

Leader's Annual Report

2019-2020

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Cyngor **Sir Gâr**
Carmarthenshire
County Council



Key Highlights

96%
of undisputed
invoices were paid
in 30 days

£2.65m
invested in Highways

£12m
Funding Secured

£52m
invested in
Affordable Homes
(over the next three years)

30
transactional
services now
online

£49m
invested in existing
Council Homes

53%
with Local Suppliers
based in the
Carmarthenshire
Postcode

77%
of spend was
with Welsh
Suppliers

90k
Hwb Appointments

64%
Waste reused,
recycled or
composted

71%
GCSE grade C or above
21.3%
Top A*- A grades
(GCSE)

Both higher
than the
averages for
Wales

Introduction



This is my fifth annual report as leader of Carmarthenshire County Council, and it illustrates the stark contrast between where we started the year and how it has ended. It also highlights how much we have done for the residents of our county and how much more we intend to do, although some of it may be on hold while we deal with the current pandemic. The spread of Covid19 has impacted us all and forced us as an authority to adapt our services almost overnight; however, we look forward toward a time of recovery when we can resume our work.

Last year I spoke about future challenges and our continued work on our five-year plan 'Moving Forward in Carmarthenshire'. As we approach the midway point in the plan, I'm pleased to report that we are making notable progress. Indeed, 40% of the actions have been completed and of those remaining, they have been reported as 80% complete.

This year we again consulted with the people of Carmarthenshire to see how the

budget should be shaped and this year we engaged with more than 2,000 groups and individuals. Alongside an increase of 4.4% in the budget settlement from the Welsh Government and a Council Tax increase of 4.89% we were able to review some of our initial proposals. We responded to public opinion by removing or deferring some budget proposals most strongly objected to during the budget consultation process, including a reduction in spending for Youth Support Services, and the closure of the Whitland Household Waste Recycling Centre. Again, this year, we have presented a fair and balanced budget which responds to the major concerns fed back from the consultation, providing significant extra resources for critical services.

This year we made clear our aspiration to regenerate our rural communities when we launched the 'Moving Rural Carmarthenshire Forward Report'. This lays out how we plan to regenerate our rural communities by strengthening local

economies, creating jobs and business opportunities and protecting the Welsh language. At the heart of the strategy is an emphasis on creating jobs and business opportunities so that young people stay and settle in Carmarthenshire. We currently lose around 1,000 young people from the county each year and we want to attract them back. The report outlines our 'Ten Rural Towns Initiative' which we had planned to launch in the autumn and is geared towards ensuring that market towns such as Llandovery and St Clears are more sustainable in the future.

Llanelli's Wellness and Life Science Village (Pentre Awel) secured outline planning consent in August 2019, which was a landmark achievement for the delivery of this development along the Llanelli coast. The project will provide world-class business, education, leisure and health facilities for the people of Carmarthenshire and create major employment opportunities. The designs for the first phase of the project illustrate the scale of the work ahead and the exciting times to come. We continue to work closely with Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, Pembrokeshire County Council and City and County of Swansea and both the Welsh and UK government as part of the Swansea Bay Joint Committee, and I remain confident that the City Deal has the potential to improve the lives of people across the county, in both urban and rural areas.

In the past few weeks Ysgol Pen Rhos in Llanelli won two awards at the RICS Social Impact Awards 2020. The awards recognise building projects which have had a positive and transforming effect on communities and the everyday lives of people. Ysgol Pen Rhos not only won the education

category but was also named the overall project of the year. There were eight categories in total and, as overall winners, Ysgol Pen Rhos beat a number of other prestigious developments including the International Convention Centre in Newport, Cardiff's Capital Quarter and the SA1 waterfront development in Swansea. The project was funded by Carmarthenshire County Council's Modernising Education Programme and the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools initiative which aims to create strategically and operationally effective resources that meet current and future need for a school-based and community-focused education. It is an investment in the future of our children and communities.

This year we reinforced our commitment to climate change and the environment and became the first local authority in Wales to publish a climate change action plan outlining how we will become net zero carbon in the next ten years. We've already reduced our carbon emissions from non-domestic buildings by 38% since 2005/6 and reduced emissions from streetlights by 65% since 2011/12. We've also reviewed the council fleet, including refuse and gritting vehicles and reduced emissions by 19%. As we renew our fleet, we will invest in more energy efficient vehicles. The plan will evolve over time and will change to meet future challenges, as well as opportunities. We will continue to work on new ways of developing projects in support of our target of becoming net zero carbon.

In March we outlined our intentions to commit a further £49m to our Carmarthenshire Housing Standard (CHS+) programme and to develop a new standard to improve the energy efficiency of homes, by cutting and offsetting carbon emissions

whilst ensuring that our homes are warm and cheap to run. Also, in terms of housing we are just 15 houses short of our promise to deliver 1,000 more affordable homes by 2021.

To further our commitment to the environment we also made changes to our refuse collection in order to increase our recycling rate. Our Media and Marketing Team worked successfully with Waste Services to consult with and inform our residents on how households could increase their recycling efforts. I hope that the resulting changes to refuse collection and food waste collection will see an increase of over 3% in our overall recycling rate.

As always, I want to thank my colleagues on the Executive Board for their continuing support and enthusiasm to do their best for Carmarthenshire, especially over the past few weeks. The same must be said for all the Carmarthenshire councillors who passionately represent their council wards and who respond so swiftly to the needs of their communities. They deserve credit and lasting appreciation for their endeavours.

I said last year that in Carmarthenshire we have some of the finest officers in Wales, and the past few weeks has more than reinforced that statement. I can't thank them enough for their efforts throughout the year and their response to the Covid-19 pandemic has been extremely humbling. They have worked tirelessly to ensure that our residents, communities, organisations, and businesses are kept safe and supported.

I really must pay tribute to the front-line staff who've shown great courage in continuing their work, often putting others before themselves and their families. I'd also like to thank those who have moved from their day-to-day work to cover other areas of front-line service – those who usually work in offices who are now working in care homes, driving buses, and delivering food. Your commitment and willingness to support others is truly inspiring. When I became leader five years ago, my appeal to this county was that we should be innovative, and even daring, in our approach and over the past few weeks I have witnessed that immeasurably. The information which follows in my Annual Report is clear evidence of the commitment across our organisation.

I would like to finish by reassuring you that although recent global events have changed the way we live and the way we work and it is inevitable that it may change some of our plans, it will not change my commitment to you that I and my Executive Board will continue to do the best we can for the benefit of Carmarthenshire as a whole.



Councillor Emlyn Dole

Leader of Carmarthenshire County Council



Laugarne Castle

Celtic Routes

In May 2019, representatives from over 40 businesses and organisations from Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire came together to learn more about an exciting new tourism project, 'Celtic Routes'.

Celtic Routes is a partnership project between Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire County Councils and the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority in Wales and Wicklow, Wexford and Waterford County Councils in Ireland.

The €1.99m project, led by Carmarthenshire County Council, is part funded by the Ireland Wales Cooperation programme (2014-2020).

The Celtic Routes project aims to persuade visitors driving through each of the partner destinations who are en-route to more established destinations to stop and spend time exploring each area and visit time and time again.

Pembrey Country Park

It was a pleasure to celebrate the fact that Pembrey Country Park has won the prestigious Blue Flag status for the eleventh consecutive year.

The attraction, which includes Cefn Sidan beach, has been awarded the status every year since 2009. Since the Blue Flag awards were first introduced in 1988, Pembrey Country Park has won more Blue Flags than anywhere else in Wales.

