

Public Document Pack



Cyngor Sir
CEREDIGION
County Council

Neuadd Cyngor Ceredigion, Penmorfa,
Aberaeron, Ceredigion SA46 0PA
www.ceredigion.gov.uk

PLEASE NOTE: This meeting may be broadcasted on the Council's Facebook site and in the archive record of the meeting. The images and sound recording may also be used for training purposes within the Council.

At the start of the meeting the Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed.

10 June 2021

Dear Sir / Madam

I write to inform you that a MEETING of COUNCIL will be held remotely via video conferencing on Thursday, 17 June 2021 at 10.00 am for the transaction of the following business:

1. **Apologies**
2. **Disclosure of personal / prejudicial interests**
3. **Personal matters**
4. **A verbal update by the Leader of the Council in relation to COVID-19**
5. **To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 14.05.2021 (Pages 3 - 8)**
6. **To consider an update on the following motion submitted on 10 December 2020 under Rule 10.1 of the Council's Rules of Procedure: (Pages 9 - 16)**

Proposer: Cllr. Mark Strong

Seconder: Cllr. Ellen ap Gwynn

Council notes that:

Ceredigion County Council calls on the Welsh Government to:

1. add a new clause to the Planning Act so that it is compulsory to make a planning application before obtaining the right to convert a residential home into a holiday home or a holiday let
2. adapt the policy framework to allow for maximum thresholds to be set with regard to the number of holiday homes in a given area
3. make it compulsory for second-home owners to ask for planning permission before turning a second home into a holiday business or an AirBnB business

7. **To consider the Report of the Corporate Lead Officer: Finance and Procurement on the Revised Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy for 2021/22 (Pages 17 - 28)**
8. **To consider the report of Corporate Lead Officer, Economy and Regeneration on the Net Zero Action Plan (Pages 29 - 72)**
9. **To consider the report of Corporate Lead Officer, Legal and Governance on the Strategy on Counter-Fraud, Corruption and Bribery (Pages 73 - 98)**
10. **To consider the report of the Corporate Lead Officer: Legal and Governance on the size of Governance and Audit Committee (Pages 99 - 102)**
11. **To consider the report of the Corporate Lead Officer: Legal and Governance on the recruitment of two independent Members and the appointment of Chair and Vice Chair to the Ethics and Standards Committee (Pages 103 - 106)**
12. **To consider the report of the Corporate Lead Officer: Policy, Performance and Public Protection in relation to the Armed Forces Covenant (Pages 107 - 112)**
13. **To consider the Ethics and Standards Committee Annual Report 2020/21 (Pages 113 - 156)**

A Translation Service will be provided at this meeting and those present are welcome to speak in Welsh or English at the meeting.

Yours faithfully



Miss Lowri Edwards
Corporate Lead Officer: Democratic Services

To: Chairman and Members of Council

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL held remotely via video-conferencing on Friday, 14th May 2021

PRESENT: Councillor Paul Hinge (Chairman), Councillors Ellen ap Gwynn, John Adams-Lewis, Bryan Davies, Ceredig Davies, Clive Davies, Euros Davies, Gareth Davies, Gethin Davies, Ifan Davies, Marc Davies, Meirion Davies, Odwyn Davies, Peter Davies MBE, Rhodri Davies, Steve Davies, Dafydd Edwards, Endaf Edwards, Elaine Evans, Elizabeth Evans, Keith Evans, Rhodri Evans, Hag Harris, Catherine Hughes, Gwyn James, Alun Lloyd Jones, Gareth Lloyd, Lyndon Lloyd MBE, Dai Mason, Catrin Miles, Ray Quant MBE, Rowland Rees-Evans, John Roberts, Mark Strong, Lynford Thomas, Wyn Thomas, Matthew Woolfall-Jones, Alun Williams and Ivor Williams.

(2.00pm – 3.10pm)

Procedure

The Chairman of the Council, Councillor Gareth Davies welcomed all to the meeting.

The Chairman welcomed the Civic Guests, namely the Lord Lieutenant, Miss Sara Edwards; Mr Jonathan Gravell, High Sheriff Dyfed; Mr Ben Lake, Member of Parliament; Miss Elin Jones, Member of the Senedd; Hazel Lloyd Lubran, the Chief Executive of CAVO; Councillor Ieuan Wyn Davies, Chairman of Carmarthenshire County Council; Professor Neil Glasser, Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellor, Aberystwyth University; Reverend Andrew Loat and Rev. Richard Lewis.

The Chairman confirmed that the meeting was being broadcasted.

1 Apologies and personal matters

Apologies

Councillors Lloyd Edwards, Maldwyn Lewis and Dan Potter apologised for their inability to attend the meeting.

Claire Parmenter, Temporary Chief Constable, Dyfed-Powys Police; Professor Elizabeth Treasure, Vice-Chancellor Aberystwyth University; Professor Medwin Hughes, Vice-Chancellor St. David's University; Councillor Gwynfor Thomas, Chairman of Powys County Council; Chris Davies, Chief Fire Officer; Mr Steve Moore, Hywel Dda University Health Board; and Maria Battle, Chairman of the Hywel Dda University Health Board also apologised for their inability to attend the meeting.

Personal matters

- a. Councillor Gareth Davies, Chairman of the Council congratulated Elin Jones on being re-elected to the Senedd and to her role as Presiding Officer;

- b. Councillor Gareth Davies, Chairman of the Council congratulated Dafydd Llywelyn on being re-elected as the Police and Crime Commissioner for the Dyfed-Powys Police area;
- c. Councillor Ray Quant, on behalf of the Independent Group congratulated Elin Jones on being re-elected to the Senedd and to her role as Presiding Officer, Dafydd Llywelyn on being re-elected as the Police and Crime Commissioner for the Dyfed-Powys Police area; Regional representatives; and Mark Drakeford returning as First Minister;
- d. Councillor Ceredig Davies on behalf of the Welsh Liberal Democrats Group congratulated Elin Jones on being re-elected to the Senedd and to her role as Presiding Officer, Dafydd Llywelyn on being re-appointed as the Police and Crime Commissioner for the Dyfed-Powys Police area; and paid tribute to all the Regional Representatives.

2 Review of the Year in Office by the Chairman of the Council

Councillor Gareth Davies noted the past year had been both unusual and extremely challenging. He noted that Ceredigion County Council and the Hywel Dda University Health Board had worked together extremely well throughout the pandemic to ensure the safety of our residents, which is reflected in the relatively low number of people affected here in Ceredigion. However, the County did not completely escape this pandemic, and he paid tribute to those that have lost loved ones from COVID-19.

The Chairman paid tribute to all the Council staff for their hard work and their dedication, with many working long hours and going the extra mile to ensure the smooth running of the Council and to ensure the safety of the residents of Ceredigion

He noted that due to the circumstances, he may well be remembered as the Chairman that never sat in his chair at the Council Chamber; that only wore his chain on two occasions, and never had an opportunity to represent the Council at any formal functions. He noted his disappointment that he had been unable to represent the Council at the Eisteddfod in Tregaron in 2020.

Councillor Gareth Davies said that it was an honour to have been the Chairman of Ceredigion County Council, and he thanked all the Members for their cooperation. He thanked Reverend Andrew Loat and Council Officers, and he wished the new Chairman, the Vice-Chair and their Consorts well for the coming year.

3 Appreciation of the Council for the service of the Chairman during the 2020/21 Municipal Year

Councillor Matthew Woolfall-Jones paid tribute to the Chairman, Councillor Gareth Davies, for providing an excellent service during a particularly challenging time, whilst ensuring fairness and an opportunity for everyone to speak, setting solid foundations for the next Chairman.

4 Election of the Chairman of the Council for the ensuing Municipal Year

It was proposed by Councillor Ceredig Davies and seconded by Councillor Rowland Rees-Evans and unanimously **RESOLVED** that Councillor Paul Hinge be elected Chairman of the Council for the ensuing Municipal year, 2021/22.

5 **Declaration of Acceptance of Office by the newly-elected Chairman**

The newly-elected Chairman was presented with his Chain of Office and made his declaration of acceptance of office. The Chairman's Consort, Mrs. Angharad Lewis was presented with her Insignia of Office.

6 **Address by the Chairman of the Council**

Councillor Paul Hinge thanked Councillor Ceredig Davies and Councillor Rowland Rees-Evans for their support and kind words, and he thanked his fellow councillors for entrusting him with the role of Chairman for the ensuing municipal year. He thanked Councillor Gareth Davies for his unstinting work as Chairman during a difficult past year, noting that it was an honour to have been his Vice-Chairman.

He thanked the Tirymynach Community Councillors for their dedication, advice, knowledge and community spirit, which had made his role as County Councillor much easier and personally rewarding. He thanked his daughter Angharad for stepping up to be his Consort, Rev Richard Lewis for graciously agreeing to be his Chaplain.

The Chairman also noted the work of those that have and continue to support armed forces personnel, their families and veterans are the support they are provided to ensure they are able to access services when they need them through the Armed Forces Covenant Specific reference was also made to the charity Woody's Lodge that provides a respite centre for those suffering from PTSD as a consequence of their service in Penlan Farm, Penrhiwpal.

7 **Election of the Vice-Chairman of the Council for the ensuing Municipal Year**

It was proposed by Councillor Ray Quant MBE and seconded by Councillor Keith Evans and unanimously **RESOLVED** that Councillor Ifan Davies be elected Vice-Chairman of the Council for the ensuing Municipal year, 2021/22.

8 **Declaration of Acceptance of Office by the newly-elected Vice-Chairman**

The newly elected Vice-Chairman was presented with his Insignia of office and made his declaration of acceptance of office. The Vice-Chairman's Consorts, Mrs. Iona Davies was presented with her Insignia of Office.

9 **Chairman's Chaplain**

It was **RESOLVED** to note the appointment of the Reverend Richard Lewis as the Chairman's Chaplain for the ensuing municipal year, 2021/22.

10 **Address by the Leader of the Council**

Councillor Ellen ap Gwynn re-iterated the congratulations to Elin Jones AS,

and also thanked her and Ben Lake, MP for their support and co-operation during the recent challenging times.

Councillor Ellen ap Gwynn congratulated Councillors Paul Hinge and Ifan Davies on being elected Chair and Vice Chair respectively. The Leader also paid tribute to Councillor Gareth Davies on his service during his year as Chairman.

The Leader addressed the Council on the main matters which had impacted the Council during the previous year and reflecting on a year during COVID-19. Gold Command was established under the leadership of the Chief Executive, Eifion Evans to address matters relating to COVID-19; regular meetings were held with the Minister for Local Government, the Minister for Health and Social Care, the Minister for Education and many others.

She thanked the Council's Information Technology team for their support in ensuring that staff were able to work from home and that virtual Council meetings could be held., Particular recognition was extended to staff from Social Services, our care homes, private care homes and domestic care teams who recognised the risk of COVID-19 early and established safety guidelines to safeguard our most vulnerable residents. She thanked the Schools Services for providing clear guidelines and up-skilling school staff to teach online, and the Early Intervention and Prevention teams who ensured that food boxes containing products by local suppliers were provided to individuals that were self-isolating. The Leader noted that the Waste Collection Services had continued throughout the whole period, and was greatly appreciated, and she thanked the Finance Services who worked tirelessly distributing £50 million in grants to local businesses.

The Leader noted that one of the highlights of the period was the recognition given to Barry Rees and Carwen Evans for establishing the first track and trace programme in Wales, for which Barry Rees was recognised with an MBE. Appreciation was extended to all Council staff across a range of services, led by Eifion Evans who have work tirelessly to support the County's efforts to protect the residents of Ceredigion from the effects of COVID-19

The Leader noted that despite the pandemic, the day to day work of the Council continued, noting that it had an exceptional year for partnership working especially with the Hywel Dda University Health Board, CAVO and Aberystwyth University. During the year the Council adopted its Economic Strategy for 2021 – 2035; agreed to purchase land and assets in order to build a new school in the Aeron Valley; approved a Tackling Poverty Strategy; and well as a programme for dealing with Ash Die-back. The Heads of Terms for the Growing Mid Wales partnership was signed with the UK Government and Welsh Government, with a promise of an investment of £110million investment in the region over 10 years.

In conclusion, Councillor Ellen ap Gwynn thanked Eifion Evans and staff for their loyalty and conscientious work, she thanked her Cabinet colleagues for their work and their support, and to Council Members and partners for

their support and co-operation.

11 **Committee Membership 2021/22**

It was **RESOLVED** to confirm the Membership of the Council's Committees as presented at the meeting.

Confirmed at the Meeting of the Council held on xx/xx/xxxx

CHAIRMAN:_____

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CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to: Council

Date of meeting: 17th June 2021

Title: Notice of Motion regarding holiday homes and second homes

Purpose of the report: To provide Council with a summary of the discussions and recommendations of the Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Language Committee

For: Consideration when discussing the Notice of Motion

**Cabinet Portfolio and
Cabinet Member:** N/A

1. Council meeting, 10th December 2020:

At the Council meeting held on 10th December 2020, the following Notice of Motion was considered by Council:

Ceredigion County Council calls on the Welsh Government to:

- 1. add a new clause to the Planning Act so that it is compulsory to make a planning application before obtaining the right to convert a residential home into a holiday home or a holiday let.*
- 2. adapt the policy framework to allow for maximum thresholds to be set with regard to the number of holiday homes in a given area.*
- 3. make it compulsory for second-home owners to ask for planning permission before turning a second home into a holiday business or an AirBnB business.*

Proposed by: Councillor Mark Strong

Seconded by: Councillor Ellen ap Gwynn

No decision was made regarding the Motion and the following was agreed by Council:

Several Members noted that they were supportive of the Motion in principle; however, it was recommended that greater evidence was required in relation to data and the nature and ownership of second and holiday homes in Ceredigion. It was recommended that the Motion be re-submitted in the new year, following the production of a background report from Officers and consideration by Scrutiny.

Both the proposer and seconder agreed to the recommendation, and it was RESOLVED to withdraw the Motion and bring back in January 2021.

2. Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 3rd March 2021

The matter relating to second homes was considered by the Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 3rd March (see below for a link to the report).

The minutes relating to this item were as follows:

Points noted during discussion included the following:

- I. Many 'Buy to let' houses are owned by local people.*
- II. There is currently no legislation in place that landlords may only rent out their properties to local people. However letting agencies, according to an internal qualitative survey undertaken in Ceredigion, noted that they prefer to let houses to local people rather than those from further away unless they are returning to live in the area. Most estate agents noted that most houses were bought by people to improve on their present residence or by people relocating to the area, although they had seen an increase in interest in second homes.*
- III. The WG Future Wales The National Plan 2040 would need to be considered in future decision making.*

The Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to endorse the Motion proposed to Council:

Ceredigion County Council calls on the Welsh Government to:

- 1. add a new clause to the Planning Act so that it is compulsory to make a planning application before obtaining the right to convert a residential home into a holiday home or a holiday let*
- 2. adapt the policy framework to allow for maximum thresholds to be set with regard to the number of holiday homes in a given area*
- 3. make it compulsory for second-home owners to ask for planning permission before turning a second home into a holiday business or an AirBnB business .*

Following consideration of the report the Committee agreed to recommend to Council that a 100% increase is levied on the council tax of holiday homes in the county.

3. Language Committee, 17th May 2021

The matter relating to second homes was considered by the Language Committee on 17th May (see below for a link to the report).

Following questions from the floor, Members thanked the officer for a comprehensive and well written report. It was AGREED to support the recommendation of the Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee to Council.

Statutory Officers' advice:

The Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommendation to Council:

"to recommend to Council that a 100% increase is levied on the council tax of holiday homes in the county"

does not form part of the Notice of Motion.

If Council is minded to consider the recommendation it cannot be incorporated into the Motion. This is a separate decision for Council to make and the recommendation should therefore be considered separately following due process.

The Chief Finance officer/S151 officer has not been consulted on this recommendation. The Functions of the Chief Finance officer/S151 Officer include:

“11.4.1 Ensuring lawfulness and financial prudence of decision-making. After consulting with the Head of Paid Service and the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Finance Officer will report to the full Council or to the Cabinet in relation to a Cabinet function and the Council’s external auditor if he or she considers that any proposal, decision or course of action will involve incurring unlawful expenditure, or is unlawful and is likely to cause a loss or deficiency or if the Council is about to enter an item of account unlawfully.

11.4.2 Administration of financial affairs. The Chief Finance Officer will have responsibility for the administration of the financial affairs of the Council.

11.4.3 Contributing to corporate management. The Chief Finance Officer will contribute to the corporate management of the Council, in particular through the provision of professional financial advice.

11.4.4 Providing advice. The Chief Finance Officer will, in conjunction with the Monitoring Officer, provide advice on the scope of powers and authority to take decisions, maladministration, financial impropriety, probity and budget and policy framework issues to all Councillors and will support and advise Councillors and officers in their respective roles. Give financial information. The Chief Finance Officer will provide financial information to the media, members of the public and the community as appropriate.” (Constitution Article 11).”

The Council has processes for conducting open and transparent well informed decision making that is impartial, legally compliant, affordable and within budget, and diligently carried out.

Assessments should always include adherence to the legislative requirements and implications, including Wellbeing of Future Generations and Socio-economic duty within with an Integrated Impact Assessment, and include reasons for decisions and financial / legal Implications.

The internal processes will include preparation of a Business Case, and Due Diligence assessment. Internal reporting may include Member Workshops. In addition, public engagement and consultation may be required. Also, pre-decision consideration by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet, with appropriate recommendations to Council.

The recommendation has policy implications, which affect several service areas. The policy framework adopted by Council will be based on that proposed by Cabinet.

Matters placed before Council should contain all necessary advice to enable Members to take a decision. If there is a need for further detailed legal or financial advice to be provided, the matter should be adjourned and a decision cannot be made until such information is available for effective decision making.

“12.2 PRINCIPLES OF DECISION-MAKING

All decisions of the Council will be made in accordance with the following principles:

12.2.1 Proportionality (i.e. any action taken must be proportionate to the aim being pursued);

12.2.2 due consultation and the taking of professional advice from officers;

12.2.3 respect for equality and human rights;

12.2.4 a presumption in favour of openness; and

12.2.5 clarity of aims and desired outcomes.

12.2.6 Proper recording of reasons for the decision, any personal and prejudicial interests declared as well as any dispensations to speak granted by the Council's Ethics and Standards Committee

12.2.7 Taking all reasonable steps to meet the principles and goals set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, in carrying out its function. (Constitution Article 12).

Conclusion

Consideration of the recommendation by the Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommendation to Council:

“to recommend to Council that a 100% increase is levied on the council tax of holiday homes in the county.”

should therefore be deferred until an appropriate process is implemented to consider the recommendation, to enable Members to be fully informed of all relevant facts and implications, following due process.

	Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If, not, please state why	N/A – This is a report summarising discussions relating to the Notice of Motion
Incorporate the Wellbeing of Future Generations:	Summary: Long term: N/A Integration: N/A Collaboration: N/A Involvement: N/A Prevention: N/A	
Recommendation(s):	For Council to : 1. consider the Notice of Motion; 2. note the recommendations made by the Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Language Committee; and 3. agree an appropriate process to be implemented to consider the recommendation if Council agrees that it wishes to consider the recommendation made by the Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding the Council Tax premium.	

Reasons for decision: • **To enable Council to consider the Notice of Motion.**

- **To adhere to the Council’s principles and procedures of decision-making**

Overview and Scrutiny:	and	Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 3 rd March 2021
Policy Framework:		Notice of Motion – as per the Council’s Constitution
Corporate Priorities:		N/A
Finance and Procurement implications:	and	N/A
Legal Implications:		N/A
Staffing implications:		N/A
Property / asset implications:		N/A
Risk(s):		N/A
Statutory Powers:		N/A
Background Papers:		Report to the Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 3rd March 2021 Report to the Language Committee, 17th May 2021 (item 6)
Appendices:		None
Corporate Officer:	Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stephen Johnson, Corporate Lead Officer: Finance and Procurement (Chief Finance Officer / Section 151 Officer) • Elin Prysor, Corporate Lead Officer: Governance and Legal (Monitoring Officer) • Lowri Edwards, Corporate Lead Officer: Democratic Services (Head of Democratic Services)
Reporting Officer:		N/A
Date:		28 th May 2021

Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council

REPORT TO:	Council
DATE:	17 June 2021
LOCATION:	ZOOM
TITLE:	Feedback from the Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Ceredigion second homes and holiday lets data
PURPOSE OF REPORT:	To provide feedback from the Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 3 March 2021

The Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the data on Ceredigion second homes and holiday lets. This was to follow up the motion to Council and to further investigate the number, spread and impact of second homes on the County of Ceredigion.

Councillor Mark Strong proposed the following Motion at the Council meeting held on 10 December 2020 submitted under Rule 3 10.1 of the Council's Rules of Procedure. This motion was seconded by Councillor Ellen ap Gwynn.

Ceredigion County Council calls on the Welsh Government to:

- 1. add a new clause to the Planning Act so that it is compulsory to make a planning application before obtaining the right to convert a residential home into a holiday home or a holiday let*
- 2. adapt the policy framework to allow for maximum thresholds to be set with regard to the number of holiday homes in a given area*
- 3. make it compulsory for second-home owners to ask for planning permission before turning a second home into a holiday business or an AirBnB business*

At the Council meeting several Members noted that they were supportive of the Motion in principle; however, it was recommended that greater evidence was required in relation to data and the nature and ownership of second and holiday homes in Ceredigion. It was recommended that the Motion be re-submitted in the new year, following the production of a background report from Officers and consideration by Scrutiny.

The report presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee including the data is contained in Appendix A.

Points noted during discussion included the following:

- I. Many 'Buy to let' houses are owned by local people.
- II. There is currently no legislation in place that landlords may only rent out their properties to local people. However letting agencies, according to an internal qualitative survey undertaken in Ceredigion, noted that they prefer to let houses to local people rather than those from further away unless they are returning to live in the area. Most estate agents noted that most houses were bought by people to improve on their present

residence or by people relocating to the area, although they had seen an increase in interest in second homes.

- III. The WG Future Wales The National Plan 2040 would need to be considered in future decision making.

Following consideration of the report the Committee agreed to recommend to Council that a 100% increase is levied on the council tax of holiday homes in the county.

Councillor Marc Davies
Chairman of the Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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CYNGOR SIR CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to:	Council
Date of meeting:	17 June 2021
Title:	Revised Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy for 2021/22
Purpose of the report:	To consider the proposed Revised MRP Policy for 2021/22.
For:	For Decision
Cabinet Portfolio:	Cllr. Gareth Lloyd Finance, Procurement and Public Protection

1. INTRODUCTION

Under the Local Authority (Capital Finance and Accounting) (Wales) Amendment regulations 2008, Local authorities are required to set aside 'prudent' revenue provision for debt repayment (MRP) where they have used borrowing or credit arrangements to finance capital expenditure. MRP for the Council's Supported Borrowing is calculated using the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) as a base. The CFR is a measure of the Council's underlying need to borrow for capital purposes.

During 2015 a review of the MRP Policy was undertaken which resulted in Council revising the 2015/16 MRP Policy. The largest element of the MRP relates to historic and supported debt which the Council agreed to provide for on a 2% straight line basis over the estimated life of the assets which was 50 years. The MRP charge is contained within the Finance and Procurement budget and this reports recommendation achieves a significant revenue saving for the current year.

2. Review of MRP Policy for Historic and Supported Debt

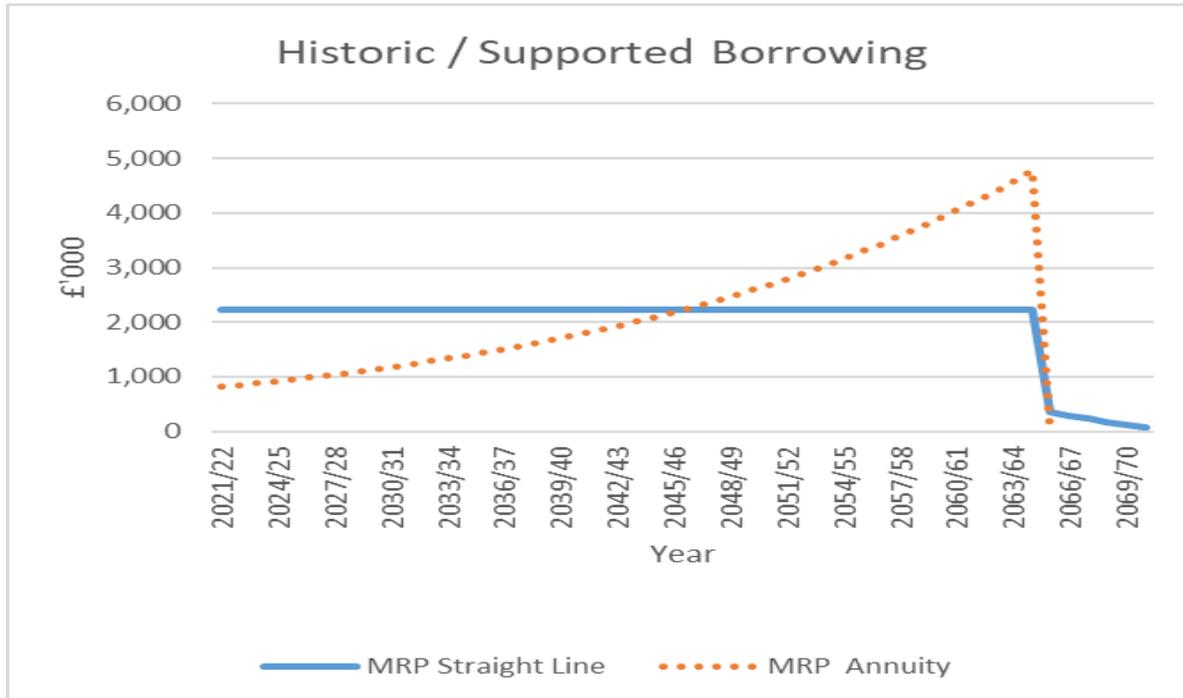
Officers have recently undertaken a further review to ensure that the Policy continues to remain prudent. Issues that have been considered:

- i. The Council can determine its own basis for charging MRP. The WG guidance 2018 (<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-06/guidance-on-minimum-revenue-provision.pdf>) does however include four options for calculating the charge. One of the options is the Asset Life Method. This option allows the charge to be profiled on an equal installment method / straight line basis or the charge could be profiled using an Annuity Method.
- ii. Flintshire, Merthyr and Powys have adopted the Annuity Method along with other Councils in England and Scotland.
- iii. CIPFA's Practitioner's Guide to Capital Finance in Local Government' (2019) states: *'The Annuity Method provides a fairer charge than equal instalments as it*

takes account the time value of money, whereby paying £100 in 10 years' time is less of a burden than paying £100 now. The schedule of charges produced by the Annuity Method thus results in a consistent charge over the asset's life, taking into account the real value of the amounts when they fall due. The Annuity Method would then be a prudent basis for providing for assets that provided a steady flow of benefits over their useful life.' Adopting the Annuity Method is a fairer basis for all generations and therefore this is a prudent approach for the Council to adopt.

- iv. The WG Guidance states that if Councils use the Annuity Method it should use an appropriate interest rate. It does not state which interest rate to use. The Historic and Supported Debt has funded the many assets that have been pooled together where Council approved an average life of 50 years some 6 years ago. It is not possible to allocate the loans against individual assets. Therefore maintaining the pooling approach an appropriate Annuity Rate for this debt is to use the average borrowing rate of loans outstanding as of 31 March 2021 - being 4.20%.
- v. The table and chart below shows a comparison between the MRP charges for the Straight Line method and the Annuity Method. The Straight Line method is charged over a 50 year period and includes MRP chargeable since 2015/16. The Annuity Method also includes MRP chargeable since 2015/16 but is charged over a 44 year period. Adopting a different number of years for the methods only has a minor impact on the overall calculations. The total charge is the same for both methods. The charge using the Annuity Method increases annually and is lower than the Straight Line Method up until 2045/46 but then in subsequent years it is higher.
- vi. Net Present Value (NPV) Calculation. The cash differences between each year, as referenced in the bullet point above, have been subject to a NPV calculation which takes into account the time value of money – this is also shown in table and chart below. The calculation illustrates that a change to the Annuity Method is nearly £10m cheaper (taking into account the time value of money) which supports that this approach will not negatively impact on future generations. The NPV calculation is based on a rate of 3.5% which is recommended by HM Treasury and can be considered to be an assumed rate for inflation.
- vii. The Council currently adopts the Straight Line basis for calculating MRP for the PFI scheme. If changes are made to how MRP is calculated for the Historic and Supported Debt it would be appropriate to adopt the same method for this group of assets. MRP for the PFI scheme is charged against the General Fund but the charge is subsequently reversed so any change will have no cash impact on the Council. The entries are required to ensure the Council's Statement of Accounts remain compliant.
- viii. The table below illustrates the MRP charge on the Straight Line Method and on the Annuity Method both in cash terms and discounted for the effect of time. The range of the MRP charge, when discounted for the effect of time, is narrower using the Annuity Method being £813k to £506k (column e) compared to £2,221k to £1,087k using the Straight Line method (column d) which supports the proposal as being fairer for all generations. The graph below illustrates the Straight Line Method and on the Annuity Method on a cash basis.

