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Cyngor Sir
CEREDIGION
County Council

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01545 572070

Dear Sir / Madam

I write to inform you that a Meeting of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be held virtually on Thursday, 13 January 2022 at 10.00 am for the transaction of the following business:

1. **Apologies**
2. **Disclosures of personal interest (including whipping declarations)**
Members are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and prejudicial interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Members Code of Conduct. In addition, Members must declare any prohibited party whip which the Member has been given in relation to the meeting as per the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.
3. **Council Fleet and Driving at Work - Use of Private Vehicles (Pages 3 - 32)**
4. **Sickness Absence update (Pages 33 - 36)**
5. **Digital Connectivity (Pages 37 - 48)**
6. **Forward Work Programme (Pages 49 - 54)**
7. **To confirm minutes of the previous meeting and to consider any matters arising from those Minutes. (Pages 55 - 70)**

Members are reminded to sign the Attendance Register

A Translation Services 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 Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The remaining Members of the Council for information only.

Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council

REPORT TO: Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee

DATE: 13 January 2022

LOCATION: Online

TITLE: HR Policies: (1) Driving at Work – Council Fleet and (2) Driving at Work – Use of Private Vehicles (Grey Fleet) policies

PURPOSE OF REPORT: To review and recommend two HR Policies: Driving at Work – Council Fleet and Driving at Work – Use of Private Vehicles Policies

REASON SCRUTINY HAVE REQUESTED THE INFORMATION: To review new policies

BACKGROUND:

The development of these two new policies by People & Organisation Service has been in collaboration with Highways and Environmental. Following initial consideration by Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 27 October 2021, both policies have been redrafted to incorporate a number of suggested amendments. These policies have been subject to consultation with the relevant Trade Unions and their amendments have been incorporated where appropriate.

The purpose of all staff policies and procedures is to clearly set out the behaviours, processes and procedures required of staff, how they can gain advice or support and, where applicable, the consequences of not adhering to the policy and/or procedure.

Driving at Work- Council Fleet Policy

A Fleet and Driver Risk Management review has been conducted by a consultant on behalf of Zurich, the Council's insurance company. Its main purpose was to review the Council's policies and arrangements against best practice standards and to provide recommendations that assist with ensuring compliance, protecting our workforce from harm, and reducing the risk of incidents.

A key recommendation of the Review was the introduction of a Driving at Work Policy with embedded Driver Agreement which provides "clear unambiguous expectation as to driving standards". The Driving at Work – Council Fleet Policy is one of a suite of initiatives aimed at standardising recording and compliance across the vehicle fleet and achieving driving standards which improve driver and passenger safety, the number of fleet related incidents and accidents. Other initiatives include the introduction of a driver training e-learning module and robust checking systems for vehicles and licences.

The Driving at Work – Council Fleet Policy introduces;

- Driver/Plant Operator Agreement to be signed on an annual basis;

- The requirement to inform their manager of any change in health or physical/sensory impairments and an annual health assessment
- With cause drug and alcohol screening
- Employee paying up to £250 contribution to insurance excess costs, following a disciplinary procedure, if the damage is caused as a result of their negligence or driving without due care and attention

Driving at Work - Use of Private Vehicle (Grey Fleet) Policy

The Driving at Work – Use of Private Vehicle (Grey Fleet) Policy set out the expectations of those employees who use their private vehicle for Council business purposes. An e-learning module will also be developed to complement the policy.

The Driving at Work – Use of Private Vehicle (Grey Fleet) Policy introduces;

- Private Vehicle user Declaration to be signed on an annual basis;
- The requirement to inform their manager of any change in circumstances which may affect the use of a private vehicle for work purposes
- With cause drug and alcohol screening
- Employee confirming that their vehicle is roadworthy, is MOT certificated (where appropriate) and correctly insured for business purposes.

WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS:	<p>Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If, not, please state why</p> <p>Summary:</p> <p>Long term:</p> <p>Integration:</p> <p>Collaboration:</p> <p>Involvement:</p> <p>Prevention:</p>	<p>Yes</p>
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RECOMMENDATION (S):

- To recommend the approval of the Driving at Work – Council Fleet Policy and Driving at Work – Use of Private Vehicles (Grey Fleet) Policy by Cabinet

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION (S):

Contact Name: Geraint Edwards
Designation: Corporate Lead Officer – People & Organisation
Date of Report: 08/12/2021
Acronyms:



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Driving at Work – Council Fleet Policy



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Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Comment
1.0			

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1. Policy statement

This Driving at Work – Council Fleet policy clearly sets out the expectations on those with managerial or supervisory responsibility for drivers as well as individual drivers. It is important that all managers / supervisors and drivers adhere to this policy and the procedures, which adopts the Health & Safety Executive's (HSE) safe driving risk-management guidance covering:

- **Safe driver:** are staff fit and competent to drive safely?
- **Safe vehicle:** are vehicles fit for purpose and in a safe road-worthy state?
- **Safe journey:** are journeys necessary and are they planned?

It is everyone's duty when at work:

- To take reasonable care of our own safety
- To take reasonable care of the safety of others who may be affected by what we do or fail to do
- To co-operate and adhere to the Council's policies so that we can all comply with our legal duties and obligations

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Ceredigion County Council employees and agency staff who drive the Council's Fleet as part of their duties.

The table below describes the two main driver categories in the Council:

Council fleet driver	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Required to drive a vehicle supplied by the Council for some or all of their role. <p>This policy applies to this category of driver</p>
Grey fleet driver	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Required to drive for work reasons and paid mileage using a private vehicle or has use of a day hire vehicle arranged through the Council's Procurement Service. <p>See <i>Driving at Work – Use of Private Vehicles Policy</i> for this category of driver</p>

The policy does not apply to commuting prior to the driver starting work, unless they are driving a vehicle provided by the Authority.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Elected Members

- Are advised on this Policy by Council Officers and have the responsibility to ensure adequate resources are available to enable the implementation of this policy and all other necessary measures to mitigate foreseeable risks to our employees, and agency staff who drive the Council's Fleet as part of their duties.
- An elected member with sufficient knowledge and experience is appointed the Council's health and safety champion and will oversee the development of this policy and bring driver and vehicle safety matters to the attention of the responsible portfolio Cabinet members.

3.2 Chief Executive

The Chief Executive has the overall responsibility for ensuring that the Council's Driving at Work policy is implemented and maintained. The Chief Executive will facilitate the provision of systems to carry out the following:

- The Chief Executive is directly responsible for the health, safety and wellbeing of all employees and any others who may be affected by any driving undertaken on behalf of the Authority as part of their duties.
- Ensuring the participation, commitment and involvement at all levels in the Council in improving the safety of our employees, governors, elected members, volunteers and agency staff who drive for work.
- Ensuring that systems are in place to comply with Driving at Work – Council Fleet policy and associated arrangements.