Cefn Sidan was also the first Welsh beach to win the accolade.

The award is only given to beaches, marinas and harbours that have the highest quality of water, environmental education and management, safety and services. The Blue Flag is an indication of a world class visiting experience for local people and visitors to Carmarthenshire.

As a council, we are proud of the long-standing association with the Blue Flag

Awards. At a time when more and more people are choosing to holiday at home, the Seaside Award is a symbol of quality that can be depended on when looking for potential places to visit.

Promoting our Heritage

Celebrating and promoting Carmarthenshire's rich cultural achievements and diversity is a clear commitment made in our Five-Year Plan as Executive Board. In May 2019, Carmarthenshire's library service was highlighted as a model for the rest of Wales, according to a Welsh Government report.

The council has been praised for its commitment to the future of its library service and for its forward-thinking approach in creating a new digital learning environment alongside its more traditional offering.

Carmarthenshire is the best in Wales for both its investment in reading materials and spending per head on library provision, as well as the third highest in Wales for PC provision.

The report praises the commitment of the council to the service itself. It praises our strategy which sets out a robust framework for the future and the variety of what we provide within the service across the county and the work done to promote health and living a healthier lifestyle, which of course also increases the number of users.

The Annual Assessment Report 2017-18 for Welsh Library Standards showed Carmarthenshire had met all the 12 core entitlements in full and of the 10 quality indicators with targets nine had been achieved in full and one in part.

The report referred to the success of the 'Makerspace' project at Ammanford library, providing a model for how traditional and digital provision can be balanced and a blueprint for future digital development across Carmarthenshire.

For me personally, seeing children as young as five coding and children aged eight recording their own songs was a fantastic experience and brings true the vision we held for the digital projects as part of the City Deal.

Childcare Offer

Since launching the Childcare Offer in January 2019, by the Welsh Government, our Family Information Service has been supporting families to access the offer. In May 2019, we received the positive news that over 400 children are now accessing free early education and childcare in Carmarthenshire.

The Childcare Offer provides eligible working parents with up to 30 hours a week of Government funded early education and childcare for their three- and four-year olds.

Parents are eligible for the Childcare Offer if they have a child of the relevant age, from the term after their third birthday until they start in full time school, and if they are working and earning at least the equivalent of 16 hours at the National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage.

As a council, we recognise that childcare is one of the biggest challenges facing working families and as Executive Board, we will ensure that we respond and deliver key childcare and play requirements.



Llanelli school's quality recognised by major award

Close to a year after its official opening, Ysgol Pen Rhos, a £10.2 million primary school in the Seaside area of the town, was highly commended in the school project of the year category at the prestigious Education Buildings Wales Awards.

Officially opened in June 2018, the school features facilities including a flying start nursery, solar panels and classroom terraces for outdoor lessons.

A 3G pitch has also been made available for school and community use, as well as hard and soft landscaping areas. Features including brickwork and pitched roofs have been incorporated to reflect the industrial heritage of a neighbouring terrace of houses, alongside the use of more contemporary features like metal and wooden cladding. The project also delivered community benefits including training and local employment.

Ysgol Pen Rhos was funded by Carmarthenshire County Council's Modernising Education Programme and the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools initiative.

The school was initially developed and then delivered, and project managed by Carmarthenshire County Council's in-house Property Design Team, working with HLM Architects. Ysgol Pen Rhos was constructed by T Richard Jones (Betws) Ltd and winning the award for the quality of the school's design and build is worthy recognition for an outstanding team effort that involved the council and its partners, as well as staff and pupils.

The inclusion of environmentally friendly features also means the school will be sustainable for many years to come, with the availability of outdoor learning and landscaped areas sure to inspire pupils now and in future.

This work has led to a facility that provides a world class learning environment, while

celebrating Llanelli's rich industrial heritage. Ysgol Pen Rhos is among many completed or planned projects in Carmarthenshire that show how seriously we take our commitment to providing the county's children and communities with top quality facilities that meet the needs of the 21st century.

Women's Tour a resounding success for Carmarthenshire

The grand finale of the OVO Women's Tour was held in the county on 15 June and proved to be a resounding success, with thousands lining the route to cheer the cyclists on their 79-mile race through Carmarthenshire.

Personally, I would like to thank all communities, businesses, volunteers and spectators, as well as event staff, security, marshals and emergency services, for helping us making it a special day for the county.

Stage Six of the race saw the best female cyclists in the world competing in a series of sprints, mountain climbs and descents through some of Carmarthenshire's most breath-taking landscape, starting at the historic Carmarthen Velodrome, crossing the Black Mountains and ending at the Closed Road Circuit at Pembrey Country Park. It was a pleasure to see our communities out in force to provide a carnival atmosphere, with many putting on their own events and family activities. The race was won by Lizzie Deignan. Hosting the race gave us the opportunity to showcase our stunning landscape and scenery, which I know has provided one of the most challenging stages for the cyclists

in this year's Tour but has taken in some of our most breath-taking mountains and valleys.

We were particularly proud of Manon Lloyd (Drops), who is from Carmarthenshire and who started her cycling career with Towy Riders in Carmarthen. It must have been a fantastic feeling for her to compete with the best in the world on home soil.

Ambitious plans to build 900 new council homes moves forward

When preparing our five-year plan, Moving Forward in Carmarthenshire, the importance of safe homes, maintained to a high standard was underlined. Therefore, in July 2019, we took another step towards this vision, when plans to build 900 new council homes in Carmarthenshire were approved.

With the funding in place to build a third of the planned homes within the next three years, Carmarthenshire is the first and only local authority in Wales with such wide-scale plans for investment in social housing - the biggest since the 1970s.

Once complete, the scheme will return Carmarthenshire County Council's housing stock to levels last seen in the 1990s and is in addition to the council's commitment to create an additional 1,000 affordable homes in the county by 2021. The provision will be made in all parts of the county and will support rural areas which have lacked available social housing for many years.

Our housing developments will also support the regeneration priorities of the county as well and will contribute towards people's health and well-being.

Black bag reduction and food bin liners to help recycling

In July, new measures were introduced to support our residents to increase their recycling rates. As part of the five-year plan, the Executive Board committed to revise and improve our recycling performance further.

The number of black bags that residents in Carmarthenshire can put out for collection has changed from four to three per fortnight in a bid to boost recycling rates. For the first time, we have also distributed food bin liners for the first time to encourage more people to recycle their food waste. As part of consultation feedback, 64% of residents who said they did not recycle their food waste said they would be more likely to do so if they were provided with free food bin liners.

It is hoped these measures – along with the introduction of black bag sorting at the recycling centres – will help the council to achieve Welsh Government's 64% recycling target by the end of this financial year and avoid a hefty fine.

Most importantly, recycling is much better for the environment than burying our rubbish in landfill.

In recent years we have achieved high recycling figures but last year there was a reduction in our overall figure and we only just achieved 58%.

This year's target is 64% and Welsh Government have said they will fine local authorities if they do not reach it and it is £164,000 for every 1% failure of the target. So, if we stay as we are that could mean a fine of £820,000 which is the equivalent of 17 teachers or 33 care workers.

However, with these changes, which will be introduced from October there is every chance we could exceed this target.

It is hoped that the introduction of food bin liners together with the black bag restriction will help increase the county's overall recycling rate by 3.3%.

