6.1.1 Actual and estimated ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream.

| Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | 2023-2024 Estimate % | 2023-2024 Actual % |
| Non-HRA | 3.45 | 2.32 |
| HRA | 28.03 | 27.54 |

The indicator shows the proportion of income taken up by capital financing costs.

6.2 Prudence

6.2.1 The Capital Financing Requirement (CFR).

| | 31.03.2024 Estimate £m | 31.03.2024 Actual £m |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Non-HRA | 305 | 267 |
| HRA | 166 | 170 |
| HRAS | 67 | 67 |
| Total | 538 | 504 |

The Capital Financing Requirement reflects the underlying need to borrow for capital purposes.

6.2.2 Gross Borrowing against the Capital Finance Requirement indicator.

To ensure that borrowing levels are prudent over the medium term the Council's external borrowing must only be for a capital purpose. Gross borrowing must not exceed the CFR for 2023-24 plus the expected changes to the CFR over 2024-25 and 2025-26 but can in the short term due to cash flows. The table below highlights the Council's gross borrowing position against the CFR. The Council has complied with this prudential indicator.

| £m | 2023-2024 Estimate | 2023-2024 Actual |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Debt at 1 st April 2023 | 410 | 410 |
| Expected Change in Debt | 57 | 0 |
| Gross debt at 31st March 2023 | 467 | 410 |
| CFR | 538 | 504 |
| Under / (Over) borrowing | 71 | 94 |

The Section 151 Officer reports that the authority had no difficulty meeting this requirement in 2023-24.

6.2.3 The Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary.

The Authorised Limit is the “Affordable Borrowing Limit” required by Section 3 of the Local Government Act 2003. The Council does not have the power to borrow above this level. The table below demonstrates that during 2023-24 the Council has maintained gross borrowing within its Authorised Limit.

The Operational Boundary is the expected borrowing position of the Council during the year. Periods where the actual position is either below or over the Boundary is acceptable subject to the Authorised Limit not being breached.

The actual financing costs as a proportion of net revenue stream identifies the trend in the cost of capital (borrowing and other long term obligation costs net of investment income) against the net revenue stream.

| | 2023-2024 £m |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Authorised Limit | 591.40 |
| Gross borrowing | 410.12 |
| Operational Boundary | 537.70 |
| Average gross borrowing position | 407.29 |
| Financing costs as a proportion of net revenue stream | 4.75% |