3.3 Health and Safety Team

The Health and Safety Manager and team will be responsible for the preparation and review of this policy. They will also:

- Assist with monitoring and auditing the unannounced fleet vehicle checks carried out by the Fleet Management Team.
- Following the completion of an incident management investigation by a line manager / supervisor, will review the investigation and if deemed appropriate also undertake further investigation into driving incidents and/or potentially dangerous near- misses at work.
- Assist with complex/high risk driving at work risk assessments.
- Assist the learning and development team to develop a driving safely at work e-learning programme.
- Work in collaboration with the relevant Service area and HR in the event of driving at work incidents where reckless behaviour, drugs or alcohol are believed to be a contributing factor.

- Report RIDDOR reportable incidents to the HSE and liaise with the HSE, Police and other external enforcing agencies where required.

3.4 Corporate Directors and Corporate Lead Officers

Corporate Directors and Corporate Lead Officers have the general responsibility for compliance with the health and safety within their service areas. There is also an expectation that from the head of the Council down, individuals should lead by personal example and follow the guidance in this policy, both in the way they drive themselves and in encouraging colleagues and employees to drive safely and responsibly.

A Corporate Director will undertake the role of Health and Safety Champion bringing driver, Grey Fleet and Council Fleet safety matters to the attention of Leadership Group.

3.5 Trade Union Safety Representatives

Safety Representatives have an important role in ensuring employees are fully consulted on and engaging with the Council's policies on safe driving, updates on driving and health at work and encouraging open communication between managers, unions and employees. Safety Representatives help by:

- Attending Health and Safety Representatives meetings and cascade information to the workforce and collect feedback.
- Reporting concerns / issues relating to driving at work that have identified, or brought to their attention, to their supervisor / line manager or the relevant service area in the first instance. If these are subsequently not resolved, to refer them to the Health and Safety Representatives meeting or the Health and Safety Team, and if not resolved in a timely manner, to escalate to the Union for further consideration.
- Leading by personal example.
- Highlighting driving at work concerns from an operational level.
- Offering feedback and contributing to the review of this policy.

3.6 Managers and Employee's responsibilities

Driving at work activity	Supervisors / Managers must:	Employees must:
Council Fleet and personal vehicles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure their employee has read, understood and signed the driver agreement policy on appointment and annually thereafter. • Enter the employee's driving licence details onto the CERI system. • Ensure that their drivers have a valid licence for the category of vehicle they drive at work. • Carry out risk assessments related to driving activities and communicate these to their teams. • Ensure drivers report driving incidents via the Council's Incident Management process. • Carry out thorough investigation of driving related incidents at work through the Council's Incident Management process. • Ensure their staff are aware of the policies and procedures relevant to driving at work, including the Alcohol and Drug Misuse policy, Sickness Absence policy, H&S policy, Lone-working requirements etc. • Monitor the health and behaviour of their drivers including incident numbers, feedback from gate checks and complaint reports etc. and take appropriate action where necessary. • Monitor the health and wellbeing of their drivers through supervision, annual appraisals and Occupational Health support where required • Advise the Fleet Management team if a driver's licence is suspended or revoked and seek specialist advice from their HR Advisor on the issue. • Work alongside HR recruitment process to ensure the job description and person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read, understand and sign the driver agreement on appointment and annually thereafter. • Comply and co-operate with the controls and measures put in place regarding driving safely at work. • Hold a valid driving licence for the category of vehicle they drive at work. • Drive in accordance with the current laws of the road and Highway Code (e.g. traffic signs and signals, speed restrictions, use of seat belts, satellite navigation, action to take following incidents on the road, etc.). • Ensure that any loads in the vehicle are securely stowed. • Be fit to drive. If fitness to drive is impaired (e.g. medical condition, taking medication etc.), they must inform their supervisor / line manager immediately and notify the DVLA as required. • Comply with any drug and alcohol test requests as outlined in the Driver's agreement. • Ensure that their eyesight meets the minimum requirements for driving and wear prescription glasses or corrective lenses if needed at all times whilst driving. • Not use any electronic devices including mobile phones when driving or when the vehicle is running. • Report any incidents whilst driving at work to their supervisor / line manager immediately. • Comply with the Council's smoke free policy • Complete and record, the daily vehicle checks prior to first use each day and report any defects identified by the check or which

	<p>specification are met (e.g. the checking of driving licences prior to appointment).</p>	<p>arise whilst in use where appropriate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify their supervisor/line manager of any unspent driving convictions/ penalty points or any pending prosecutions / charges for driving related offences. Carry out all actions required to maintain their driving licence entitlement including but not limited to renewing their licence by the expiry date and attending any medicals where required to renew the licence. • Comply with any restrictions related to their licence. • Notify their supervisor/line manager immediately of any reason, which may lead to the suspension or revocation of their licence in full or in part. • Plan their journeys taking into account weather, time of day and where relevant, time constraints e.g. meeting start time. • Attend any training required to reduce risk, maintain competency and put this training into effect.
<p>Driving Council Fleet</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure their drivers have attended all relevant training e.g. CDAT and MiDAS updates, H&S update training, vehicle familiarisation sessions and toolbox talks relevant to their duties. • Ensure their driving staff have attended Fleet and job specific training prior to starting their driving duties • Ensuring drivers provide driving licence and Driver CPC card (where appropriate) details every 6 months to enable checks to confirm or reaffirm eligibility to drive. • Ensure drivers complete their daily driver checks prior to first use; that they are recording these and reporting defects. • Notify Insurance Section of any driver who reports that they have 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete and record the daily vehicle defect book and report any defects immediately to their supervisor / line manager. • Attend any additional training required (MiDAS, CDAT, etc.) for the type of fleet they drive at work and ensure they are up to date. Where required, to undertake the 37 hours of driver CPC training over a 5-year period in line with the Council's Driver CPC programme. Where required carry their Driver CPC card at all times whilst driving Council Fleet. • Take the breaks from driving as required by current legislation.

	received a driving conviction / endorsement to ensure continuation of cover.	
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3.7 Fleet Management

The Council's Fleet Management Service is responsible for the management of the Council's owned, leased and hired fleet. This involves:

- Ensuring compliance with relevant health and safety and Fleet / driving related legislation,
- Complying with its obligations as an Operator's Licence holder,
- Developing and reviewing its Safe Systems of Work and Risk Assessments in liaison with the Corporate Health and Safe Unit,
- Undertaking audits of compliance with Fleet related management and driving requirements,
- Providing or arranging for the provision of Fleet driver training e.g. Driver CPC, MIDAS, CDAT and Infringement training,
- Management and supervision of Fleet Management related contractors on site,
- Management of fuel stocks,
- Operation of the Council's Transport Maintenance Units (TMUs) which are situated at Glanyrafon Depot, nr. Aberystwyth and Penrhos Depot, nr. Llandysul whose work includes:
 - Planning and undertaking scheduled inspections, maintenance and preparation for MOT / Annual testing,
 - Diagnosing faults and identifying defects; undertaking or arranging repairs where necessary
 - Responding to / recovering fleet involved in accidents or which have broken down (including on call out of hours)
 - Undertaking Class 4 and 7 MOTs,
 - Management of parts and consumables,
 - Operation of activities in line with Safe Systems of Work and Risk Assessments.