Council's plan to cut CO₂ by almost 700 tonnes a year

Carmarthenshire County Council made the commitment to become a net zero carbon local authority by 2030 in February when declaring a climate emergency. It was agreed to invest over £2.5million to make energy efficiencies in our buildings in a bid to cut carbon emissions by almost 700 tonnes a year.

The authority has taken out an interest-free loan to pay for the Welsh Government Re:fit scheme, which it will pay back over 10 years from savings on running costs.

New technology will be installed in non-domestic buildings - including schools - to save energy and water, with an estimated 691 tonnes of CO₂ saved every year.

Over 30 sites have been identified for phase one of the roll-out, undertaken on behalf of the council by renewable energy company Ameresco.

The scheme is in addition to the energy saving measures the council has already applied in its buildings.

To date, over £2million has been invested in over 200 energy efficiency projects, saving over £7million in running costs and 41,000 tonnes of CO₂ over the lifetime of installed technologies.

The council has a policy of integrating low and zero carbon technologies into major building works projects such as schools, where PV installations and Passivhaus standards are already in use.

Its fleet of refuse lorries is the most emission-friendly fleet in Wales; street lighting has been converted to LED units; and there has been significant investment in Safe Routes in the Community and Safe Routes to Schools to encourage more sustainable travel.

We take our commitment very seriously, and we're pleased to be making this investment not only to save harmful carbon emissions, but also to save financially on the cost of running our buildings.

Planning to play a key role in protection of Welsh language

In July 2019, unanimous support was given to a motion which called for the planning system to play a larger role in the protection and growth of the Welsh language. Through the Moving Forward in Carmarthenshire plan, we have committed fully to supporting the Welsh Government target of having one million Welsh speakers by 2050.

The motion asked that the Welsh language becomes a material planning consideration for all developments of five or more houses in Rural Carmarthenshire, and 10 or more in urban areas. The approach will help address the decline in the number of Welsh speakers across our county.

Whilst developing our next Local Development Plan, which will set the boundaries and guidelines for planning

until 2033, this will now include provision to measure the impact of larger developments on the Welsh language countywide.

It will also seek to provide more affordable housing to allow more Welsh-speaking families to continue living in, or return to live, in Carmarthenshire.

New charging points to meet demand

In August 2019, it was announced that more charging points were set to be installed across Carmarthenshire for electric vehicles.

Some 26 sites in Llanelli, Burry Port, Ammanford, Carmarthen, Gwendraeth Valley and Llandeilo were announced as the latest locations to benefit from electric vehicle charging points.

The proposed 7kw-22kw (fast chargers) will charge a compatible electric vehicle in 3-5 hours.

Funding was secured for the for the plug-in chargers via successful bids to Welsh Government's Local Transport Fund and OLEV's residential charge point scheme.

This latest scheme forms part of Carmarthenshire County Council's ongoing efforts to support sustainability and to become a net zero carbon local authority by 2030. Naturally, we will be looking at installing more of these points across the county to meet the growing demand for electric and plug-in hybrid cars.

Carmarthenshire's GCSE results top Welsh average

In August, it was a pleasure to announce that Secondary school pupils in Carmarthenshire were celebrating GCSE pass rates above the national average again this year.

Almost 71 per cent of pupils achieved a grade C or higher, with 21.3 per cent awarded the top A*- A grades - both higher than the averages for Wales.

Pupils continue to achieve strong progress in their Welsh language skills with 72 per cent of entries in Welsh Language and 88 per cent of entries in Welsh Literature attaining a C grade or better, an upward trend that bucks the national trend.

Standards in English Language and English Literature continue to improve across the county, with 63.5 per cent and 80.5 per cent of entries, being awarded a C grade or above.

Pass rates in Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Maths have also continued to improve and surpass the Welsh averages.

The progress achieved provides our pupils with a firm foundation as they move on to their future learning and career opportunities. I would like to sincerely thank all pupils, parents and staff for their commitment and support in securing such pleasing achievements.

Major investment to improve county's roads

As part of the Executive Board's five-year plan, reviewing and developing a maintenance programme to, where necessary, improve the condition of existing highways across the County is a clear commitment. In August, it was announced that nearly £2.5m was being invested in Carmarthenshire roads over the next year.

A host of improvement works are underway with six resurfacing schemes already complete.

Around 40 sections of road will be resurfaced after funding was made available from the council's capital works programme and the Welsh Government.

This significant investment is in addition to a programme of preventative dressing treatment which has already finished.

The sections of road being resurfaced have been identified as a priority based on road condition, usage and strategic importance.

We do recognise however, that we are unable to treat every road; however, the combined improvements will support safer and improved journeys for Carmarthenshire's road users.



Development proposals, Tyisha ward

Executive Board backs plan to change schools' language

At the beginning of September 2019, the Executive Board supported plans to change the language of education at five local primary schools.

Under the proposals, children starting in the foundation phase classes in September 2020 at Ysgol Y Ddwylan (Newcastle Emlyn), Ysgol Griffith Jones (St Clears), Ysgol Llangynnwyr (Carmarthen), and Ysgol Llys Hywel (Whitland) will be taught in Welsh until they reach age seven, when parents can then decide the language they want their children to continue learning.

And, from January 2020, children starting at Llandovery's Ysgol Rhys Pritchard will be taught through the medium of Welsh up to the end of year six, aged 11.

English will be taught as a subject at the school, from year three onwards, with the aim of ensuring that all pupils become

confidently bilingual by the end of their primary schooling. There will be no change for current pupils attending the schools.

Our intention is to move these schools along the language continuum, coinciding with our five-year plan and our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

Our aim as a county is to see each pupil at the end of key stage two completely bilingual and confident in using the English and Welsh language.

Council working hard to meet continued social care pressures

During the year, we have faced unprecedented pressures on our social care budget with the growing number of older people in need. Despite the demands, the council's Executive Board was told that the authority has continued to provide a range of good quality Social Care Services.

During its 2019 review of services, the Care Inspectorate Wales said people “routinely told us they were satisfied with the services that helped them” in Carmarthenshire. This was one of several positive highlights in the report presented to Executive Board.

The work in services for people with mental health and learning disabilities was highlighted, and it was noted that services are more modern and focused on preventative care, allowing more people to live in our communities with supportive arrangements in place to reduce the number of people needing residential care. The department has also been working hard to strengthen the workforce to continue meeting the demands of people requiring care at home.

Exciting times ahead for Llanelli's Tyisha ward

In October 2019, it was announced that Llanelli's Tyisha ward was to be transformed as part of an exciting multi-million-pound regeneration project.

It follows a major consultation exercise with residents and businesses to create a vibrant, new community which will give the area – including Station Road – a complete overhaul.

An ambitious regeneration masterplan has been drawn up following feedback from the community and will now be put into action. The Executive Board made the commitment in the Moving Forward in Carmarthenshire report to develop a pilot project in the ward and to develop ways of tackling poverty in the area.

The aim is to transform the area, which is one of the county's most deprived, into a place where people want to live and work.

Consultation work was undertaken through 'Planning for Real'. All ages were keen to contribute and I'm sure by working together we can improve this area.

Tyisha is an area of strategic importance, providing a vital link between Llanelli town centre and the developments at Delta Lakes. It has the highest population density in Carmarthenshire, however, over a quarter of housing is social rented, in low demand and difficult to let.

The plan is to deliver new mixed-use housing developments, develop more community facilities and bring vacant business premises back into use.

Action will also be taken to improve the environment and to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour along with providing opportunities for education, training and employment.

A community steering group has been set up and the council is working with various partners including Dyfed-Powys Police and Llanelli Town Council to drive forward the project.