Historic / Supported Borrowing						
	In cash terms			Discounted for the effect of time		
	a	b	c=b-a	d	e	f=e-d
Year	MRP Straight Line	MRP Annuity	Difference	MRP Straight Line	MRP Annuity	Difference
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
2021/22	2,221	813	1,408	2,221	813	-1,408
2022/23	2,221	847	1,374	2,146	819	-1,328
2023/24	2,221	883	1,339	2,074	824	-1,250
2024/25	2,221	920	1,301	2,004	830	-1,174
2025/26	2,221	959	1,263	1,936	835	-1,100
2026/27	2,221	999	1,223	1,870	841	-1,029
2027/28	2,221	1,041	1,181	1,807	847	-960
2028/29	2,221	1,085	1,137	1,746	852	-894
2029/30	2,221	1,130	1,091	1,687	858	-829
2030/31	2,221	1,178	1,044	1,630	864	-766
2031/32	2,221	1,227	994	1,575	870	-705
2032/33	2,221	1,279	943	1,522	876	-646
2033/34	2,221	1,332	889	1,470	882	-588
2034/35	2,221	1,388	833	1,420	888	-533
2035/36	2,221	1,446	775	1,372	894	-479
2036/37	2,221	1,507	714	1,326	900	-426
2037/38	2,221	1,571	651	1,281	906	-375
2038/39	2,221	1,636	585	1,238	912	-326
2039/40	2,221	1,705	516	1,196	918	-278
2040/41	2,221	1,777	445	1,155	924	-231
2041/42	2,221	1,851	370	1,116	930	-186
2042/43	2,221	1,929	292	1,079	937	-142
2043/44	2,221	2,010	211	1,042	943	-99
2044/45	2,221	2,095	127	1,007	949	-57
2045/46	2,221	2,183	39	973	956	-17
2046/47	2,221	2,274	-53	940	962	22
2047/48	2,221	2,370	-148	908	969	61
2048/49	2,221	2,469	-248	877	975	98
2049/50	2,221	2,573	-352	848	982	134
2050/51	2,221	2,681	-460	819	989	170
2051/52	2,221	2,794	-572	791	995	204
2052/53	2,221	2,911	-690	765	1,002	237
2053/54	2,221	3,033	-812	739	1,009	270
2054/55	2,221	3,161	-939	714	1,016	302
2055/56	2,221	3,294	-1,072	690	1,023	333
2056/57	2,221	3,432	-1,210	666	1,029	363
2057/58	2,221	3,576	-1,355	644	1,036	393
2058/59	2,221	3,726	-1,505	622	1,043	421
2059/60	2,221	3,883	-1,661	601	1,051	449
2060/61	2,221	4,046	-1,824	581	1,058	477
2061/62	2,221	4,216	-1,994	561	1,065	504
2062/63	2,221	4,393	-2,171	542	1,072	530
2063/64	2,221	4,577	-2,356	524	1,079	555
2064/65	2,221	4,770	-2,548	506	1,087	580
2065/66	350		350	77		-77
2066/67	291		291	62		-62
2067/68	233		233	48		-48
2068/69	175		175	35		-35
2069/70	117		117	23		-23
2070/71	60		60	11		-11
Total	98,970	98,970	0	51,487	41,509	-9,978



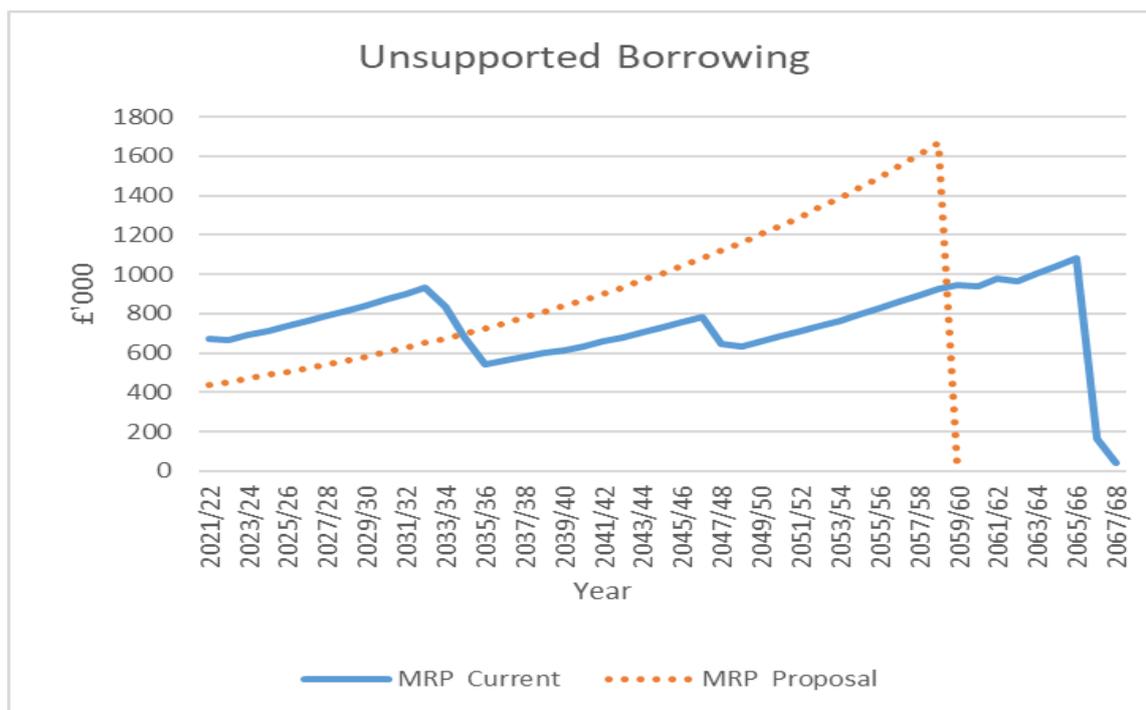
3. Review of MRP Policy for Unsupported Debt

The Councils current Policy already states that the Asset Life Annuity Method is adopted for calculating MRP on unsupported borrowing. The MRP calculation is made on an individual asset basis.

An alternative method has been considered which uses an average asset life for all unsupported borrowing in a year, as opposed to having multiple charges based on an individual assets basis. If this approach is adopted in future years there is also an opportunity to rebase the MRP Policy in place for unsupported borrowing since 2008, which have an average asset life calculated as being 38 years. Taking into account the level of unsupported borrowing in each year the weighted average interest rate is 3.68% which is based on the PWLB annuity rate for each loan as of the 31st of March of the relevant year. 3.68% is thus deemed to be a prudent appropriate Annuity rate to be used in the revised MRP calculation. The table below compares the current MRP charge to the average asset life approach. The total MRP, on a cash basis, payable over the period is the same using either method. The MRP is lower using the average asset life approach until 2033/34. This approach also results in the MRP charge being discharged 9 years earlier. This together with the NPV calculation illustrates that the average asset life approach will not negatively impact on future generations.

The table below illustrates the MRP charge on the Current Method and the Proposed Method in cash terms and discounted for the effect of time. The range of the MRP, when discounted for the effect of time, is narrower using the Proposed Method being £466k to £437k (e) compared to £670k to £238k (2065/66) using the Current method (d) which supports the proposal as being fairer for all generations. The graph below illustrates the Current Method and on the Proposed Method on a cash basis.

Unsupported Borrowing						
	In cash terms			Discounted for the effect of time		
	a	b	c=b-a	d	e	f=e-d
Year	MRP Current	MRP Proposal	Difference	MRP Current	MRP Proposal	Difference
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
2021/22	670	437	-233	670	437	-233
2022/23	666	453	-213	644	438	-206
2023/24	689	470	-219	643	439	-204
2024/25	712	487	-225	642	439	-203
2025/26	736	505	-231	642	440	-202
2026/27	761	524	-238	641	441	-200
2027/28	787	543	-244	640	442	-199
2028/29	814	563	-251	640	442	-197
2029/30	842	584	-258	639	443	-196
2030/31	871	605	-266	639	444	-195
2031/32	900	627	-273	638	445	-194
2032/33	931	650	-281	638	446	-192
2033/34	832	674	-158	551	446	-105
2034/35	677	699	23	433	447	14
2035/36	541	725	184	334	448	114
2036/37	560	752	192	334	449	114
2037/38	580	779	199	335	449	115
2038/39	601	808	207	335	450	115
2039/40	611	838	226	329	451	122
2040/41	634	869	235	330	452	122
2041/42	656	901	244	330	453	123
2042/43	680	934	254	330	453	123
2043/44	705	968	263	331	454	124
2044/45	730	1,004	273	331	455	124
2045/46	757	1,041	284	331	456	124
2046/47	784	1,079	295	332	457	125
2047/48	647	1,119	471	265	457	193
2048/49	633	1,160	527	250	458	208
2049/50	657	1,202	545	251	459	208
2050/51	683	1,247	564	252	460	208
2051/52	709	1,293	583	253	461	208
2052/53	737	1,340	603	254	461	208
2053/54	766	1,389	624	255	462	207
2054/55	796	1,441	645	256	463	207
2055/56	827	1,494	667	257	464	207
2056/57	859	1,549	689	258	465	207
2057/58	893	1,606	713	259	465	207
2058/59	928	1,665	737	260	466	206
2059/60	944		-944	255		-255
2060/61	941		-941	246		-246
2061/62	976		-976	246		-246
2062/63	965		-965	236		-236
2063/64	1,003		-1,003	236		-236
2064/65	1,042		-1,042	237		-237
2065/66	1,083		-1,083	238		-238
2066/67	162		-162	35		-35
2067/68	40		-40	8		-8
Total	35,020	35,020	0	17,487	17,156	-331



4. Consultation

The Governance and Audit Committee have considered a report on the proposed changes to the MRP on 3 June 2021. Members of the Committee asked the Officers several detailed questions. The Committee agreed to support the proposed Revised MRP Policy for 2021/22 subject to periodic reviews; and that revenue savings be included in this report. Audit Wales, who attended the Committee, agreed to this amendment, and they are content with the recommendations outlined in this report.

The Council's professional Treasury Advisors are supportive of the recommendations in this report.

5. Conclusion

The MRP charge is contained within the Finance and Procurement budget and this reports recommendation achieves a significant revenue saving for the current year. The average annual saving over the next five and ten year periods are £1,561k and £1,474k for the supported and unsupported debt combined.

The following changes are reflected in the proposed Revised MRP Policy Statement for 2021/22 which is attached as Appendix A.

- i. **Historic and Supported Debt** – adopt Option 3 (Asset life method) of the 2018 WG guidance and applying the Annuity Method with an interest rate of 4.20%

(the average borrowing rate of loans outstanding as of 01/04/21) over a 44 year period commencing 01/04/2021.

- ii. **New Supported Borrowing** – adopt Option 3 (Asset life method) of the 2018 WG guidance and apply the Annuity Method.
- iii. **PFI credit arrangements** - adopt Option 3 (Asset life method) of the 2018 WG guidance and apply the Annuity Method.
- iv. **Historic Unsupported Prudential Borrowing** – adopt Option 3 (Asset life method) of the 2018 WG guidance and apply the Annuity Method with an interest rate of 3.68% (the weighted average interest rate of the borrowing concerned) over a 38 year period commencing 01/04/2021.
- v. **New Unsupported Prudential Borrowing** – adopt average estimated useful life of assets using Option 3 (Asset life method) of the 2018 WG guidance and apply the Annuity Method.

Recommendation(s): to approve the Revised Minimum Revenue Provision Policy for 2021/22 as set out in Appendix A.

Wellbeing of Future Generations:	Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If, not, please state why Summary.	Yes
	Long term:	The Policy ensures a prudent approach to financing the repayment of debts is adopted which covers the short and long term.
	Integration:	Indirectly by ensuring an appropriate budget is ring fenced for the cost of repaying debt
	Collaboration:	N/A
	Involvement:	N/A
	Prevention:	The Policy ensures a prudent approach to financing the repayment of debts is adopted which covers the short and long term.

Reasons for decision: To revise the Minimum Revenue Policy for 2021/22

Overview and Scrutiny: Report presented to Governance and Audit Committee

Policy Framework: 2021/22 Treasury Management Strategy

Strategic Objectives: Ceredigion County Council is an organisation that is fit-for-purpose to deliver improving services to meet the needs of our citizens

Financial Implications:	A prudent charge for Debt Repayment for all generations is approved
Statutory Powers:	Local Government Act 2003
Background Papers:	Welsh Government Guidance on MRP – Revised 2018
Appendices:	Appendix A: 2021/22 Revised MRP Policy Statement
Corporate Lead Officer:	Stephen Johnson (Finance & Procurement)
Reporting Officer:	Justin Davies (Corporate Manager – Core Finance) Duncan Hall (Corporate Manager – Service Finance)
Date:	03/06/2021

Revised 2021/22 MRP Policy Statement

1. **General Principles**

- a) The Council's proposed Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy for 2021/22 follows the principles of the guidance issued by the Welsh Government under section 21(1A) of the Local Government Act 2003, through using one of the options outlined in the guidance, combined with introducing a further option that is underpinned by the principle of prudent provision.
- b) Estimated life periods will be determined in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom unless WG require or determine otherwise. To the extent that expenditure is not on the creation of an asset and is of a type that is subject to estimated life periods that are referred to in the guidance, these periods will generally be adopted by the Council. However, the Council reserves the right to determine useful life periods and prudent MRP in exceptional circumstances where the recommendations of the guidance would not be appropriate.
- c) As some types of capital expenditure incurred by the Council are not capable of being related to an individual asset, asset lives will be assessed on a basis which most reasonably reflects the anticipated period of benefit that arises from the expenditure. Also, whatever type of expenditure is involved, it will be grouped together in a manner which reflects the nature of the main component of expenditure and will only be divided up in cases where there are two or more major components with substantially different useful economic lives.

2. **Methods for calculating MRP**

- a) The major proportion of the MRP for 2021/22 will relate to the more historic debt liability that existed pre 2008 or post 2008 where it relates to Supported Borrowing funded by WG. The MRP liability on the Council's Capital Financing Requirement that relates to pre 2008 debt and post 2008 Supported Borrowing funded by WG through RSG will be provided for using Option 3 (Asset life method) of the 2018 WG guidance and applying the Annuity Method with an interest rate of 4.20% (the average borrowing rate of loans outstanding as of 01/04/21) over a 44 year period commencing 01/04/2021.
- b) As further new Supported Borrowing is utilised in the Capital Programme, the MRP liability on each new tranche of Support Borrowing will also be provided for using Option 3 (Asset life method) of the 2018 WG guidance and applying the Annuity Method.
- c) A significant proportion of the MRP for 2021/22 will relate to the Historic Unsupported Prudential Borrowing since 2008 which is reflected within the Capital Financing Requirement. The MRP liability on the Council's Capital Financing Requirement that relates to post 2008 Unsupported Borrowing will be provided for using Option 3 (Asset life method) of the 2018 WG guidance and applying the Annuity Method with an interest rate of 3.68% (the weighted average interest rate of the borrowing concerned) over a 39 year period commencing 01/04/2021.
- d) As further Unsupported Prudential Borrowing is utilised in the Capital Programme, the MRP liability reflected within the Capital Financing Requirement will be charged over a period commensurate with the average estimated useful life of assets using Option 3 (Asset life method) of the 2018 WG guidance and applying the Annuity Method.
- e) Where there is Temporary Borrowing in lieu of future Capital receipts (e.g. WG repayable finance loans or temporary Unsupported Prudential Borrowing) the principal of not charging MRP will continue, e.g. whilst awaiting the realisation of capital receipts from the sale of surplus assets.
- f) Where an asset is under construction, the Council reserves the right to not make an MRP charge until the financial year after that in which the capital expenditure is incurred and in the case of a new asset comes into service use.
- g) MRP on PFI credit arrangements will be charged over a period commensurate with the estimated useful life applicable to the asset and using the Annuity Method.

- h) Where MRP relates to a pre-determined profile linked to a credit arrangement (e.g. Finance Lease) then the MRP calculation will be in accordance with the relevant bespoke repayment profile.
- i) The Council has the option of making additional Voluntary MRP contributions in addition to the above MRP calculations at any point in time. E.g. The Council may treat any Voluntary MRP as 'up-front' provision (having a similar impact to the early repayment of debt) and thus recalculate future MRP charges accordingly.

CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to: Council

Date of meeting: 17/06/2021

Title: Achieving Net Zero by 2030 – Action Plan

Purpose of the report: To provide and update on the development of the Council's Net Zero Action Plan

For: Decision

**Cabinet Portfolio and Councillor Rhodri Evans & Councillor Alun Williams
Cabinet Member:**

Background:

The meeting of Ceredigion County Council on 20 June 2019 (Full Council 20 June 2019) agreed to:

- Commit to making Ceredigion a net zero carbon Local Authority by 2030
- Develop a clear plan for a route towards being net zero carbon within 12 months
- Call on Welsh and UK Governments to provide the necessary support and resources to enable effective carbon reductions

Further to this, on the 5th March 2020, Ceredigion County Council declared a global climate emergency, committing to meeting the most significant challenge facing our county and our planet.

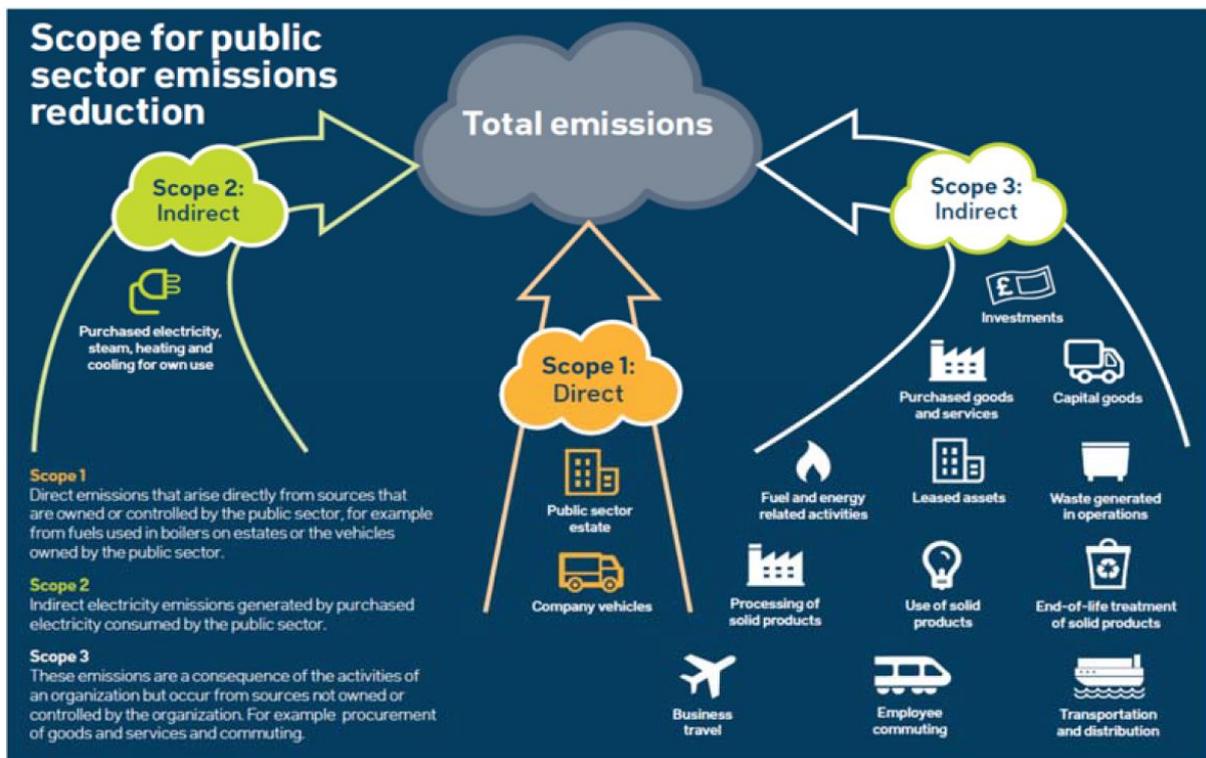
This document sets out how we intend to respond to the climate emergency. It explains why we need this Net Zero Carbon Action Plan and why the 2030 target is so important to tackling climate change. The Action Plan assesses Ceredigion's current operational carbon emissions and outlines the challenges associated with the ambitious 2030 target.

This report was considered by Overview and Scrutiny Thriving Communities on 26 May 2021.

Focus of the net-zero action plan:

The focus is currently upon operational energy usage and emissions (Scope 1 and 2 emissions), as these are routinely recorded and calculated annually as part of the annual review of the Carbon Management Plan. There is a need to calculate and understand the carbon footprint of the Local Authority as a whole (to include Scope 3 emissions), which will be undertaken once the Welsh Government publish their reporting methodology, release of which has been delayed by COVID. The additional emission sources will likely include:

- (1) Mobility and Transport;
- (2) Procurement;
- (3) Land Use; and
- (4) Buildings



This Plan has been formed based on the Member-led motion put forward in June 2019, the contents should be considered on the basis of whether it articulates the desired vision going forward.

Anticipated Next Steps

Short-term (next 3 - 12 months)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Net Zero Action Plan to Cabinet/Council • Integration of Net-Zero Action plan into Corporate Priorities, to ensure progress is monitored and reported. • Further work to progress schemes already identified, which will contribute to delivery of emission reductions • Continue discussions with Welsh Government and District Network operators over grid capacity issues within the county.
Medium-term (next 18 months - 2 years)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upon release of Welsh Government reporting methodology, full baseline exercise needs to be undertaken, to expand emission monitoring to also include emissions from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Mobility and Transport; ➢ Procurement; ➢ Land Use; and ➢ Buildings. <p>As a result, there will be many other actions that emerge over time, which will need to be identified and progressed further.</p> • Once we have a complete baseline carbon footprint, we will be able to look more specifically at projects and schemes that will contribute to emission reduction and carbon offsetting – this will also need significant financial investment. • Continue work that is effective in delivering emission reductions, focus on projects that are proven to deliver positive outcomes.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse and assess where information, resources and policy changes are needed to support the move towards net zero carbon. Initial annual review and update of Net Zero Action Plan – to Scrutiny, Cabinet summer 2022.
Long-term (next 2+ years)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Net-Zero Action Plan to be reviewed and updated periodically, to ensure progress. Further delivery of projects that provide significant carbon reductions, these will likely be more complex, larger in scale and value, this may include carbon sequestration, tree planting. Zero carbon working practices should now be embedded throughout Local Authority working practices All new schemes, projects and developments in Ceredigion should be being delivered in a manner that contributes to our net-zero ambitions

Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If, not, please state why
Summary: In progress

	Long term:	This Net Zero Action Plan will support the Council’s 2030 net zero carbon ambition
	Collaboration:	The Council is already working in collaboration with a number of public bodies in relation to carbon reduction and delivery of emission reduction.
Wellbeing of Future Generations:	Involvement:	Climate Change and Carbon Management Group is well established and attended by both Members and officers, this provides a good initial forum for stakeholder engagement, but scope for wider involvement following publication of this Plan
	Prevention:	This Plan will support implementation of actions and measures to reduce carbon emissions that contribute to climate change
	Integration:	Will help integrate and embed emission reduction across the Authority
Recommendation(s):	Endorse the Net Zero Action Plan and Actions set out within it	
Reasons for decision:	To support the Council’s commitment to reducing the effects of climate change.	

Overview and Scrutiny:	Progress to be reported periodically to the Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Policy Framework:	
Corporate Priorities:	Promoting Environmental and Community Resilience •The County will make a positive contribution towards tackling the causes and mitigating the effects of climate change and environment harm
Finance and Procurement implications:	Cost of delivering this plan has not been calculated yet, although it is likely to be significant. Energy efficiency measures implemented will also provide some financial savings, which will be reflected in energy invoicing.
Legal Implications:	
Staffing implications:	Further development and review of this plan is required and additional staff resource will be needed.
Property / asset implications:	We will need to ensure that we provide services and operate in an efficient and sustainable way, building on the good work already being undertaken across the Authority.
Risk(s):	Climate change is included on the Council's corporate risk register
Statutory Powers:	The Welsh Government (WG) target for a carbon-neutral public sector by 2030. Environment (Wales) Act 2016, Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, The Mid Wales Energy Strategy
Background Papers:	Net Zero Action Plan Scrutiny Committee Feedback
Appendices:	
Corporate Lead Officer:	Russell Hughes-Pickering
Reporting Officer:	Bethan Lloyd Davies
Date:	07/06/2021



Cyngor Sir
CEREDIGION
County Council

Achieving Net-Zero Carbon by 2030



Action Plan
2021/22 to 2029/30

We are facing a global climate emergency

The meeting of Ceredigion County Council on 20 June 2019 (Full Council 20 June 2019) agreed to:

- Commit to making Ceredigion a net zero carbon Local Authority by 2030
- Develop a clear plan for a route towards being net zero carbon within 12 months
- Call on Welsh and UK Governments to provide the necessary support and resources to enable effective carbon reductions

On the 5th March 2020, Ceredigion County Council declared a global climate emergency, committing to meeting the most significant challenge facing our county and our planet.

Ceredigion Council has been reducing its carbon emissions since 2007 when the Council launched its first five-year Carbon Management Plan. Since then, following a series of three 5-year plans addressing all areas of the Council's work, the Council has exceeded its carbon reduction targets and reduced emissions by 51.66%, saving over £6 million in the process.

As the world climate crisis becomes ever more apparent, many local residents have been asking for a more ambitious target. On June 20th 2019 the Council therefore agreed to put a plan in place for achieving net zero carbon emissions from council activities by 2030. The formulation of that plan, like everything else, has been held up by Covid but is now complete and presented here.

Of course having a plan is not the same thing as putting that plan into action, but it is the essential first step. The target of net zero carbon emissions is ambitious. It requires different layers of government to work together. Our whole society is in unknown territory on climate change and no local authority has achieved net carbon zero yet. All of us - in our homes and our organisations - have to do our bit as governments push at the boundaries of human knowledge to find solutions to this most serious of problems.

Local authorities have a key role to play in terms of both the resources they can bring to bear and their duty to act in the long-term interests of local residents; this Net Carbon Zero plan for Ceredigion Council is an important local step in this vital process.

Councillor Alun Williams

Ceredigion Council's Member Champion for Sustainability



Ceredigion's Net Zero Carbon Action Plan

This document sets out how we intend to respond to the county-wide climate emergency. It explains why we need this Net Zero Carbon Action Plan and why the 2030 target is so important to tackling climate change. The Action Plan assesses Ceredigion's current operational carbon emissions and outlines the challenges associated with this ambitious 2030 target. It sets this against the timescale of current policy, recognising that not all the solutions to tackling climate change currently exist. For the purpose of the declaration of a climate emergency, and this Action Plan, we are defining carbon neutrality as the point when we achieve a net zero carbon budget by getting as close to zero greenhouse gas emissions as possible by 2030, and then offsetting any residual emissions via other credible initiatives.

The Action Plan also lays down the response strategy that the county will implement to respond to the climate emergency. It sets out the objectives we aim to reach, the types of actions that we will prioritise in the first phase of the response and the specific interventions that the county will deliver in future years. This Action Plan has been produced under the leadership of Ceredigion County Council, but its successful delivery will require collective action from across the county, from both organisations and individuals. A county-wide collaborative effort is required if we are going to meet this enormous challenge head on and leave a positive legacy for our county and communities.

Collectively we can deliver more of the things we already do well, faster, to reduce emissions and identify new and innovate ways to do more. We also need to use our collective power to ensure that Welsh and National government gives us more tools and resources to help stabilise our climate on our accelerated timeframe.

Ceredigion cannot solve global climate change alone, but we are committed and determined that we will fully play our part. We will need to think big and act quickly.

This Action Plan provides a framework for taking action, securing further funding and lobbying Welsh and national government to provide the necessary support and resources.

The need for declaring a climate emergency

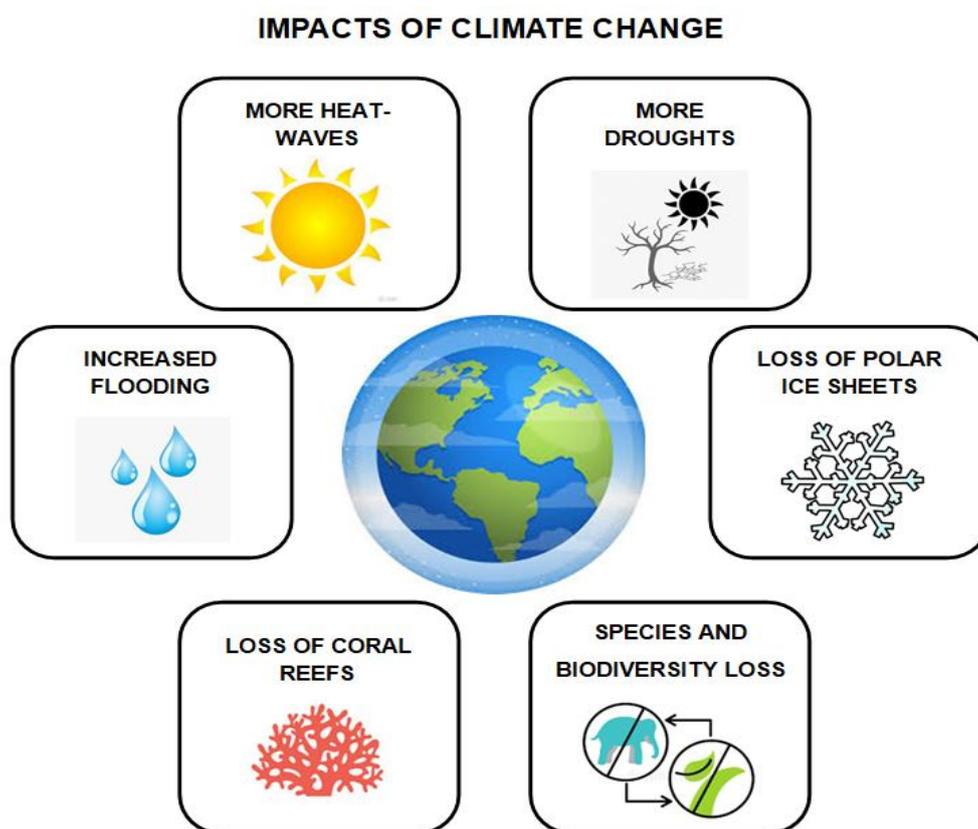
The earth is close to 1°C warmer than it was 100 years ago and without action this could increase to 3°C, which will be catastrophic for our society and the natural world. As a result of climate change people in Ceredigion can expect to experience rising sea levels and heavier rain storms.

There is overwhelming evidence that the changes we are experiencing in our climate, predominantly in the form of global warming, are caused by human activity. Governments have agreed to take action to limit the global temperature rise to well below 2°C above preindustrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit it even further to 1.5°C. The UK government has committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2050.

It is our belief in Ceredigion and now also that of over 50% of other Local Authorities and organisations across the country, that current government commitments do not go far enough, nor quickly enough, to successfully address the existential issues for our society in relation to climate change. The emergency status is now needed to prompt rapid action at a local, national and international level.

We are also clear that we cannot do it alone. The climate emergency needs to be responded to at every level. In Ceredigion we need to respond at a county-wide level and as such organisations and individuals from across the county need to come together to find solutions and ensure substantial change happens quickly. This is the ethos we hope to embed within the actions set out in this Action Plan.

Ceredigion County Council's Carbon Management Plan has been used to drive change within the Local Authority and it is hoped that greater awareness will help individuals and organisations across the county be more aware and develop their own plans for how they will reduce their own emissions.



Why carbon neutral by 2030?

In October 2018 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published a special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C. The IPCC found that a 1.5°C world would have significantly lower climate-related risks for natural and human systems than a 2°C world, and that global carbon emissions would need to reach net zero around 2050 in order to have no, or limited, overshoot beyond the effects of 1.5°C of climate change. Behind this report is a huge body of scientific research and analysis with near-unanimous agreement among the world's scientific community.

Consistent IPCC reports and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change summits have come and gone; they attract publicity and media attention at the time, but action by world leaders to work towards the plans agreed at these meetings has been slow.

The IPCC Special Report of October 2018 was the strongest yet – effectively saying that the world had just 12 years to get a grip on this issue or our ecosystem would suffer irreparable damage.

This has led to a realisation that time is fast running out, which resulted in a Climate Emergency being declared during 2019 by many organisations including Ceredigion County Council and over 280 other UK local authorities. The Welsh Government and UK Government have also declared a Climate Emergency.

Local Authorities have an opportunity to lead the de-carbonisation agenda, providing local vision and delivery. As such, we need to have a target that reflects what the science tells us.

This Action Plan as intended to be a dynamic, living document that will be updated and reviewed annually. It will be used to instigate action, with partners and stakeholders coming together to do more, helping to inspire and give confidence that we can all respond to the imposing threat of climate change. Ultimately, we want this Action Plan to help facilitate a county-wide conversation, inspire rapid local action and create bottom up pressure on the Welsh and UK Government so that we can reach our 2030 ambition.

From 1 to 12 November 2021, the UK will host the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow.