4. Revision of policy

The Council will review and update this policy as required to reflect changes in legislation, processes, post-incident recommendations and case law.

How the success of the policy will be measured

The success of this policy will be measured by the increase or decrease in:

- The number of driving related incidents reported.

- The number of reportable driver related incidents that are deemed to be avoidable.
- The number of traffic infringements received.
- The number of notices of intended prosecutions of drivers received in relation to vehicles of the Council's Fleet.
- The costs of repairs and maintenance of the Fleet.
- Other financial costs associated with vehicle use.
- The average cost of vehicle-related employee compensation claims.

5. Appendices

Appendix 1	Driver/Plant Operator Agreement
Appendix 2	Driving Incident – Reporting Flow Chart

Ceredigion County Council

Driver/Plant Operator Agreement

This agreement sets out the expectations, requirements and conditions of all employees who are required to drive or operate any Fleet item within the course of their duties.

Definitions

<i>Council Fleet</i>	<i>All vehicles, plant and trailers owned, leased or on hire to the Ceredigion County Council</i>
<i>Drivers</i>	<i>All employees who are required to drive and/or operate an item of the Council Fleet during the course of their duties</i>
<i>Employees</i>	<i>Any permanent, temporary, casual, relief or agency staff employed by or working on behalf of Ceredigion County Council</i>

All employees must agree and fully adhere to the following conditions, failure to do so may result in the revocation of the right to drive/operate a Ceredigion Council vehicle and disciplinary action.

Employee personal responsibilities:

- Employees must inform their supervisor / line manager if they have any new or existing underlying health conditions or any other physical or sensory impairments that may affect their ability to drive / operate their vehicle / plant safely. They must present themselves when requested to do so for an annual health assessment to assess, wellbeing and fitness to drive/operate Council Fleet.
- Employees must hold a valid licence to drive or operate the vehicle, plant or trailer they use.
- Employees must notify their manager of any unspent driving convictions/ penalty points.
- Employees must obey road/ traffic regulations and drive with due care and attention at all times.
- Employees must have completed the Ceredigion Driver Awareness Training (CDAT), MIDAS (Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme) training (where applicable) and vehicle familiarisation (where appropriate) for the vehicles, plant or trailer they use.
- Drivers must ensure that they, and all passengers under the age of 14 years old, are wearing seatbelts as required by law and Council policy.
- Drivers must remind all passengers 14 years or older of their personal responsibility to wear seatbelts as required by law and Council policy.

- Employees involved in any vehicle / plant related incident must report this to their line manager immediately, irrespective of whether anyone was hurt or not, and no matter how insignificant the damage to the vehicle or plant. Drivers must follow the incident reporting procedure as outlined in the incident reporting flow chart.
- Employees must not interfere with or modify any risk mitigating equipment (including dash cameras & telematics).
- Employees must report to their line manager if they are taking any prescribed (or over the counter) medication that may affect their ability to drive / operate their vehicle / plant safely.
- Employees are required to comply with all requirements related to maintaining their driving licence entitlement including but not limited to:
 - renewing their licence at the required intervals specified on their licence in accordance with their age and / or medical conditions; and
 - notifying the DVLA of any new reportable medical conditions or changes to existing medical condition which may affect their ability to drive.
- Employees must not smoke or use electronic cigarettes in vehicles.
- Employees who are required to hold a Drivers CPC card must undertake the 37 hours of driver CPC training where relevant over a 5 year period. Drivers must carry their CPC cards with them at all times whilst driving vehicles / plant where driver CPC is required.
- The employee must submit their licence and CPC card details on an 6 monthly basis; when requesting a new defect check book or drivers hours book; or as required by their manager.
- Employees must only use the vehicle for work purposes (some employees may be permitted to take vehicles home; in which case, Council vehicles must not be used for domestic / personal purposes).

Drug and Alcohol Testing

- Employees must not drive / operate any vehicles or any equipment if they are under the influence of illegal substances or alcohol.
- To ensure the effective implementation and operation of this agreement and the Driving at Work Policy, the Council reserves the right to require Employees to undertake alcohol and/or drug tests when it is suspected that they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Employees are reminded that a request to undergo alcohol and drug testing does not, in itself, indicate that they are suspected of wrongdoing.
- Where testing takes place, the individual will need to sign a written consent to be tested. Failure to give consent, or refusal to supply a sample of urine, blood, hair or other sample as reasonably required, will be considered to be a breach of this agreement and may lead to disciplinary action being taken.
- Tests will be conducted under the direction of, and test results interpreted by, a professional external service that meets appropriate standards. Staff will have access to a duplicate of any sample taken to enable them, if they so wish, to have it independently analysed. Other arrangements relating to screening will be discussed with affected members of staff at the time.

- When testing for alcohol, a blood-alcohol level of 80 mg of alcohol per 100 ml of blood or above will usually lead to disciplinary action.

Employee vehicle / plant responsibilities:

- Drivers must ensure that they complete their daily checks prior to first use of a vehicle, plant or trailer each day and record this in their Driver’s Daily Check.
- Drivers must report any defects identified as part of their daily check, or any which arise during use, to the Transport Maintenance Unit immediately and follow any instruction given.
- The employee is responsible for ensuring the vehicle / plant is kept in a clean, usable condition.
- The employee is required to present the vehicle / plant / trailer for inspection at the required intervals.

IMPORTANT

This list is not exhaustive; all drivers must ensure they comply with all legal and employment requirements.

Employees who are found to have caused damage to either an item of the Council Fleet, third party vehicle or property through negligence or driving without due care and attention may be liable, following a disciplinary hearing, for an amount of up to £250 as a contribution to insurance excess costs.

EMPLOYEE DECLARATION

I have read, understand and agree to comply with above conditions authorising me to drive/operate Ceredigion County Council Fleet

I understand and specifically authorise Ceredigion County Council to deduct from my pay or other payments due to me any money which I may owe to the Council under the terms of this Agreement.

Employee signature:.....

Print name:.....