A total of £9.3million has been allocated from the council's New Build Programme (Housing Revenue Account) specifically for the Station Road area to assist in its regeneration. This project is unique in the area that it covers, and it is a significant change for those living in Tyisha. The community has given their opinions and are keen that changes take place.

Rural regeneration launch success

On the 8 October, over 100 people from all walks of life turned out to the launch of the council's rural regeneration strategy.

The event was held in Newcastle Emlyn and was an opportunity for people to hear more about the Moving Rural

Carmarthenshire Forward strategy which focuses on strengthening local economies, creating jobs and business opportunities and protecting the Welsh language.

The findings and recommendations of the cross-party task group review which was set up to investigate, understand and plan what is needed to create more sustainable rural communities and economies were discussed.

The event was well attended and was an opportunity to discuss the recommendations and to plan in order to everything in our power to support our rural areas to grow, to thrive, and to become self-sustaining – communities that offer opportunities for all.

This strategy gives everybody living and working in our rural communities an opportunity to get involved and play a part – this is not something we as a council can do alone and we welcome all input from residents, businesses and organisations.

At the heart of the new strategy is an emphasis on creating jobs, affordable homes and business opportunities so that young people stay and settle in Carmarthenshire. There is also an emphasis on encouraging young people to return to their roots.

It is the first time ever that a wide-ranging strategy has been developed by the council to specifically focus on its rural areas, where over 60 per cent of Carmarthenshire's population lives.

Council recognised for addressing empty homes

Ensuring that empty properties are bought back into use is one of the priorities within the Moving Forward in Carmarthenshire plan.

An Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee report released by the Welsh Government shows the council sets a good example in actively targeting empty properties in the private sector with an extensive and consistent approach.

In the last year, 189 properties in Carmarthenshire have been brought back into use - the second highest across all 22 local authorities in Wales.

We have two dedicated officers to address empty properties as well as an action plan. The officers work alongside Simple Letting to help owners bring their properties back into use and to prevent homelessness. These empty properties are also providing more affordable homes, achieving 63 affordable units last year.

Houses into Homes scheme is also available to empty property owners and is delivered by the council on behalf of the Welsh Government. The scheme offers recyclable and interest free loans.

We have been innovative in our approach, utilising various enforcement powers from Improvement Notices to Empty Dwelling Management Orders. A total of two Interim Empty Dwelling Management Orders resulting in three Final Empty Dwelling Management Orders have been served.



Helping make a child's Christmas

At the beginning of November, residents across Carmarthenshire were asked to help make a child's Christmas by donating a gift to those less fortunate.

The message came as we launched our eighth Toybox Appeal which helps hundreds of children with families who can't afford to buy gifts or toys.

Presents donated by kind people are given to families who, for a range of reasons, are not able to give their children a Christmas that most of us take for granted. Schools, family centres and youth workers identify those who are in greatest need of support.

In 2018, over 6,000 gifts were donated to 957 children from birth to teenagers. People were asked to donate new gifts from babies from 18 months up to teenagers and unwrapped so that they can be easily sorted.

I would like to personally thank all Elected Members, staff and volunteers who came together to sort, wrap and deliver toys in the run-up to Christmas.

Huge increase in recycling thanks to residents

There was also an opportunity to thank residents in Carmarthenshire for their recycling efforts after figures showed huge increases in the amount of food waste being recycled.

A total of 370 tonnes of food waste has been recycled in the first month following the reduction in the number of black bags households can put out for collection.

That is a staggering 25 per cent increase in food waste recycling.

Blue bag recycling has also risen by 10 per cent or 90 tonnes (the same weight as approximately 60 small cars) compared to the same period the previous year.

This means that by recycling more, less rubbish is going to landfill. The number of black bags collected in the first month since the three-bag limit was introduced has reduced by 100 tonnes compared to the same period last year.

Restoration works begin at Carmarthenshire Museum

Carmarthenshire Museum is recognised as one of the county's cultural gems and it was fantastic to see the major restoration works starting in January 2020, with a £1.2 million council investment.

The former Bishop's Palace in Abergwili is of huge historical and architectural importance and contains unique collections of fascinating art and antiquities from Carmarthenshire's rich past.

Essential repairs are being carried out to the roof and chimneys, as well as the stonework and dormer windows to make the museum watertight. Restoration works are also being carried out to the main entrance porch and to improve access.

It coincides with the £2.34 million Tywi Gateway Project to restore and transform the Bishop's Park and former palace outbuildings to create a café and learning space. The park's historic paths, walls and plantings will be re-instated and repaired and new access to the walled garden and Great Meadow will be created. The project has received £1.27 million from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

It marks the beginning of an exciting restoration journey for the museum itself, with ambitious plans to improve the shop/reception area and restore the Bishop's dining room gallery, subject to successful grant funding.

The commitment to deliver a transformation plan for the existing Museums provision in order to improve the provision for residents and visitors was made in our five-year plan.

Carmarthenshire benefits from new broadband rollout

As Leader of the council, I welcomed the decision by Openreach to introduce a broadband roll-out as a positive step forward in helping more communities and businesses become digitally connected.

Openreach, part of the BT Group, announced it will be investing in several full fibre ultrafast developments across the country, with many areas across Carmarthenshire set to benefit. Areas including Abergwili, Bronwydd, Burry Port, Carmarthen, Cwmffrwd, Capel Hendre, Carmel, Cwmgwili, Cefneithin, Cross Hands, Croesyceiliog, Drefach, Hendy and Idole have been listed for the investment.

As a council, we are committed to supporting improved digital connectivity across Carmarthenshire, in particular in rural areas where some communities are still receiving poor – if not any – digital services.

We understand Carmarthenshire is one of the biggest beneficiaries of this Openreach investment to roll out fibre broadband across 19 of our communities, and this is as a direct result of our continued lobbying for improved connectivity in our communities.

Whilst this is undoubtedly good news, there are many more areas that are in desperate need for investment and we will continue working behind the scenes to help make that happen.

Supporting families to stay together

First Minister Mark Drakeford and Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services Julie Morgan visited Carmarthenshire County Council to meet the team who are driving a positive change to family social care in January 2020.

Carmarthenshire has the lowest number of children in care throughout Wales, and figures are reducing steadily year-on-year with more and more families being supported to stay together.

Our strategic aim to reduce the number of looked after children is aligned to the Welsh Government's and is achieving this via a whole range of services which are together making a positive difference to hundreds of local people.

In conversation with social work managers, Mr Drakeford said Carmarthenshire stood out because the team is prepared to think and do things differently, and he wanted to find out how other areas of Wales can replicate their success.

One of the simplest, yet most effective, changes made in recent years is to align teams working across children's services and education and bringing staff with specialist skills together to provide a whole team around a family in need, opposed to attaching a single social worker to an individual case.

The First Minister was told how this has allowed sharing of skills, perspectives and ideas to provide a bespoke package of support for each family, as well as creativity in finding different ways of linking in with families and keeping them together.

Prevention and early years intervention are

also a key features – in the last six months the service has supported 18,000 families with a range of community-based services to build resilience and prevent the need for families to have contact with the statutory social care system.

As Leader of the council, I'm very proud that Carmarthenshire is at the forefront of developing such a diverse range of services that support families with a variety of needs and supports them to care for their children at home and within their own communities.

Keeping families together with the right kind of support is something I feel very strongly about. I'm proud of the work of our teams, and their willingness to work differently and try new approaches to support families in need and prevent them from needing our services.