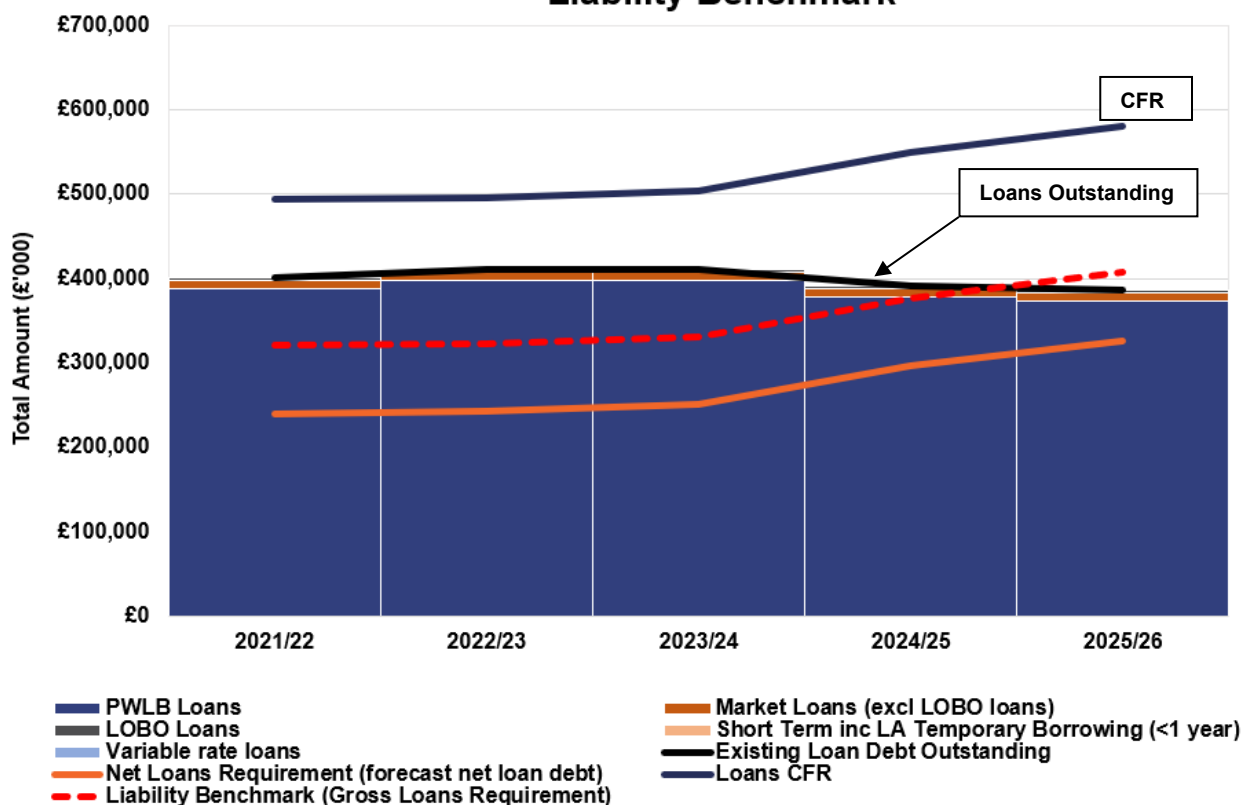
7. Liability Benchmark

A new Prudential Indicator for 2023/2024 is the Liability Benchmark. The Council is required to estimate and measure the Liability Benchmark for the forthcoming year and the following two years. The liability benchmark is a measure of how well the existing loans portfolio matches the Council’s planned borrowing needs.

There are four components to the Liability Benchmark:

- **Existing Loan Debt Outstanding:** The Council’s existing loans that are still outstanding in future years.
- **Loans CFR:** This is calculated in accordance with the loans CFR definition in the Prudential Code and projected into the future based on approved prudential borrowing and planned Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP).
- **Net Loans Requirement:** This will show the Council’s gross loan debt less treasury management investments at the last financial year-end, projected into the future and based on its approved prudential borrowing, planned MRP and any other major cash flows forecasted.
- **Liability Benchmark:** This equals net loans requirement plus short-term liquidity allowance.

Liability Benchmark



The purpose of this prudential indicator is to compare the Council's existing loans outstanding (the black line) against its future need for loan debt, or liability benchmark (the red line). If the black line is below the red line, the existing portfolio outstanding is less than the loan debt required, and the Council will need to borrow to meet the shortfall. If the black line is above the red line, the Council will (based on its current plans) have more debt than it needs, and the excess will have to be invested. The chart therefore tells a Council how much it needs to borrow, when, and to want maturities to match its planned borrowing needs.

8. Leasing

No finance leases were negotiated during the year.

9. Rescheduling

No rescheduling was undertaken during the year.

10. Conclusion

This report demonstrates compliance with the reporting requirements of the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice.

11. Recommendations

It is recommended that this report be received by Cabinet.

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| Totals | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|------|
| Total | £161,000,000 | |
| Calls & MMFs | £72,500,000 | 45% |
| Fixed Deposits | £88,500,000 | 55% |
| Specified | £72,500,000 | 100% |

| Weighted Average | | |
|------------------------|-----------------|-------|
| Yield | | 5.23% |
| Maturity (Days) | | |
| Total Portfolio | Total Portfolio | 31.69 |
| Long Term | | |
| Short Term | | |
| AAA | - | 1.00 |
| AA | F1 | 38.95 |
| A | F1 | 51.94 |
| BBB | F2 | 0.00 |
| CCC | C | 0.00 |

| Risk Factors | | |
|------------------------|--------|--------|
| < 1 year | £6,876 | 0.004% |
| 1 - 2 years | £0 | 0.000% |
| 2 - 3 years | £0 | 0.000% |
| 3 - 4 years | £0 | 0.000% |
| 4 - 5 years | £0 | 0.000% |
| Total Portfolio | £6,876 | 0.004% |

| Maturity Structure | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| < 1 Week | £84,500,000 | 52% |
| < 1 Month | £31,000,000 | 19% |
| 2 - 3 Months | £31,500,000 | 20% |
| 3 - 6 Months | £7,000,000 | 4% |
| 6 - 9 Months | £7,000,000 | 4% |
| 9 - 12 Months | £0 | 0% |
| 12 Months+ | £0 | 0% |
| Total | £161,000,000 | 100% |