Employee number:

Date:

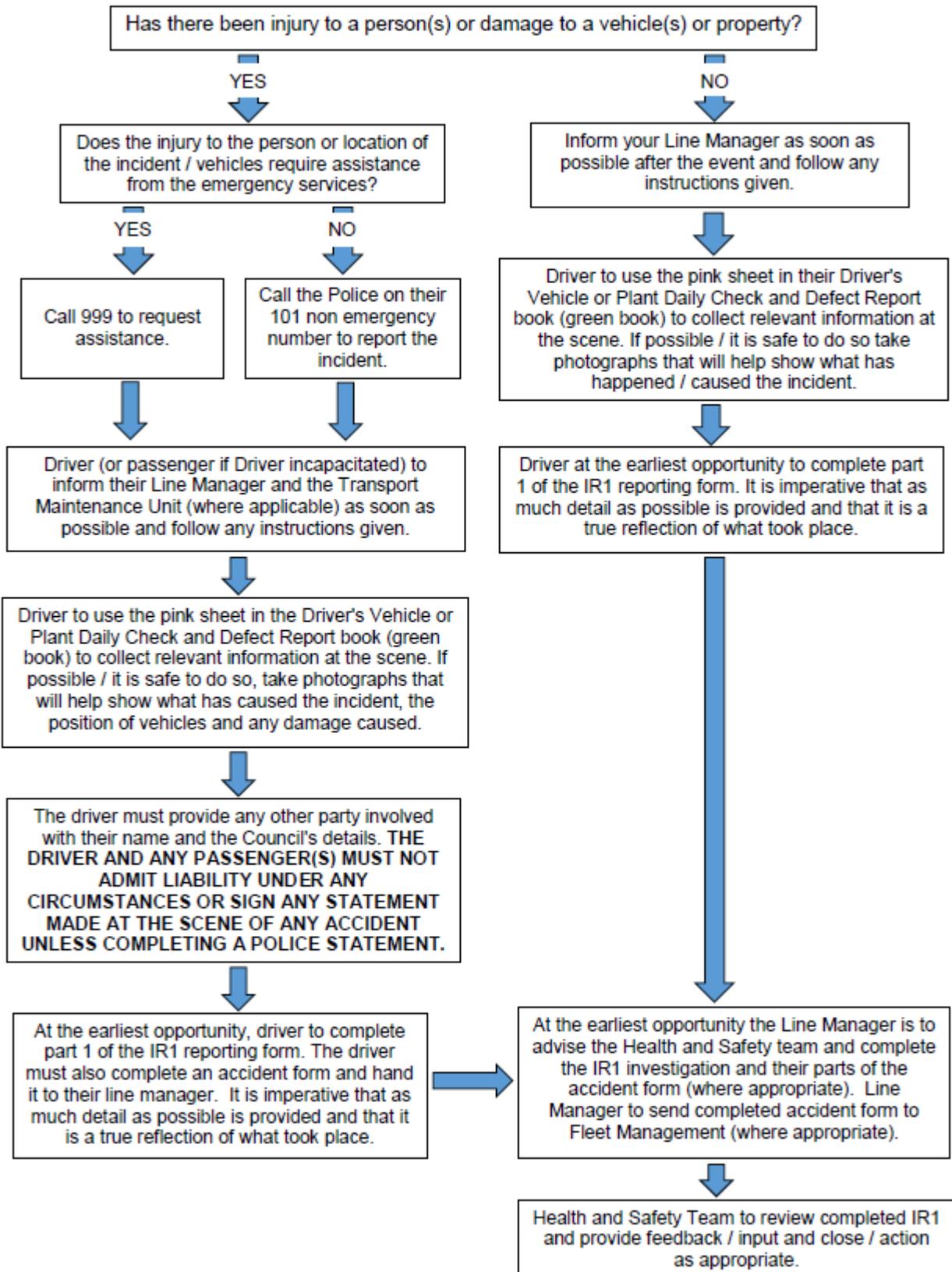
Job Title:.....

Manager signature:

Print name:.....

Date:.....

Driving Incident - Reporting Process Flow Chart





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Driving at Work – Use of Private Vehicles (Grey Fleet) Policy



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Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Comment
1.0			

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1. Introduction

The Council has a responsibility to its employees and others who may be affected by their actions. To ensure it fulfils this duty of care the Council is required to comply with legislative requirements when employees use their own vehicles for work related business. There are a number of risk implications of this for both the Council and its employees which have to be managed such as welfare, health and safety, transport, and insurance.

An employee's own vehicle is deemed to be a *place of work* when it is being used on their employers' business, and therefore there are responsibilities which fall on employers in terms of assessing any risks and taking reasonable, practicable precautions.

These risks include the drivers being unlicensed or uninsured, or the vehicles being un-roadworthy or unsuitable for the purpose, which could lead to the risk of accidents and injuries, potentially followed by compensation claims and prosecutions under road traffic law or health and safety legislation.

2. Policy statement

This policy clearly sets out the expectations on those employees who use privately owned vehicles for Council business and the expectations on their line managers. It is important that all managers and employees who use a private vehicle for work purposes adhere to this policy and the procedures, which adopts the Health & Safety Executive's (HSE) safe driving risk-management guidance covering:

- **Safe driver:** are staff fit and competent to drive safely?
- **Safe vehicle:** are vehicles fit for purpose and in a safe road-worthy state?
- **Safe journey:** are journeys necessary and are they planned?

It is everyone's duty when at work:

- To take reasonable care of our own safety
- To take reasonable care of the safety of others who may be affected by what we do or fail to do
- To co-operate and adhere to the Council's policies so that we can all comply with our legal duties and obligations

3. Scope

This policy applies to all Ceredigion County Council employees, school employed staff, governors, elected members, volunteers and agency staff who drive their own private vehicles or a hired vehicle which has been arranged through the Council's Procurement Team on work business.

The table below describes the two main driver categories in the Council:

Council fleet driver	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Required to drive a vehicle supplied by the Council for some or all of their role. <p>See <i>Driving at Work – Council Fleet Policy</i> for this category of driver</p>
Grey fleet driver	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Required to drive for work reasons and paid mileage using a private vehicle or has use of a day hire vehicle arranged through the Council's Procurement Service. <p>This policy applies to this category of driver</p>

The policy does not apply to commuting prior to the driver starting work

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 Elected Members

- Are advised on this Policy by Council Officers and have the responsibility to ensure adequate resources are available to enable the implementation of this policy and all other necessary measures to mitigate foreseeable risks to our employees, governors, elected members, volunteers and agency staff who drive their own private vehicles or privately hired vehicles on work business
- An elected member with sufficient relevant knowledge and experience is appointed the Council's Health and Safety Champion and will oversee the development of this policy and bring driver and vehicle safety matters to the attention of the responsible portfolio Cabinet members.

4.2 Chief Executive

The Chief Executive has the overall responsibility for ensuring that this Driving at Work – Use of Private Vehicles policy is implemented and maintained. The Chief Executive will facilitate the provision of systems to carry out the following:

- The Chief Executive is directly responsible for the health, safety and wellbeing of all employees and any others who may be affected by any driving

undertaken on behalf of the Authority when driving their own private vehicles or privately hired vehicles on work business

- Ensuring the participation, commitment and involvement at all levels of the Council in improving the safety of our employees, governors, elected members, volunteers and agency staff who drive for work.
- Ensuring that systems are in place to comply with Driving at Work – Use of Private Vehicles policy and associated arrangements.

4.3 Health and Safety Team

The Health and Safety Manager and team will be responsible for the preparation and review of this policy. They will also:

- Following the completion of an incident management investigation by a line manager / supervisor, review the investigation and if felt appropriate undertake further investigation into driving incidents and potentially dangerous near- misses at work.
- Assist with complex/ high risk driving at work risk assessments.
- Assist the learning and development team to develop a driving safely at work e-learning programme.
- Work in collaboration with the relevant Service area and HR in the event of driving at work incidents where reckless behaviour, drugs or alcohol are believed to be a contributing factor.
- Where appropriate, report RIDDOR reportable incidents to the HSE and liaise with the HSE, Police and other external enforcing agencies where required.