More Carmarthenshire schools in green category

The aim of increasing the proportion of schools with a Green or Yellow categorisation in the National School Categorisation System is a clear objective within our Executive Board five-year plan. Results announced in January 2020, confirmed that schools across Carmarthenshire are responding well to support.

The primary purpose of the Welsh Government's categorisation model is to identify the appropriate level of support for each school according to need and to ensure that effective support and resources are in place to secure improvements.

A school's strengths and areas for improvement in standards, provision and leadership are identified during discussions



Ysgol Pen Rhos

with schools throughout the year before the most appropriate level of support for a school is agreed.

Categorisation outcomes show that 78 per cent of Carmarthenshire's primary schools and 91.6 per cent of secondary schools are now in green and yellow categories.

We are very pleased with the overall position here in Carmarthenshire. Many schools have shown improvement, and it is encouraging to see that the percentage of schools in the green category has increased. I would like to congratulate pupils, teachers, governors and parents for working together to ensure every child has the best chance of reaching their potential and we will continue to support and work closely with those who need support in order to secure further development.

Council's plans to invest quarter of a billion in county

We have recently announced our intention to invest almost £255million in capital projects to boost the economy, create jobs and enhance residents' quality of life.

The Executive Board has agreed its ambitious five-year capital programme detailing how we aims to spend a quarter of a billion pound in a variety of schemes to deliver strategic priorities and aspirations for the county.

The programme includes a further commitment of £86million to build or transform even more schools as part of its 21st Century Schools investment programme, which has already seen over £200million invested in new or improved primary and secondary schools over the last ten years.

As well as funding to improve Carmarthenshire's roads and bridges, the council has some exciting plans to develop a cultural quarter in Carmarthen, with £1.9million committed to the regeneration of the Oriel Myrddin Gallery in King Street, which will complement existing programmes including a purpose-built archive just opposite.

To further enhance people's leisure opportunities, the council is planning to invest a further £650,000 in Carmarthen Leisure Centre and has re-committed its promise to deliver a new leisure centre for Llanelli as part of the Wellness Village which is pushing ahead.

£4million will be spent transforming Llandeilo Market Hall, and £847,000 has been earmarked for further investment in Glanamman Industrial Estate.

Half a million has been committed to kick-start the council's efforts to become net carbon zero within the next 10 years - followings our 2019 climate emergency declaration – alongside new monies of £6.5million to maintain and improve the council's operational estate, including essential works at County Hall, Carmarthen, and Ty Elwyn in Llanelli.

Money has also been set aside to make good on the council's promise for a changing places facility for disabled residents and visitors in Llanelli.

The proposed capital programme anticipates an estimated spend of nearly £255million over the next five years, optimising funding opportunities and maximising the funding from potential external sources.

Carmarthenshire first to publish climate action plan

In February 2020, Carmarthenshire County Council became the first local authority in Wales to publish a climate change action plan detailing how we work towards becoming net zero carbon in the next 10 years.

Efforts to reduce and offset carbon emissions are already making a positive contribution to the climate change agenda, but more is to come with focus on key areas as the council rises to the challenge.

Last year the authority became one of the first councils in the UK to declare a climate emergency, pledging to becoming net carbon zero by 2030 - 20 years ahead of Welsh and UK government targets - and committing to publish an action plan within a year. We have reduced carbon emissions from its non-domestic buildings by 38 per cent since 2005/06 and procures all its electricity from renewable energy sources.

We have invested £2million in 200 energy efficiency projects in the hope of saving 41,000 tonnes of carbon emissions.

All new major build projects incorporate renewable energy, including solar panels, air and ground source heat pumps.

Carbon emissions from streetlights have reduced by 65 per cent since 2011/12, and 80 per cent of the county's 20,000 street lights have been converted to low energy LED.

Carbon emissions from the council's fleet, including refuse and gritting vehicles, has reduced by 19 per cent since 2012/13 with more investment due to upgrade to a more energy efficient fleet.

Actions include developing new carbon reductions from council's buildings, purchasing more energy efficient fleet, collaboration with other public bodies to deliver wider change, exploring opportunities for tree planting and renewable energy generation on council-owned land.

However, we do recognise that the easy bit is to write an action plan - the hard work starts now. This plan will evolve and will change to meet the challenges of the future. It will also respond to opportunities. We are currently exploring potential opportunities for largescale renewable energy projects and are working with Welsh Government Energy Service and Swansea Bay City Region to establish a Regional Energy Plan for South West Wales.

£1b construction framework awarded for south west Wales

Up to a billion pounds worth of construction contracts will be commissioned as part of a new South West Wales Regional Contractors Framework, awarded by Carmarthenshire County Council on behalf of the Mid and West Wales region.

A range of local and national contractors have gained a place on the framework to construct, refurbish and repair buildings for the public sector over the next four years.

As a council, we will be operating the framework until 2024, in association with Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire, Ceredigion and Swansea councils.

The framework will assist the whole region and the wider public sector, including

central government departments and their agencies, non-departmental public bodies, devolved administrations, NHS bodies, local authorities – including Powys County Council - the police, fire service, voluntary sector, charities and private sector organisations procuring on behalf of these bodies.

As well as providing rapid access to market leading contractors, the framework promises to reduce procurement time by an average of 100-200 days.

It will also provide significant procurement savings, particularly on high value contracts, with public sector bodies benefitting from less waste, less duplication, local engagement and greater efficiencies.

Emphasis has been given to supporting small and medium-sized enterprises in the Welsh supply chain, in a bid to support the local economy and boost employment.

Social value practices have also been a key focus of the assessment process, for example all projects over £1million must leave a community legacy, delivering against the goals of the Well Being of Future Generations Act.

This is a ready-made and fully compliant delivery vehicle for major capital building works, including reactive and planned repair and maintenance works for public sector organisations throughout the south west Wales and mid Wales region.

Public sector frameworks can create social value not only through the physical environments they help to create and maintain, but also the economic activity they generate, both locally and nationally.

Moving Forward in Carmarthenshire



We have seen a lot of change over recent weeks. Whilst we've all noticed the services that have been suspended, you will also realise that by working differently we have managed to keep over 300 council services running without any disruption, where it has been safe to do so.

As a council, we will continue to maintain our key objectives; however, these may look different and will need to be prioritised in response to Covid-19. Our five year plan, Moving Forward in Carmarthenshire, will continue to guide our work, but there will be thorough reflection and evaluation as part of our next steps.

Below are the key strategic highlights from our work on the five year plan, during 2019-20.

The Llanelli Wellness & Life Science Village (Pentre Awel)



Outline planning for the Village was approved by Planning Committee in January 2019 and, following additional flood modelling requested by National Resources Wales, consent was formally awarded on 6th August 2019.

ARUP have been commissioned to develop the design for the first Zone of the Village. Zone one comprises the leisure (dry and wet) and City Deal (education/business development/clinical delivery) these elements are being brought together into a 'Street' design to optimise opportunities and efficiencies through integration of services

In addition, the Village is one of the first projects in the UK to be awarded full funding (£60,000) by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to undertake a heat network feasibility study.

This funding recognises the potential value of the project within the local area and the council's commitment to become a zero-carbon authority by 2030.

Skills and Talent Initiative



The £30million Skills and Talent Initiative, to ensure the County fully benefits from the opportunities that will be created through the £1.3 billion investment through the Swansea Bay City Deal has been presented to the City Deal Programme Board and the Business Plan was updated. The schools that the project has already worked with have submitted a number of project ideas that they are keen to proceed with, in order to develop opportunities and raise the aspirations of young students around the City Deal projects.