Policy Landscape

The policy landscape around decarbonisation is constantly evolving, but relevant recent policy is captured here:

The Welsh Government (WG) target for a carbon-neutral public sector by 2030.

WG Environment Act Part II specifies an 80% reduction in all-Wales net emissions by 2050 against a 1990 baseline [Ceredigion started accurately recording emissions data in 2007/08 when our first Carbon Management Plan was put in place, so 2007/08 is CCC's only viable baseline year].

The Welsh Government commissioned and funded the Welsh Government Energy Service (WGES) to undertake the development of Regional Energy Strategies for each Welsh region including mid Wales covering the geographies of Powys & Ceredigion.

The strategy sets the vision for mid Wales “To achieve a net zero-carbon energy system that delivers social and economic benefits, eliminates fuel poverty, better connects mid Wales to the rest of the UK, and contributes to wider UK decarbonisation.”

The Mid Wales Energy Strategy sets out 6 Key Priorities to tackle energy issues in the region:

Key Priority 1: Drive forward the decarbonisation of the region's housing and building stock

Key Priority 2: Work proactively to ensure that electricity and gas grids in the region are suitable for a 100% decarbonised future

Key Priority 3: Boost the use of renewable energy through new generation and storage

Key Priority 4: Accelerate the shift to zero carbon transport and improve connectivity

Key Priority 5: Develop and harness the potential of agriculture to contribute to zero carbon goals

Key Priority 6: Harness innovation to support decarbonisation and clean growth



1

The **Mid Wales Energy Strategy** will seek to deliver the following benefits to the economic region of mid Wales:

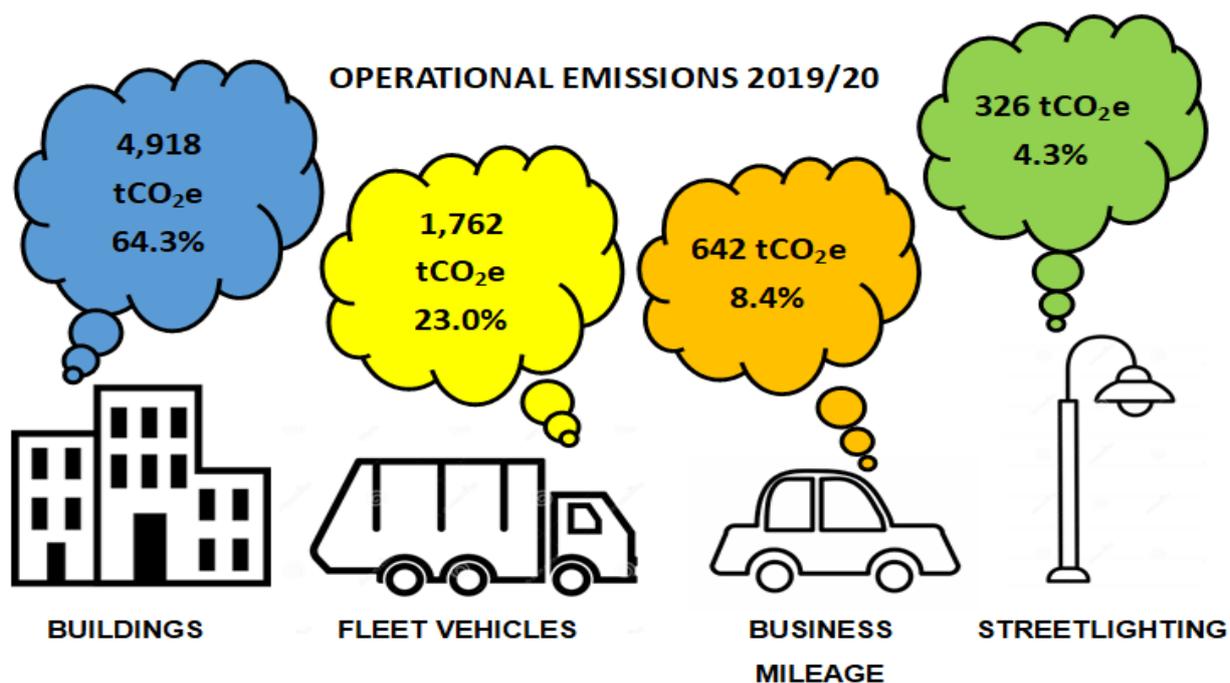
- Raise the level of ambition regionally on energy
- Secure cross-sector stakeholder support for a shared place-based energy system vision for the region
- Provide the evidence needed to demonstrate the economic benefit of investment in local energy systems
- Develop a regional pipeline of deliverable projects and programmes that will achieve the vision

Ceredigion County Council's current annual operational emissions

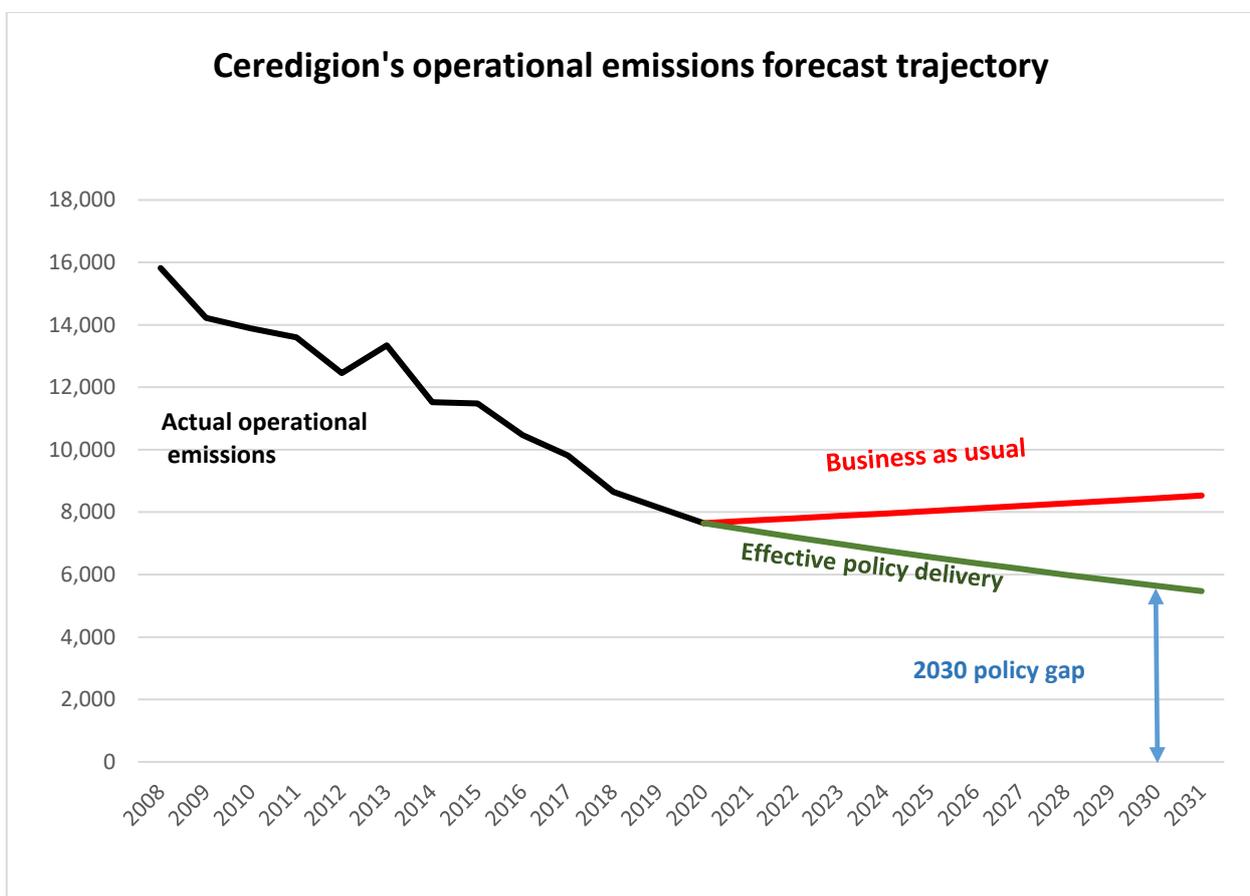
During 2019/20 Ceredigion County Council's operational emissions were 7,648t/CO₂. This was across four main areas: buildings, streetlighting, fleet vehicles and business mileage.

Key Measures of Success	2007/08	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2018/19 vs. 2019/20	
					Status	% change
Non Domestic Buildings						
Consumption (kWh)	33,181,924	25,243,982	23,824,245	23,165,854	Improved	-2.76%
Carbon Emissions (tCO ₂ e)	11,034	5,557	5,177	4,918	Improved	-5.01%
Streetlighting						
Consumption (kWh)	2,789,852	1,473,489	1,430,263	1,176,392	Improved	-17.75%
Carbon Emissions (tCO ₂ e)	1,503	518	435	326	Improved	-25.06%
Fleet Vehicles						
Consumption (Litres)	735,921	687,747	676,698	679,623	Declined	0.43%
Carbon Emissions (tCO ₂ e)	1,995	1,867	1,802	1,762	Improved	-2.22%
Business Mileage						
Mileage (miles)	3,907,910	2,592,354	2,573,678	2,301,840	Improved	-10.56%
Carbon Emissions (tCO ₂ e)	1,288	784	729	642	Improved	-11.93%
TOTAL EMISSIONS	15,820	8,726	8,143	7,648	Improved	-51.66%

The table above illustrates the breakdown on the Council's operational carbon emissions. In 2019/20 buildings alone accounted for 4,918t/CO₂, equivalent to 64.3% of operational emissions, with fleet vehicles contributing a further 1,762t/CO₂, or 23%. These two emission sources, will require the greatest change and input to ensure emission reductions.



For Ceredigion to achieve its 2030 target we need to act at least **four times faster** than envisaged by current policy.



The diagram above shows the trajectory of Ceredigion’s operational emissions forecast to 2030 for two different scenarios:

Business as usual charts emissions if no national or corporate policies were implemented between now and 2030, with emissions beginning to rise steadily as population grows.

All policies are effective charts emissions if all current government policies and aspirations are successfully implemented.

The 2030 policy gap the remaining annual emissions of greenhouse gases that still need removing if all current policies and government aspirations are successful.

Net Zero-carbon Local Authority by 2030 – outline approach

When a council passes any motion, it reflects the importance that the organisation places on the issue and it signals its intent to address it. Therefore, if a council passes a climate-emergency motion the same can be said for this agenda. The use of the term ‘emergency’ is significant and, by definition, carries a greater priority than normal. If that is the case, then the actions that a council takes should carry greater priority also.

Ceredigion County Council is a member of the Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) and has in 2021 joined APSE Energy – a collaboration of over 100 UK local authorities who are working towards the municipalisation of energy. APSE Energy was established to help support local authorities to make the most of their assets in the energy arena and to help them take a leadership role within it. The APSE Energy publication *Local Authority Climate*

Emergency Declarations: Strategic and practical considerations for climate emergency declarations, targets and action plans (June 2019) has informed the Council’s approach. This recognises that while an emergency declaration deserves an appropriate response, a local authority cannot abandon everything else in order to tackle climate change as there are other legal duties and responsibilities to fulfil as well as locally identified priorities that it has committed to addressing

A pragmatic approach, therefore, is being adopted for the route towards Ceredigion becoming a net zero-carbon local authority by 2030. This initially focuses on the carbon emissions that are presently measured by the Council; however, it is recognised that this approach needs to be sufficiently flexible to accommodate changing circumstances – including the reporting requirements yet to be introduced by the Welsh Government as part of its ambition for a carbon neutral public sector by 2030. This initial focus is not intended to limit or preclude other potential wider actions to address the climate emergency, and some of these are identified in Appendix 3.

Ceredigion has, over a number of years, adopted proactive programmes to reduce its carbon emissions, and has regularly reported performance in its annual reports. It is proposed that these reported emissions from Council activities initially constitute the scope of the Council’s commitment to become net zero carbon by 2030. These carbon emissions come from:

- non-domestic buildings;
- street lighting;
- fleet mileage; and
- business mileage.

While the Council is committed to significantly further reduce its carbon footprint it also recognises that however energy/carbon efficient its services become they will inevitably still have a residual carbon footprint. This situation is acknowledged by the ‘Net’ in the Net Zero Carbon equation, as it enables this residual carbon footprint to be compensated for by the generation of renewable energy and/or carbon offsetting (such as by the planting of trees). This can be summarised thus:

Carbon Footprint	–	Renewable-energy Generation Carbon Offsetting	=	Net Zero Carbon
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Resources required and costs

We want our County to be a leader in decarbonisation and fully appreciate the scale of the challenge ahead. It is also recognised that we need to start delivering county-wide action immediately, even though we do not yet have all the answers. The aim of this Action Plan is to provide a framework for engagement, for taking action, securing further funding and lobbying Welsh and national government.

At this stage it is not possible to detail the full costs of Ceredigion becoming a carbon neutral Local Authority by 2030. Some high level work has been completed on carbon management schemes being considered, in collaboration with the Welsh Government Energy Service. Grid connection costs within the County are reducing the viability of medium to large scale energy generation, this needs addressing. West Wales is ideally suited for large-scale renewable and community energy generation schemes, but at present the lack of grid capacity is hindering development of these projects.

It must be noted that the cost of not taking action to tackle climate change, far outweighs the cost of taking action now. This is because the impact upon people, buildings and infrastructure in Ceredigion as a result of unchecked climate change will be far worse – in both economic terms but also social and environmental terms. Doing nothing, or continuing as we have is therefore no longer an option.

Recognising that additional resource is required to tackle the climate emergency, the County Council is committing revenue and capital budget to support the delivery of the outcomes and actions identified in both this Net Zero Action Plan and its own Carbon Management Plan - we will also need to maximise funding from other sources such as grants.

Net-Zero response strategy

Ceredigion’s Net-Zero response needs to deliver the following key objectives:

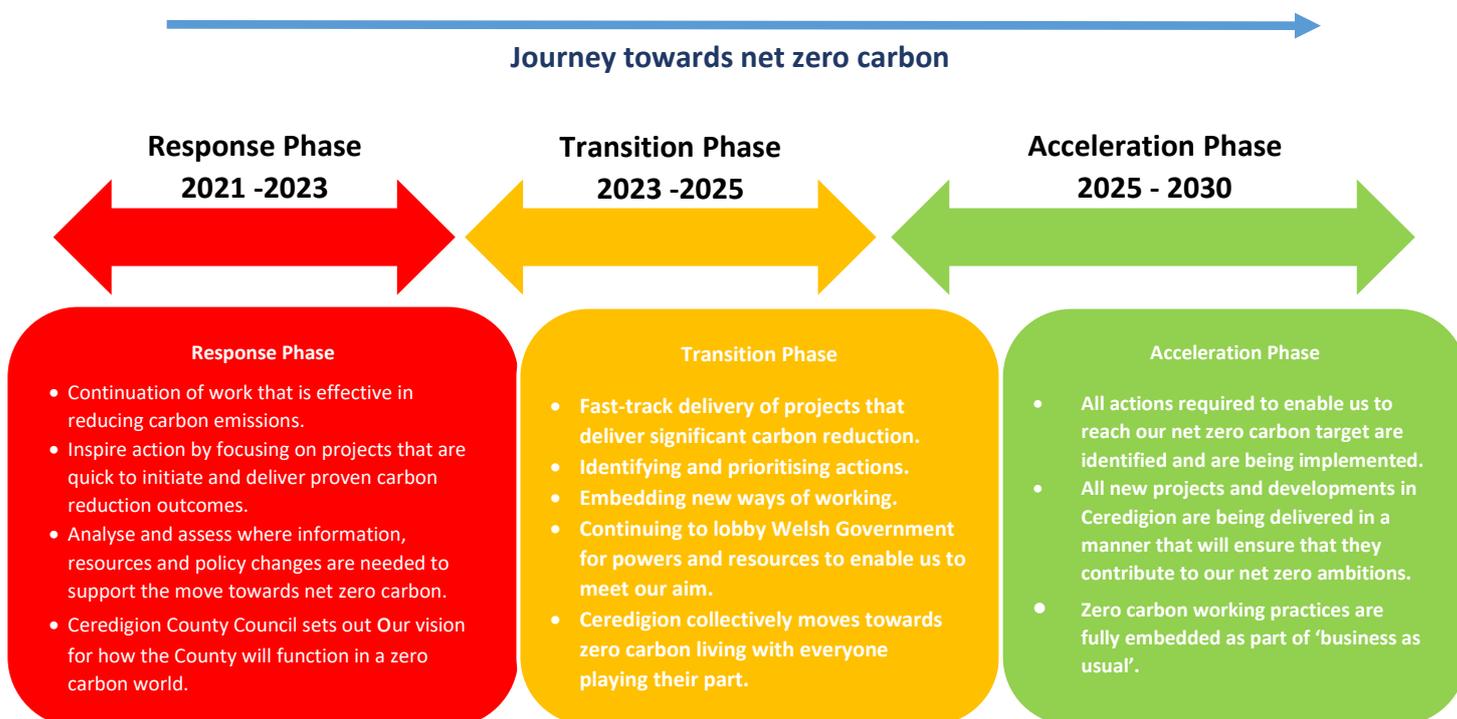
- Set clear actions that will reduce operational emissions
- Ensure a greater understanding of emission sources.
- Embed emission reduction within local authority services
- Start a county-wide conversation
- Inspire rapid action
- Create bottom up pressure on Welsh Government to provide infrastructure, support and resources to achieve our net-zero ambition

To do this we need to bring together the activities already happening within the different Local Authority Service areas, as well as within our local communities and across the County, which are helping to reduce carbon emissions. We also need to be able to respond quickly to opportunities and technical advancements. The Action Plan is therefore intended to be a dynamic document that will be reviewed annually, recording the actions being undertaken and those planned, so that others can see opportunities for collaboration and make similar changes themselves. We have therefore committed to reporting on the progress of this Action Plan every year through to 2030, so that everyone can see what the progress made and the difference we are all making by working more collaboratively.

In responding to a climate emergency we must be mindful that some of the solutions and technologies needed to become a net carbon-zero Authority by 2030 are yet to be available. We will need to alter our approach to tackling climate change as new policies are introduced, new funding becomes available and as society and behaviours begin to change. As a result our net-zero response will be structured in three inter-related phases between now and 2030, as illustrated in the diagram below:-

CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL’S NET ZERO ACTION PLAN

STRATEGIC APPROACH



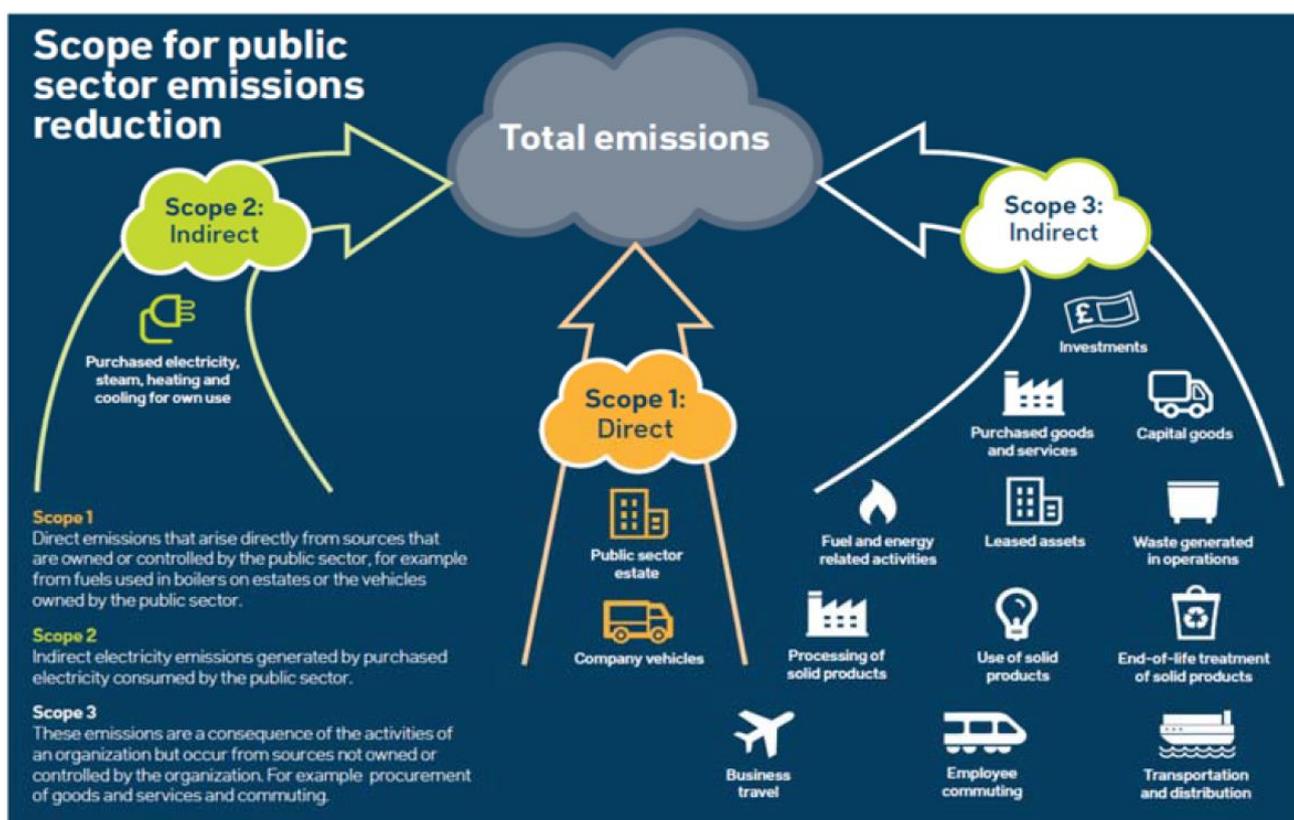
The first 'response stage', from 2021-2023, focuses on implementing actions that will rapidly and credibly reduce carbon emissions as well as driving changes needed to rapidly increase the rate at which we reduce our emissions. This ensures a credible response to the climate emergency and avoids spending time preparing longer term plans which may quickly become out-dated in an environment that is rapidly changing.

The second 'transition stage', from 2023-2025, new ways of working are being embedded across the Authority, with increasing delivery of projects that deliver carbon reduction and a better understanding of options and requirements for achieving net-zero.

In the 'acceleration phase', between 2025 and 2030, all actions required to reach our net-zero carbon target will have been identified and will be being delivered. Emission reduction and zero carbon working will be embedded across the Authority.

Focus of the net-zero action plan

The following sections provide an overview of actions that will be taken in Ceredigion to tackle the climate emergency. The focus is currently upon operational energy usage and emissions (Scope 1 and 2 emissions), as these are routinely recorded and calculated on an annual basis. There is a need to calculate and understand the carbon footprint of the Authority as a whole (to include Scope 3 emissions), which will be undertaken once the Welsh Government publish their reporting methodology, the release of which has been delayed by COVID.



The Council is already doing a lot of work in areas that contribute to emission reduction, as well as climate change mitigation. This Action Plan brings these work streams together, in one place to work towards the common goal of becoming a net-zero Local Authority by 2030. **Appendix 3** of this document details some of the work currently being undertaken by the Authority to contribute to this goal.

Operational Buildings

The Council has reduced carbon emissions from its non-domestic buildings by 55.43% since 2007/08 – from 11,034 tCO₂e to 4,918 t/CO₂e. An 11.50% reduction in emissions occurred between 2017/18 and 2019/20.

Energy consumed by the Council’s non-domestic operational buildings in 2019/20 and resultant emissions:-

Utility	Consumption (kWh)	Carbon Emissions (tCO ₂ e)
Electricity	7,627,024	2,115
Natural Gas	8,336,137	1,703
Gasoil	904,178	247
Kerosene	309,308	80
LPG	3,164,457	729
Biomass	2,824,750	44
TOTAL	23,165,854	4,918

To-date, the Council has invested over £5 million in energy efficiency and carbon reduction projects, financed via ‘Invest to Save’ and Capital Budgets. This investment has saved £2.8m to date and is projected to save over £6 million / 30,000 tCO₂e over the lifetime of the installed technologies. This investment, coupled with the Council’s on-going property rationalisation, agile working and maintenance programmes, is producing financial and carbon savings in times of significantly increasing utility prices.

ACTIONS – Operational Buildings

- Delivery of ‘Re:fit’ (Energy Efficiency) Scheme in operational property to achieve energy/carbon savings
- Develop further potential phases of ‘Re:fit’ (Energy Efficiency) project, or similar, to achieve accelerated energy/carbon savings.
- Incorporate wording into new build and construction design briefs to state that Ceredigion County Council require that new buildings are carbon neutral/net zero carbon in their energy use – and preferably carbon positive, in that they generate more energy than they can consume.
- Adopt the ‘Fabric first’ standard, where appropriate, in new building-construction projects.
- Continually review and amend design specifications and briefs to reflect new technologies and energy-efficient equipment.
- Extend ‘smart’ and sub-metering technology to ensure accurate and timely capture of energy-consumption data. Consider application for water smart metering.
- Develop appropriate carbon-reduction target for the Council’s non-domestic buildings as part of annual review of Action Plan.

Streetlighting

The Council has reduced carbon emissions from its street lighting by 78.31% since 2007/08 – from 1,503 tCO₂e to 326 tCO₂e. A reduction in emissions of 17.75% occurred from 2018/19 into 2019/20.

Since 2007/08, Ceredigion has implemented two LED street lighting upgrade programmes, which have seen the conversion of 7,526 of 7,885 streetlights to LED, as well as ‘part night lighting’ (where lamps are automatically switched off between midnight and 5:00 am).

Total Capital spend on street lighting upgrades is approximately £2.75m. This has generated annual savings of £259,000, 1,600,000 kWh and 1,177 tCO₂.

Completion of the second phase of street lighting improvements means that 95% of Ceredigion street lighting will have been converted to LED, the remaining 5% are heritage lighting, where there isn't currently an available LED solution – this will be revisited in future.

ACTIONS - Streetlighting

- Develop appropriate carbon-reduction target for the Council's street lighting as part of annual review of Action Plan.
- Upgrade remaining high-power-demand street lights to LED by end of March 2022 using agreed Ceredigion County Council funding.
- Replace any street lights that no longer comply if the Council cannot economically repair – i.e. repair costs more than a new Energy efficient LED lamp.

Fleet Vehicles

The Council has seen a 2.22% decrease in carbon emissions from its fleet vehicles from 2018/19 into 2019/20 – from 1,802 tCO₂e to 1,762 tCO₂e, despite a slight increase in consumption (litres). Carbon-emissions factors can vary each year, hence lower emissions in 2018/19 versus 2019/20, even though consumption figure was higher.

As at January 2021, the Council operates a diverse fleet of approximately 200 vehicles and 73 items of plant. The oldest vehicle in the fleet being an infrequently used 48 year-old snow blower and the youngest vehicle being a 4 month-old 3.5t pickup;

- The majority of the fleet is less than 7 years old;

We have an established fleet-list which influences and informs the vehicle replacement programme; this takes into account the:

- size and type of vehicle
- what it is used for and
- how much use is made of it

This allows the flexibility to replace vehicles when it is optimal to do so. As part of the decision making process consideration is given to whether the vehicle is actually needed or if a smaller and / or more fuel efficient vehicle would be suitable.

We replace our fleet vehicles on an incremental basis with new more fuel efficient vehicles which have a positive influence on reducing carbon emissions, enabling us to benefit from ongoing advancements in technology.

25% of our vehicles are fitted with telematics (tracking), some vehicles are also specified with speed limiters, restricting the speed and, where appropriate, engine rev limiters – these can help with driver behaviour and reduce carbon emissions.

Pedestrian diesel sweepers, as well as petrol-powered trimmers and gardening tools have been replaced with Lithium battery-powered options - the advantages of these include lower emissions, noise reduction and less hand-and-arm vibration, which can lead to health problems for the user.

The Council has engaged (October 2020) with the Welsh Government Energy Service (WGES) to undertake a full review of fleet and business transport in order to ascertain the business and environmental case for switching to ULEVs. WGES aims to help organisations meet the WG's stated objective of all public-sector road transport transitioning to ULEV by 2030 and to support the move to Net Zero.

ACTIONS – Fleet Vehicles

- Undertake a review to identify the most appropriate fuel-powered vehicles for each of the Council’s services and to identify opportunities for the introduction of ULEVs.
- Review current telematics reporting system to include more detailed analysis of CO₂ emissions and identify opportunities to support the reduction of whole-fleet emissions.
- Develop appropriate carbon-reduction target for the Council’s fleet as part of annual review of Action Plan.

Business Mileage

The Council has reduced carbon emissions from its business mileage by over 50.16% since 2007/08 – from 1,288tCO₂e to 642 tCO₂e. An 11.93% reduction in emissions occurred from 2018/19 into 2019/20.

The Council is exploring opportunities for using electric pool cars, which will reduce grey fleet travel (where officers use their own vehicles).

Potential for the installation of more electric-vehicle chargepoints at Council buildings and in public car parks needs further investigation, as greater EV charging provision will also encourage wider uptake of ULEVs in the staff ‘grey’ fleet. The EV charging rolled out so far has aimed at meeting the needs of residents and visitors, and primarily to support and encourage the transition to electric vehicles.

The Council is in the process of reviewing its travel and subsistence policy, and in particular the mileage schemes relating to hybrid and electric vehicles, along with this the Council offers a car leasing employee benefits scheme, which regularly promotes electric vehicles due to them providing the greatest cost savings.

Ceredigion County Council has engaged (October 2020) with Welsh Government Energy Service (WGES) to undertake a full review of fleet and business transport, in order to ascertain the business and environmental case for switching to ULEVs.

Electric bicycle charging has been installed at the Canolfan Rheidol Council Office in Aberystwyth.

During the COVID pandemic period, most office based staff have been working from home. Better use has been made of technology to facilitate home working, with meetings continuing but being held virtually – this new way of working has significantly reduced the need for officer travel, providing emission reductions across the Authority. As we come out of this pandemic, it is important that we learn from and build on what has worked well over the last 12 months. There is an opportunity to develop an agile working policy, to ensure that we continue to monitor and reduce grey fleet/officer travel emissions. Agile working will also reduce emissions from staff commuting, which aren’t currently recorded.

ACTIONS – Business Mileage

- Continue to expand the Council-owned EV-charging network.
- Continue to promote flexible ways of working, to ensure staff travel reductions seen during the COVID period continue
- Look at development of a Green Travel Plan, to include a review of the Council’s business mileage in order to identify opportunities for the introduction of ULEVs.
- Development of an agile working policy
- Develop appropriate carbon-reduction target for the Council’s business mileage as part of annual review of Action Plan.

Renewable Energy Generation and Carbon Offsetting

As of summer 2020, Ceredigion County Council has the following levels of renewable and low-carbon energy measures installed:

- Solar photovoltaic (PV) panels: 412 kW at 16 sites (equivalent to approx. 1,600 panels), many of which are schools.
- Solar PV-powered signs, lamps and street furniture – various locations.
- Biomass District heating – Aberaeron, provides heating and hot water to the Penmorfa Council Offices, Aberaeron Primary School and Min y Mor Care Home.
- Biomass District Heating – Aberystwyth, provides heating and hot water to the Canolfan Rheidol Council Offices, Welsh Government Office building, Plascrug Leisure Centre and Penweddig Secondary School.