4.4 Corporate Directors and Corporate Lead Officers

Corporate Directors and Corporate Lead Officers have the general responsibility for compliance with the health and safety within their service areas. They are also expected to lead by example and follow the requirements and guidance in this policy, both in the way they drive themselves and in encouraging colleagues and employees to drive safely and responsibly.

A Corporate Director will undertake the role of Health and Safety Champion bringing driver, Grey Fleet and Council Fleet safety matters to the attention of Leadership Group.

4.5 Trade Union Safety Representatives

Safety Representatives have an important role in ensuring employees are fully consulted on and engaging with the Council's policies on safe driving, updates on driving and health at work and encouraging open communication between managers, unions and employees. Safety Representatives help by:

- Attending Health and Safety Representatives meetings and cascade information to the workforce and collect feedback.
- Reporting concerns / issues relating to driving at work that have identified, or brought to their attention, to their supervisor / line manager or the relevant service area in the first instance. If these are subsequently not resolved, to refer them to the Health and Safety Representatives meeting or the Health and Safety Team and if not resolved in a timely manner, to escalate to their Union.
- Leading by example.
- Highlighting driving at work concerns from an operational level.
- Offering feedback and contributing to the review of this policy.

4.6 Managers and Employee's responsibilities

Driving at work activity	Line Managers must:	Employees must:
Council Fleet and personal vehicles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure their employee has read, understood and signed the Private Vehicle User declaration on appointment and annually thereafter. • Enter the employee's driving licence details onto the CERL system. • Ensure drivers report driving incidents via the Council's Incident Management process. • Where relevant, carry out thorough investigation of driving related incidents at work through the Council's Incident Management process. • Ensure their staff are aware of the policies and procedures relevant to driving at work, including the Alcohol and Drug Misuse policy, Sickness Absence policy, H&S policy, Lone-working requirements etc. • Seek advice from their HR Advisor if a driver's licence is suspended or revoked. • Work alongside HR recruitment process to ensure the job description and person specification are met (such as the checking of driving licences prior to appointment). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read, understand and sign the Private Vehicle User declaration on appointment and annually thereafter. • Comply and co-operate with the controls and measures put in place regarding driving safely at work. • Hold a valid driving licence for the category of vehicle they drive at work. • Drive in accordance with the laws of the road and Highway Code (i.e. traffic signs and signals, speed restrictions, use of seat belts, satellite navigation, action to take following incidents on the road, etc.). • Ensure that any loads in the vehicle are securely stowed. • Be fit to drive. If fitness to drive is impaired (e.g. medical condition, taking medication etc.), they must inform their line manager immediately and notify the DVLA as required. • Comply with any drug and alcohol screening requests as outlined in the Private Vehicle User Declaration. • Ensure that their eyesight meets the minimum requirements for driving and wear prescription glasses or corrective lenses if needed at all times whilst driving. • Not use any electronic devices including mobile phones when driving or when the vehicle is running. • Report any incidents whilst driving at work to their line manager immediately. • Comply with the Council's smoke free policy • Notify their manager of any unspent driving convictions or any pending

		<p>prosecutions / charges for driving related offences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify their supervisor / line manager immediately of any reason, which may lead to the suspension or revocation of their licence in full or in part. • Carry out all actions required to maintain their driving licence entitlement including but not limited to renewing their licence by the expiry date. • Comply with any restrictions related to their licence. • Plan their journeys taking into account weather, time of day and where relevant, time constraints e.g. meeting start time. • Attend any training required to reduce risk, maintain competency and put this training into effect.
Driving personal vehicles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that their drivers are aware of the requirements for their vehicles to be roadworthy at all times, be taxed, have a current MOT (where applicable) and be appropriately insured for business use including, where relevant, carrying service users and/or where any expenses claims are made. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out regular vehicle condition / defect checks and ensure the servicing, repair and maintenance of their own vehicle. • Ensure that their vehicle is taxed, has a current MOT and is appropriately insured for business use including, where relevant, carrying service users, and/or where any expenses claims are made. Keep their vehicle details updated on the CERI system (self-service). • Keep their electronic diaries up to date to ensure their colleagues and line manager know their whereabouts for lone working / safety reasons.

5. Business travel

- 5.1** The Council is responsible for meeting the cost of travel by its employees on official business. Official travelling means necessary travel for the purpose of:
- attendance at meetings in pursuit of official Council's business
 - attendance at training courses
 - journeys made on work related business

- 5.2** Official travelling does not include travel from home to normal place of work and the return journey. See Officer Travelling & Subsistence guidance on CeriNet for further details

6. Revision of policy

The Council will review and update this policy as required to reflect changes in legislation, processes, post-incident recommendations and case law.

7. Appendices

Appendix 1 Private Vehicle User Declaration

Ceredigion County Council

Private Vehicle User Declaration

I understand the Driving at Work – Use of Private Vehicles Policy and the requirements relating to the use of a private vehicle at work. I acknowledge that it is my responsibility, whilst using a private vehicle for work purposes, to ensure that:

- I am correctly licensed to drive it and have the correct vehicle permissions.
- I will produce my driving licence when requested by my line manager
- The vehicle is serviced and maintained in a roadworthy condition as required by road safety legislation and is suitable for the task.
- I will produce, upon request, my MOT certificate (where required).
- My use of the vehicle is covered by an appropriate insurance policy which includes the use for business purposes including, where relevant, carrying service users, and I will produce the insurance certificate when requested by my manager.
- I will bring to my line manager's immediate attention any change in circumstances which may affect the use of a private vehicle for work purposes, including any conviction for a traffic offence, onset of a medical condition, illness, injury or impairment affecting my ability and fitness to drive.

Notes

Insurance policies for Social, Domestic and Pleasure use typically only permit travel to the normal place of work from home and back again. Individuals must ensure that their intended use of a privately owned vehicle is covered for business use, for the period their vehicle is to be used. If in doubt individuals should check with their insurance company to establish if their existing insurance policy provides cover for the intended use before using a private vehicle for Council business use. In addition, claims for damages or injuries remain a personal responsibility.

Drivers are expected to ensure they have checked their vehicle for roadworthiness prior to use on council business.

Drug and Alcohol Testing

Employees must not drive any vehicle if they are under the influence of illegal substances or alcohol.

- To ensure the effective implementation and operation of this declaration and the Driving at Work Policy – Use of Private Vehicles, the Council reserves the right to require employees to undertake alcohol and/or drug tests when it is suspected that they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Employees are advised that a request to undergo alcohol and drug testing does not, in itself, indicate that they are suspected of wrongdoing.
- Where testing takes place, the individual will be expected to sign a written consent to be tested. Failure to give consent, or refusal to supply a sample of urine, blood, hair or other sample as reasonably required, will be considered to be a breach of this agreement and may lead to disciplinary action being taken.
- Tests will be conducted under the direction of, and test results interpreted by, a professional external service that meets appropriate standards. Staff will have access to a duplicate of any sample taken to enable them, if they wish, to have it

independently analysed. Other arrangements relating to screening will be discussed with affected members of staff at the time.