Transformational town centre developments

The work to deliver Transformational town centre developments in Llanelli has continued over the year and the town centre projects at Market Street North and the former YMCA building have received full award letters from the Welsh Government (WG) with both receiving £2m WG grant funding. The Council's match-funding contributions from Regeneration and Housing equate to £2.5m per project, thus committing a total £9m of investment for the two projects.

Cross Hands Growth Zone

Work on delivering the Cross Hands Growth Zone, Llanelli and the Coastal Belt Transformational Plan is progressing-

- o Phase 2 infrastructure project at Cross Hands East Strategic Employment site. The development is creating a new site highway, supporting infrastructure and a number of new market ready development sites.
- o Two separate build projects are being developed through grant assistance on phase 1 plots already created and the County Council, in partnership with Welsh Government, is progressing with proposals for a self-build office and industrial space with the assistance of EU funds.
- o The Workways + and Buccaneer projects are progressing well with support for both the long term unemployed and businesses continuing under the objectives of their respective projects. We await WG confirmation of a Short Term Unemployed (STU) employability programme which is to be aligned with the workways programme.

Superfast Broadband

The Council has worked with partners to assist and act as technical advisors, addressing issues in terms of superfast broadband and mobile phone signal across the County and in particular in rural areas. A proposed "Digital Connectivity Action Plan for Carmarthenshire" has been produced and we have worked with Welsh Government, Openreach, Mobile providers and other relevant stakeholders to inform this Action Plan.

The document summarises the current situation in terms of Broadband and Mobile connectivity across the County, identifies priority areas which require intervention and presents several potential workstreams which could be pursued in order to further improve the situation. We are also leading on behalf of Carmarthenshire on the Swansea Bay City Deal Digital Infrastructure project, ensuring the needs of the County are at the forefront of plans for the regions Digital Connectivity.

Promoting the Welsh Language

During 2019/20, we have continued to lead the Welsh Language Strategic Forum, which is jointly planning the Carmarthenshire Promotion Strategy Action Plan. The forum met four times during the year and particular attention was given to developing the Language in Pre-school years, Planning, Integration, Young People and Welsh for Adults. A full round of updates on the Action Plan have now been completed, and work has begun on measuring the impact of the Promotion Strategy in line with the requirements of the Welsh Language Measure.

A number of events were held in our workplaces during the year to promote the Welsh language internally. These events were an opportunity to draw attention to the requirements of the Standards, to share resources to facilitate the use of Welsh at work and to celebrate the many efforts of our staff who are learning Welsh and leading on promoting the Welsh language.

A number of new county-specific information booklets and resources have

also been designed and printed to encourage the use of Welsh at work, in education, with family and in the community, contributing strategically and practically to the Government's objective of A million Welsh speakers by 2050.

Moving Rural Carmarthenshire Forward

We have prepared and published, in June 2019, the Moving Rural Carmarthenshire Forward Report and recommendations for action on behalf of the Carmarthenshire Rural Affairs Task Group. This Report marks a significant milestone for the Council, since it is the first time ever that a wide-ranging strategy has been developed to regenerate our rural communities in Carmarthenshire.

A further key component of rural regeneration is the development of our rural towns, traditionally market towns, and to this aim we have launched our 'Ten Rural Towns Initiative', to help ensure our traditional social and business centres are economically, socially, environmentally and culturally sustainable in the future.

Tourism

Our events support scheme for community groups and organisations to promote and publicise community events, which uses a core £20,000 budget from the Council, has proved extremely popular, with nearly the full budget allocated by 31st March 2020, although a number of these are still to claim.

Events supported through the fund included:-

- o the Llanelli Half Marathon and Carmarthen St David's Week.
- o Llandovery Sheep Festival 2019 and the Llandeilo Festival of the Senses 2019 – both of which are important focal activities in the promotion of our vibrant rural County Towns to tourists.
- o Llanelli Pride in August and Gŵyl Canol Dre 2019

The '*Things to Do*' section of the Discover Carmarthenshire website continues to be one of the most visited, with residents and tourists interested to see what is going on.

All Council "events" including those from libraries, parks, museums, theatres and outdoor countryside have been populating their information on the website, greatly amplifying themselves to a much wider audience than if just using their own respective web pages.

Hwb

We have extended the Hwb model developed in Llanelli to Ammanford and Carmarthen, making front line support services more accessible to residents.

- o The Carmarthen Customer Service Centre has been rebranded as the Hwb for Carmarthen and the services delivered at Spilman Street mirror that of the other 2 centres.
- o The Hwb, Llanelli deals with on average 2900 appointments per month, The Hwb Ammanford 1100 per month and at Carmarthen 2000 per month. A Cash Desk is co-located at each location which brings its own footfall to the

centres. In addition, we have partners working from the Hwbs, Workways +, Communities for Work+, Communities for Work employability projects based at Ammanford and Llanelli permanently and referrals to these projects from Carmarthen.

- o Other organisations attend on a periodical basis for example: Shelter Cymru, Learn Direct, Carmarthenshire Association of Voluntary Services, SSAFA Armed Forces charity, PACE employability project, Family Housing Association, Gwalia Bond Scheme, Cambrian Training and Dyfed Powys Police.

Wellbeing of Future Generations

We have ensured the Council fully responds and complies with the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act including consideration of the five ways of working in all that we do.

- o We published a Corporate Strategy refresh at the end of June 2019 which incorporated all our Well-being Objectives. This received a Wales Audit Office certificate of compliance
- o To comply further with the Act, we prepared an 2018/19 Annual Report which received feedback from the Future Generations Commissioners Office, acknowledging our progress on the requirements of the Act. The Commissioner found that 'Overall you're making good progress and we welcome your work to consolidate your plans into one, as part of a more integrated approach and 'There is clear understanding of and commitment to the 5 ways of working'.

Investors in People

Once again the Council has achieved the highest award in recognition of the work we do to support our staff's health and wellbeing. The Platinum Corporate Health Standard is the quality-mark for workplace health promotion in Wales led by the Welsh Government.

Carmarthenshire County Council is the only Local Authority in Wales to hold this award and has done so since 2009. Organisations are re-assessed every three years and this year we have been revalidated with the Gold and Platinum awards.

To achieve the Platinum award, we had to demonstrate business excellence and sustainable development as an integral part of business practice and culture.

Healthy lifestyle

We have continued to ensure the Council fully supports staff to maintain a healthy life style, which includes proactive and preventative actions and education to raise awareness on key health topics and, where necessary, to ensure the careful management of staff sickness absences in the interest of the staff and the provision of services. During the year-

- o Actions plans have been put in place and initiatives are underway to support the promotion and maintenance of health lifestyles. Using data and local information to identify where the focus needs to be.
- o Also 50 volunteer Wellbeing Champions have recently been trained and will be working, encouraging and motivating their colleagues in the divisions,

developing clubs, teams, activities and corporate messages which improve mental and physical health & wellbeing.

TIC

The TIC programme continues to implement a balanced work programme and to support and drive a number of objectives including improving services and processes; identifying and supporting the delivery of efficiency savings and supporting cultural and behavioural change across the organisation. There are over 15 projects on the current programme and the programme is flexible to allow for new projects to be added during the year.

- o Efficiency savings identified and/or delivered from the wider TIC Programme to the end of 2018/19 total nearly £20m.
- o Investors in People recognised the impact of TIC in their accreditation report as follows; "Ongoing evolution of the TIC awards and the continuity of the TIC team, which has become well-embedded into the way the Council operates, is bearing fruit, with many examples of productivity and efficiency improvements as a result of TIC projects" (Insights Assessment Report liP May 2018).