SLY Model

Carmarthenshire County Council

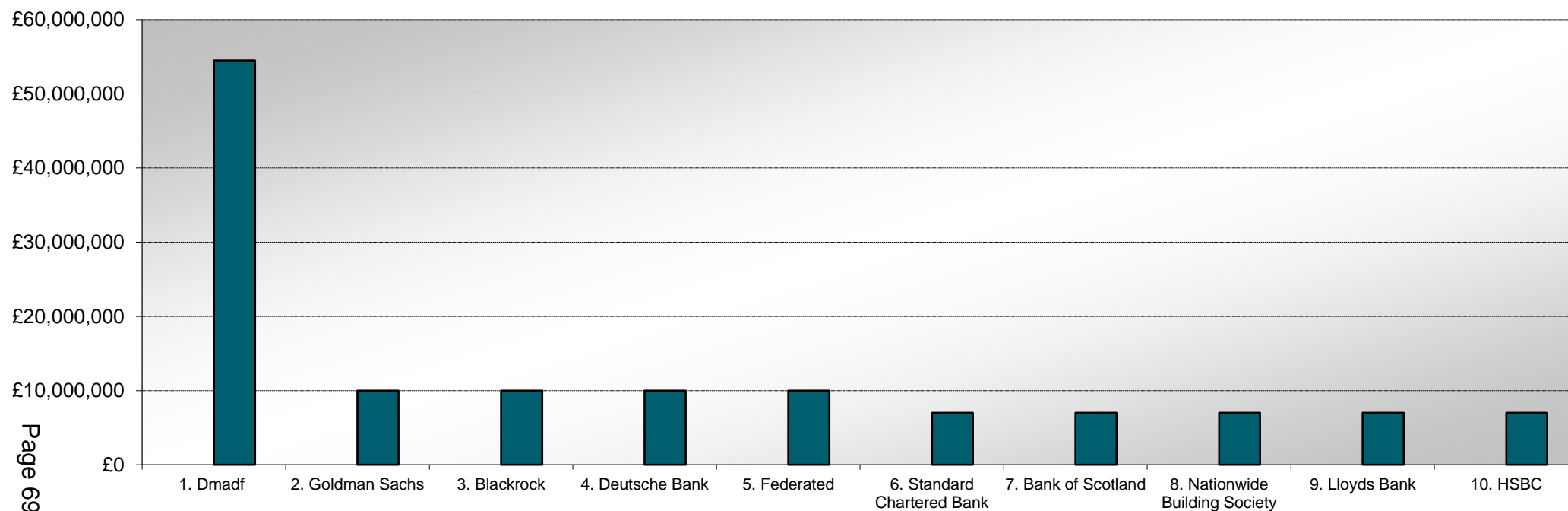
31/03/2024

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Top 10 Counterparty Holdings

Carmarthenshire County Council

| Counterparty | Principal | % of Total Holding | WAM (Days) | WAYield | WADefault |
|--------------------------------|-------------|--------------------|------------|---------|-----------|
| 1. Dmadf | £54,500,000 | 42.08% | 36 | 5.18% | 0.002% |
| 2. Goldman Sachs | £10,000,000 | 7.72% | 1 | 5.17% | 0.000% |
| 3. Blackrock | £10,000,000 | 7.72% | 1 | 5.27% | 0.000% |
| 4. Deutsche Bank | £10,000,000 | 7.72% | 1 | 5.21% | 0.000% |
| 5. Federated | £10,000,000 | 7.72% | 1 | 5.31% | 0.000% |
| 6. Standard Chartered Bank | £7,000,000 | 5.41% | 1 | 5.26% | 0.000% |
| 7. Bank of Scotland | £7,000,000 | 5.41% | 1 | 5.15% | 0.000% |
| 8. Nationwide Building Society | £7,000,000 | 5.41% | 208 | 5.24% | 0.054% |
| 9. Lloyds Bank | £7,000,000 | 5.41% | 96 | 6.22% | 0.025% |
| 10. HSBC | £7,000,000 | 5.41% | 1 | 2.09% | 0.000% |