- When testing for alcohol, a blood-alcohol level of 80 mg of alcohol per 100 ml of blood or above will usually lead to disciplinary action.

EMPLOYEE / DRIVER DECLARATION

I have read, understand and agree to comply with above conditions

Signature:.....

Print name:.....

Personal reference number (Ceri):

Date:

Job Title:.....

Manager signature:

Print name:.....

Date:.....

Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council

REPORT TO: Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee

DATE: 13 January 2022

LOCATION: Online

TITLE: Sickness Absence Report

PURPOSE OF REPORT: To report on the management of sickness absence in the Council and to receive a presentation on sickness absence data

REASON SCRUTINY HAVE REQUESTED THE INFORMATION: For information

BACKGROUND:

This report sets out procedures of managing sickness absence in the Council and will be supported by an up to date sickness absence data presentation.

For our corporate workforce the Managing Sickness Absence at Work Policy & Procedure has been in place since autumn 2017. The processes outlined within the document have been fully implemented and are by now well established.

For our school workforce, a revised model Managing Sickness Absence at Work Policy & Procedure was approved by Cabinet in December 2021 and is being offered to Governing Bodies this term for adoption.

The following procedures are broadly the same for both policies.

Sickness Absence monitoring

The monitoring of sickness absence is split into two distinct parts:

- a) Short term sickness absence – short period of absences, often only a few days as a result of minor ailments
- b) Long term sickness absence – continuous absence of longer than 28 days

Short term absence monitoring

Short term absence are seen as the most disruptive due to their unpredictability and difficulty in arranging cover.

The management of short term sickness absence relies on the monitoring of periods of individual absences and checking these overtime to see if one or more of the policy's trigger points have been hit. These trigger points are as follows:

- 3 or more occasions of absence in a 3 month rolling period
- 5 or more occasions of self-certified absence in a 12 month rolling period

- 2 or more occasions in a 12 month rolling period where absences about any period of leave (annual or bank holidays)
- Any unacceptable patterns of absence

Following any absence a line manager will conduct a Return to Work interview with the employee to discuss their absence; whether the reporting procedure was followed correctly; their fitness to return to work; and any concerns which may arise from the employee or line manager. This process is currently run on an aging legacy system but it has become more difficult to maintain the system and therefore we are currently working on developing a new process within the Ceri system which will significantly improve the reliability of the system and data.

Employees who reach a trigger point will be required to attend an Absence Review Meeting with their line manager to investigate further the reason(s) for absence, to assess if there are any underlying issues (medical or otherwise) and, if relevant, to advise the employee of the consequences of the continued short term absences. The record of the Absence Review Meeting will be kept on file for a period of 12 months. If a further trigger point is hit within that period a further Absence Review meeting will be held.

Initial Absence Reviews will take place within the Service but any further stages will be supported by a member of the HR Team. If it is necessary to hold a Final Absence Review chaired by the relevant Corporate Lead Officer then the outcome may be dismissal with notice.

Long term sickness absence monitoring

Long term sickness absence is defined as being continuously absent for 28 days or more due to sickness and the process followed is very different from that of short term absences.

As soon as possible after the 28th day of absence a welfare meeting will be arranged by the line manager, who will be accompanied by a colleague or member of the HR Team, to identify any support which would assist the employee returning to work which may include a referral to the Council's Occupational Health provider, Carmarthenshire County Council. It is explained to the employee that any referral to occupational health should be seen as a supportive process and not a punitive one. Since the beginning of the pandemic these have been held remotely but previously the expectation was for these to be held face to face.

A First Absence Review meeting is scheduled to take place in the 6th or 7th week of absence, following receipt of an occupational health report. The content of the report is discussed with the employee and its recommendations considered. The scope of recommendations are wide and could range from a phased return to work, reasonable adjustments to support a return to work (e.g. a reduction in working hours; suitable equipment or a temporary redeployment to another role), not currently being fit enough to return to work, or in certain circumstances a suggested termination of employment on grounds of ill health.

If the employee remains absent, an Intermediate Review is scheduled between 12 and 16 weeks of continued absence where the same process outlined above is followed. In some cases it may be necessary to hold more than one Intermediate Review, especially where an employee is undergoing a course or treatment such as chemotherapy or operation such as joint replacement. The pandemic has seen a lengthening in the period for employees to be diagnosed, for hospital appointment and postponement of treatment or operations, which has inevitable impact on the length of time employees remain absent.

A Final Absence Review will be held if an employee remains absent. This review will rely on the advice of an occupational health physician but may also include information from their GP or treating consultant where appropriate. Any termination on the grounds of ill health will be with notice and, if relevant, the employee will be referred to the pension scheme to consider if it is appropriate for early release of pension benefits.

Monthly meetings take place between the Absence Team and HR Offices to review each of the long term absence cases to ensure that progress is recorded and line managers advised on any action required from them.

Care First

Care First is the Council's Employee Assistance Programme which not only provides a 24/7 independent and confidential counselling service, either telephone or face-to-face, but also a range of other services such as debt management; information and advice service on consumer issues, legal, finance, and benefits; wellbeing information and advice on nutrition, health or fitness. The service is available to all employees.

Dying to Work Charter

In June 2021 the Council and its recognised trade unions signed up to the TUC's Dying to Work Charter. The charter requires a commitment from the Council that our employees will be supported, protected and guided throughout their employment, following a terminal diagnosis. The following are indicative of the commitment required of the Council:

- Terminally ill workers will be secure in the knowledge that we will support them following their diagnosis and we recognise that safe and reasonable work can help maintain dignity, offer a valuable distraction and can be therapeutic in itself.
- We will provide our employees with the security of work, peace of mind and the right to choose the best course of action for themselves and their families which helps them through this challenging period with dignity and without undue financial loss.

Absences due to Covid-19

It was agreed by Welsh Government and local authorities that absence due to self-isolation, experiencing Covid-19 symptoms or testing positive for Covid-19 would not be treated as sickness absence for the purposes of annual absence stats. Nevertheless, there have been times when these absences have disrupted the provision of services, especially in our residential homes and schools. The data included in the absence presentation shows only those staff who are unable to work due to self-isolation requirement, Covid-19 symptoms or Covid-19 positive illness and does not include those who were able to continue in their role working from home.

Employee Health and Wellbeing Officer and strategy

Lucy Barratt was appointed Employee Health and Wellbeing Officer in November 2019 and this role has proved invaluable in supporting employees at every level throughout the past two years, but especially during the pandemic. This support is provided with the aim of keeping staff in work where possible and has included individual wellbeing support/discussions with staff, group or team sessions of resilience, stress management, wellbeing emails (originally weekly, now monthly), wellbeing webinar, and dedicated support for front line staff.