Information & Communications Technology

We have continued to improve the suitability and ICT resources within schools to ensure that all newly built schools have the latest digital technologies and

infrastructures in place to deliver 21st century education.

We are working on the delivery of all ICT infrastructure and systems at Bryngwyn, Five Roads, Pembrey and Rhys Prichard/Pantycelyn schools as part of the Modernising Education Programme. This will ensure the security and compliance of all devices at all schools across the County. We are also working closely with Welsh Government as a lead Authority, steering, influencing and planning for the £5 million Digital Education grant which we will receive for Carmarthenshire Schools over the next 3 - 4 years.

Modernising Education Programme

The Delivery of all Band A and Band B commitments identified in the Modernising Education Programme has continued, with most projects within the Band A Programme having been completed.

The further schemes are being progressed for the remaining projects. Regarding the Band B programme the project for Five Roads has commenced on site and the scheme for Ysgol Pembrey has also been approved by Welsh Government. These commitments mean our children and young people will receive a world class education in safe and stimulating environments.

Flying Start

Flying Start continues to be delivered across 18 areas of Carmarthenshire, covering a total of 767 postcodes. Several of the Flying Start Health Visitors have undertaken additional immunisation

training so that they can support catch-up clinics which have been organised in response to the health board's aim of increasing immunisation rates. This in turn supports the health and wellbeing of children within Flying Start.

Health Visitors have undertaken training for additional immunisations to support clinics. Non-attenders and older children have been targeted to try and increase uptake rates. All Flying start health visitors have attended 'Lift the Lip' training. This will help Health Visitors to identify early signs of decay in young children so that they can refer them to the appropriate dentists.

Cycling Hub

We have continued to develop our aim to establish Carmarthenshire as the Cycling Hub of Wales by delivering the key projects for the Tywi Valley Cycle Path. Our Strategic Boards continue to meet and are progressing with a number of actions set out in the Cycling Strategy. We continue to deliver the Cycling infrastructure such as Tywi Valley Path and Active Travel networks.

An initial £313k funding was awarded by the Welsh Government to progress the design and feasibility of our Active Travel aspirations. Challenges remain for Rural Authorities such as Carmarthenshire to benefit from Active Travel funding, which is being targeted by the Welsh Government at Urban areas.

Integration of public transport network

We have been working with neighbouring authorities in the Swansea Bay City Region to develop the integrated transport system currently known as the South West Wales METRO.

Rail priorities have been submitted for Carmarthenshire which include, amongst other things, a requirement for a faster rail service to West Wales using the Swansea District Line and reopening of St Clears Railway Station. We are currently delivering on our successful bid of £450k from the Local Transport Network Fund from the Welsh Government. This will see measures introduced to improve the accessibility, attractiveness efficiency and quality of the public transport infrastructure across the County.

Safer routes

We have been working with communities to support the development of Safer Routes and bids have been successful in securing grant funding to deliver schemes. We have also made representations to the National Active Travel Board to sustain funding for Safer Routes in Communities and we continue to develop bids for funding to deliver Active Travel schemes.

Cycling Strategy

Work on the implementation of the Cycling Strategy for Carmarthenshire has progressed well throughout the year with partners engaged in various projects and initiatives, however March / April 2020 has

seen the Coronavirus crisis overtake these works, and the planned programme moving forward will have to be re-evaluated as part of the Corporate recovery plan.

Litter management

Our undertakings to date in relation to working with local stakeholders to pilot litter management arrangements across Llanelli, with specific attention to the town centre and approach roads, with a view to introducing across the County are -

- o Introduction of Pride in Your Patch stakeholders' group to focus on the partnership arrangements of volunteers and involvement of key partners such as the Community & Town Councils.
- o Renewal of the Public Spaces Protection Orders to tackle dog fouling and other dog related issues.
- o Introduction of new enforcement Powers to tackle litter and small scale fly tipping & duty of care issues.
- o Joint Enforcement Operations by working with local Police Inspectors.
- o Radio campaigns: The Council teamed up with Carmarthenshire Radio to reinforce key messages about litter and the local environment.
- o Dog fouling campaign in partnership with community organisations and schools.
- o Working with Keep Wales Tidy through a national partnership project 'Caru Cymru'. The project deals with all the environmental issues that affect our local communities. The Project is focused in encouraging behavioural change for the long term. We're working across sectors and county borders to run national

campaigns, as well as targeted local projects. However, with the Covid-19 outbreak, the authority has suspended many of the activities by mid-March 2020 to comply with the Governments directive on social distancing.

Homes as power stations



We have contributed to delivering the Swansea Bay City Deal programme to develop 'Homes as Power Stations' to help generate sustainable and affordable homes and address fuel poverty for our residents by developing new homes with innovative technologies. The developments during the year are:-

- o The first 2 housing schemes at Dylan and Garreglwyd have been developed to the upgraded standards and are progressing well. These dwellings incorporate a number of enhanced innovative technologies, well in excess of Building Regulations requirements, generating their own power, although these first two sites are supplemented with gas. These homes will reduce energy usage and costs for tenants.
- o We have developed further options and designs on a pair of semi-detached homes as a pilot on the Dylan site to further enhance the benefits of a fabric-first design approach to reduce energy usage and carbon footprint and instructions have been issued in respect of those and will be handed over as part of phase 3 of the Dylan scheme in 2020.
- o Further developments have taken place with properties to the same standard as Garreglwyd and have been developed for Gwynfryn in Ammanford where work has commenced on site and to even higher standards in Glanmor.

We will continue to explore further options as schemes progress, working with partners to develop new options to further enhance the efficiencies and energy saving opportunities and apply these to further projects where costs permit.

Homelessness Strategy

Work has continued to implement key Homelessness Strategy actions to ensure vulnerable residents are supported appropriately. These include delivering a wider degree of affordable housing options, and a new commissioning plan for temporary and supported housing that will see smaller, more dispersed offers of accommodation. We are continuing to work with partner agencies to ensure people with housing difficulties contact us earlier to prevent their homelessness happening in the first place.

Carmarthenshire Museums

We have continued to deliver a transformation plan for the existing Museums provision at the County Museum Abergwili, Parc Howard, Kidwelly Industrial Museum and Museum of Speed Pendine to improve the provision for residents and visitors. Developments to date are:-

- o Museum of Speed construction and exhibition design is progressing. Negotiations with key lending institutions are ongoing and the outcome of these will inform approaches to museum environmental control.
- o Parc Howard Essential Works package is out for listed building planning consent and the programme continues to be monitored by the Parc Howard Collaboration Group.

- o Progress on Kidwelly Industrial Museum is restricted by significant delays awaiting action by other key Council specialists.

Town & Community Councils

Our work with Town & Community Councils and other community organisations to look at ways to invest in upgrading Local leisure provisions has progressed well throughout the year with many T&C Councils engaged in various projects and initiatives, however March / April 2020 has seen the Coronavirus crisis overtake these works, and the planned programme moving forward will have to be re-evaluated as part of the Corporate recovery plan.

Care Management

The implementation of the new care management and rostering system (CM) has been successfully implemented across the whole of the Domiciliary Care Service. The remaining element of the project which is the integration with Payroll has been put on hold whilst the service deals with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. This will be completed later in the new financial year.