Over recent years, the Council has sought to significantly increase the amount of renewable electricity that it generates but has been frustrated by the limited capacity of the local electricity-distribution network (National Grid). Previous applications to the electricity-distribution network operators – Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN) and Western Power Distribution (WPD) – for connecting to the electricity network have resulted in financial quotes that have made the scheme unviable.

Therefore, while Ceredigion County Council's preferred primary method of compensating for its residual carbon footprint is to significantly increase the amount of renewable energy generated on its land, this relies on enhancements to the capacity of the local electricity-distribution network. Unfortunately, this is beyond the direct control of the Council – and discussions are ongoing with SPEN, WPD and the Welsh Government to seek the necessary improvements.

The Council is working with the Welsh Government Energy Service (WGES) to explore and deliver opportunities for larger-scale renewable-energy projects. The WGES supports the public sector in Wales to bring tangible projects to fruition and advises on energy-related issues. It is currently undertaking a review of the Council's land in order to identify potential opportunities for ground-mounted solar PV and wind turbines. Future renewable-energy generation on Council-owned land will depend on grid capacity (or having a local off-loader for power generated), and will also need to be satisfactory ecological terms and obtain planning permission.

Carbon offsetting involves compensating for carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions arising from industrial or other human activity by participating in schemes designed to make equivalent reductions of CO₂ in the atmosphere. Because one unit of CO₂ has the same climate impact wherever it is emitted, the benefit is the same wherever it is reduced or avoided. Achieving verified carbon reductions could include investing in protecting rainforests in South America or, other global schemes and potentially, local actions such as tree planting, woodland management and peatland restoration. This can be a complex issue and represents the option of last resort unless tree planting/peatland enhancement on Council-controlled land is yet to be deemed to qualify for carbon offsetting (Note: This to be confirmed when the Welsh Government publishes its land-use guidance as part of the carbon-neutral public services reporting framework).

In recognising that the carbon-sequestration ability of soils and grasslands should not be overlooked, and that managed pasture for soil health instead of production gives benefits to carbon storage and the regulation of water runoff, the Council is reviewing practices for safeguarding and increasing carbon storage in soils and biomass, such as:

- Changing agricultural practices on Ceredigion's County Farms to reduce emissions production and increase carbon sequestration through good soil management.
- Engaging with the agri-food sector to gain an understanding of how the Council might be able to support more sustainable farming practices across the County.
- Increased green infrastructure – owned and managed by either CCC or third parties, to include biodiversity enhancements and public access.

- Coastal management – since ‘coastal squeeze’ due to rising sea levels is an issue in coastal habitats, exploring allowing habitats to retreat one field back from the shoreline in order to increase extent.

ACTIONS – Renewable Energy Generation and Carbon offsetting

- Work with Welsh Government Energy Service to explore and deliver opportunities for large-scale renewable-energy projects.
- Work with LASER Energy & National Procurement Service to support greater procurement of energy from locally generated renewable-energy projects.
- Explore the feasibility of, and identify land for, tree planting and other such measures (such as increasing the carbon store in soils and biomass) on Council-controlled land in order to contribute towards carbon offsetting.
- Development and implementation of a Tree Strategy – which will include future management of existing and proposed areas of woodland, management plans, removal of trees and life cycle.
- Development and implementation of an Agri-food Strategy – exploring opportunities for local production and consumption in Ceredigion schools and care homes. This will lower food miles and provide better soil management.
- Develop appropriate target for renewable-energy generation as part of annual review of Action Plan.

Collaboration

In order to achieve our net zero carbon target, collaboration with Welsh Government, public sector bodies, local Public Service Boards, Growing Mid Wales partners as well as private, third and community sectors is going to be essential.

Working with Welsh Government

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 sets a target for the Welsh Government to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% (on 1990 levels) by 2050. The Welsh Government declared a climate emergency on 29 April 2019 and, as a response, accepted the recommendations from the UK Committee on Climate Change for emission reduction of 95% by 2050 with the ambition to be net zero (Note: For Wales/Ceredigion carbon emissions, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2018>, January 2021).

‘Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales’ (March 2018) sets out the Welsh Government’s approach to cutting carbon emissions and increasing efficiency in a way that maximises the wider benefits for Wales, ensuring a fairer and healthier society. It sets out 100 policies and proposals that directly reduce emissions and support the growth of the low-carbon economy across all areas of government, including:

- increasing tree planting to, initially, at least 2,000 hectares per year and then doubling that to 4,000 hectares as rapidly as possible;
- commissioning an independent feasibility study on carbon-capture use and storage;
- reducing emissions from power generation in Wales, including using consenting, planning and permitting powers and developing a policy position on the fuels used to generate power;
- encouraging the take-up of electric vehicles by developing a rapid charging network;
- an ambition for buses, taxis and private-hire vehicles to be zero emission by 2028;
- reviewing Building Regulations to explore how higher energy-efficiency standards can be set for new builds;
- working with partners to include more about sustainability and decarbonisation in the new curriculum; and
- providing fruit and fuel trees for the entire Mount Elgon region in Uganda by 2030 (carbon offsetting).

The Welsh Government has an ambition for a carbon-neutral public sector by 2030, and will be supporting the public sector to baseline, monitor and report progress towards carbon neutrality (Policy 20, 'Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales'). Based on recent carbon footprinting undertaken by Natural Resources Wales and NHS Wales, the Welsh Government proposes to prioritise the following four key themes to meet this ambition:

- (1) Mobility and Transport;
- (2) Procurement;
- (3) Land Use; and
- (4) Buildings.

Aether Ltd has secured the contract to develop the reporting guidance, working with public bodies and Welsh Government to establish consistent, Wales-wide methodologies for carbon-emissions reporting. The final set of documentation was to be delivered to the Welsh Government by the end of 2019/20 but this has been delayed due to COVID-19. It is currently intended that final documentation be circulated to all public bodies in the coming months. This will assist in baselining carbon emissions, developing plans and monitoring progress towards emissions-reduction targets.

As mentioned in previous sections, the Council is working with the Welsh Government Energy Service to explore and deliver opportunities for large-scale renewable-energy projects and ULEVs.

As outlined previously, the 'Re:fit' project is a collaboration between Welsh Government and the Welsh Public Sector using a pre-procured contractor framework and Salix invest-to-save funds.

The Council is part of the WG Hydrogen Reference Group, which intends to promote discussions on the best way for Wales to progress this market. The group is closely linked into MH:EK and the South Wales Industrial Cluster (SWIC), as well as the broader hydrogen supply chain and networks. WG intends to develop its hydrogen policy position and identify funding opportunities. The outcomes from this group work will, in turn, feed through into the Welsh Government's internal hydrogen group, which includes representatives from across many departments with interests in hydrogen.

The Welsh Government Energy Service is developing a Regional Energy Plan for the Mid Wales Region based on recent work produced by the Institute of Welsh Affairs (IWA) and Regen SBCR a Renewable Energy Future. The Council is engaged with this work stream.

Working with Ceredigion Public Services Board / Growing Mid Wales partners

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 established a statutory board, known as a Public Services Board (PSB), in each local authority area in Wales - each PSB is a collection of public bodies working together to improve the well-being of its County.

Ceredigion County Council is an active member of the Climate Change and Natural Resources Working group, which is a sub-group of the Ceredigion PSB.

Collaboration with Experts from Private, Third and Community Sectors

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impact of their decisions; to work better with people, communities and each other; and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change. The Act requires public bodies to implement five key ways of working in future decision-making:

- 1) looking to the long-term;
- 2) taking an integrated approach;
- 3) involving a diversity of the population;
- 4) working with others in a collaborative way; and
- 5) understanding the root causes of issues to prevent them from recurring.

The Council works in close collaboration with a vast range of private, third-sector and community partners. These include, but are not limited to:

- Welsh Government
- Consortium of local Authorities in Wales (CLAW)
- Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA)
- Ceredigion Public Service Board
- Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE)
- Community Councils
- Hywel Dda University Health Board
- Association of Local Government Ecologists
- Wales Local Nature Partnership Project

ACTIONS – Collaboration

- Continue to engage with Welsh Government in all areas of decarbonisation.
- Work with Ceredigion PSB partners to identify and develop opportunities for collaboration in relation to carbon reduction.
- Work with Welsh Government and Mid Wales Region partners to establish a Regional Energy Plan for Mid Wales.
- Identify additional partners and landowners for potential carbon reduction joint working.
- Work with the Council’s private-sector partners and major landowners to explore innovative approaches to carbon reduction.
- Collaborate with Ceredigion’s third sector and community organisations to explore carbon-reduction opportunities and further renewable-energy aims.

Integration and Communication

The Council has adopted a corporate approach to draft this action plan with regular meetings chaired by Cllr Alun Williams and attended by various Council Officers and Cabinet Members, Representatives from Welsh Government Energy Service have also attended meetings.

It is recognised that Staff and Member awareness and buy-in will be required to enable the Council to successfully deliver the Net Zero Carbon Plan - this will require specific training and communications - initially, it is proposed to undertake a Staff survey to identify how individuals can contribute to the Council’s commitment to become a net zero carbon local authority.

Integrated Impact Assessments (IIA) are undertaken for Council projects, proposals and decisions, An IIA incorporates the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Sustainable Development Principles, the Equality Act 2010 and the Welsh Language Measure 2011 (Welsh Language Standards requirements) and Risk Management in order to inform effective decision making and ensuring compliance with respective legislation.

In September 2019 the young Swedish activist Greta Thunberg inspired millions of young people and adults throughout the world who to take part in the global ‘Climate Strike’, demanding urgent action in tackling the climate crisis - young people from Aberystwyth schools went “on strike” to press for action on climate change and a number of Ceredigion councillors and officers spent time listening and discussing with them.

Performance on progress towards becoming a net zero carbon local authority by 2030 will be reported annually, together with annual reviews of the action plan.

ACTIONS – Integration and Communication

- Undertake Staff survey to identify how individuals can contribute to the Council’s commitment to become a net zero carbon local authority
- Provide staff training on carbon reduction in their day to day work and specialist areas – include carbon reduction as part of the Council’s corporate induction
- Consolidate smarter working practices to create further decarbonisation efficiencies – e.g. smarter use of workplaces, home working and reduced commuting mileages. The well-being and working conditions of employees must be paramount in this consideration – including equipping staff with suitable office furniture and energy-efficient equipment.
- Incorporate climate change / carbon reduction in Integrated Impact Assessment process undertaken by Council
- Review Action Plan following publication of Welsh Government guidance regarding new national carbon-reporting framework.

Performance on progress towards becoming a net zero carbon local authority by 2030 will be **reported annually**, together with annual reviews of the action plan.

Appendix 1

Actions Summary

ACTIONS – Operational Buildings

- Delivery of 'Re:fit' (Energy Efficiency) Scheme in operational property to achieve energy/carbon savings
- Develop further potential phases of 'Re:fit' (Energy Efficiency) project, or similar, to achieve accelerated energy/carbon savings.
- Incorporate wording into new build and construction design briefs to state that Ceredigion County Council require that new buildings are carbon neutral/net zero carbon in their energy use – and preferably carbon positive, in that they generate more energy than they can consume.
- Adopt the 'Fabric first' standard, where appropriate, in new building-construction projects.
- Continually review and amend design specifications and briefs to reflect new technologies and energy-efficient equipment.
- Extend 'smart' and sub-metering technology to ensure accurate and timely capture of energy-consumption data. Consider application for water smart metering.
- Develop appropriate carbon-reduction target for the Council's non-domestic buildings as part of annual review of Action Plan.

ACTIONS - Streetlighting

- Develop appropriate carbon-reduction target for the Council's street lighting as part of annual review of Action Plan.
- Upgrade remaining high-power-demand street lights to LED by end of March 2022 using agreed Ceredigion County Council funding.
- Replace any street lights that no longer comply if the Council cannot economically repair – i.e. repair costs more than a new Energy efficient LED lamp.

ACTIONS – Fleet Vehicles

- Undertake a review to identify the most appropriate fuel-powered vehicles for each of the Council's services and to identify opportunities for the introduction of ULEVs.
- Review current telematics reporting system to include more detailed analysis of CO₂ emissions and identify opportunities to support the reduction of whole-fleet emissions.
- Develop appropriate carbon-reduction target for the Council's fleet as part of annual review of Action Plan.

ACTIONS – Business Mileage

- Continue to expand the Council-owned EV-charging network.
- Continue to promote flexible ways of working, to ensure staff travel reductions seen during the COVID period continue
- Look at development of a Green Travel Plan, to include a review of the Council's business mileage in order to identify opportunities for the introduction of ULEVs.
- Development of an agile working policy
- Develop appropriate carbon-reduction target for the Council's business mileage as part of annual review of Action Plan.

ACTIONS – Renewable Energy Generation and Carbon offsetting

- Work with Welsh Government Energy Service to explore and deliver opportunities for large-scale renewable-energy projects.
- Work with LASER Energy & National Procurement Service to support greater procurement of energy from locally generated renewable-energy projects.
- Explore the feasibility of, and identify land for, tree planting and other such measures (such as increasing the carbon store in soils and biomass) on Council-controlled land in order to contribute towards carbon offsetting.
- Development and implementation of a Tree Strategy – which will include future management of existing and proposed areas of woodland, management plans, removal of trees and life cycle.

- Development and implementation of an Agri-food Strategy – exploring opportunities for local production and consumption in Ceredigion schools and care homes. This will lower food miles and provide better soil management.
- Develop appropriate target for renewable-energy generation as part of annual review of Action Plan.

ACTIONS – Collaboration

- Continue to engage with Welsh Government in all areas of decarbonisation.
- Work with Ceredigion PSB partners to identify and develop opportunities for collaboration in relation to carbon reduction.
- Work with Welsh Government and Mid Wales Region partners to establish a Regional Energy Plan for Mid Wales.
- Identify additional partners and landowners for potential carbon reduction joint working.
- Work with the Council’s private-sector partners and major landowners to explore innovative approaches to carbon reduction.
- Collaborate with Ceredigion’s third sector and community organisations to explore carbon-reduction opportunities and further renewable-energy aims.

ACTIONS – Integration and Communication

- Undertake Staff survey to identify how individuals can contribute to the Council’s commitment to become a net zero carbon local authority
- Provide staff training on carbon reduction in their day to day work and specialist areas – include carbon reduction as part of the Council’s corporate induction
- Consolidate smarter working practices to create further decarbonisation efficiencies – e.g. smarter use of workplaces, home working and reduced commuting mileages. The well-being and working conditions of employees must be paramount in this consideration – including equipping staff with suitable office furniture and energy-efficient equipment.
- Incorporate climate change / carbon reduction in Integrated Impact Assessment process undertaken by Council
- Review Action Plan following publication of Welsh Government guidance regarding new national carbon-reporting framework.

Appendix 2

Carbon Reduction Summary – Operational Emissions

Key Measures of Success	2007/08	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2018/19 vs. 2019/20	
					Status	% change
Non Domestic Buildings						
Consumption (kWh)	33,181,924	25,243,982	23,824,245	23,165,854	Improved	-2.76%
Carbon Emissions (tCO ₂ e)	11,034	5,557	5,177	4,918	Improved	-5.01%
Streetlighting						
Consumption (kWh)	2,789,852	1,473,489	1,430,263	1,176,392	Improved	-17.75%
Carbon Emissions (tCO ₂ e)	1,503	518	435	326	Improved	-25.06%
Fleet Vehicles						
Consumption (Litres)	735,921	687,747	676,698	679,623	Declined	0.43%
Carbon Emissions (tCO ₂ e)	1,995	1,867	1,802	1,762	Improved	-2.22%
Business Mileage						
Mileage (miles)	3,907,910	2,592,354	2,573,678	2,301,840	Improved	-10.56%
Carbon Emissions (tCO ₂ e)	1,288	784	729	642	Improved	-11.93%

Carbon Footprint	-	Renewable Energy Generation Carbon Offsetting	=	Net Carbon Zero
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Carbon Footprint 2019/20	-	Renewable Energy Generation	+	Tree Planting	=	Net Carbon Zero
	Carbon Emissions (tCO ₂ e)	Wind (no of turbines)	Solar PV (no of panels)	Tree planting (no of trees)		
Operational Buildings	4,918	16	81,967	491,800	=	0 tCO ₂ e
Streetlighting	326	1	5,433	32,600	=	0 tCO ₂ e
Fleet Vehicles	1,762	6	29,367	176,200	=	0 tCO ₂ e
Business Mileage	642	2	10,700	64,200	=	0 tCO ₂ e
	7,648	25	127,467	764,800	=	0 tCO ₂ e
		13.5 MWh	32 MWh	478 ha		

Wind: above based on number of 500kW turbines, with an estimated annual generation of 1,200,000 kWh/year, or 306.7 tCO₂e

Solar: above based on number of individual 250W PV panels, with an estimated annual generation of 235kWh/year = 0.06 tCO₂e

Trees: above assumes one broad leaf tree will absorb in the region of 1 tonne of carbon dioxide during its full life-time (approximately 100 years), planted at a rate of 1,600 trees per hectare

Notes:

1. The equivalent number of wind turbines and solar PV panels is based on a high-level calculation that will change year-on-year with changes in the UK emission conversion factor for electricity. Whilst this metric is used to help demonstrate the scale of the task, it is purely meant for illustrative purposes only as it is dependent on many external variables.
2. The equivalent number of trees is based on a high-level calculation and is dependent on many external variables. Whilst this metric is used to help demonstrate the scale of the task, it is purely meant for illustrative purposes only.
3. Welsh Government will be introducing a new national carbon reporting framework in 2021; consequently, the above performance data may not be directly comparable after this date.

Appendix 3

Current Decarbonisation Policy

The policy landscape around decarbonisation is constantly evolving, but relevant recent policy is captured here, with links to relevant documents where available:

The Welsh Government (WG) target for a carbon-neutral public sector by 2030.

[Environment \(Wales\) Act 2016](#), Part II relates to Climate change and specifies an 80% reduction in all-Wales net emissions by 2050 against a 1990 baseline [Ceredigion started accurately recording emissions data in 2007/08 when our first Carbon Management Plan was put in place, so 2007/08 is CCC's only viable baseline year].

WG target for 70% of electricity used in Wales to be from renewable sources by 2030 [the equivalent of 50% of Wales' electricity consumption was met from renewable sources in 2018 compared with 48% in 2017 and 43% in 2016].

WG target for 1 gigawatt (GW) of renewable-electricity capacity in Wales to be locally owned by 2030 and for all new projects to have an element of local ownership by 2020. [Wales is already 77% towards having 1 GW of renewable-energy capacity that is locally owned, with the total installed capacity of locally owned electricity projects up to the end of 2018 at almost 778 megawatts (MW)].

In March 2019, Welsh Government launched '[Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales](#)' – a cross-government plan to cut emissions and contribute to the global fight against climate change.

In May 2019, the UK Committee on Climate Change (UKCCC) recommended that a 100% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions should be legislated for 'as soon as possible', and urged government to set a net-zero CO₂ emissions target by 2050.

In May 2019, following the lead set by both Welsh and Scottish governments, the House of Commons declared a climate emergency.

In June 2019, WG declared that Wales would accept the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) recommendation for a 95% reduction in (Wales-specific) greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and go further with an ambition to reach net zero.

[Wellbeing of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#), The Well-being of Future Generations Act requires public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.

Promoting environmental and community resilience is a corporate priority, which is set out within [Ceredigion County Council's Corporate Strategy](#).

Appendix 4

Glossary of Terms

Units of measurement

A carbon footprint is measured in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO_{2e}). The carbon dioxide equivalent (CO_{2e}) allows the different greenhouse gases to be compared on a like-for-like basis relative to one unit of CO₂. CO_{2e} is calculated by multiplying the emissions of each of the six greenhouse gases by its 100 year global warming potential.

A carbon footprint considers all six of the Kyoto Protocol greenhouse gases: Carbon dioxide (CO₂), Methane (CH₄), Nitrous oxide (N₂O), Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), Perfluorocarbons (PFCs) and Sulphur hexafluoride (SF₆).

Source - <https://www.carbontrust.com/resources/guides/carbon-footprinting-and-reporting/carbon-footprinting/>

A **kilowatt (kW)** is simply 1,000 watts, which is a measure of power, eg a 10,000 watt electric shower could also be called a 10 kilowatt shower.

A **megawatt (MW)** is simply 1,000 kilowatts, which is a measure of power, eg a gigawatt (GW) is 1,000 megawatts and a terawatt (TW) is 1,000 gigawatts

A **kilowatt hour (kWh)** is a measure of how much energy is being used; it doesn't mean the number of kilowatts used per hour, it is simply a unit of measurement that equals the amount of energy one would use to keep a 1,000 watt appliance running for an hour, for example:

- One 100 watt light bulb would take 10 hours to rack-up 1 kWh of energy.
- One 2,000 watt appliance would use 1 kWh in just half an hour.
- One 50 watt item could stay on for 20 hours before it used 1 kWh.

Source - <https://www.ovoenergy.com/guides/energy-guides/what-is-a-kwh-kw-and-kwh-explained.html>

A **megawatt hour (MWh)** is 1000 kWh.

Explanations:

Terminology related to climate change can be difficult to understand especially for those with infrequent contact with the topic. Below are some terms which are commonly used:

Carbon Accounting - carbon accounting covers a wide range of different practices and means different things to different groups of people but can generally be split into two categories: physical carbon accounting (which looks at quantifying physical amounts greenhouse gas emissions to the atmosphere), and financial carbon accounting (which looks at giving carbon a financial market value). Physical carbon accounting can be used to help companies and countries work out how much carbon they are emitting into the atmosphere, this is known as a greenhouse gas inventory. Once it has been established how much carbon is being emitted, reduction targets can be set. This method is also important for helping to assign responsibility to different parties for their associated carbon emissions.

Carbon accounting provides the tools to not only quantify and measure carbon emissions but also to help make informed decisions with regards to mitigation strategies:

- How much carbon is being emitted?
- Who is responsible for these emissions?
- Which methods should we employ to achieve the biggest carbon reductions?

- Are there strategies or policies which appear 'green' but actually increase our carbon emissions?

Carbon accounting can help to answer all these questions, but it can be a complex process.

Source – <https://www.ed.ac.uk/sustainability/what-we-do/climate-change/case-studies/climate-research/carbon-accounting>

Net Zero Carbon – it is clear from the science that the amount of CO₂ in the atmosphere resulting from human activity largely determines the extent of global warming. This means that to prevent catastrophic climate change, CO₂ emissions need to be reduced to zero. The science led to governments worldwide agreeing to achieve a balance between emissions and removal of greenhouse gases, in the Paris Agreement. 'Net zero' refers to achieving an overall balance between emissions produced and emissions taken out of the atmosphere. Like a bath with the taps on, an approach to achieving this balance can either be to turn down the taps (the emissions) or to drain an equal amount down the plug (removals of emissions from the atmosphere, including storage for the emissions such as 'carbon sinks' i.e. anything that absorbs more carbon than it releases as carbon dioxide. European forests are currently a net carbon sink as they take in more carbon than they emit).

Source - <http://www.lse.ac.uk/GranthamInstitute/news/what-is-net-zero/>

Carbon Neutral - carbon neutrality means annual zero net anthropogenic (human caused or influenced) CO₂ emissions by a certain date. By definition, carbon neutrality means every tonne of anthropogenic CO₂ emitted is compensated with an equivalent amount of CO₂ removed (e.g. via carbon offsetting).

Source – <https://www.wri.org/blog/2015/12/cop21-glossary-terms-guiding-long-term-emissions-reduction-goal>

- The Council has committed to become a 'Net Zero Carbon' local authority whilst the Welsh Government has an ambition for a 'Carbon Neutral' Welsh public sector. Within the confines of this document both these terms are inter-changeable.

Carbon Offsetting - put simply, offsetting means securing carbon credits equivalent to one's carbon impact. This means compensating for every tonne of CO₂ emitted by ensuring there is one tonne less in the atmosphere. Because one unit of CO₂ has the same climate impact wherever it is emitted, the benefit is the same wherever it is reduced or avoided. Achieving verified carbon reductions could include protecting rainforests in Sierra Leone or potentially local tree planting.

Source - <https://climatecare.org/carbon-offsetting/>

Appendix 5

Climate Emergency

The initial focus of this action plan for a route towards becoming a net zero carbon local authority is not intended to limit or preclude other potential wider actions that contribute towards addressing the climate emergency.

Some of these actions are identified below (this is not an exhaustive list):

Housing

- The Ceredigion Energy Company Obligation Local Authority Flexibility (ECO LA Flex 3) grant scheme commenced in October 2019 and will be available until March 2022. This scheme is available countywide and covers energy-inefficient homes that either spend more than 10% of their income on fuel or are on low income and are vulnerable to the cold. The grant goes towards home energy-efficiency measures involving heating upgrades and insulation. Since September 2019, over 173 properties have received improvements through the scheme.
- In March 2019 we commenced a Warm Homes Fund project delivering 140 first time central heating systems with the necessary insulation measures in the homes of vulnerable low income households. These installations were a mix of LPG systems and air source heat pumps. This scheme will come to an end in March 2021 and we are currently in discussion with the funders in relation to delivering a Phase 2 scheme for a further 140 installations in the next 12 months.
- The Welsh Government Warm Homes Arbed 3 programme are currently evaluating the properties in the Cardigan area in readiness for submission of a report to WG to determine feasibility of a scheme. This will include the installation of heating systems/upgrades and insulation measures in privately owned properties (both owner occupied and privately rented). The aim is undertake a minimum of 100 installations.
- Ceredigion County Council are currently considering various other funding opportunities in order to tackle climate change within the county and reduce the carbon footprint.

Planning, Development, Land Use and Biodiversity

The Ceredigion Local Development Plan 2007-2022 (LDP1) was adopted in April 2013 and seeks to govern how and where development takes place throughout the County by setting out a series of policies and proposals. The LDP is used in the determination of all planning applications in Ceredigion. A core element of the LDP is the principle of sustainable development. The LDP also has an objective to ensure development minimises Ceredigion's greenhouse gas contribution, both singularly and cumulatively, and to seek a reduction wherever possible. The plan's strategy seeks to secure sustainable development via the Settlement Hierarchy, which aims to direct development to locations with a high level of services. This in turn reduces the need to travel which subsequently contributes to a reduction in carbon emissions.

The principle of sustainable development is also consistent throughout the plan's policies. This is evidenced, for example, in policies supportive of renewable energy developments and sustainable travel infrastructure. To ensure the delivery of sustainable development, the LDP is also subjected to a Sustainability Appraisal which incorporates a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA). The purpose of these tools is to ensure that policies and proposals in the LDP reflect sustainable development principles and take into account the significant effects of the plan on the environment.

Ceredigion's current Local Development Plan (LDP 1) has been subjected to monitoring on an annual basis through the medium of the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). The findings of the 3rd AMR triggered a plan review which informed the completion of the LDP Review Report published in November 2017. The outcome recommended the commencement of a replacement LDP (LDP 2). The

replacement plan will cover the period 2018-2033. The revised LDP will seek to maintain the principle of sustainable development and seek to address climate change throughout, further focussing development to the most sustainable locations which are accessible by sustainable transport modes and have the necessary capabilities to support home working. The change in travel to work behaviours arising from COVID 19 pandemic are likely to become a permanent feature, with at least 30% of workers/work hours working from home being the norm going forward, according to Welsh Government policy intentions. Telemedicine and other uses of digital communications are also likely to impact on the need to travel (the first sustainable development principle) and on car miles travelled in particular for a dispersed rural population such as that in Ceredigion (where approximately 60% of residents live outside the main towns and viable public transport services are a challenge).

As part of the revision process, a Climate Change Topic Paper is being compiled. The paper takes account of any relevant legislation, strategies, policies, guidance and evidence which has been published or altered since the adoption of LDP1. This, in turn, informs any necessary changes to the plan in the context of climate change. One outcome identified thus far has been the need to produce an overarching strategic climate change policy. Whilst not compulsory, the addition of a strategic policy was identified by officers as the most appropriate mechanism to address concerns relating to climate change and development. The policy will seek to set out criterion governing development proposals in relation to carbon emissions, previously developed land, energy efficiency, renewable energy generation, climate responsive design, sustainable construction methods, the management, protection and enhancement of ecosystem services, water resources, the best and most versatile land and green infrastructure assets and networks which act as carbon sinks. In addition, it will further seek to avoid and minimise flood risk taking a nature based solutions first approach.

A Renewable Energy Assessment (REA), which constitutes part of the evidence base and thus informs the replacement plan, has also been recently conducted. The REA is a high-level strategic assessment of the potential for renewable and low and zero carbon energy generation across the County. The REA sets out a series of renewable energy targets and local areas of search for wind and solar. Collectively, this will inform the replacement plan and in turn seek to facilitate the development and use of renewable and low and zero carbon energy technologies in Ceredigion.

Flooding, as a hazard, must be considered to inform the LDP process; which involves the consideration of the potential consequences of flooding as well as the likelihood of an event occurring. Planning authorities should adopt a precautionary approach of positive avoidance of development in areas at risk of flooding, with additional consideration of surface water flooding and shoreline management plans.

Planning Policy Wales (PPW), supported by Technical Advice Note 15 (TAN15 currently under review), provides a precautionary framework to direct new development away from areas at high risk of flooding. In particular, vulnerable developments, described in TAN 15, are required to be directed away from areas at risk of flooding.

Development Advice Maps enable planning authorities to take a strategic approach to flood risk and consider the catchment as a whole by providing a preliminary representation of flood risks, which informs the LDP process. In addition, flood consequences assessments should assist the understanding of how natural and man-made defences work as integral components of places and provide a means by which the cumulative effects of development can begin to be understood, to help manage flood risk at an early stage.

CCC is currently preparing a Strategic Flood Consequences Assessment (SFCA) to form part of the evidence base for the replacement LDP.

The SFCA will support the Council's role in achieving sustainable development through managing flood risk and avoiding future impacts of flooding. The SFCA will also assist Ceredigion in a broader sense

by helping to tackle key issues such as designing for climate change, nature and biodiversity conservation, ecological connectivity and enhancing the natural environment and its services.

A Green Infrastructure Assessment (GIA) has recently been undertaken. This contains maps and associated commentary on existing urban green infrastructure assets and habitats for Ceredigion's six main towns plus Adpar (sister settlement to Newcastle Emlyn, Carmarthenshire), and on the land-based designations for the county as a whole, as well as identifying the extent of connectivity for wildlife between existing core habitats and for people between existing green infrastructure assets and between urban and rural areas. It establishes the key opportunities and priorities for delivering Green Infrastructure improvements for each of the main towns, plus the county as a whole.

The GI Assessment suggests that, based on the identification of broad habitats within each of the 2km buffers around towns, and the ecosystem services likely to be provided by these habitats, it would appear that the towns which benefit the most from higher levels of habitat-based ecosystem service provision are Aberystwyth, Aberaeron and Cardigan. This could be in part because these are coastal towns which benefit from the cultural and regulating services provided by Ceredigion's coast and its habitats. Tregaron has notable ecosystem service provision to the north, where the Ramsar site and mire habitat is located. In terms of ecosystem service needs, Cardigan, Adpar, and the more densely developed western and southern parts of Aberystwyth would benefit from the creation of GI (e.g. planting of trees and hedges and appropriately managed grasslands) to reduce levels of particulate air pollutants.

