

Executive Board

24.05.21

Carmarthenshire Economic Recovery and Delivery Plan

Recommendations / key decisions required:

That Members:

- 1) Receive an update on the impact that Covid-19 is having on Carmarthenshire's economy, businesses and communities.
- 2) Approve the proposed economic recovery and delivery plan.
- 3) Receive regular quarterly updates on performance against delivery plan actions

Reasons:

The intelligence gathered clearly demonstrates that the authority and the local economy face an extremely difficult time over the next 24 months as the effects of the Covid-19 crisis puts pressure on jobs and demand. It is therefore essential that the Council's response is in tune with the needs of businesses and communities across Carmarthenshire, taking advantage of opportunities to accelerate change to enable success in the economy of the future.

Carmarthenshire's economic recovery plan identifies some 30 actions to support the recovery of the Carmarthenshire economy from the social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and Brexit. It sets out our priorities for supporting Business, People and Place. With this support Carmarthenshire's economy can recover as quickly as possible to become one which is more productive than before, more equal, greener, healthier, and with more sustainable communities.

Relevant scrutiny committee to be consulted N/A

Exec Board Decision Required YES

Council Decision Required NO

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

Directorate:

Chief Executives

Name of Head of Service:
Jason Jones

Designations:
Head of Regeneration

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Carmarthenshire Economic Recovery and Delivery Plan

1. SUMMARY OF PURPOSE OF REPORT.

At its meeting on 29th June 2020, the Executive Board considered a report which provided an assessment of the impact that Covid-19 was having on Carmarthenshire businesses and identified what was important to them in the short, medium and long-term, so that going forward the Authority could provide them with the assistance they most needed. In response to the issues identified a draft recovery strategy was proposed focusing on 11 key themes. A business, economy and community recovery group has been established to coordinate development and delivery of actions aligned to these 11 themes and an overarching advisory group, comprising key private sector industry leaders, has been established. This group has assisted with us with the development and refinement of our draft plan into a finalised economic recovery and delivery plan, copy attached.

An independent review of our draft economic recovery plan and initial 11 themes concluded that we are on the right track and need to focus on our priorities, challenge current ways of working to maximise opportunities for businesses and make it as simple as possible to support recovery and growth in the economy. Whilst our 11 initial themes have been tackling the right areas, the finalised report identifies the synergies that exist in support of Business, People and Place to assist with communicating our plan to businesses, stakeholders and partners, to deliver more and add value to the recovery of the Carmarthenshire economy. We have also identified four key cross-cutting priorities including a major focus on ensuring the county has ultra-reliable digital connectivity, digital culture and skills.

The Plan sets out the short-term priorities and immediate actions over the next two years that will protect jobs and safeguard businesses in Carmarthenshire. The Plan also puts us in a stronger position with our regional economic partners as we prepare the vision and objectives for the Regional Economic Framework and Regional Economic Delivery Plan over the next few months.

Our Plan is ambitious about the long-term future of the Carmarthenshire economy with a belief that the county has the right mix of business, people and places to recover and grow much stronger than before. Our underlying strength is the large number of self-employed and micro businesses and the equally important number employed in the foundational economy. We will focus on supporting our SME's to upscale, and our local knowledge and connections with small businesses in Carmarthenshire means that we are well placed to bolster support within our local economies, increase local spend and maximise the potential for a more localised growth in community wealth and wellbeing.

At the current time our business support activity will be focused on the food sector and supply chains that are suffering significantly alongside hospitality sector closures. This sector is a pivotal element of our foundational economy.

Our plan has clear recovery outcomes that will result from the proposed activity and actions, including the replacement of more than 3,000 jobs that have already been lost; safeguarding and replacing up to 10,000 jobs that may have been, or are at high risk of being lost, once furlough comes to an end; and supporting over 1,400 businesses that are at risk of insolvency. In addition to these measurable impacts on the Carmarthenshire economy, there

has been an opportunity cost from the impact of Covid-19 and Brexit on our economy. A stretching target is to challenge ourselves to put in place the levels of support required to create around 1,700 additional jobs that would have been generated if our economy had stayed on its pre-crisis growth trajectory.

2. OTHER OPTIONS AVAILABLE AND THEIR PROS AND CONS

The economic analysis that has been undertaken to assess the impacts of COVID-19 and Brexit on the Carmarthenshire economy during the next three years suggests that without our intervention:

- It is unlikely that GVA will recover to its pre-pandemic level for at least 3 years.
- There is a strong possibility that employment does not recover to pre-pandemic levels within the next 3 years.

The intelligence gathered to support the development of our recovery plans also clearly demonstrates that businesses are expecting the council to support economic activity, prepare the ground for recovery and lead Carmarthenshire out of this crisis. There is no other option for the Council other than to take immediate action in collaborating with its businesses and the wider community.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?	Yes – Carmarthenshire Economic Recovery and Delivery Plan – Final Report – March 2021
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IMPLICATIONS

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

Signed: Jason Jones

Head of Regeneration

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

1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities

In developing the plan we have fully taken account of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act by ensuring that the actions we have identified fully consider and embed sustainable development with a view to improving economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being in all that we do. We have also considered how we can apply the five ways of working (long-term; prevention; integration; collaboration; involvement) as we make progress on the identified actions.

This will be further developed as detailed plans for delivering the actions are taken forward, but there is a summary of our overarching considerations on page 9 of the plan.

3. Finance

The Council has allocated capital and revenue funding to support the recovery actions. This will be used as match funding wherever possible to draw down additional funding to maximise opportunities.

CONSULTATIONS

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

Signed: Jason Jones Head of Regeneration

1. Scrutiny Committee

N/A

2. Local Member(s)

N/A

3. Community / Town Council

N/A

4. Relevant Partners

996 businesses have been consulted in addition to the members of the Carmarthenshire Business Advisory Group. We will also engage with Carmarthenshire PSB members as the plan moves into implementation.

5. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations

EXECUTIVE BOARD PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S) AWARE/CONSULTED

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

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

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

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