Armed Forces

Our Armed Forces Community within Carmarthenshire continue to be widely supported and have benefitted from the Armed Forces Covenant Trust Funding. Our collaboration and joint enterprise with our statutory and non-statutory bodies have

continued apace for our Armed Forces personnel, which includes veterans, serving personnel both regular and reserve, and their dependents.

Our service children are firmly on our radar within the County. We work in partnership with Supporting Service Children in Education Wales in identifying and supporting the unique needs of our Armed Forces Children. Our hubs continue to provide vital services to our veterans and are continuing to widen the network of drop in session and activities for those who have served. We look to take forward this coming year the findings of the Veterans Scoping Exercise in Wales and the Strategy for our Veterans.



Information, networking and signposting for our Armed Forces Community is key. Information for our Armed Forces community is available on our website. Our focus will be on continuously improving our information available on an ongoing basis by sharing and enhancing the information available on our website.

Regional Partnership Board

Carmarthenshire has continued to play a key role in the Partnership by chairing the Regional Partnership Board and by taking a leading role on a range of change programmes supported through the Welsh Government's Transformation and Integrated Care Funds. These include the £6m Connect project, delivered in partnership with Llesiant Delta Wellbeing, which provides a proactive call service to

some of our most vulnerable residents and a rapid response to any problems before they need a more acute intervention and the Connecting People, Kind Communities programme promoting active citizenship and extending the Carmarthenshire is Kind' approach across West Wales. These, along with established projects such as the Transfer of Care Advice and Liaison Service (TOCALs) operating in both our general hospitals and helping avert unnecessary admissions, are vital in reducing pressure on our health and care system and, importantly, in delivering the very best outcomes to people in our County.

Learning Disabilities Charter

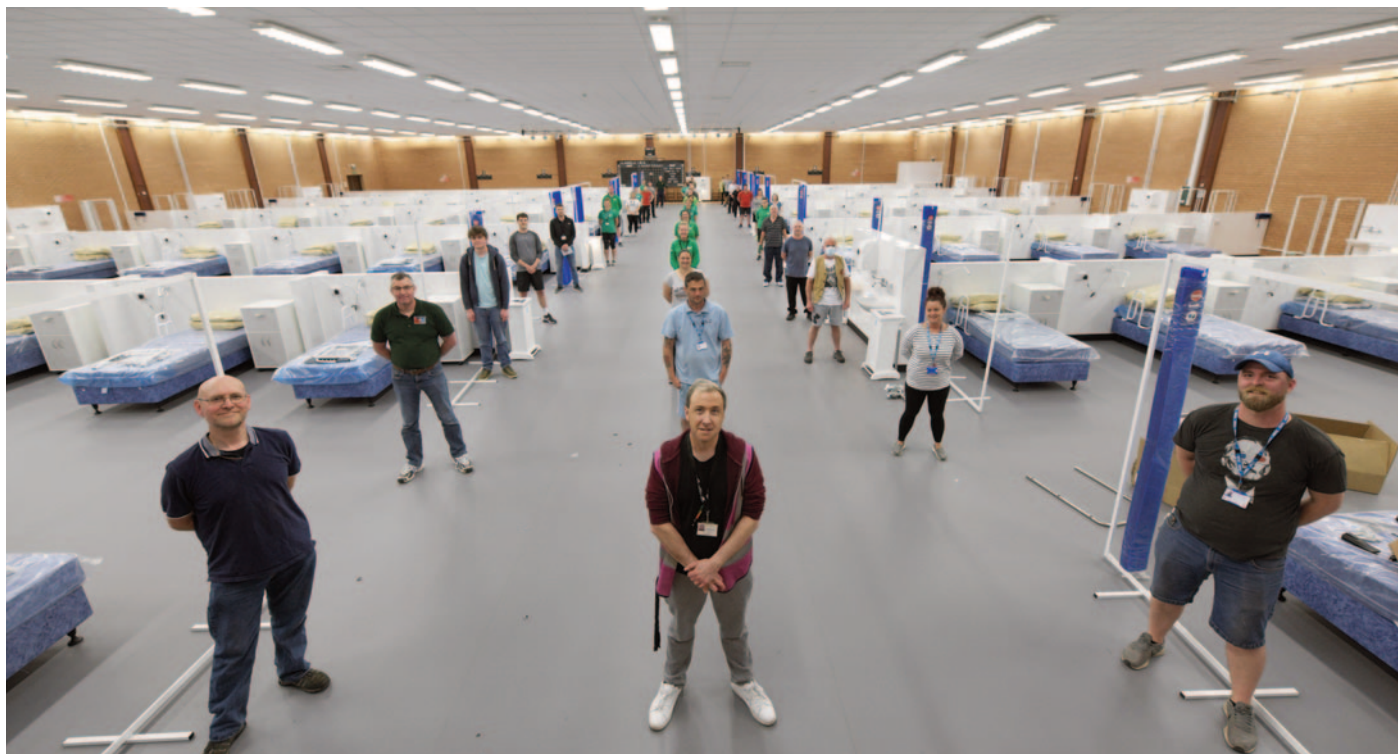
Over the past 5 years, people with learning disabilities in Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion have worked together to develop a Charter – a simple list of things they expect, and need, to live fulfilling lives. The Charter has been developed with support from the Welsh Government's Intermediate Care Fund, the West Wales Care Partnership, and Pembrokeshire College. It is supported by the County Councils of Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire, and the Hywel Dda University Health Board. Organisations, companies and individuals can sign the Charter and commit to treating everyone equally. There will be a quality mark developed which will be awarded to organisations or businesses who demonstrate they live up to the standards and aspirations of the charter.

Integrated Services

Carmarthenshire County Council is committed to promoting the well-being of all of its residents, and particularly those who have care and support needs. It is therefore extremely positive that Care Inspectorate Wales acknowledged in their inspection report that 'Social Workers and partners recognise adults are the best people to judge their own well-being.' In our response to A Healthier Wales we recognised that a different approach was needed to support health and wellbeing. As a division we developed a plan and innovative projects supported by the Welsh Government Transformation fund. The purpose of the plan is to put people, kindness and connection at the heart of provision and set out a framework that embeds an asset-based approach to supporting health and wellbeing. Our ambition is to ensure that Carmarthenshire keeps improving as a place to grow, work and age well.

The whole programme of work demonstrates how Carmarthenshire can make the shift from being reactive to proactive; working collaboratively to move away from a culture of crisis management that focuses on a small number of people, to one that supports improved outcomes for the whole population of the county.

Coronavirus Response and Recovery



These are without doubt unprecedented and challenging times...

Never in my time as Leader did I think I'd see the council setting up temporary hospital facilities to support our colleagues in the NHS.

These are extraordinary times – it is unsettling for all of us who are trying to adapt to a new 'normal', at least for the time being, to help protect ourselves, the people we love, and the communities where we live.

What I will say, is that in the face of huge challenges I have seen remarkable community spirit. Neighbours helping each other, colleagues supporting each other, and strangers finding a common ground.

The Council has already moved into the recovery planning phase and a number of

services that had either closed or were only partially open due to the Pandemic are now operational. As part of our recovery planning, we aim to seek a better understanding of the impact the pandemic has had in the County from a social, economic, environmental and cultural perspective.

Working in full collaboration with other public, private and community sector representatives the Council will identify actions and measures we can take to fully aid recovery across the whole of Carmarthenshire.

Once we have evaluated the community impact of the pandemic we will be reviewing the key priorities we have set out in Moving Carmarthenshire Forward to ensure that our short-term focus up until the next local government elections fully supports recovery from the pandemic and that plans are developed for medium and longer term recovery.