Sustainable flood management measures, such as installation of sustainable drainage systems, tree planting, or creation of large-scale green space (where feasible) aligned with natural flood management approaches such as managed retreats, may be beneficial in Lampeter and in the east of Tregaron where the risk of surface water flooding is highest.

Priority should be given to creating new GI that addresses identified deficiencies in GI and ecosystem services provision, and extends and connects the existing network. Other prioritised opportunities will relate more to enhancing the quality, accessibility and awareness of existing GI. At the scale of the County, increased provision of woodland and expansion/restoration of peat bogs would help to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere (as well as reducing flooding downstream and providing cooling benefits), thus contributing towards CCC's commitment to become a net zero carbon local authority by 2030. Policies to support such development will be included in the replacement LDP.

Specific projects that link to the GIA are the 'Connecting with Nature' Ceredigion PSB project due for completion by the end of March 2021, with funding of £25k from NRW, which is tasked to identify publicly owned land which can be managed, improved and enhanced for biodiversity and be opened to public access, volunteering and wellbeing activities. It will identify 6 priority opportunities from a long list linked to potential for enhancing the positive reconnection of people within their communities by considering specific issues, using information and evidence already gathered during preparation of the Green Infrastructure Assessment report. Further settlement specific GI work is being undertaken with cross border partners in Carmarthenshire and NRW to map assets and needs around climate resilience in Newcastle Emlyn.

Amendments to building regulations notwithstanding a new policy may be introduced into the LDP regarding electric charging points for new developments to increase this provision in both residential and non-residential development. Key issues for Ceredigion relate to development of EV charging facilities in the public realm and on the arterial roads, to ensure availability of EV charging points for use by residential householders without off-road parking and for rural residents who need to make relatively long journeys for shopping/leisure/hospital visits, etc., and for tourists and leisure visitors for whom recharging facilities will be an important factor in choosing their holiday/leisure destination.

Waste and Environmental Services

- The Council operates the following kerbside collection service:
 - Dry mixed recyclates (paper, card, plastics, cans and cartons) - collected weekly
 - Food waste - collected weekly
 - Absorbent hygiene products - collected fortnightly on application
 - Glass bottles and jars - collected 3 weekly
 - Non-recyclable waste - collected 3 weekly
 - Garden waste and bulky household waste - collected on request
- The Council's trade waste customers are given opportunities to recycle dry mixed recyclate and food waste.
- Waste collection routes are reviewed on an ongoing basis to improve efficiency.
- The collected food waste is treated by anaerobic digestion to produce digestate (slurry-like fertilizer) which is spread on local agricultural land and biogas, used to produce heat and power.
- The non-recyclable waste collected at the kerbside is treated by energy from waste to generate electricity.
- The Council provides four household waste sites in the county, where residents can deposit a wide range of domestic waste materials.
- The Council works with and supports local re-use organisations, helping to find new homes for unwanted quality household items.
- The Council's performance for recycling, composting and preparation for re-use was 72% in 2019/20, compared to a statutory target of 64%.
- The Council continues to work with stakeholders to educate residents about the benefits of waste prevention, re-use and recycling.
- The Council fully supports community efforts to reduce the use of single-use plastic within the county and has significantly reduced its own usage by steps such as:
 - Removing plastic milk bottles and straws in schools and replacing with non-plastic alternatives.
 - Ending the use of plastic cups, cutlery and pre-packed sachets in civic canteens.
 - Installing public drinking fountains

Procurement

Ceredigion County Council is committed to delivering sustainable solutions including the reduction of carbon emissions and recognises the key role procurement has in achieving this goal. The latest procurement strategy maximises the contribution towards sustainable development through the embedding the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Sustainable Development Principles in procurement processes. Specifically the Strategy will deliver a healthy environment through procuring sustainable solutions and by pre-qualifying prospective suppliers on their sustainability records and values. Actions within the Strategy include:

- Develop commodity strategies through Category Management, eg increase local sourcing and procure sustainable solutions.
- Work with suppliers to help them improve and become more sustainable.

The Corporate Procurement Team has representation on the Council's Carbon Reduction Group and the Project Management Panel, which facilitates early engagement with project managers on associated sustainability considerations, as well as other matters. The team also played a key role in the Plastic Free Ceredigion Task & Finish Group, which was successful in eliminating a number of single use plastics used by the Authority. Subsequently the Council has lead on a national framework for catering packaging which enables organisations to transition from traditional plastic products to sustainable solutions.

During the framework development process procurement officers worked closely with WRAP Cymru and Welsh Government Policy makers and their input captured within the specification. Looking ahead, the procurement team is currently working on a Foundational Economy project that includes strands to enhance the local supply base and food, with the aim of delivering positive economic and health impacts in the County.

Coastal Protection, Flooding and Drainage

- All Coast Protection and Flood Alleviation schemes undertaken by the Council are designed to include climate change allowances in accordance with Welsh Government guidelines.
- Surface-water drainage systems on new developments will also need to be designed to cater for a 1-in-100-year rainfall event plus 30% allowance for climate change.
- Ceredigion County Council oversees Schedule 3 under the Flood & Water Management Act 2010 which requires new developments to include Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) features. This may require on-site provision of rills, leats, ponds, etc.

Transportation and Highways

Background

The Ceredigion highways asset consists of:

- 2,151km carriageways – used by public and school transport and cyclists
- 212 km of footways – used by pedestrians within settlements and providing a link between communities and tourism and other destinations
- Xx km of dedicated cycleways
- Xx km of shared use paths (pedestrians and cyclists)
- Local bus service network operating 2,882,977 kilometres of journeys (2019/20)
- There are also a large number of sections of public rights of way that may be accessed to make active and sustainable travel journeys.

Active Travel

The County Council must meet a number of statutory duties under the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2014. The Welsh Government has designated three Active Travel destinations (towns) in Ceredigion – Aberystwyth, Cardigan and Lampeter. This includes seeking to continuously improve (extend) the existing network and all new highways and transportation schemes should adhere to the Active Travel Design Guidance. The County Council was able to construct 1,155 km of new shared use path created in 2019/20. The Council is currently undertaking the required review of its existing network and developing future routes for development and inclusion in future work programmes. More information is available at: <http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/resident/travel-roads-parking/active-travel/>

With sufficient public transport travel opportunities in rural areas, Active Travel is capable of providing more opportunities for modal shift away from car journeys primarily for shorter journeys. Welsh Government grant funding continues to be accessed to provide new and improved infrastructure.

The County Council has trail-blazed the provision of electric bicycle charging facilities to encourage take-up of e-bikes, particularly for a wider section of the population which might be less confident or able to cycle longer distances and in areas where the topography is more challenging to most potential cyclists.

The County Council has utilised the Welsh Government's Covid-19 Sustainable Travel Grant in 2020/21 to facilitate safe, socially-distanced pedestrian and cycling access within a number of its

towns - notably the creation and management of 'Safe Zones', improved cycle parking provision, widening of footways and new pedestrian links such as between Penmorfa Offices car park and Ysgol Gynradd, Aberaeron. The intention has been to create permanent facilities to encourage future walking and cycling at these locations.

Welsh Government grant funding has enabled the County Council to invest in Safe Routes in Communities schemes and Road Safety training and awareness programmes help to build infrastructure (particularly in and around schools) and provide the necessary skills and confidence amongst children and younger people to walk, ride and scoot safely. Alongside work to expand the network and promote Active Travel, these initiatives are helping to encourage more environmentally sustainable travel choices as children progress through to adulthood.

Whilst the Council is encouraged by the Welsh Government to focus on walking and cycling within the designated Active Travel towns and communities immediately surrounding these towns, there is potential to further develop the longer distance trails such as the Rheidol and Ystwyth trails connecting Aberystwyth and the Cardi Bach trail in Cardigan. Other routes may also be identified. If sufficiently developed, all have potential to encourage cycling over sections of these trails connecting communities and replacing some car journeys.

1.0 Bus Travel

The local bus network in Ceredigion consists mostly of services supported by Ceredigion Council and Welsh Government. The main arterial routes are well served by the following TrawsCymru services:

- T1 Aberystwyth –Aberaeron – Lampeter (and locations to Carmarthen)
- T1C Aberystwyth – Aberaeron – Llandysul (and locations to Cardiff)
- T2 Aberystwyth – Machynlleth (and locations to Bangor)
- T5 Aberystwyth – Aberaeron – Cardigan (and locations to Haverfordwest)

which provide regular and reliable local and longer distance travel opportunities. These are complemented and supported, with investment from CCC, by local bus services which interchange at key hubs including:

- Aberystwyth
- Aberaeron
- Cardigan
- Lampeter

In 2019/20 the Local Bus network in Ceredigion operated a total of 2,882,977 kilometres.

1.1 Bwcabus

The Bwcabus is an innovative transport solution which provides demand responsive as well as fixed route / timetable travel opportunities over a large area of south Ceredigion as well into neighbouring Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire.

1.2 Cardi Bach

The Cardi Bach is a bus service which serves the coastal communities between Cardigan and New Quay, linking into the wider bus network at both ends, affording local socially necessary journeys as well as access to the Ceredigion Coastal path.

- Community Transport – e.g. Cardigan Town Rider, Bws y Bro etc? see: <http://www.cavo.org.uk/archives/category/help-for-organisations/community-transport>

1.3 Learner Transport

CCC maintains 36 primary schools, 4 secondary schools, one 3-16 school and two 3-19 schools.

Free learner travel is provided for approximately 400 eligible primary school pupils and 2500 eligible secondary school pupils. The County Council therefore provides in the region of 1,102,000 learner transport journeys every year.

1.4 Integrated Network

The learner transport and local bus service arrangements are closely aligned and integrated. They support each other by optimising resources to provide and maintain travel opportunities which are unlikely to be viable and sustainable otherwise, this is especially true in the more rural and sparsely populated areas of Ceredigion.

2.0 Concessionary Fare Scheme

CCC facilitates the all Wales Concessionary Fare Scheme in Ceredigion with approximately 18,000 passes in circulation with 358,612 passenger journeys originating in Ceredigion undertaken in 2019/2020. The Scheme, funded by the Welsh Government (WG) and Local Authorities, entitles people over 60 and people with certain disabilities who are resident in Wales, to travel free at any time of day on local bus services throughout Wales, in addition to some train services.

3.0 Train Travel

Opportunities to travel by train, or a combination of bus train, active travel and private car occur at the following railway stations which are of particular relevance to Ceredigion:

- Machynlleth
- Dovey Junction
- Borth
- Bow Street
- Aberystwyth
- Carmarthen

The introduction of an almost hourly train service pattern on the Cambrian Main line between Aberystwyth and Shrewsbury over seven days of the week has significantly increased travel opportunities and integration with bus services, especially at Aberystwyth and Machynlleth and now from Bow Street.

From the outset, the County Council has supported the development and lobbied the Welsh Government for a new Aberystwyth North Park and Ride public transport interchange at Bow Street. The Transport for Wales Interchange is scheduled to open in February 2021 includes Ceredigion's first new railway station since the Beeching Cuts of the 1960s with bus interchange, cycle and car parking. The County Council has worked with the Welsh Government to develop and provide a network of active travel links to/ from the new Interchange. A potential Aberystwyth Park & Ride (South) at Rhydyfelin is identified in the current Local Transport Plan and the site has been identified as a candidate site for this use in the current Local Development Plan. Further development work would be required if this proposal was to be taken forward.

The County Council is a member of the Cambrian Railways Partnership – the Mid Wales regional community rail partnership covering the Cambrian Main Line and the Cambrian Cast Line. The Partnership seeks to promote the growth in use of rail passenger services for regular journeys and to promote 'green' tourism as well as representing the interests of local communities served by the Cambrian lines. Ceredigion County Council currently employs the Development Officer and provides financial management on behalf of the Partnership. See: <https://www.thecambrianline.co.uk/>

County Council Members attend the meetings of the Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth Rail Committee with officer support. The Committee brings together local authorities, local communities, rail users, Transport for Wales and the Rail Industry to develop service improvements and promote rail use within and to/ from Mid Wales – see: <http://shrewsburyaberystwythrailway.org/>

County Council Members have in the past resolved to support the development of plans for the reinstatement of the dismantled Aberystwyth to Carmarthen Railway Line. The proposal is being taken forward by the Welsh Government – see: <https://gov.wales/aberystwyth-carmarthen-rail-reinstatement-feasibility-study>

Sustainable Travel and New Developments

Highways is a statutory consultee in respect of applications made to the County Council as Local Planning Authority. The Highways Development Control service provides advice and support to developers during the pre-application and full application process. Highways may at times object to a development that it considers does not support or make sufficient provision for sustainable travel as defined in the relevant Local Development Plan policies – see: <http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/resident/planning-building-control-and-sustainable-drainage-body-sab/planning-building-control/ceredigion-local-development-plan/> The Highways Development Control service will consider access to proposed developments by sustainable transport and travel and in some circumstances may recommend a requirement for a Travel Plan. The Local Planning Authority may choose to require financial contributions from developers towards the provision of sustainable travel infrastructure or services.

Sustainable Distribution (Freight/ goods)

A project was identified in the current Joint Mid Wales Local Transport Plan 2015-20. Possible potential for rail freight to reduce road-based transport of some goods, although opportunities have been investigated in the past including the timber freight trial/ pilot around 10 years ago. The length of journey between markets (considered to be too short for viable rail freight journeys), some constraints (bridges, curvature, signalling, availability of passing loops and line capacity) and lack of interest within the market resulted in little progress. Use of ‘cleaner’ fuels and changes to vehicle technology (electric and hydrogen) may serve to support de-carbonisation of goods distribution over time. The Marches Local Enterprise Partnership, the Growing Mid Wales Partnership published Marches and Mid Wales Freight Strategy in 2018 – see: http://www.tracc.gov.uk/uploads/media/Marches_and_Mid_Wales_Freight_Strategy_February_2018.pdf

EV Charging Proposals

The County Council has invested in providing electric vehicle (EV) charge-points available for use by the public at its Penmorfa Aberaeron and Canolfan Rheidol, Aberystwyth offices. The service is provide by Silverstone as part of its Dragon Charging Network – see: <https://www.dragoncharging.co.uk/>

Highways officers have to date unsuccessfully applied for Welsh Government transport grant funding to extend this arrangement to County Council-owned public off-street car parks across the County. A new grant funding application has however been submitted for the development of a Ceredigion EV network with some charge-point installation in the 2021/22 Financial Year as well as investigating opportunities for hydrogen as an alternative fuel – e.g. buses and freight. The outcome of this

application is currently awaited. County Council officers have provided support to ongoing Transport for Wales proposals to install charge-points of the Strategic Road Network in Ceredigion (as part of its national programme) and at Bow Street Interchange. The Welsh Government has recently published its Electric Vehicle (EV) charging strategy for Wales – see: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2020-12/electric-vehicle-charging-strategy-consultation-document.pdf>

4.0 Purposes of travel

The combined elements of the public transport network provide a number of travel opportunities for a variety of purposes which include but are not limited to:

- Shopping
- Health
- Socialising
- Leisure and recreation
- Learning
- Tourism
- Commuting
- Work related travel

CCC is conscious that the effects and impacts of COVID-19 are likely to be wide and long standing; this will have a significant impact on the travel choices, desires and requirements in the short, mid and longer term which at this stage are difficult to forecast or predict. It is possible that travel for every day purposes, including all those referenced above, may reduce and the way in which travel is undertaken may change. Future demand may be identified through the North Wales and South West and Mid Wales transport models being developed by Transport for Wales for use by local authorities, developers and other organisations.

With more frequent passenger transport services limited to operating along the strategic road network (with some local feeder services), in deeper rural areas such as Ceredigion, the private car is likely to remain the main form of transport/ travel to access services, opportunities and facilities and to maintain mobility and independence. It may be possible to achieve modal shift away from the private car for shorter journeys but in deeper rural areas, influencing more sustainable travel choices/ providing real alternatives are more challenging and along with commercial journeys and tourism, this is where a shift to ULEVs will have the most impact going forward.

Car sharing and car clubs? Car sharing was led at one time through the regional transport consortium but there appears little progress over the last 6-8 years. It is often referred to in Transport Assessments and Green Travel Plans for new developments – but seemingly little happens. There is potential to develop both, particularly car clubs with potential to tie-in with ULEV - although the Covid-19 pandemic will have had an impact on people's confidence to share a journey with someone outside of their family/ 'bubble'.

5.0 Caru Ceredigion

As part of Caru Ceredigion residents and visitors to Ceredigion would be encouraged to consider:

- the impact of the travel choices they make on the climate emergency - this would include considering whether journeys are necessary and how they are undertaken;
- making the best use of the sustainable travel choices and facilities that are available to them, extending from public transport services to walking and cycling infrastructure, as this supports their ongoing viability as well as business cases for future improvements.

6.0 Moving Forward

Ceredigion County Council has actively engaged and supported the ongoing Transport for Wales (TfW) 'Wales Bus Network Reform and Design' project which seeks to optimise resources and improve travel opportunities across Wales taking into account local dynamics and influencers. This will inform the future design of bus networks in Wales.

CCC is also aware of the WG's aspirational future vision for transport in Wales as set out in the emerging Wales Transport Strategy; CCC will continue to work with the relevant partners, including WG and TfW, to realise and deliver on these aspirations on a regional, as well as local basis, for the benefit of Ceredigion's residents and visitors, as well as its economy and environment.

Transport networks and the travel opportunities afforded, in terms of infrastructure and service provision, will need to be dynamic and flexible to reflect the requirements of a post COVID world and to respond positively to the challenges of the climate emergency in order to be fit for purpose moving forward. With this in mind we are actively engaged with partners who are investigating the potential for use of electric buses on the TrawsCymru network in Ceredigion and the infrastructure that would be required to support and facilitate this. This is seen as the logical place to start in terms of electrifying buses in Ceredigion which in turn can progress to a cascading and roll out process across the network.

An overall reduction in travel, as well as move to more sustainable modes of travel, support the overall principles underpinning effective and efficient travel planning from a financial and environmental perspective, thus positively influencing the climate emergency.

Education

- The Eco-Schools programme is an international initiative that enables sustainable development to be a major part of the life and ethos of schools. The programme involves the entire school community in improving the school environment and encouraging good citizenship; pupils study topics including waste, litter, energy, water, transport, healthy living and global citizenship. All schools in Ceredigion are registered on the Eco Schools programme.
- Ceredigion utilises a 'fabric first' approach to all the projects on the 21st Century Schools Programme. A 'fabric first' approach to building design involves maximising the performance of the components and materials that make up the building fabric itself, before considering the use of mechanical or electrical building services systems; this can help to reduce capital and operational costs, improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions whilst reducing ongoing maintenance costs. Buildings designed and constructed using a fabric first approach aim to minimise the need for energy consumption through methods such as:
 - maximising air-tightness;
 - increased levels of insulation;
 - optimising solar gain through the provision of openings and shading;
 - optimising natural ventilation and
 - using the thermal mass of the building fabric.
- The County Council has utilised available funding to improve or provide new walking and cycling routes to schools and colleges to make journeys safer and more accessible for walking, cycling and scooting. Some schemes have included a reduction in the speed limit (to 20 mph), physical traffic calming and cycle shelters. Where there are no formal pedestrian crossing facilities, the Council deploys School Crossing Patrol staff at locations considered to be 'higher risk' to provide a safer environment for learners to walk to school. The Council's Road Safety Team delivers training and awareness programmes in schools - such as Kerbcraft pedestrian training and National Standards Cycle Training - to provide the necessary skills and build confidence amongst children and younger people to walk, ride and scoot safely to their school, thus discouraging journeys made by the private car.

- Where feasible, new schools will take advantage of the green technologies available to us, and will attempt to maximise the use of ground source, air source and solar technologies appropriate to each individual site. A range of Council service areas including Highways and Environmental Services will be engaged early on to contribute to any proposals to review existing education provision, enlarge existing schools and for any new build.
- Ceredigion are also committed to installing electric vehicle charging points within all of its new schools.

Regeneration

Economy and Regeneration – information to follow

Finance

- Ceredigion County Council is part of the £2.4 billion Dyfed Pension Fund.
- On 23rd Jan 2020 Ceredigion Council agreed to call on the Dyfed Pension Fund to disengage from investment in fossil fuels within two years.
- At its meeting of 11th January 2021 the Dyfed Pension Fund Board agreed to steps that will reduce the carbon footprint of its financial holdings by 16%.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

- The Council continues to introduce ICT good practice to actively help reduce carbon emissions, including:
 - Reducing energy consumption at its Data Centres and across its Network through the virtualisation and rationalisation of hardware and the adoption of energy efficient servers and ICT infrastructure;
 - Facilitating a reduction in staff travel through the implementation of agile working practices across the Authority including the use of laptops and online video conference meetings and calls ('Skype for Business' & 'Microsoft Teams');
 - Reducing printing across the Authority by facilitating the adoption of paperless working through better use of technology.
 - Rationalisation of printing, and removal of colour printing for the majority of staff has been undertaken within office buildings.

Civil Contingencies

The Council's Civil Contingency role aims to help mitigate the effects of climate change by working with partner organisations and communities and developing, maintaining and testing contingency plans for various risks, including:

- more extreme weather events causing severe fluvial flooding, such as Storm Callum in 2018;
- raising sea levels causing an increase in coastal flooding and,
- hotter, dryer summers causing water shortages, an increase in 'wild fires' and effects on the health of the population (especially older and more vulnerable citizens).

The Council is a member of the Dyfed-Powys Local Resilience Forum (LRF) whose members include the Emergency Services, Health Bodies, other Local Authorities, Government Agencies and Utility Companies. The Dyfed-Powys LRF members work together to ensure arrangements are in place to help mitigate the effects of any emergencies including those caused by climate change. The role of the Council during emergencies includes providing support for the emergency services, support and care for the local and wider community and co-ordination of the response by organisations other than the emergency services. As time goes on, and the emphasis switches to recovery, the Council takes a leading role in rehabilitating the community and restoring the environment. The LRF produces and

regularly reviews the Dyfed Powys Community Risk Register. (Note: 'UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2017 Evidence Report – Summary for Wales' summarises the Wales-specific evidence included in the 'UK Climate Change Risk Assessment Evidence Report').

The Council also recognises the effects of climate change, in particular to coastal erosion and flooding in its own corporate risk register.

Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council

REPORT TO: Cabinet

DATE: 15 June 2021

LOCATION: ZOOM

TITLE: Feedback from the Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Achieving Net Zero by 2030 Action Plan

PURPOSE OF REPORT: To provide feedback from the Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 26 May 2021

The Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the Achieving Net Zero 2030 Action Plan at its Committee meeting on 26th May 2021. The document sets out how the Council intend to respond to the climate emergency. It explains why we need this Net Zero Carbon Action Plan and why the 2030 target is so important to tackling climate change. The Action Plan assesses Ceredigion's current operational carbon emissions and outlines the challenges associated with the ambitious 2030 target.

The Action Plan had been created in response to the Council decision on 20 June 2019 where it agreed to:

- Commit to making Ceredigion a net zero carbon Local Authority by 2030
- Develop a clear plan for a route towards being net zero carbon within 12 months
- Call on Welsh and UK Governments to provide the necessary support and resources to enable effective carbon reductions

Further to this, on the 5th March 2020, Ceredigion County Council declared a global climate emergency, committing to meeting the most significant challenge facing our county and our planet.

Several members stated that they agreed in principle with the need to address this issue, however, concerns were raised regarding the cost implications of this plan to achieve the targets outlined; and that a business plan was required.

Following consideration of the report the Committee **agreed to recommend to Cabinet:**

- (i) that a cross party working group be established as part of the current carbon group to push forward the plan;
- (ii) that the Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive a regular update report every six months; and
- (iii) that Cabinet write to WG on the urgency of providing the reporting methodology.

It is noted that since the scrutiny committee took place WG have published the reporting methodology.

Councillor Marc Davies
Chairman of the Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to: Council

Date of meeting: 17 June 2021

Title: Strategy on Counter-Fraud, Corruption and Bribery (to include Anti-Money Laundering)

Purpose of the report: To provide Members with an update of the Strategy

For: Decision

Cabinet Portfolio and Cabinet Member: Cllr Ray Quant MBE, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Legal and Governance, People and Organisation, and Democratic Services

Ceredigion County Council has a duty to the public to safeguard money that should be used in the public interest.

To help organisations achieve this by addressing their risks to fraud, CIPFA has produced a Code of Practice on Managing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption. The Code states that an organisation needs a counter fraud strategy setting out its approach to managing risks and defining responsibilities for action.

This document is intended to serve this purpose, and applies to all employees, elected Members and Lay Members of the Council. The Strategy was last approved in April 2018 and has recently been updated following its 3-yearly review.

Wellbeing of Future Generations:

Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If, not, please state why No – no policy or service change

Summary:

Long term:

Collaboration:

Involvement:

Prevention:

Integration:

Recommendation(s): To APPROVE the Council's updated Strategy on Counter-Fraud, Corruption and Bribery (to include Anti-Money Laundering)

Reasons for decision: To ensure the Council has a counter fraud strategy setting out its approach to managing risks and defining responsibilities for action, in accordance with CIPFA's recommendation.

Overview and Scrutiny: Governance & Audit Committee, 3 June 2021.
It was AGREED to endorse the Strategy for presentation to Council for final approval.

Policy Framework: Corporate Strategy 2017-22

Corporate Priorities: All

Finance and Procurement implications: To safeguard money that should be used in the public interest.

Legal Implications: To take account of the Fraud Act 2006, Bribery Act 2010 and the Money Laundering & Terrorist Financing (Amendment) Regulations 2019

Staffing implications: None

Property / asset implications: To safeguard the Council's property & assets.

Risk(s): To address the risk of fraud, corruption, bribery & money laundering.

Statutory Powers: None

Background Papers: None

Appendices: **Strategy on Counter-Fraud, Corruption and Bribery (to include Anti-Money Laundering)**

Corporate Officer: **Lead** Elin Prysor
Corporate Lead Officer Legal & Governance Services /
Monitoring Officer

Reporting Officer: Elin Prysor
Corporate Lead Officer Legal & Governance Services /
Monitoring Officer

Date: 24 May 2021

Mae'r Strategaeth yma ar gael yn Gymraeg. This Strategy is available in Welsh.

Ceredigion County Council's Strategy on Countering Fraud, Corruption and Bribery (to include Anti-Money Laundering)



Cyngor Sir
CEREDIGION
County Council

Approved by Council:

July 2021

**Ceredigion County Council's Strategy on Countering Fraud, Corruption and
Bribery (to include Anti-Money Laundering)**

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1. Introduction

The CIPFA [“Code of practice on managing the risk of fraud and corruption,”](#) states that an organisation needs a counter fraud strategy setting out its approach to managing risks and defining responsibilities for action. This document is intended to serve this purpose.

This policy applies to all employees, elected Members and Lay Members of the Council.

This policy sits alongside the Council’s various other policies, including:

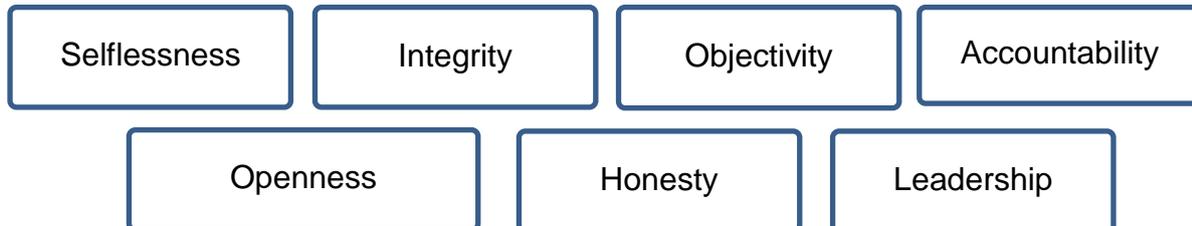
Officers:	Members:
Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees	Members Declaration and Registration of Hospitality and Interests Policy
Concerns and Complaints Policy	Code of Conduct for Members
Contract Procedure Rules	Member Handbook
Corporate Risk Register	Members’ Allowances
Disciplinary Policy	
Domestic Violence Policy	Members and Officers:
Employees Declaration and Registration of Hospitality and Interests Policy	Data Protection and GDPR Policy
Pay Policy	Email Policy
Political Restrictions Policy	Information Security Policy
RIPA – Policy	Policy and Guidelines for Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk
Social Media Policy	Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)
Suspension Policy and Procedures	Safe Recruitment Policy
Whistleblowing Policy	Financial Regulations
	Modern Slavery Policy

The Council acknowledges its responsibilities for ensuring that the risks associated with fraud, corruption and bribery are managed effectively across all areas of the organisation.

The Council will have regard to various relevant legislation, Regulations, statutory guidance and codes of practice, including CIPFA’s Code of Practice on Managing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption, Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally, and Protecting the Public Purse.

Ethics

Employees working for the Council serve the whole Authority, are accountable to, and owe a duty to the Council. Employees must act in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees. The Code of Conduct is underpinned by the ethical principles stated in '[The Seven Principles of Public Life](#)':



Identifying the Risk Areas: Definitions

<p>Fraud</p>	<p>The Fraud Act 2006 defines the categories of fraud as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • false representation, • failing to disclose information, and • abuse of position. <p>False representations include having an intention to make a gain for yourself or another, or exposing another to the risk of loss.</p> <p>CIPFA's publication "The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards" defines fraud in its Glossary as: <i>"Any illegal act characterised by deceit, concealment or violation of trust. These acts are not dependent upon the threat of violence or physical force. Frauds are perpetrated by parties and organisations to obtain money, property or services; to avoid payment or loss of services; or to secure personal or business advantage".</i></p>
<p>Corruption</p>	<p>HM Government's UK Anti-Corruption Plan states "There is no universally accepted definition of 'corruption'. A number of organisations, including 'Transparency International' define it as 'the abuse of entrusted power for private gain'. The World Bank defines a 'corrupt' practice as the 'offering, giving, receiving or soliciting, directly or indirectly, of anything of value to influence improperly the actions of another party'".</p>
<p>Bribery</p>	<p>The Bribery Act 2010 sets out the offences of bribery as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bribing another person, and • offences relating to being bribed.