In addition, an Employee Health and Wellbeing Strategy has recently been implemented covering the period 2021 – 2026 with the aim of improving the health and wellbeing of employees by focussing on five pillars: Positive Environments; Policies and Practice; Healthy Lifestyle; Mental Health and Wellbeing; and Culture and Behaviour. Employee absence data is one of the measures which will be used in future to measure the success of this strategy.

Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If not, please state why

Not applicable. Report for information.

WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS:

- Summary:*
- Long term:**
- Integration:**
- Collaboration:**
- Involvement:**
- Prevention:**

RECOMMENDATION (S):

- To receive the report on the management of sickness absence

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION (S):

Contact Name: Geraint Edwards
Designation: Corporate Lead Officer – People & Organisation
Date of Report: 08/12/2021
Acronyms:

Cyngor Sir Ceredigion County Council

REPORT TO: Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee

DATE: 13th January 2022

LOCATION: Virtual meeting

TITLE: Digital Connectivity

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT: To provide an overview of the initiatives and projects that Ceredigion County Council are currently undertaking to support the levels of digital connectivity across the County

REASON SCRUTINY HAVE REQUESTED THE INFORMATION: To better understand the work carried out by the Council in improving Digital Connectivity across the County.

Background

A report was presented to Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November 2020 which emphasised that accessibility to 'good' quality, reliable digital connectivity is essential for residents, businesses and visitors in supporting Ceredigion's economy. That with co-ordinated developments digital infrastructure can act as a catalyst for business growth and innovation within our targeted sectors and provide communities with enhanced access to employment, education and services.

At that time, increasingly so due to lock down restrictions, it was evident that digital connectivity had become an essential part of modern life, influencing how individuals work, communicate and access services. The situation has not changed as we all continue to make adjustments following the pandemic with families, businesses and organisations increasingly reliant on the effective use of digital connectivity to maintain operations and a sense of 'normality'.

This report provides the opportunity to update on the initiatives that have been carried out over the previous 12 months, as well as raising awareness of new developments by the Council, as well as those by both UK and Welsh Governments over the coming months to promote the levels of digital connectivity across Ceredigion.

Current Situation

Broadband

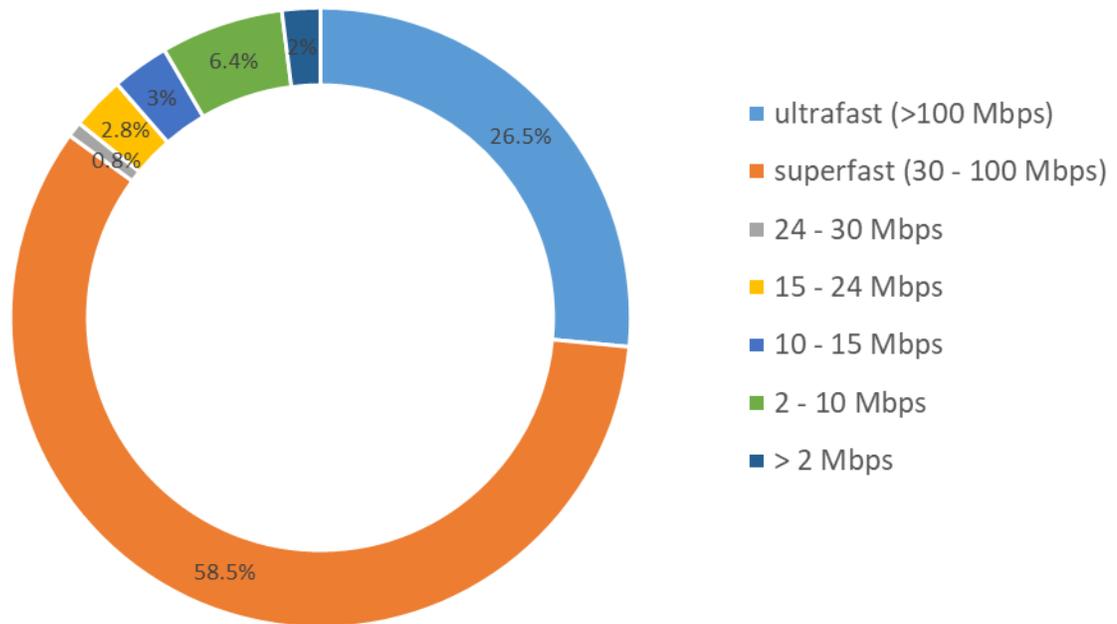
Despite the levels of broadband connectivity in Ceredigion seeing improvements over the past 12 months, the overall levels of connectivity still currently lags behind some parts of Wales and the UK. Approximately 85.5% of premises in Ceredigion have the capability to connect to Superfast Broadband (30Mbps+), lower than that for Wales (96.1%) and the UK (97%) on average.

26.5% of the region currently has access to Ultrafast Broadband (100mbps+) compared to Wales (48%) and the UK (68%), while 8.5% of premises in Ceredigion cannot access a connection of more than 10Mbps compared to only 2.25% for Wales and 1.8% for the UK experiencing this issue.

Despite these figures Ceredigion currently has 26.5% coverage of Fibre to the Premises (FTTP), allowing download speeds of up to 1gbps (1000mbps), which is greater than the Wales average of 26% and the highest level for a rural Local Authority and several other Local Authorities in Wales, with the UK average being 28.6% coverage per Local Authority.

Through the deployment of the Superfast Cymru programme which is scheduled to be completed by 2022, it has been suggested by Openreach that 90% of properties will be able to receive Superfast broadband (<30 Mbps) once the programme has been completed.

Ceredigion Broadband Speeds



	Nov 2020	Nov 2021	+ / -
FTTP	22%	26.5%	+4.5%
Superfast (>30 Mbps)	82.6%	85.5%	+2.9%
>10 Mbps	10.2%	8.5%	- 1.7%
>2 Mbps	2.7%	2%	-0.7%

Mobile

Since the previous report little has changed in the levels of mobile coverage in Ceredigion, in that mobile coverage also lags behind the Wales and UK average coverage with topography and the lower density of population posing particular challenges in improving mobile coverage in the County. Approximately 9% of premises within the County have no 4G services while only 54% of premises have 4G coverage from all four operators, this in comparison to on average 73% in Wales and 80% across the UK.

Since 2017, Ceredigion has seen four new 4G masts activated with another 4 additional masts scheduled. In addition to this, 11 Extended Area Service (EAS) masts are planned in Ceredigion to provide Emergency Services Network coverage in the most remote and rural parts of the County, with it hoped that these additional masts will become commercialised to provide services to residents and businesses. Programmes to improve the levels of mobile connectivity across the County will be discussed later in this report.

Current Projects/ Initiatives

Broadband

Fibre Projects

Though the levels of broadband connectivity haven't been exceeded at the rate which would have been desired over the past 12 months, this is not to suggest that significant progress has been made in reaching connectivity ambitions. At present 4 differing alternative network providers have proposed fibre projects across the County with there currently over 20 project areas being proposed and to be initiated in 2022. These 'alt nets' will be in addition to the publically funded Superfast Cymru Programme being deployed by Openreach.