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CABINET

MONDAY, 16 SEPTEMBER 2024

PRESENT: Councillor D. Price (Chair)

Councillors (In Person):

| | | | |
|-----------|--------------|-------------|------------|
| G. Davies | H.A.L. Evans | P.M. Hughes | A.C. Jones |
| A. Lenny | J. Tremlett | | |

Councillors (Virtually):

| | | |
|------------|-------------|-----------------|
| L.D. Evans | E.G. Thomas | A. Vaughan Owen |
|------------|-------------|-----------------|

Also in attendance (Virtually):

Councillor D.M. Cundy

Also Present (In Person):

W. Walters, Chief Executive

J. Morgan, Director of Community Services;

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

C. Moore, Director of Corporate Services;

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

A. Williams, Director of Place and Infrastructure;

S. Murphy, Head of Law, Governance and Civil Services;

L. Jenkins, Cabinet Support Officer;

C. Higginson, Media Manager;

S. Rees, Simultaneous Translator;

M. Runeckles, Members Support Officer;

J. Owen, Democratic Services Officer.

Also Present (Virtually):

D. Hall-Jones, Member Support Officer.

Chamber, County Hall, Carmarthen, SA31 1JP and remotely: 10:00am - 10:18am

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

The Leader welcomed Councillor Carys Jones, to her first Cabinet Meeting as the Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs, Community Cohesion and Planning Policy.

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 29TH JULY 2024

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 29th July 2024 be signed as a correct record.

4. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE BY MEMBERS

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

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

5.1. QUESTION BY SION DAVIES TO CLLR. EDWARD THOMAS, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, WASTE AND INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

The Chair advised that Mr Davies was not present to ask his question and had requested that the question be asked on his behalf.

"Given the widespread concerns among Carmarthenshire's waste collection workforce regarding the proposed shift to four-weekly black bin collections and the centralisation of waste operations at Nantycaws, including fears about earlier start times, increased travel distances, and the impact on local communities, can the Cabinet Member explain why these proposals are being pushed forward despite clear dissatisfaction from those who will be most affected?"

Response by Councillor Edward Thomas – Cabinet Member For Transport, Waste and Infrastructure Services:-

The Council is committed to making informed decisions that balance the needs of the community environmental sustainability and economic viability. The Council has been working with the Welsh Government on this to develop the strategy and is committed to continue to collaborate to deliver these changes in a way that improves the service the public receives. This increases recycled capture and delivers cost effectiveness for the long-term. We received your correspondence on this matter and a full response would be sent following this meeting.

The Leader took the opportunity to highlight that he had also received a letter from Mr Davies in his capacity as a Conservative party representative in Llanelli. A joint response from the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Transport, Waste and Infrastructure Services to respond to the points that had been raised within the letter.

6. ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATOR REPORT 2023-2024

As part of the requirements of the revised CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management, the Cabinet considered the Council's Annual Treasury Management and Prudential Indicator Report for the 2023-2024.

The Council adopted the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy and the five-year capital programme for 2023-24 on the 1st March 2024.

The Annual report listed the activities that took place during the year.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL that the Annual Treasury Management and Prudential Indicator Report for 2023-2024 be approved.

7. REVENUE BUDGET OUTLOOK

The Cabinet considered a report on the Council's current financial outlook and updates on the current financial model covering the next financial year.

The report also outlined the proposals for taking forward the budget preparation for the next year.

It was commented that this was concerning time for all at the Council and for local government across Wales. Discussions taking place across the Country with Leaders and Cabinet Members indicates a significant concern in respect of the Local Governments ability to fund the gap. It was raised that a momentous piece of work was to be carried out in the coming months, in terms of lobbying both UK Government and Welsh Government to ensure that wage and price increases are funded sufficiently over the next financial year and medium term.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that:-

- 7.1 the initial budget outlook for 2025/26 to 2027/28 be received;**
- 7.2 the proposed approach to identifying the required savings be endorsed;**
- 7.3 the proposed approach to the Budget Consultation be noted.**

8. TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF COUNCILLOR DERYK CUNDY TO THE LABOUR GROUP VACANT SEAT ON THE RURAL WORKING GROUP ADVISORY PANEL

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that Councillor Deryk Cundy be appointed to the Labour Group vacancy on the Rural Working Group Advisory Panel.

9. ANY OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS

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

CHAIR

DATE

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