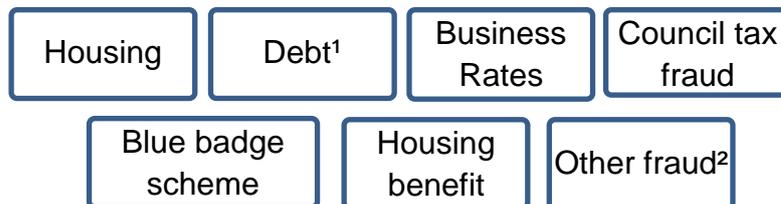
<p>Bribery (continued)</p>	<p>A defence may be available if the conduct was necessary for specific reasons. Ministry of Justice guidance on the Bribery Act 2010 defines bribery as: <i>“Giving someone a financial or other advantage to encourage that person to perform their functions or activities improperly or to reward that person for having already done so”.</i> Commercial organisations are liable for failure to demonstrate adequate procedures are in place to prevent these offences taking place.</p>
<p>Money Laundering</p>	<p>Money laundering is the term used for a number of offences involving the proceeds of crime or terrorism funds. The Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 sets out the following principal offences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concealing, disguising, converting, transferring criminal property or removing it from the UK (section 327); • Entering into or becoming concerned in an arrangement which you know or suspect facilitates the acquisition, retention, use or control of criminal property by or on behalf of another person (section 328); and • Acquiring, using or possessing criminal property (section 329). <p>There are also two additional separate offences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • failure to disclose any of the primary offences (sections 330-332) and • tipping off (section 333). <p>Potentially any person could be caught by the money laundering provisions if they suspect money laundering and either become involved with it in some way and/or do nothing about it. Tipping off is where someone informs a person or people who are, or are suspected of being involved in money laundering, in such a way as to reduce the likelihood of their being investigated or prejudicing an investigation.</p> <p>Specific defences may be available where there is reasonable excuse or where the disclosure is authorised. Whilst the risk to the Council of contravening the legislation is low, it is extremely important that all employees are familiar with their legal responsibilities: serious criminal sanctions may be imposed for breaches of the legislation.</p> <p>The key requirement on employees is to promptly report any suspected money laundering activity to the Money Laundering Reporting Officer (MLRO)</p>

Risk areas

Asset Misappropriation	Occurs when those entrusted to manage the assets of an organization steals from it. Assets can include cash, cash equivalents, physical assets but also data or intellectual property	False payroll records Purchasing cards
Bribery & Corruption	The offer, promise or conferring of a financial or other advantage to another person with the intention to induce them to perform improperly a relevant function or activity or to reward for the same	Manipulating tenders Securing deals
Misstatement & Misreporting	Deliberate mis-recording, manipulation and reporting of elements of company performance or other factual information. This may be part of internal goals or contractual or legislative requirements	Regulatory reporting
Third Party Relationships	Heightened fraud risk exists in the operation of a range of third party relationships not under an organisation's direct control. Objectives, controls and ethical standards may not be aligned	Overcharging Substitution of materials
Information and Cyber Fraud	Occurs through sophisticated cyber hacking and exploits both physical and behavioural weaknesses to steal critical information and intellectual property	Client identities Corporate identities
Conflict of Interest	Occurs when employees are in a position to benefit themselves, or a third party, with whom there is an association including family members or friends	Employee-owned supplier

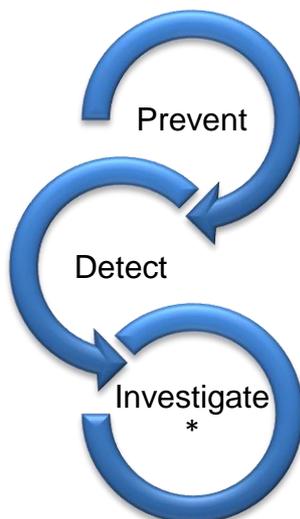
The Scale of Fraud in the Public Sector

According to CIPFA, the following fraud types are most common:



- 1 'Debt' is the avoidance of payment of a debit excluding Council Tax,
- 2 'Other fraud' includes social care, procurement, insurance, grant, pensions, investments, payroll and expenses.

Aims and objectives



Ceredigion County Council has a duty to the public to safeguard money that should be used in the public interest. Fraudulent behaviour at this scale threatens the Authority; therefore there is a high degree of commitment to ensure an effective strategy exists which is designed to protect, detect and investigate.

*Identify a clear path for investigating fraud, bribery and corruption, and any other malpractice to include money-laundering.

This will allow public money to be used on public services (boosting the economy, investing in people's future, enabling individual and family resilience and promoting environmental and community resilience) rather than being lost to fraud.

2. Culture, Responsibility and Prevention

The Council acknowledges the importance of promoting a culture that is resilient to the threats of fraud and corruption. The Council is determined that the culture and tone of the organisation should uphold honesty and integrity. The Council also acknowledges its responsibility for ensuring the management of its fraud and corruption risks and will be accountable for the actions it takes through its governance reports and procedures.

The Council maintains a specific goal of ensuring and maintaining its resilience to fraud and corruption, and explores opportunities for financial savings/prevention of financial loss from enhanced detection and prevention.

The Council's [Financial Regulations](#) (para 1.8.3) state that in "preventing fraud and corruption the Council will not tolerate fraud, corruption or any acts of malpractice in the administration of its responsibilities, whether from inside or outside the Council. The Council's expectation of propriety and accountability is that Members and employees at all levels will lead by example in ensuring adherence to legal requirements, rules, procedures and practices. The Council also expects that individuals and organisations (e.g. suppliers, contractors, service providers) with whom it comes into contact will act towards the Council with integrity and without thought or actions involving fraud and corruption".

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Elected members	As elected representatives, all Members of the Authority have a duty to protect the Council and public money from any acts of fraud and corruption. This is done through existing practice, compliance with the Members' Code of Conduct, the Council's Constitution including Financial Regulations and Standing Orders and all relevant legislation.
Monitoring Officer	<p>The Monitoring Officer is responsible for ensuring that all decisions made by the Authority are within the law. The Monitoring Officer also promotes and maintains high standards of conduct throughout the Authority by developing appropriate governance arrangements including codes of conduct and other standards and policies, together with appropriate reporting and enforcement.</p> <p>The Monitoring Officer is the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for the National Fraud Initiative (NFI). The SRO is responsible for ensuring that the Council meets the statutory requirements of the NFI. The Monitoring Officer is also the SRO for the National Anti-Fraud network (NAFN).</p>

<p>Section 151 Officer</p>	<p>The Corporate Lead Officer – Finance and Procurement has been designated with the statutory responsibilities as defined by s151 of the Local Government Act 1972 (the “Section 151 Officer”) for the proper administration of its financial affairs.</p> <p>‘Proper administration’ encompasses all aspects of local authority financial management including compliance with the statutory requirements for accounting and internal audit. Under these statutory responsibilities the Section 151 Officer contributes to the counter-fraud and corruption framework of the Authority.</p> <p>All suspected fraud or irregularities should be reported to the Corporate Lead Officer – Finance and Procurement – see Point 5 below. The Section 151 Officer is also the Money Laundering Reporting Officer (MLRO) – see Point 6 below.</p>
<p>Internal Audit (IA)</p>	<p>The Internal Audit Service protects organisational value by providing objective assurance, advice and insight. It evaluates and improves effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes. This will help prevent the opportunity for fraud, although this is not its primary aim or responsibility. The IA Service may be required to undertake an investigation as a result of any irregularities – see Point 5 below.</p> <p>The Corporate Manager - Internal Audit provides an Annual Internal Audit Counter-Fraud Report to the Governance and Audit Committee. The report summarises the work internal audit have undertaken to counter fraud.</p>
<p>DWP’s Fraud and Error Service</p>	<p>All powers held under the Social Security (Fraud) Act 1992 is now exercised by the DWP’s Fraud and Error service, including the investigation of alleged housing benefit fraud.</p> <p>The Council has the power to investigate fraud relating to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. These powers are contained within The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Detection of Fraud and Enforcement) (Wales) Regulations 2013.</p>
<p>External Auditors</p>	<p>The role of External Auditor is currently undertaken by Audit Wales (AW), who may, alternatively, appoint another approved body to undertake this role on its behalf. This role covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Auditing the Council’s financial statements, • Considering the risks of material misstatements in the accounts due to fraud, • Certification of specified grants, • Assessing the Council’s value for money arrangements, • Evaluating the Council’s performance and improvement, and • Reviewing the Council’s compliance with the sustainable development principle.

All employees	<p>The Authority's employees are expected to abide by the Authority's 'Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees' as well as any code of conduct related to their personal professional qualifications. The Authority's Code includes expected standards and rules to include those relating to the declaration of personal interest, hospitality and gifts.</p> <p>All Members and employees of the Authority are required to declare any relevant interests and any offer of gifts or hospitality which is in any way related to the performance of their duties. Chief Officers are required to do this annually. They are also required to disclose any interests whether direct or indirect, in respect of the Authority's business eg close personal associations, contracts, directorships, members/clerkships of Town/community councils.</p> <p>The adequacy and appropriateness of the authority's internal controls, risk management and governance procedures are independently reviewed by both internal and external audit. Sound systems will allow for innovation but at the same time minimise the opportunity for fraud or any other misappropriation. Management should respond positively to internal and external audit recommendations if any weaknesses are found in their areas of responsibility, by implementing all actions required to ensure sufficient procedures are in place and are operating as expected.</p> <p>ICT systems used by the Council log usage of internet, e-mail, telephones and application systems down to individual PC / Laptop address and telephone number / extension number. All users of ICT and telephone systems are formally notified that these logs will be monitored from time to time and appropriate action taken for any misuse.</p>
Recruitment	<p>The Authority recognises that a preventative measure in the fight against fraud and corruption is to take effective steps at the recruitment stage to establish a previous record of prospective employees in terms of their propriety and integrity. Staff recruitment is therefore required to be in accordance with the Authority's Human Resource policies, to include the Disclosure and Barring Service / Safe Recruitment Policy.</p>
Public	<p>Although this policy is primarily aimed at those within the Council, it is also expected that the public would report any fraudulent behaviour so it can be investigated as necessary.</p>

3. Detection and Investigation

The responsibility for the prevention and detection of any irregularities primarily rests with Leadership Group and managers.

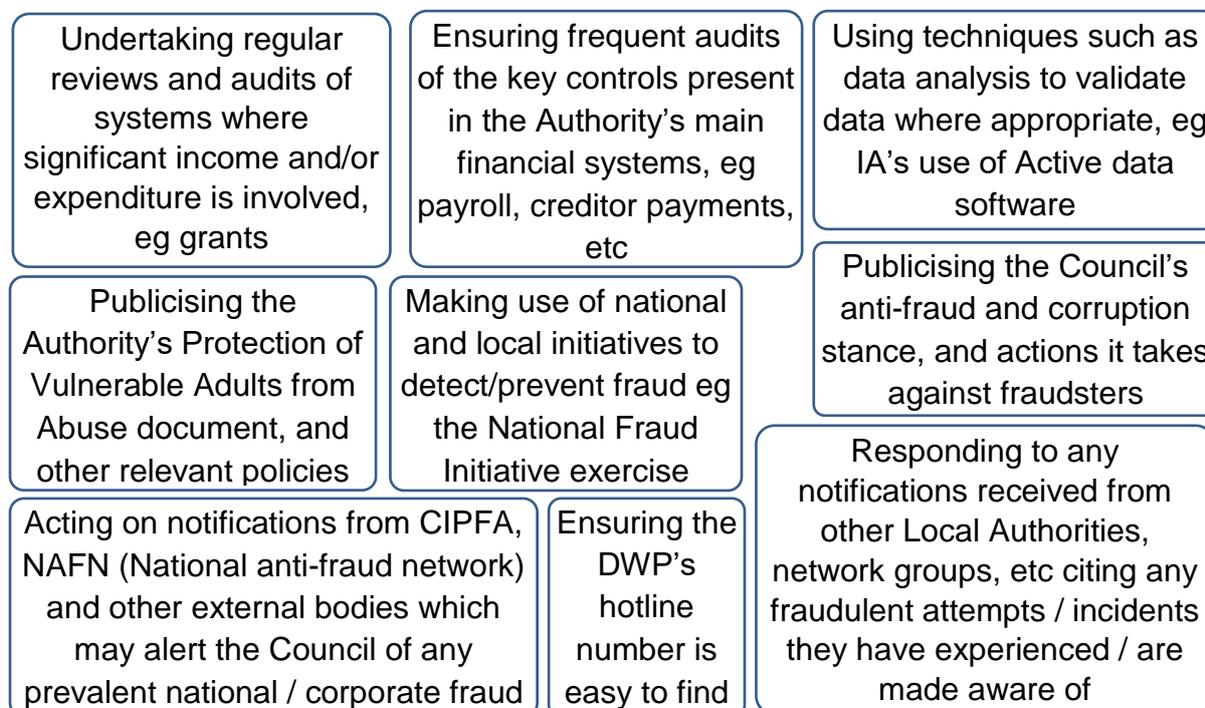
The Council takes into account reports and recommendations by Audit Wales to tackle fraud effectively (e.g. [‘Raising our Game’ - Tackling Fraud in Wales](#) and [The National Fraud Initiative in Wales 2018-2020](#)).

All managers produce business plans which include their business risks – fraud can be input as a risk if deemed appropriate with mitigating actions noted. Managers use the Risk Assessment Criteria to score the risk from low to critical. Managers score fraud risk based on likelihood (rare to certain) the impact of the risk (negligible to severe) on the Council’s finances, service provision, health & safety, etc. If a risk is scored high enough it is added to the Council’s Corporate Risk Register and reported regularly to Leadership Group and Governance and Audit Committee.

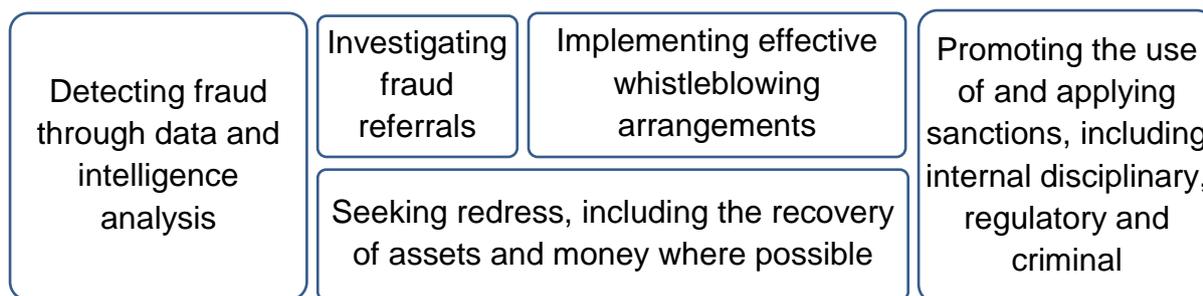
The Council will make use of joint working and/or partnership approaches and opportunities to managing its risks, where possible and appropriate.

The Council will promote both a proactive and reactive approach to detection and enforcement. Actions taken within the Council which can provide indicators of any fraudulent activity include:

Proactive



Reactive



Despite the best efforts of employees, fraud is often discovered as a result of chance or through a ‘tip-off’. The Authority has systems in place to deal with such incidents correctly. This can be through the application of the Authority’s Codes of Conduct, Financial Regulations, Complaints System, Protection of Vulnerable Adults from Abuse document and/or the Whistleblowing Policy, as well as this Strategy.

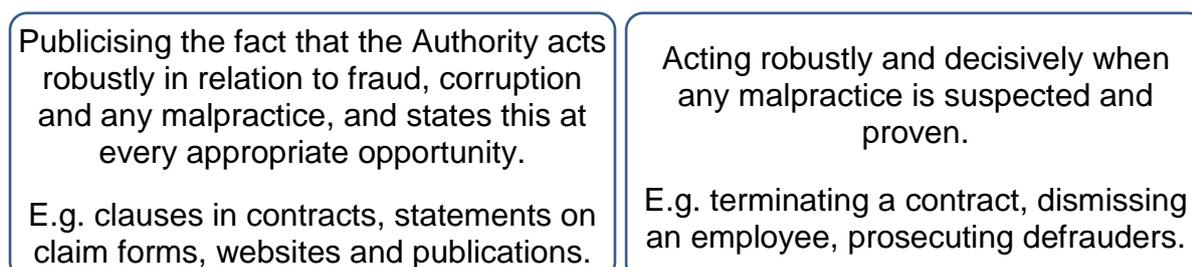
In accordance with the Authority’s Financial Regulations (Point 1.8.3), all suspected fraud or irregularities should be reported to the Corporate Lead Officer – Finance and Procurement and/or Corporate Manager Internal Audit. It may also be reported to the Monitoring Officer, under the Whistleblowing Policy.

Pending investigation and reporting, the Corporate Lead Officer – Finance and Procurement will take all steps necessary to prevent further loss and to secure records and documentation against removal or alteration. The IA Service may be required to undertake a review to strengthen procedures and ensure no recurrence of such an incident.

The investigation will depend on the nature of the incident. An internal investigation may be required by an appointed Investigating Officer, which may lead to disciplinary action. Depending on the circumstances and available evidence, the investigation may be referred to the Police or another appropriate external body.

4. Deterrence and Awareness

When individuals are considering fraudulent behaviour they deliberate the reward against the risk of the activity. If fraudulent behaviour is often discovered and met with harsh penalties it increases the risk factor which in turn minimises the probability of the fraudulent act. Raising the awareness of the consequences of discovery therefore improves the effectiveness of deterrents such as:



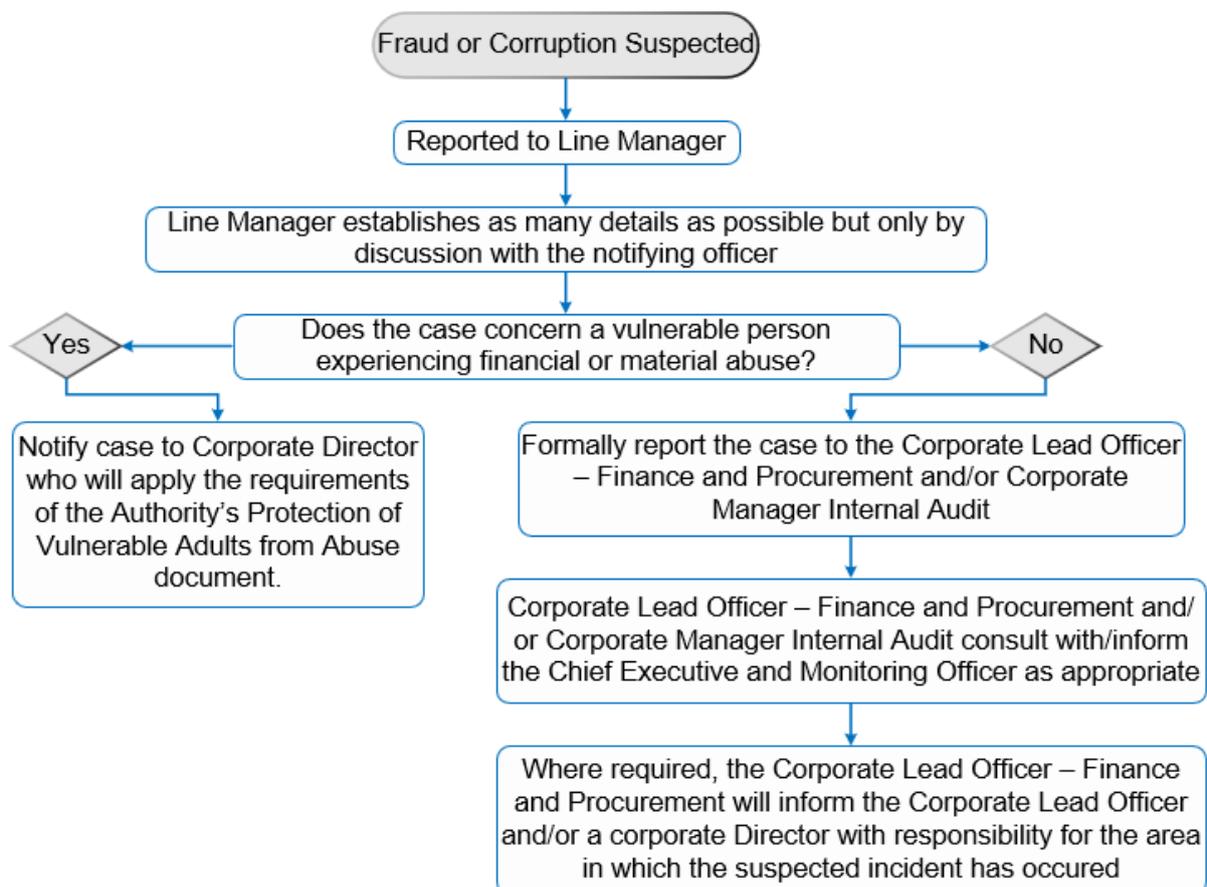
Taking action to effect the maximum recoveries for the Authority.
E.g. through agreement, court action, penalties.

5. Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Response Plan

Determined perpetrators will always find a way around systems and procedures. Therefore, all officers and Members must be aware of what is required in the event of a suspected incident of fraud, bribery and corruption. It is vitally important that the plan is followed by all concerned in order to ensure that the situation is handled professionally and to safeguard against the case being compromised.

Notifying Suspected Fraud or Corruption

The Authority's staff and elected Members are positively encouraged to raise concerns regarding suspected fraud, bribery and corruption. They can do this in the knowledge that such concerns will be treated confidentially, as far as possible. A suspicion of wrongdoing must be reasonably held. The Authority will ensure that any allegation of any kind, including anonymous letters or telephone calls, will be looked at and thoroughly investigated in an appropriate manner. Reporting should be carried out as a matter of urgency. The normal route for expressing a concern should be via line managers.



On occasion where this is not appropriate, a route other than their normal line manager may be used to raise such concerns, such as via:

Corporate Lead Officer - Finance and Procurement/s151 Officer	Stephen Johnson 01970 633110 stephen.johnson@ceredigion.gov.uk
Chief Executive	Eifion Evans 01545 572021 eifion.evans@ceredigion.gov.uk
Corporate Manager - Internal Audit	Amanda Roberts 01970 633320 amanda.roberts@ceredigion.gov.uk
Corporate Lead Officer – Legal and Governance Services / Monitoring Officer	Elin Prysor 01545 572120 elin.prysor@ceredigion.gov.uk
Corporate Lead Officer – People and Organisation	Geraint Edwards 01545 572019 geraint.edwards2@ceredigion.gov.uk
Audit Wales	02920 320500 info@audit.wales
Other Corporate Lead Officers	See Council directory
Leader of the Council; Cabinet or other Members	See Council Website

Investigating Suspected Fraud, Bribery or Corruption

Once fraud is suspected, it is critical that any investigation is conducted in a professional manner aimed at ensuring that the current and future interests of both the Council and the suspected individual(s) are protected. The latter is equally important as a suspicion should not be seen as automatic guilt.

The Authority's IA Service has experience in fraud investigation. The Corporate Manager - Internal Audit and Audit Manager hold a CIPFA Certificate in Investigative Practice (CCIP). The Senior Auditor is an Accredited Counter Fraud Technician (ACFTech). In accordance with relevant legislation and the Council's Financial Regulations (Point 1.8.2) the IA Service has authority to:

- a) Enter any Council premises or land at any reasonable times,
- b) Access all assets, records, documents, correspondence and control systems relating to any financial or other transactions of the Council,
- c) Require and receive any such information and explanation considered necessary

- concerning any matter under consideration/examination,
- d) Require any employee of the Council to account for cash, stores or any other Council property under his or her control, and
 - e) Have access to records belonging to third parties, such as contractors or partnership agencies, according to the relevant contractual terms.

It may therefore be appropriate to request the IA Service to undertake the investigation. However, if the allegations are of a professional or very specialist malpractice nature, the Corporate Lead Officer – Finance and Procurement may have to appoint another expert as the Investigating Officer. The Council periodically trains a 'pool' of internal investigators across all services; and certain enforcement staff have PACE training.

Reporting Arrangements

As soon as the initial "detection" stage of the investigation has been completed a written confidential Interim Report should be made by the Investigating Officer in accordance with the agreed reporting process.

The Interim Report should set out the findings to date and the interim conclusions drawn from those findings. This will help the Corporate Lead Officer – Finance and Procurement, Monitoring Officer and Corporate Lead Officer / Corporate Director with responsibility for the area investigated decide whether the investigation should continue to the next level.

If it is to proceed, the Chief Executive, the Chair of Governance and Audit Committee and the Authority's external auditors need to be made aware of the incident. A Final Report will be issued as soon as possible after the completion of all necessary investigatory work.

The format of the Final Report will not always be the same as each case is unique, but will frequently set out:

- How the investigation arose,
- Who the suspects are,
- Their position in the Council and their responsibilities,
- How the investigation was undertaken,
- The facts and evidence which were identified, and (where appropriate),
- Summary of findings and recommendations.

Any system weaknesses identified during the investigation will normally be reported separately in an internal audit report.

The Final Report will supersede all other reports and be the definitive document on which management (in a disciplinary situation) and possibly the police (in a criminal situation) will base their initial decisions.

All reports must be substantiated by the strongest evidence and avoid contents that could be considered to be defamatory in the event of the report being made public.

Defamation in law is defined as: “the publication of a statement which tends to lower a person in the estimation of right-thinking members of society generally or which tends to make them shun or avoid that person”. [Winfield]

Liaison with the Police

Initial contact with the Police should only be undertaken following discussion between the Investigating Officer, Corporate Lead Officer – Finance and Procurement, Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, who will consider whether the matter should be referred for further investigation.

Where a case involves a vulnerable person, the decision will be made by the statutory Director of Social Services, in consultation with the relevant Corporate Director and/or the Safeguarding Team.

It is the policy of the Police to welcome early notification of suspected fraud. The matter will be considered for referral by the Police to the Crown Prosecution Service for a decision as to whether the suspect should be charged with any criminal offence.

If the Police decide that a formal investigation is necessary, all staff are expected and required to co-operate fully with any subsequent requests or recommendations. All contact with the Police following their initial involvement will usually be via the Investigating Officer.

Where the Police decide to formally investigate, this will not, if at all possible, prejudice any internal disciplinary procedures; these should continue as normal. However, the internal investigation and the Police investigation should, wherever and whenever possible be co-ordinated to make maximum use of resources and information.

The identity of the notifying employee will be protected as far as possible, in accordance with the Whistleblowing policy.

Disciplinary action

The Authority will deal swiftly and thoroughly with any incidents of malpractice. Employees will face disciplinary or other action in accordance with the Council's HR Policies.

Disciplinary or other action will be taken in addition to, or instead of criminal proceedings (this depends on the circumstances of each individual case), in keeping with the Council's Disciplinary Policy.

Resources

The Council will:

- Make an annual assessment of whether the level of resource invested to counter fraud and corruption is proportionate for the level of risk, in its annual response to the external auditor regarding matters in relation to fraud.
- Make use of an appropriate mix of experienced and skilled staff.
- Grant unhindered access to its employees, information and other resources as required for investigation purposes.
- Make use of joint working and partnership facilities, as well as data and intelligence sharing to support counter fraud activity.

6. Anti-Money Laundering

[The Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing \(Amendment\) Regulations 2019](#) came into force on 10 January 2020 and sets out the amendments to the [Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing and Transfer of Funds \(Information on the Payer\) Regulations 2017](#). The 2019 Regulations implement the EU's 5th Directive on Money Laundering.

The Regulations apply to "relevant persons" acting in the course of business carried out by them in the UK. Relevant persons are now obliged to adopt a more risk-based approach towards anti-money laundering, in particular in how they conduct due diligence.

Not all of the Council's business is relevant for the purposes of the legislation; however, the safest way to ensure compliance with the law is to apply them to all areas of work.

All members of staff are therefore required to comply with the reporting procedure set out in the policy.

The obligations on the Council are to:

- Appoint a Money Laundering Reporting Officer (MLRO) to receive disclosures from employees of money laundering activity;
- Implement a procedure to enable the reporting of suspicions of money laundering;
- Maintain client identification procedures in certain circumstances;
- Maintain record keeping procedures; and

- Conduct a money laundering and terrorist financing risk assessment and adopt appropriate internal controls.

The Money Laundering Reporting Officer (MLRO)

The officer nominated to receive disclosures about money laundering activity within the Council is the Corporate Lead Officer – Finance and Procurement (Section 151 Officer) who can be contacted as follows:

Stephen Johnson
Finance and Procurement
Canolfan Rheidol
Rhodfa Padarn
Llanbadarn Fawr
SY23 3UE
Telephone: 01970 633110

Identification of potential money laundering situations

The following may raise employees' suspicions, and should be reported immediately to the MLRO:

- A transaction involving a large amount of cash,
- Making a cash payment that later requires a refund,
- Secretive customer, eg refusal to provide requested information without a reasonable explanation,
- Concerns about the location or identity of a customer,
- Unnecessary routing or receipt of funds from third parties or through third party accounts,
- Involvement of an unconnected third party without a legitimate reason,
- No obvious legitimate source of funds,
- Weak internal accounting controls or business records,
- Previous transaction for the same customer that should have been or has been reported to the MLRO,
- Individuals or companies that have funds even though they are insolvent,
- Lack of traceability of the people involved.

Cash payments

No payment to the Council exceeding £5,000 will be accepted in cash (including notes, coins or travellers cheques in any currency) without the approval of the MLRO.

Reporting to the Money Laundering Reporting Officer (MLRO)

If employees are asked to collect a payment exceeding £5,000 in cash they must provide details to the MLRO using the pro-forma report attached at Appendix 1, so that precautionary checks can be performed. The report must include as much detail as possible. This does not mean that transactions below this sum should never raise suspicions. Professional alertness should be exercised at all times, taking into account the factors above.

If an employee has reasonable grounds to suspect money laundering activities in respect of a lesser sum, the matter should be reported to the MLRO in the same way.

The employee must then follow all directions from the MLRO and must not make any further enquiries themselves into the matter. Additionally they must not take any further steps in the transaction without authorisation from the MLRO.

To prevent the suspect becoming aware of the suspicion the employee must not discuss the matter with others or note on a file that a report has been made to the MLRO.

The MLRO will promptly evaluate the circumstances of each case and make a decision as whether to report the matter to the National Crime Agency (NCA) via its [website](#) or by its 24 hour phone line: 0370 496 7622.

Where the MLRO concludes that there is no reasonable grounds to suspect money laundering then he shall mark the report accordingly and give his consent for any ongoing or imminent transactions to proceed.

It is a criminal offence if the MLRO knows or suspects, through a disclosure being made to him, that another person is engaged in money laundering and he does not disclose this as soon as possible to the NCA.

All reports made must be retained by the MLRO in a confidential file kept for that purpose, for a minimum of five years.

Customer Due Diligence

Regulation 28 Customer due diligence measures - [The Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing \(Amendment\) Regulations 2019](#), [Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing and Transfer of Funds \(Information on the Payer\) Regulations 2017](#)

Where the Council is carrying out certain regulated business (accountancy, audit and tax services and legal services, relating to financial, company or property transactions), and part of this:

- Forms an ongoing business relationship with a client,

- Undertakes a one off or occasional transaction amounting to €15,000 or more whether carried out as a single transaction or several linked ones, or
- The officer suspects money laundering or terrorist financing:

then the customer due diligence procedure below must be followed before any business is undertaken for that client.

Customer due diligence means:

- Identifying the customer and verifying the customer's identity on the basis of information obtained from a reliable and independent source eg conducting a search at Companies House.
- Obtaining information on the purpose and intended nature of the business relationship.

Where the "relevant business" is being provided to another UK public sector body then written, signed instructions on the body's headed paper should be obtained prior to the transaction being completed.

The requirement for customer due diligence applies immediately for new customers and should be considered on a risk sensitive basis for existing customers. Customer due diligence means that the Council must know its clients and understand their businesses in order to determine whether there is suspicious activity that should be reported.

The Regulations require that the Council identifies its customers and verifies that identity on the basis of documents, data or information obtained from a reliable source. Where there is a beneficial owner who is not the customer, then the Council must identify that person and verify the identity. Where the beneficial owner is a trust or similar then the Council must understand the nature of the control structure of that trust. Finally the Council must obtain information on the purpose and intended nature of the business relationship. The Regulations stipulate the need for the Council to consider both customer and geographical risk factors in deciding what due diligence is appropriate.

These checks must generally be undertaken by the Council before it establishes a business relationship or carries out an occasional transaction, or if it suspects money laundering or terrorist funding or doubts the veracity of any information obtained for the purposes of identification or verification. However, the Council is not required to undertake these checks if its customer is another public authority, unless it suspects money laundering or terrorist funding.

The Council is also obliged to maintain ongoing monitoring of its business relationships which means it must scrutinise transactions throughout the course of the relationship to ensure that the transactions are consistent with the Council's knowledge of the customer and keep the information about the customer up-to-date.

Enhanced Customer Due Diligence and Ongoing Monitoring

Regulation 33 Obligation to apply enhanced customer due diligence - [The Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing \(Amendment\) Regulations 2019](#), [Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing and Transfer of Funds \(Information on the Payer\) Regulations 2017](#)

In certain circumstances it will be necessary to undertake what is noted in the Regulations as Enhanced Customer Due Diligence. In summary, this will be necessary where:

- The customer has not been physically present for identification purposes; or
- In any other situation which by its nature can present a higher risk of money laundering or terrorist financing.

Where this applies, the Council will need to take adequate measures to compensate for the higher risk. For example, this will mean ensuring that the customer's identity is established by additional documents, data or information.

In this instance, the Regulations impose a special obligation to carry out ongoing monitoring of its business relationships which means it must scrutinise transactions undertaken throughout the course of the relationship to ensure that these transactions are consistent with the Council's knowledge of the customer, his/her business and risk profile; and keep documents, data or information obtained for the purpose of applying Customer Due Diligence measures up-to-date.

Redress

The Council will endeavour to seek redress, including the recovery of assets and money where possible. This may include recovery proceedings action pursuant to the [Proceeds of Crime Act 2002](#).

Record Keeping

Where the "relevant business" is carried out then the customer due diligence identification evidence and the details of the relevant transaction(s) for that client must be retained for at least five years.

7. Training

The continuing success of the Authority's Counter Fraud, Corruption and Bribery and Anti-Money Laundering arrangements will be partly reliant on the effectiveness of staff training and responsiveness throughout the Authority. Managers should therefore ensure that adequate and appropriate training and development is provided for their staff, especially those involved in the internal control system.

The Money Laundering Regulations require that relevant staff are made aware of the law relating to money laundering and terrorist financing, and to the legal requirements of the data protection act, and are regularly given training in how to

recognise and deal with transactions and other activities or situations which may be related to money laundering or terrorist financing.

The MLRO should maintain a written record of the measures taken and training provided.

A series of webinars are due to be provided on Cyber Crime to Council employees from April 2021 onwards; and a training module on Ethics & Fraud is due to be presented to the Council's Corporate Workshop on 28th May 2021. The Council's Corporate Workshop will be used as an opportunity to raise awareness of this Strategy.

MBL Seminars Ltd, which the Council subscribes to, offers seminars on Anti-Money Laundering.

Managers ensure that staff are made aware of any other training opportunities.

8. Conclusion

The Authority has in place a clear network of systems and procedures to fight against fraud and corruption that is available to all stakeholders. It is essential that these arrangements keep pace with any future developments in both preventative and detection techniques.

Appendix 1

CONFIDENTIAL

Report to Money Laundering Reporting Officer

Re: Suspected money laundering activity

From: _____ (employee name)

Service: _____ Ext No: _____

Details of suspected offence:

Name(s) and address(es) of person(s) involved: (if a company / public body please include details re nature of business)

Nature, value and timing of activity involved: (please include full details eg what, when, where, how; attach a separate sheet if necessary)

Nature of suspicions regarding such activity: Please attach a separate sheet if necessary

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

Please do not discuss the content of this report with anyone you believe to be involved in the suspected money laundering activity described. To do so may constitute a tipping off offence, which carries a maximum penalty of 5 years' imprisonment.

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Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council

REPORT TO:	Council
DATE OF MEETING:	17 June 2021
LOCATION:	Remotely via Video Conference
TITLE:	Report on size of the Governance and Audit Committee
PURPOSE OF REPORT:	To consider the size/composition of the Governance and Audit Committee, in accordance with the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021
FOR:	Decision
Cabinet Portfolio and Cabinet Member:	Cllr. Ray Quant MBE, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Customer Contact, Legal & Governance, People & Organisation

BACKGROUND:

S.116 of the Local Government and Elections 2021 states that:

- One-third (1/3) of the Committee members are lay persons.

This provision will come into force on 5th May 2022.

On 18 March 2021 Council resolved to approve the commencement of the recruitment process for lay members to the Governance and Audit Committee.

CURRENT POSITION

On 24/2/21 the Governance and Audit Committee ('GAC') agreed that the future Committee should comprise:

- 3 independent/lay members and
- 6 County Councillors

Total 9.

On 21 May 2021 the Democratic Services Committee resolved to recommend to Council that from 6 May 2022 the GAC should comprise of:

- 3 independent/lay members and
- 6 County Council Members.

Total 9.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council resolves to approve that:

1) with effect from 5th May 2022, the Governance and Audit Committee shall comprise:

- 6 x County Council Members
- 3 x independent lay members;

Total: 9.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Monitoring of the governance of the Council,
- to ensure compliance with the 2021 Act, and
- to provide clarity for the future recruitment of lay members to the Governance and Audit Committee.

Has an Integrated Impact

Assessment been completed? No

If, not, please state why

Summary: *This report does not represent a change in policy or strategy.*

WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS:

Long term:

Supporting activity in the community in encouraging participation in recruitment of lay members for balancing short term need with long term planning for the future, including in compliance with current legislation and encouraging a Prosperous Wales by supporting the local economy in the role and work carried out by the Governance and Audit Committee, including making right financial decisions (globally responsible Wales).

Integration:

Encouraging fair working and participation in decision making in recruitment to Governance and Audit Committee and in the role, in the aim of a positive impact on people, economy, environment and culture.

Collaboration:

Governance and Audit Committee and Council working together, and with wider community in recruitment of lay member(s) and ongoing collaboration in new appointment(s) to deliver effective work of Governance and Audit Committee and support Council.

Involvement: Involving those with an interest (opportunity for those with interest to apply for role with Governance and Audit Committee), seeking their views in work of Governance and Audit Act, encouraging incorporating stakeholder engagement and consultative approach.

Prevention: Acting to prevent problem of non-compliance with legislation.

Overview and Scrutiny: Not applicable
Policy Framework: Not applicable
Corporate Priorities: Boosting the Economy – increasing skillset/opportunity for Membership of GAC & cross cutting themes in work of Governance and Audit Committee

Financial implications: Implications in recruitment process and ongoing costs of additional Committee members

Legal implications: The Council will fail to comply with legislation/regulations unless the Governance and Audit Committee comprises 1/3 lay members from 5 May 2022

Contact Name: Elin Prysor
Designation: Corporate Lead Officer: Legal & Governance (& Monitoring Officer)
Date of Report: 24 May 2021
Acronyms: N/A
Appendices: None

Background papers Report to Audit Committee 2 October 2019:
http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/cpdl/Democratic_Services_Meetings_Public/H%20size%20of%20audit%20committee.pdf
 2 October 2019 Audit Committee Minutes:
http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/cpdl/Democratic_Services_Meetings_Public/G%20Cofnodion%20combined%20171219.pdf).
 27 January 2020 Report to Democratic Services Committee
http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/cpdl/Democratic_Services_Meetings_Public/Size%20of%20audit%20committee.pdf).
 27 January 2020 Democratic Services Committee Minutes:
http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/cpdl/Democratic_Services_Meetings_Public/A%20Cofnodion%2027%20lonawr%202020.pdf)
 12 November 2020 Audit Committee Meeting Minutes:
<http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/media/8073/audit-121120-final-s.pdf>).
 24 February 2021 Report to Audit Committee:
[http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/cpdl/Democratic_Services_Meetings_Public/B%20LG%20and%20Elections%20combined%20\(s\).pdf](http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/cpdl/Democratic_Services_Meetings_Public/B%20LG%20and%20Elections%20combined%20(s).pdf)
 24 February 2021 Draft Audit Committee Meeting Minutes:
<https://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/media/8730/audit-24021-final-s.pdf>

18 March 2021 Report to Council:

[http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/cpd/Democratic_Services_Meetings_Public/1%20-%20Changes%20to%20Audit%20Committee%20per%20Local%20Government%20and%20Elections%20\(Wales\)%20Act%202021.pdf](http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/cpd/Democratic_Services_Meetings_Public/1%20-%20Changes%20to%20Audit%20Committee%20per%20Local%20Government%20and%20Elections%20(Wales)%20Act%202021.pdf)

18 March 2021 Draft Council Meeting Minutes:

<https://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/media/8975/cofnodion-ddrafft-18032021-saesneg-final.pdf>).

21 May 2021 Democratic Services Report to Democratic Services Committee on Size of Committees:

<https://council.ceredigion.gov.uk/documents/s1472/Report%20-%20Size%20of%20all%20committees.pdf?LLL=0>

21 May 2021 Report to Democratic Services Committee on Size of Governance and Audit Committee:

<https://council.ceredigion.gov.uk/documents/s1473/Report%20-%20size%20of%20Governance%20and%20Audit%20Committee.pdf?LLL=0>

Statutory powers:

Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asc/2021/1/introduction/enacted>

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021
(Commencement No. 2 and Saving Provisions) Order 2021

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2021/297/contents/made>

CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to: Council

Date of meeting: 17 June 2021

Title: Ethics and Standards Committee:
-recruitment of two independent members
- Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair

Purpose of the report: To ensure appropriate appointments are made to the Ethics and Standards Committee

For: Decision

Cabinet Portfolio and Cabinet Member: Councillor Ray Quant MBE
Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Legal and Governance, People and Organisation and Democratic Services

1) Appointment of two Independent Members

The current Chair Mr Hywel Wyn Jones and Mr Rif Winfield were appointed initially on 27/9/2011 and reappointed on 27/9/2017. Their respective terms of office will expire on 26/9/2021. These members are not now eligible for reappointment.

On 10th December 2020 Council resolved to approve:

- a) the job description, person specification and criteria for the appointment of independent members;
- b) and b) Membership of the Selection Panel.

The Selection Panel took place on 26th March 2021 and the interviews on 15th April 2021.

The two successful candidates were:

- Caryl Davies;
- Alan Davies.

It is proposed that these appointments will be for a term of 6 years from 27th September 2021. The Regulations provide for a further term of 4 years thereafter.

2) APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

The term of office of the current Chair, Mr Hywel Wyn Jones, of the Ethics and Standards Committee come to an end on 26th September 2021.

Regulation 22 of the Standards Committees (Wales) Regulations 2001 (as amended by Regulation 9 of the Standards Committees (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2006) provides that:

- The Chair and Vice Chair must be elected from amongst the independent members
- The Chair and Vice Chair shall be elected for whichever is the shorter of the following periods –
 - (a) a period of not less than four nor more than six years, or
 - (b) until the term of office of that person as an independent member of that standards committee comes to an end

Council resolved on 16th March 2017 that the current Chair, Mr Hywel Wyn Jones, should be reappointed for a further term, to expire on 26th September 2021. The term of office of the current Vice-Chair, Mrs Caroline White, will expire on 30 July 2023.

The Council AGM (held on 14 May 2021) approved the following nominations:

- Hywel Wyn Jones: Chair
- Caroline White: Vice-Chair

Following the Chair stepping down voluntarily following the meeting of the Ethics and Standards Committee on 19/5/21, the Committee nominated the following:

- Caroline White: Chair
- John Weston: Vice-Chair

with effect from 20/5/21.

It is proposed that Council resolves to endorse the nominations: for the following periods :

- a) Caroline White: Chair (20 May 2021 – 30 July 2023).
- b) John Weston : Vice-Chair (20 May 2021 – 30 July 2023)

Recommendation(s): **That Council resolves:**

- 1. to approve the appointment of the following independent members of the Ethics & Standards Committee:**
 - Caryl Davies;
 - Alan Davies.**from 27th September 2021 to 26th September 2027**
- 2) to approve the following nominations:**
 - a) Caroline White: Chair (20/5/21 – 30/7/23).**
 - b) John Weston: Vice-Chair (20/5/21 – 30/7/23)**

Reasons for decision: The recommendations are necessary to ensure that the appropriate appointments are in place, in accordance with relevant legislation and the Constitution.

Overview and Scrutiny:	and	Not applicable								
Policy Framework:		Ceredigion Council is an organisation that is fit for purpose to deliver improving services to meet the needs of our citizens.								
Corporate Priorities:		Ceredigion council is an organisation that is fit for purpose to deliver improving services to meet the needs of our citizens.								
Finance and Procurement implications:	and	None								
Legal implications:		Without this decision the Committee will not comply with legislative requirements								
Staffing implications:		None								
Property / asset implications:		None								
Integrated Assessment conclusions:	Impact	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Equalities and Diversity:</td> <td>None</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Welsh Language:</td> <td>None</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sustainable Development:</td> <td>None</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Engagement:</td> <td>None</td> </tr> </table>	Equalities and Diversity:	None	Welsh Language:	None	Sustainable Development:	None	Engagement:	None
Equalities and Diversity:	None									
Welsh Language:	None									
Sustainable Development:	None									
Engagement:	None									
Statutory Powers:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Government Wales: The Standards Committees (Wales) Regulations 2001 (2001/2283 Regulations) • Local Government Wales: The Standards Committees (Wales) (Amendment) 2006 (2006/1849) & 2016 (2016/85) Regulations • Local Government Act 1972 • Local Government Act 2000 								
Background Papers:		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st August 2013; • 16th March 2017; • 7th December 2017; • 17th May 2019; • 1st August 2019; • Ethics and Standards Committee report 18/11/20 • Council 10th December 2021 • Ethics and Standards Committee 19th May 2021 								
Appendices:		None								
Head of Service:		Chief Executive								

Reporting Officer: Elin Prysor, Monitoring Officer

Date: 19/4/21

CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to: Council

Date of meeting: 17-06-2021

Title: Armed Forces Covenant

Purpose of the report: To ask that Ceredigion County Council sign the Armed Forces Covenant and publicly commemorate the 10th Anniversary of the Covenant.

For: DECISION

Elected Member with lead responsibility for the Armed Forces: Cllr Paul Hinge, Armed Forces Champion

BACKGROUND

In June 2011 the Government launched the Armed Forces Community Covenant (AFCC) following the notion of a 'Military Covenant' between the Government and the UK Armed Forces which all started in around 2000. Every Local Authority in UK has signed a 'Community Covenant Partnership'. Ceredigion County Council signed the AFCC in 2013.

Businesses at the time signed a 'Corporate Covenant' but there is now no distinction between a Community Covenant, with a community collectively making a declaration, and the Corporate Covenant. The two have evolved into the Armed Forces Covenant (AFC), please see **Appendix 1** for a draft of the Covenant, which the Council would sign.

All signatories of the AFC are acknowledged on a data base publicised by the MOD. Prior to 2014 there was no centrally held data and signatories before this date are not acknowledged nationally, therefore Ceredigion County Council do not feature on this centrally held database. Some of the partner signatories on the Ceredigion AFCC, and our Armed Forces stakeholders have gone on to sign the AFC and now feature on this centrally held database

CURRENT SITUATION

When the AFCC was published in 2011, it outlined tangible commitments to the Armed Forces community. During this time Ceredigion County Council has delivered on these commitments and tenets of the Covenant, thereby demonstrating ongoing commitment to the Armed Forces community. This commitment is evidenced through the work of the Armed Forces Champion, Cllr Paul Hinge, and through appropriate policy integration.

Across Ceredigion County Council, the Education, Housing and HR departments are developing initiatives in collaboration with the Regional Armed Forces Liaison

Officer (ALFO) on strengthening the delivery of the covenant. Notably Ceredigion's Housing department has been acknowledged as good practice by Welsh Government for their progressive work with identifying and meeting the needs of service users from within the Armed Forces Community. Much has been achieved in this time.

The 10th Anniversary of the AFC is an opportune moment to reaffirm the Council's commitment, celebrate the successes and continued commitment to uphold the principles of the AFC that were made back in 2013. It will also serve to refresh the Council's commitments into more appropriate measures that are more pertinent today. By signing the AFC we will join our local partners and be formally acknowledged nationally.

PROPOSAL

This paper serves to ask for Council agreement to sign the AFC and for the official signing to be conducted as part of a ceremony to reaffirm the Council's commitment and to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of the AFC. If agreed, it is proposed that the reaffirmation take place in the Autumn of this year, at the end of September or beginning of October and arrangements will be made to take account of the availability of Elected Members and other dignitaries.

	Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If, not, please state why	No. This paper seeks to reaffirm the commitment already made by the Council to the Armed Forces Community Covenant in 2013.
Wellbeing of Future Generations:	Summary: Long term: Collaboration: Involvement: Prevention: Integration:	
Recommendation(s):	That Ceredigion County Council sign the Armed Forces Covenant and publicly commemorate the 10th Anniversary of the Covenant in Sept/Oct 2021.	
Reasons for decision:	To reaffirm the Council's commitment, celebrate the successes and continued commitment to uphold the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant that were made back in 2013.	
Overview and Scrutiny: Policy Framework:		

Corporate Priorities:	Investing in People's Future; Enabling individual and family resilience
Finance and Procurement implications:	N/A
Legal Implications:	None
Staffing implications:	None
Property / asset implications:	N/A
Risk(s):	N/A
Statutory Powers:	N/A
Background Papers:	Please see appendices below
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Draft Armed Forces Covenant
Corporate Lead Officer:	Alun Williams, Corporate Lead Officer Policy, Performance and Public Protection
Reporting Officer:	Diana Davies, Corporate Manager Partnerships and Performance
Date:	17-06-2021



Ceredigion County Council

We, the undersigned, commit to honour the Armed Forces Covenant and support the Armed Forces Community. We recognise the value Serving Personnel, both Regular and Reservists, Veterans and military families contribute to our business and our country.

Signed on behalf of:

Ceredigion County Council

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____



Cyngor Sir
CEREDIGION
County Council

The Armed Forces Covenant

An Enduring Covenant Between

The People of the United Kingdom
Her Majesty's Government

– and –

All those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces of the Crown

And their Families

The first duty of Government is the defence of the realm. Our Armed Forces fulfil that responsibility on behalf of the Government, sacrificing some civilian freedoms, facing danger and, sometimes, suffering serious injury or death as a result of their duty. Families also play a vital role in supporting the operational effectiveness of our Armed Forces. In return, the whole nation has a moral obligation to the members of the Naval Service, the Army and the Royal Air Force, together with their families. They deserve our respect and support, and fair treatment.

Those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether Regular or Reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and the bereaved.

This obligation involves the whole of society: it includes voluntary and charitable bodies, private organisations, and the actions of individuals in supporting the Armed Forces. Recognising those who have performed military duty unites the country and demonstrates the value of their contribution. This has no greater expression than in upholding this Covenant.

Section 1: Principles Of The Armed Forces Covenant

1.1 We at **Ceredigion County Council** will endeavour in our business dealings to uphold the key principles of the Armed Forces Covenant, which are:

- *no member of the Armed Forces Community should face disadvantage in the provision of public and commercial services compared to any other citizen*
- *in some circumstances special treatment may be appropriate especially for the injured or bereaved.*

Section 2: Demonstrating our Commitment

2.1 **Ceredigion County Council** recognises the value serving personnel, reservists, veterans and military families bring to our business. We will seek to uphold the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant, by:

- *promoting the fact that we are an armed forces-friendly organisation – through appointment of an Armed Forces Champion. The Champion will lead the delivery of a quarterly Armed Forces Covenant partnership forum which aims to bring together public and non-public bodies to ensure collaboration for the benefit of the Armed Forces Community as outlined in the Covenant.*
- *seeking to support the employment of veterans young and old, by working with our Armed Forces Community to enable this.*
- *Striving to support the employment of service spouses and partners.*
- *seeking to support our employees who choose to be members of the Reserve Forces reflected in our employment policies for accommodating their training and deployment where possible*
- *Aiming to actively participate in Armed Forces Day*

2.2 We will publicise these commitments through our literature and/or on our website, setting out how we will seek to honour them and inviting feedback from the Service community and our customers on how we are doing.

CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to:	Council
Date of meeting:	17 June 2021
Title:	Annual Report from the Chair of the Ethics and Standards Committee 2020/21
Purpose of the report:	For Council to note the work of the Ethics and Standards Committee during 2020/21
For:	Information
Cabinet Portfolio and Cabinet Member:	Councillor Ray Quant MBE, Cabinet Member for Legal and Governance, People and Organisation and Democratic Services

Background

An Annual Report of the Chair of the Ethics and Standards Committee has been prepared and presented to Council since 2018.

Current Position

The Annual Report from the Chairman of the Ethics and Standards Committee for 2020/21 has been prepared and is attached (Appendix A).

Council is requested to note the Annual Report as presented, which outlines the work of the Ethics and Standards Committee during 2020/21.

The Annual Report will be published on the Council website.

Future requirements-from May 2022

From May 2022, the Ethics and Standards Committee will be required to make an annual report to the Authority as soon as practicable after the end of each financial year (meaning period of 12 months ending with 31 March) in respect of that year, pursuant to **S63 Local Government & Election (Wales) Act 2021**.

The annual report will have to describe how the committee's functions have been discharged during the financial year.

The Council must then consider the annual report made by its standards committee before the end of 3 months beginning with the day on which the authority receives the report.

Content

The report will have to include a summary of—

- a) what has been done to discharge the general and specific functions conferred on the committee by section 54 or 56 of the 2000 Act, namely its functions including:

- promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by the members and co-opted members of the authority, and
- assisting members and co-opted members of the authority to observe the authority's code of conduct.
- advising the authority on the adoption or revision of a code of conduct,
- monitoring the operation of the authority's code of conduct, and
- advising, training or arranging to train members and co-opted members of the authority on matters relating to the authority's code of conduct.

b) reports and recommendations made or referred to the committee under Chapter 3 of the 2000 Act. This will include:

- PSOW references to Monitoring Officer

c) action taken by the committee following its consideration of such reports and recommendations;

d) notices given to the committee under Chapter 4 of the 2000 Act, This will include Adjudication Panel for Wales (APW) recommendations.

In addition, from May 2022, the annual report will also include the committee's **assessment of the extent to which leaders of political groups of the Council have complied with their duties** under section 52A(1) of the 2000 Act (as inserted by S62 of the 2021 Act), during the financial year.

These are to:

- 1)(a) must take reasonable steps to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by the members of the group, and
(b) co-operate with the council's standards committee (and any sub-committee of the committee) in the exercise of the standards committee's functions.
- 2) have regard to any guidance about their functions issued by the Welsh Ministers.

The annual report should also make reference to the way the committee has discharged its new functions (set out in S62):
of—

- (a) monitoring compliance by leaders of political groups on the council with their duties under section 52A(1), and
- (b) advising, training or arranging to train leaders of political groups on the council about matters relating to those duties."

The annual report may also include recommendations to the authority about any matter in respect of which the committee has functions.

	Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If, not, please state why	N/A This report is not related to a new Policy or change in service
Wellbeing of Future Generations:		

Summary:

Long term: N/A

Collaboration: N/A

Involvement: N/A
Prevention: N/A
Integration: N/A

Recommendation(s): **That Council:**
1) notes the contents of the report, and
2) considers the contents of the Annual Report from
the Chairman of the Ethics and Standards
Committee 2020/21 (Appendix A).

Reasons for decision: To inform the Council of the work of the Ethics and Standards Committee during 2020/21

Overview and Scrutiny: Not applicable. The Ethics and Standards Committee endorsed the report at its meeting on the 19 May 2021
Policy Framework: Not applicable

Corporate Priorities: Not applicable

Financial implications: None

Statutory Powers: Local Government Act 2000
Local Government & Election (Wales) Act 2021.

Background Papers: Code of Conduct
Guidance from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
Annual Report of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

Appendices: Appendix A – Ethics and Standards Committee Annual Report 2020/21

Corporate Lead Officer: Corporate Lead Officer: Legal and Governance & Monitoring Officer
Reporting Officer: Elin Prysor
Date: 07 June 2021

Ethics and Standards Committee



Cyngor Sir
CEREDIGION
County Council

Annual Report 2020/21

The Ten General Principles of Public Life

<p>Selflessness – Members should serve only the public interest and should never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.</p>	<p>Personal judgement – Members may take account of the views of others, including their political groups, but should reach their own conclusions on the issues before them and act in accordance with those conclusions.</p>
<p>Honesty and integrity – Members should not place themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned, should not behave improperly, and should on all occasions avoid the appearance of such behaviour.</p>	<p>Respect for others – Members should promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person, and by treating people with respect, regardless of their race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability. They should respect the impartiality and integrity of the authority’s statutory officers and its other employees.</p>
<p>Objectivity – Members should make decisions on merit, including when making appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards or benefit.</p>	<p>Duty to uphold the law – Members should uphold the law and, on all occasions, act in accordance with the trust that the public is entitled to place in them.</p>
<p>Accountability – Members should be accountable to the public for their actions and the manner in which they carry out their responsibilities, and should co-operate fully and honestly with any scrutiny appropriate to their particular office.</p>	<p>Stewardship – Members should do whatever they are able to do to ensure that their authorities use their resources prudently, and in accordance with the law.</p>
<p>Openness – Members should be as open as possible about their actions and those of their authority, and should be prepared to give reasons for those actions.</p>	<p>Leadership – Members should promote and support these principles by leadership, and by example, and should act in a way that secures or preserves public confidence.</p>

“Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life”

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1

Foreword by the Chair of the Committee

I am pleased to present the annual report of the Ethics and Standards Committee, covering the period 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021. This has been a strange and exceptional year for our Committee, as for the Authority in general. The constraints caused by the pandemic have meant that we have had to put aside our plans to continue our programme of training and updating Councillors – including members of Town and Community Councils – on the Code of Conduct. However, I would like to reassure the Authority and the public that this remains a priority for the future, when the current constraints on communication are lifted.

This year, the Committee has met on only two occasions, on 5th August and 19th November, at which we were able to make a timely response to all applications by members for Dispensation to participate on issues in which they had a prejudicial interest. We were also able to keep abreast of standards and compliance issues reported by the Public Services Ombudsman and the Adjudication Panel for Wales.

On a personal note, as this will be my last report as Chair of the Committee, I would like to thank my fellow members, the Monitoring Officer and all the officers who have provided us with valuable and expert support. I offer my best wishes to my successor in the Chair, and to the two new members who will replace Rif Winfield and myself in September 2021.

Hywel Wyn Jones
2020/21 Chair of the Ethics and Standards Committee

2

Terms of Reference of the Ethics & Standards Committee & Vision Statement

The Council has established an Ethics and Standards Committee in accordance with the Standards Committee (Wales) Regulations 2001 (2001/2283) (as amended (2006/1849), 2007/951).

COMPOSITION

Membership

The Ethics and Standards Committee is composed of nine members. Its membership comprises of:

- Five 'independent' members, who are not Councillors or Officers or the spouse of a Councillor or an officer of this Council or any other relevant authority as defined by the Regulations, appointed in accordance with the procedure set out in the Regulations;
- Two County Councillors [other than the Leader of the Council and any member of the Cabinet];
- Two members of Town and Community Councils wholly or mainly in the Council's area ('Community Committee members')

Term of Office

- Independent members are appointed for a term of not less than four nor more than six years. They may be re-appointed for one further consecutive term not exceeding four years. The term of office of one Independent Member was extended during 2019/20.
- Members of the Council who are members of the Ethics and

Standards Committee have a term of office until the start of the next local government election following their appointment. This will end in May 2022 .

- Community Council Committee members would have a term of office until the next ordinary local government election following their appointment. This will end in May 2020.

Quorum - A meeting of the Ethics and Standards Committee shall only be quorate when:

- at least three members are present, and;
- at least half the members present (including the Chairperson) are Independent Members.

Community Committee Members - A Town/Community Committee member shall not take part in the proceedings of the Ethics and Standards Committee when any matter relating to their Community Council is being considered;

Chairing the Committee

- An Independent Member must chair the Ethics and Standards Committee.
- The Chair and Vice-Chair are elected by the Members of the Ethics and Standards Committee for whichever is the shorter of the following periods:-
 - a period of not less than four nor more than six years, or
 - until the term of office of that person as an independent member of the Ethics and Standards Committee comes to an end

If the Chair is absent from a meeting of the Ethics and Standards Committee then the Vice Chairperson of the Committee, if present, shall preside.

If both the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the Ethics and Standards Committee are absent from a meeting of that Committee, such independent member of the Ethics and Standards Committee as the members of the Committee present shall choose who shall preside.

VISION STATEMENT

“Our Vision is that the people of Ceredigion will have trust and confidence that all those elected to office in Local Government in our

county will work to the highest ethical and moral standards in serving their community”

3

Roles and Functions of the Ethics and Standards Committee

The Ethics and Standards Committee had the following roles and functions:

- promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Councillors,
- assisting the Councillors, Co-opted Members and church and parent governor representatives to observe the Members' Code of Conduct;
- advising the Council on the adoption or revision of the Members' Code of Conduct;
- monitoring the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct;
- advising, training or arranging to train Councillors, co-opted members and church and parent governor representatives on matters relating to the Members' Code of Conduct;
- granting dispensations to Councillors, Co-opted Members and church and parent governor representatives from requirements relating to interests, as set out in the **Members' Code of Conduct 2016 edition; Section (81(4) & (5) of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Standards Committees (Grant of Dispensation)(Wales) Regulations 2001 (2001/2279).**
- dealing with any reports from a case tribunal or interim case tribunal, and any report from the Monitoring Officer on any matter referred to that officer by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales; as set out in (section 73(1) **Local Government Act 2000, Local Government Investigations (Functions of Monitoring Officers and Standards Committees)(Wales) Regulations 2001)) (2001/2281) (as amended; 2009/2578), and the Local Government (Standards Committee, Investigations,**

**Dispensations and Referral) (Wales) (Amendment)
Regulations 2016 (2016/85).**

- the exercise of the above in relation to the Community Councils wholly or mainly in its area and the members of those Community Councils;(Section 56(1) Local Government Act 2000) to appoint an appeals panel of three, with a majority of independent members, one of whom would act as Chairperson, with regard to complaints made by members of the public under the Council's complaints procedure

Examples of the type of work carried out by the Ethics and Standards Committee may include:

- involvement in developing training materials on the Code, including a flowchart summarising the main provision of the code
- attendance at and participation in training session on the Code for both the County Council and Community Councils
- attendance at Council and Committee meetings to observe proceedings
- the introduction of procedures which allow Councillors to attend Committee meetings to present an application for dispensation in person

4

Membership of the Committee

Membership of the Ethics and Standards Committee 2020/21

1st April 2020– 31st March 2021

Committee Member	Term of Office	Term as Chair & Vice Chair
Mr Hywel Wyn Jones (Chair) Independent Member	2/09/17-26/09/21	Chair:22/02/19- 26/09/21 in line with term of office
Mrs Caroline White (Vice- Chair) Independent Member	01/08/13- 01/08/19. Extended by Council on 1/8/19: 1/8/19-30/7/23	Vice-Chair 22/02/18- 01/08/19. Extended by ES Committee on 12/7/19: up to 21/2/22
Mr Rif Winfield Independent Member	27/09/17-26/09/21	
Ms Carol Edwards Independent Member	22/02/18-21/02/24	
Mr John Weston Independent Member	22/02/18-21/02/24	
Councillor Dai Mason Ceredigion County Council	05/05/17- Local Government elections May 2022	
Councillor Odwyn Davies Ceredigion County Council	05/05/17-	

	Local Government elections May 2022.	
Councillor Julian Evans (Community Council Representative)	05/05/17- Local Government elections May 2022	
Councillor Gill Hopley (Community Council Representative)	05/05/17- Local Government elections May 2022	

Members of the current Ethics & Standards Committee

 <p>Mr Hywel Wyn Jones (Chair)</p>	<p>Hywel Wyn Jones is a former Administrative Secretary of the University of Wales, Aberystwyth. For ten years he was a member of the Standards Committee of Dyfed-Powys Police Authority (with a term as Chairman). Hywel has served as an Independent Member of Ceredigion County Council Ethics and Standards Committee since 2012, and as its Chair from February 2018. Hywel is also Chair of the Standards Committee of Mid & West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority.</p> <p>Hywel' term of office will end on 26/9/21</p>
 <p>Mrs Caroline White (Vice-Chair)</p>	<p>Caroline White is a retired teacher. Caroline's 26-year teaching career included many whole school management responsibilities, latterly as Assistant Head. Caroline was appointed as an Independent Member of the Ethics and Standards Committee in August 2013 and was elected as Vice-Chair, from February 2018.</p>

 <p>Mr Rif Winfield</p>	<p>Rif Winfield has enjoyed a career in the political, commercial and voluntary sectors. He was an elected Borough Councillor in 1972.</p> <p>Rif was a founding Director of Ceredigion Association for Voluntary Organisations for 17 years including Chairman.</p> <p>Rif has been an Independent Member of the Ceredigion Ethics & Standards Committee since 2011.</p> <p>Rif' term of office will end on 26/9/21</p>
 <p>Mrs Carol Edwards</p>	<p>Carol Edwards qualified as a Chartered Librarian from the Librarian College in Aberystwyth. worked for Clwyd County Council, Ysbyty Llwynhelyg (as a medical librarian)and then back to Aberystwyth at the National Library for Wales for over 20 years, and as Head of Department from 2010-2013.</p> <p>Carol is currently a Governance Manager and Clerk of the Board of Trustees for the National Library for Wales.</p> <p>Carol was appointed as a Member of the Ethics & Standards Committee in February 2018.</p>
 <p>Mr John Weston</p>	<p>John Weston was a Town Planner, and was then employed by the WAO as a performance auditor, retiring in 2013; undertaking audits within Councils in Wales and also with Welsh Police and Fire and Rescue services.</p> <p>John was appointed as an Independent Member of the Ethics & Standards Committee from February 2018.</p>



**Cllr Dai Mason
(Ceredigion County
Council)**

Dai Mason was a design engineer at IBERS, and then a Company Director in the entertainment/ travel industry.

School Governor.

Currently Ceredigion County Councillor since 2012 representing the Trefeurig Ward. Chairman of Ceredigion County Council 2016/17.

Appointed to the Ethics & Standards Committee in May 2012.



**Cllr Odwyn Davies
(Ceredigion County
Council)**

Odwyn Davies is a farmer.

Ceredigion County Councillor since 1999 representing the Llangybi Ward.

Former joint Leader of Llangybi area, Urdd Gobaith Cymru.

Member of the Ethics & Standards Committee since May 2012.

 <p>Dr Julian Evans (Community Council representative)</p>	<p>Julian Evans was a Dental Surgeon from 1978, and ran his own practice until retirement in 2008.</p> <p>New Quay Town Council Councillor (Mayor 5 times since 1982.</p> <p>Ceredigion County Council Councillor representing New Quay ward (1995-1999)</p> <p>Member of the magistrate’s selection committee, former part-time firefighter. Former School Governor. Chair of the Ceredigion branch of One Voice Wales.</p> <p>Appointed to the Ethics & Standards Committee in 2017.</p>
 <p>Cllr Gill Hopley (Community Council representative)</p>	<p>Gill Hopley enjoyed a successful career in retail and fashion design from 1987 until her retirement in 2016.</p> <p>New Quay Town Councillor since 1991 (and mayor on several occasions).</p> <p>Ceredigion County Councillor representing the New Quay ward from 1999 until 2017. Chairman of Ceredigion County Council 2015.</p> <p>Appointed to the Ethics & Standards Committee in 2017.</p>

When does the Ethics & Standards Committee meet?

The Ethics & Standards Committee has scheduled meetings. Meetings can also be convened at other times in exceptional circumstances.

5

The Committee's Work in 2020/2021

1. APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION

2018/19

The Committee had considered 21 applications from County and Community and Town Councillors during the year.

Of these:

- 9 applications were from County Councillors and
- 13 Community and Town Councillors

2019/20

The Committee had considered 15 applications from County and Community and Town Councillors during the year.

Of these:

- County Councillors: 13
- Town & Community Councillors 2

Of these:

- 15 were granted
- 0 was deferred
- 0 was refused
- 0 was withdrawn

2020/21

The Committee had considered 18 applications from County and Community and Town Councillors during the year.

Of these:

- County Councillors: 10
- Town & Community Councillors 8

- 18 were granted
- 0 was deferred
- 0 as refused
- 0 was withdrawn

The grounds upon which the Committee may grant a dispensation are set out in the Standards Committee (Grant of Dispensations) (Wales) Regulations 2001 (Reg. 2)

The most common grounds for which the Committee granted dispensations were:

- a) no fewer than half of the members of the relevant authority or of a committee of the authority (as the case may be) by which the business is to be considered has an interest which relates to that business;
- d) the nature of the member's interest is such that the member's participation in the business to which the interest relates would not damage public confidence in the conduct of the relevant authority's business
- f) the participation of the member in the business to which the interests relates is justified by the member's particular role or expertise.

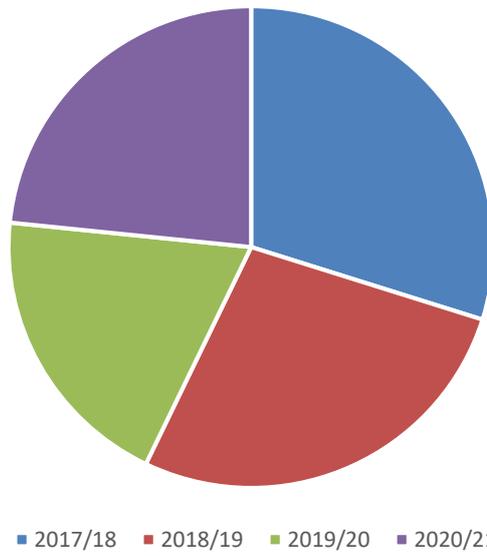
Of the 18 dispensations granted:

- 4 were granted to speak only
- 14 were granted to speak and vote

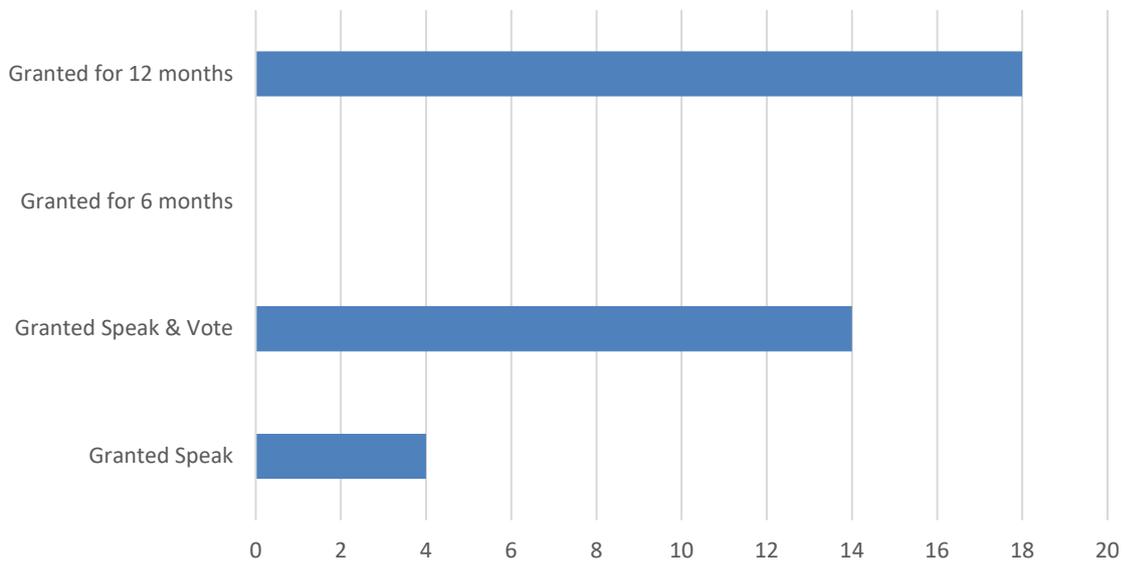
Of the dispensations granted:

- 18 were granted for a term of up to 12 months
- 0 were granted for a term of up to 6 months

Dispensation Applications Received 2017-2021



Overview of Applications granted 2020/2021



Reminders for renewal are not sent to Members. Dispensations lapse automatically at the end of the term. Any applications for extensions of time are treated as new applications in order to ensure that Members properly review the need and grounds for dispensation.

The Committee approaches each application on its merits.

Details of the applications dealt with by the Committee can be viewed as part of the agenda/minutes of the meetings of the Committee which are accessible on Ceredigion County Council's website:

<http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/your-council/councillors-committees/committees/ethics-and-standards/>

Applicants are encouraged to attend meetings in person.

During 2018/19 2 Members attended Committee in person

During 2019/20 2 Members attended Committee in person.

During 2020/21 4 Member attended the Committee (via video conferencing) (in relation to 13 applications)

2. ADJUDICATION PANEL FOR WALES (APW).

It was reported at the meeting of the 19 November 2020 that there have been a number of documents which had been updated, namely:

- Presidential Guidance: Anonymity
- Presidential Guidance: Disclosure
- Presidential Guidance: The role of the Monitoring Officer in APW proceedings

Members noted the content of these documents.

The Chair provided an overview of the decision report of the Adjudication Panel for Wales in relation to Councillor Neil McEvoy, Cardiff City Council and informed Members that the report was available on the APW website.

3. THE PUBLIC SERVICE OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES (PSOW) CODE OF CONDUCT CASEBOOK

The Monitoring Officer presented the Ombudsman Code of Conduct Casebook Issues to Committee:

- Code of Conduct Casebooks Issue 23 – January 2020

No others were issued during this reporting period.

4. TRAINING

At the meeting of the 05 August 2020, it was agreed that opportunities to deliver training via video conferencing or pre-recorded training be explored by officers.

It was agreed at the meeting on the 19 November 2020, that opportunities to deliver training via video conferencing or pre-recorded training be explored by officers and Town/Community Councils asked if they have any specific training requests in relation to the code and hosting remote meetings.

5. RECRUITMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

The Scrutiny and Standards Officer presented the report on the recruitment of two new independent members to the Committee at the meeting held on the 19 November 2020. The current Chair Mr Hywel Wyn Jones and Mr Rif Winfield were appointed initially on 27/9/2011 and reappointed on 27/9/2017. Their respective terms of office will expire on 26/9/2021. These members were not now eligible for reappointment. Consequently it was now necessary to recruit two new independent members to the Ethics and Standards Committee to maintain the Committee's composition, as set out in the Constitution, and as required by legislation.

The Committee AGREED to recommend to Council:

- 1) The job description, person specification and criteria subject to the amendments.
- 2) Membership of the Selection Panel as follows:
 - Chairman of the Council
 - Independent/Lay Panel member (nominated by the Monitoring Officer): Professor John Williams
 - Chair and Vice Chair of the Ethics and Standards Committee (or other independent members nominated by the Monitoring Officer as necessary)
 - Town and Community Council representative nominated by One Voice Wales.

6. WELSH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATIONS – Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 Regulations to establish corporate joint committees-Part 5

At the meeting of the 19 November 2020, it was reported that the Welsh Government was currently consulting on the draft regulations which would establish four regional Corporate Joint Committees across Wales.

Members of the Ethics and Standards Committee were requested to consider questions 8 (a) (b) and (c) of the consultation document.

It was AGREED that members and staff of a CJC should be subject to a Code of Conduct and that the code should be similar to that of Principal Councils and that all co-opted members be covered by a code i.e. those with and without voting rights. This will form part of the corporate response to the consultation.

7. WORKSHOP

A workshop of the Ethics and Standards Committee Members was held on the 04 March 2021 to discuss the Draft guidance from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales on the Code of Conduct. Recommendations were sent to the PSOW accordingly.

8. CONCLUSIONS

The Committee had a relatively quiet year due to the Covi-19 pandemic, and were very grateful for the advice and support of the Monitoring Officer, and Standards Officers during the two meetings that were held, and in respect of the consultation exercises.

6

Code of Conduct – Monitoring Officer's Report

1. All County Councillors, Town/Community Councillors and Co-opted Members are required to abide by the **Code of Conduct for Councillors** adopted by the Council which conforms to the mandatory requirements of the Model Code of Conduct issued by the National Assembly for Wales.
2. Complaints relating to an allegation that a County Councillor had breached the Code should be sent to the Ombudsman directly and/or to the Council's Monitoring Officer (MO)
3. The Ombudsman publishes a guidance on the PSOW website on how to make a complaint about an elected member on a Factsheet.
4. The WLGA has e-learning training modules available for Councillors on the All Wales Academy, including Ethics and Standards (Councillor Development), and Social Media Guidance.
5. The Adjudication Panel for Wales (APW) published a Sanctions Guidance during 2019
6. The PSOW may decide that the MO should investigate a complaint, or may ask the Council's Ethics & Standards (ES) Committee to make a determination. Options available to the ES Committee include no further action, censure and suspension for up to 6 months.
7. If the Ombudsman investigates an allegation of a breach of the Code and concludes that a breach has occurred The Ombudsman will forward a report of his findings to the Monitoring officer and to the Councillor concerned.
8. If the Ombudsman considers that the breach is serious it may be forwarded to the Adjudication Panel for Wales who has the power to disqualify a councillor for up to 5 years.

9. The Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021 received Royal Assent during 2020/21. S62 of the Act sets out additional duties for political group leaders, to uphold standards of conduct, effective from May 2022.

MONITORING OFFICER'S REPORT

1.Complaints received

PREVIOUS YEARS

2018/2019

The Monitoring Officer considered 17 complaints against Members in relation to the Code of Conduct.

Of these:

- 13 were against County Councillors
- 4 were against Town/ Community Councillors.

The table below shows an analysis of complaints received:

County Councillors	
Member on Member	0
Public on Member	9
Officer on Member	4
Self-referrals to PSOW	0
	Total: 13
Town/ Community Councillors	
Member on Member	0
<u>Public on Member</u>	4
	Total: 4

2019/2020

The Monitoring Officer considered 13 complaints against Members in relation to the Code of Conduct.

Of these:

- 11 were against County Councillors
- 2 were against Town/ Community Councillors.

The table below shows an analysis of complaints received:

County Councillors	Complaints received
Member on Member	0
Public on Member	3
Officer on Member	8
Self-referrals to PSOW	0
	Total: 11
Town/ Community Councillors	
Member on Member	2
Public on Member	2
	Total: 13

CURRENT YEAR: 2020/2021

The Monitoring Officer considered 23 complaints against Members in relation to the Code of Conduct.

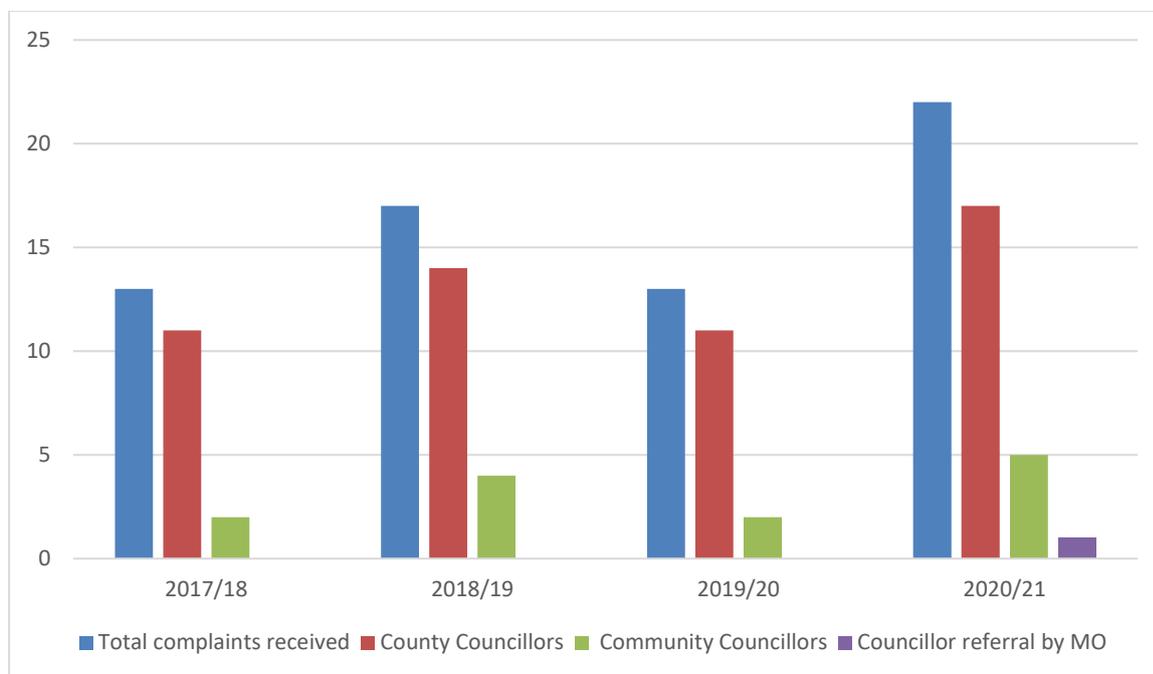
Of these:

- 17 were against County Councillors
- 5 were against Town/ Community Councillors.

Source of complaints:

County Councillors	Number of complaints received
Member on Member	1
Public on Member	11
Officer on Member	4
Self-referrals to PSOW	0
Clerk of Town/Community Council	1
	Total: 17
Town/ Community Councillors	
Member on Member	1
Public on Member	4
Self-referrals to PSOW	0

Total	
Councillor referral by Monitoring Officer	1



It should be noted that complaints by Officers against Members are not always made directly by the Officer concerned, who may not wish to pursue a formal complaint. Where concerns are drawn to the attention of the Monitoring Officer/Chief Executive, those cases will be dealt with by the Monitoring Officer (and if appropriate the Chief Executive) who may make enquiries and provide advice/action as appropriate.

The Monitoring Officer will investigate as necessary.

2. PSOW Notifications

The MO received notifications of the following complaints:

PREVIOUS YEARS

2018/19

Of the complaints received:

7 x from the PSOW.

These resulted in:

	County Council	Town/ Community Council
	4	3
Of these: Declined to Investigate/Closed after initial consideration:	2	3
Investigation: Discontinued:	0 1	0 0
No evidence of breach:	1	

No further action: 0

Of those investigated:

- 0 resulted in sanctions and
- 0 resulted in no sanction

Sanctions/actions included: advice given to member to modify behaviour

2019/20

The PSOW reported 6 complaints

	County Council	Town/ Community Council
	5	1
Of these: Declined to Investigate/Closed after initial consideration:	5	0

Investigation: Discontinued: No further action necessary	0 0 0	1 0 1
No evidence of breach: Technical breach	0 1	0 0

Of those investigated:

- 0 resulted in sanctions and
- 0 resulted in no sanction .”

CURRENT YEAR 2020/21

The PSOW reported 4 complaints

	County Council	Town/ Community Council
Of these: Declined to Investigate/Closed after initial consideration:	2 2	2 x
Investigation: Discontinued: No further action necessary	1 0 0	2 1 0
<u>Ongoing:</u> <u>Recorded as pre-</u> <u>assessment</u>	1	1
Outcomes:		

No evidence of breach	0	0
Technical breach	1	0
Breach	0	

Of those investigated:

- **0 resulted in sanctions**
- **1 resulted in no sanction**

For Information:

PSOW Annual report 2020/21:

E. Code of Conduct Complaints Closed

County/County Borough Councils	Closed after initial consideration	Discontinued	No evidence of breach	No action necessary	Refer to Standards Committee	Refer to Adjudication Panel	Withdrawn	Total
Ceredigion		-	-	-	-	-	-	

F. Town/Community Council Code of Complaints

Town/Community Council	Closed after initial consideration	Discontinued	No evidence of breach	No action necessary	Refer to Standards Committee	Refer to Adjudication Panel	Withdrawn	Total
		-	-	-	-	-	-	

This information is not available at date of writing this report

3.Nature of Complaints

2017/18-2019:

The majority of complaints against County Councillors related to:

- Bullying
- Lack of respect/ consideration/ courtesy for others

- Lack of impartiality
- Improper use of delegated powers
- Conflict of interest
- Standards of Conduct, including inappropriate parking, delay in paying Council Tax
- Using position to gain an advantage
- Disclosure of confidential information
- Failure to reply to an enquiry
- Acting without authority
- Improper use of delegated power
- Failure to disclose personal/prejudicial interests
- Standards of conduct eg inappropriate parking, comments made in meetings and inappropriate communication
- Attempting to compromise officers impartiality
- Social Media postings by Councillors eg complaints about officers and services.
- Development Control Committee decisions.

Town/Community Councillors

Complaints included:

- perception of lack of transparency in Council meetings,
- improper meeting procedures eg voting, quorum, failure to adequately record decisions, failure to publish minutes and register of interests
- failure to disclose personal/prejudicial interests
- discrimination

Some of the complaints above were attributable to acts/omissions of clerks.

2019/20

The majority of complaints against County Councillors related to allegations of:

- Social Media postings
- Failure to declare an interest
- Improper use of delegated powers
- Lack of respect/ consideration/ courtesy for officers – including Development Control Committee/Scrutiny meetings
- Lack of respect for the Chair of a public meeting-Scrutiny Committee
- inappropriate comment regarding Officers.

2020/21

- Social Media postings
- Inappropriate behaviour
- Lack of respect/consideration/attitude
- Planning decision
- swearing
- Bringing Council into disrepute
- Poor culture
- Failure to declare interest
- Nuisance/harrassment
- Physical assault
- failure to disclose prejudicial interests
- disclosure of confidential information
- failure to take action

Town/Community Councillors

Complaints against Town/Community Councillors included:

- perception of lack of transparency in Council meetings,
- improper meeting procedures eg voting, quorum, failure to adequately record decisions, failure to publish minutes and register of interests
- failure to disclose personal/prejudicial interests
- Discrimination-sexism, ageism
- Criminal conviction
- Failure to self-report criminal allegations/convictions
- Poor culture
- swearing
- Lack of respect/consideration/attitude
- Threatening behaviour

Some of the complaints above were attributable to acts/omissions of clerks.

4. Monitoring Officer Advice

The Monitoring Officer regularly provides informal advice orally, or in writing to County Councillors on various issues within the Code of conduct including personal/ prejudicial interests. This advice is given orally, or in writing.

Advice can be a preventative measure, or in anticipation of a potential breach, or following a breach in consideration of mitigation. Occasionally advice may be given to Town/Community Councillors. There is an expectation that Town/Community Councillors consult their clerk in first instance.

Queries include advice on:

- meeting process/procedure
- conflicts of interest
- breach of Code of Conduct
- process to make a complaint

Most of Town/Community Councils within the Ceredigion area are subscribed to One Voice Wales from whom clerks can seek advice.

2018-19

The Monitoring Officer issued :

County Councillors

informal advice- numerous/varied. .

- formal advice : 5
- informal warnings: 0
- formal warnings (e-mail/letter): 1

Town/Community Councils

- The Monitoring Officer informal advice issued to clerks:
- informal 5
- formal 0
- Face to face meetings with members of public: 1
- Face to face meeting was undertaken with a Town/community clerk:1
- meeting process/procedure

- conflicts of interest

2019-20

The Monitoring Officer issued :

County Councillors

- informal advice- numerous/varied.
- formal advice : 3
- informal warnings: 2
- formal warnings (e-mail/letter): 1

Some issues considered by the Monitoring officer relate to pre-emptive advice by the Monitoring officer in relation to disclosures of interest:

X 6.

Sanctions included:

- member apology in writing to the officer or member
- member apology to the officer or member in public meeting

Town/Community Councils

Advice may also be given to clerks to Town/community Councils, by telephone, email or face to face. Most of Town/Community Councils within the Ceredigion area are subscribed to One Voice Wales

The Monitoring Officer informal advice issued to clerks:

- Informal (telephone/email):)2
- meetings with members of public: 0

Queries include advice on:

- Public meeting process/procedure
- conflicts of interest
- conduct of a councillor

2020-21

- informal advice- numerous/varied.

Some issues considered by the Monitoring officer relate to pre-emptive advice by the Monitoring Officer in relation to disclosures of interest

- formal advice : 4
- informal warnings: 1
- formal warnings (e-mail/letter): 1
- Local Resolution Procedure:1

Advice was also given to o clerks of Town/Community Councils, and members of the public.

5. The Ethics & Standards Committee -Hearing Panels

- There were no Ceredigion County Council Councillor cases referred to Committee during 2020/21.
- There were no Town/Community Council cases referred to Committee during 2020/21.

6.Adjudication Panel for Wales (APW)

- There were no Ceredigion County Council cases referred by the PSOW to the APW during 2020/21.
- There were no Ceredigion Town/Community Council cases referred to the APW during 2020/21.

7. PSOW referrals to the Monitoring Officer for investigation during 2020/21

There were no cases referred to the Monitoring Officer by the Public Service Ombudsman Wales during 2020/21.

2020/21

Summary

- The standard of conduct by Ceredigion County Council Members generally is to be commended.
- There were complaints by Members against Members.
- Whilst bullying, intimidation and/or lack of respect/courtesy continues to be an issue, the relationship between Ceredigion County Council Officers and Members has improved, with less instances of bullying, intimidation and/or lack of respect/courtesy than previously.
- Councillors are largely aware of the need to declare interests, and do so in a timely and appropriate way. Advice is sought from the Monitoring Officer at appropriate times.

- The use of social media as a forum for Councillors making representations/expressing views is continuing to increase. This has occasionally brought the Council into disrepute.
- The Monitoring Officer maintains a recommendation that all Members receive refresher training on social media, as well as data protection (including the responsibility of Councillors as data controllers).
- Despite there being fewer public meetings held during the Covid period ,there was a slight increase in the number of applications for dispensations during 2020/21.
- As in previous years, the Monitoring Officer identified that some County Councillors Members would benefit from refresher /additional safeguarding training
- Members continue to be more cognisant of the need to:
 - consider whether they have an interest, and
 - declare any interest in communication/correspondence with officers.

8. Correspondence with Group Leaders

- Consultation on the new draft guidance from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales on the Code of Conduct was circulated to Group Leaders; together with a summary of changes by email on the 19 February 2021. Comments on its content was requested by the 05 March 2021.
- Adjudication Panel for Wales Notice of Decision relating to Councillor Kevin O'Neill, Leader at Merthyr Tydfil Borough Council was circulated by email on the 12 January 2021. In order to promote the new duty to take reasonable steps to promote and maintain high standard of conduct (from May 2022), it was recommended that the Group Leaders bring the decision to the attention of their group members.

9. Annual update on the Register of Interest

An email dated the 29 April 2020 from the Monitoring Officer was circulated to Members requesting them to carry out an annual review of their Register of Interests Booklet , at the end of the financial year. Members were therefore requested to review the online version of their Register of Interests for the entire year 2019/20 (1/4/19-31/3/20):

- If there were no new interest/changes , Members emailed to confirm “No changes.”

- If there were new interests/changes, Members emailed to confirm that there were changes, and provided details of these changes.

The original booklets were re-signed and re-dated and each reply, and booklet were reviewed by the Monitoring Officer

These arrangements are inspected regularly by auditors.

10. Covid 19 – Business grants

All Councillors, and/or co-opted independent members, were requested to make a declaration if they, or anyone involved in the overall running and/or control of a business, (or someone who is a close personal associate of theirs), had, to best of their knowledge, applied for a Business Support Grant, Enhanced Lockdown Grants for businesses or Restrictions Business Fund NDR for businesses grant. All declarations were requested be made by the closing date of the applications.

The following emails were circulated to Members:-

- Covid 19 Business support Grant- 07 July 2020
- Covid 19 Enhanced Lockdown Grants for businesses- 28 October 2020
- Covid 19 Restrictions Business Fund NDR Grants for businesses – 14 December 2020

11. Hospitality Register

During 2020/21 there were no declarations of hospitality from Councillors.

7

Future Priorities

The priority areas the Ethics and Standards Committee to consider in 2021/22

- Code of Conduct Training for County Councillors and Town and Community Councillors - Continue to offer training to clusters of Town and Community Councils whose Clerks and Councillors had not responded to the offer of training and/or who had requested training
- Annual meeting with Political Group Leaders
- Update Members Register of Interest on the new Democratic Services System, Modern.gov
- The Committee adopts a proactive approach to working collaboratively with other relevant standards organisations and keeping up with best practice
- Members of the Ethics and Standards Committee attend Committee meetings of the Council to observe and familiarise themselves with proceedings and conduct.
- Recruitment of two independent members-to be in place by 25/9/21
- Consider and implement changes set out in Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act 2021-matters relevant to the Ethics and Standards Committee:
Part 4 sections S62 Conduct of members imposed additional duties on political group leaders as follows:

County and county borough councils: duties of leaders of political groups in relation to standards of conduct

(1)A leader of a political group consisting of members of a county council or county borough council in Wales—

(a) must take reasonable steps to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by the members of the group, and

(b) must co-operate with the council's standards committee (and any sub-committee of the committee) in the exercise of the standards committee's functions.

(2) In complying with subsection (1), a leader of a political group must have regard to any guidance about the functions under that subsection issued by the Welsh Ministers.

(3) "(2A) A standards committee of a county council or county borough council in Wales also has the specific functions of—

(a) monitoring compliance by leaders of political groups on the council with their duties under section 52A(1), and

(b) advising, training or arranging to train leaders of political groups on the council about matters relating to those duties."

These provisions will become effective from May 2022.

8

Attending the Ethics and Standards Committee / Contact us

Attending meetings of the Ethics and Standards Committee

The Council is keen to see Members of the public attend Ethics and Standards meetings

With the exception of confidential items, all business is held in public.

All of the public agenda papers are published online 3 working days in advance of the meeting <http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/your-council/councillors-committees/committees/>

Contact us

If you wish to find out more about the Ethics and Standards Committee or make a comment or suggestion, please contact us:

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The Ombudsman (PSOW)

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