Since the announcement of additional funding from UK Government in April 2021 for the Gigabit Voucher, these alt nets have been carrying out engagement with communities to ensure commercial viability and carrying out the required processes and network designs in order to receive funding for the deployment of fibre infrastructure and to ensure that there is no cost for these connections for residents and businesses.

Several of the proposed projects have now received UK Government Funding, with wayleaves and the placement of relevant cabinets also being agreed. There is currently infrastructure being deployed in a number of areas in Ceredigion preparation for network builds in early 2022, with fibre connections expected to take place shortly after. During 2021 the foundations have been laid and required funding applications have been carried to see the deployment of fibre in 2022.

Project Gigabit

Initially announced in the Spring 2020 Budget but held back by delays and revisions, Project Gigabit is a £5bn UK Government programme aimed at reaching more than one million 'hard to reach' homes and business to provide gigabit capable broadband to at least 85% of UK premises by the end of 2025 and 100% by 2030.

There are many network providers already building their own full fibre broadband infrastructure and expanding them across the country. However, since these rollouts rely greatly on a providers own budgets and 'commercial builds', there is a limit to the areas where they can afford to supply and install fibre infrastructure. Some areas, such as some in Ceredigion, would cost more for a provider to deploy fibre than they could make back in revenue, even with the use of the Gigabit Voucher.

To combat this, Project Gigabit's funding will go directly towards helping providers perform these very rural installations, through breaking down areas and procurement exercises being carried out to connect the properties within these areas to fibre. This will allow providers to expand their networks to all possible homes, regardless of commercial interests or economic viability. DCMS has identified that 234,000 premises in Wales will be in scope of the Project Gigabit Programme – meaning they won't benefit from the commercial build and thus require public subsidy to go further. The government will set out the timetable for the delivery of these connections within

Ceredigion once it has agreed on the procurement process with the Welsh Government, which is believed to take place in the coming months.

Open Market Review (OMR) 2021

The Welsh Government are currently carrying out an Open Market Review (OMR) upon broadband provisions within Wales. The purpose of this Open Market Review (OMR) and the subsequent Public Review is to confirm the premises within the current and future gigabit-capable broadband intervention areas and which do not have access to broadband infrastructure delivering at least 30Mbps with no plans to provide such infrastructure over the next three years.

In addition to the above, the OMR is also looking to gather information in order to inform the UK Government's Project Gigabit programme and future Building Digital UK (BDUK) interventions under this programme. This OMR and Public Review process enables telecommunications companies, Local Authorities and all other interested stakeholders to provide information on their network plans and coverage, both existing and planned.

This information will be used to inform future public interventions and influence where the best use of public funding is used to ensure that the maximum number of properties are connected to fibre broadband. Ceredigion County Council have been working with suppliers and relevant stakeholders to ensure that their commercial build information is shared with the Welsh Government and that comprehensive data is gathered upon the current situation in Ceredigion. The report of the OMR is expected in early 2022 and from the report it will be possible to identify which properties will be receiving improved broadband provisions in the next three years and where additional interventions may be required.

Mobile

Shared Rural Network

The Shared Rural Network (SRN) is a collaboration between Mobile Network Operators (MNO's) and UK Government to improve 4G coverage for people living, working and travelling in poorly served rural areas.

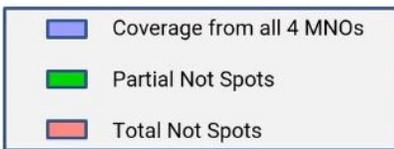
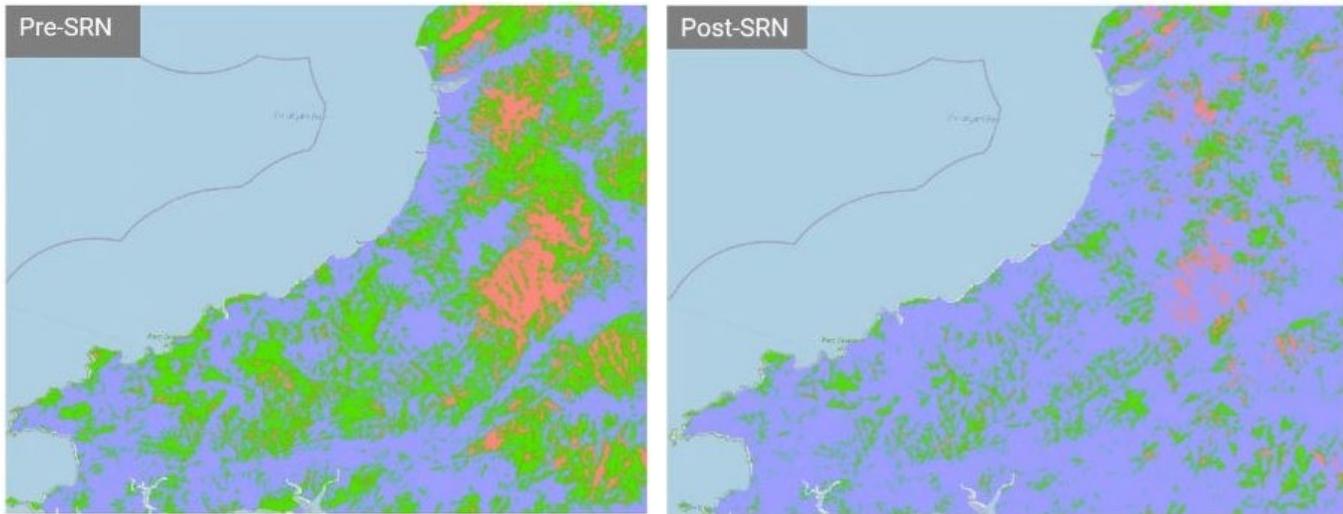
EE, O2, Three and Vodafone are collectively investing £532 million to extend their coverage by upgrading their existing networks, working together on shared infrastructure and building new sites. In addition to this the UK Government will also invest a further £500 million to build new masts in areas with no 4G coverage from any operator.

The network will ensure geographic coverage from at least one operator to 95% of the UK by the end of 2025, broadening consumer choice for mobile services in rural areas.

The legally binding coverage commitments will be enforced by Ofcom and though the specific coverage for Ceredigion has not yet been calculated, it is anticipated that coverage in Wales will improve to 95% from at least one operator and 80% from all four operators. This compares to the current levels of 89% and 58% respectively. Ceredigion County Council are involved with continued

consultations with those delivering the scheme and have committed to providing support where and as possible.

The SRN will deliver reliable 4G mobile connectivity allowing rural business to prosper and rural communities to thrive. The new infrastructure is guaranteed to bring significant improvement to mobile coverage to the County, and in turn will deliver economic benefits and address the urban rural digital divide, delivering improved digital infrastructure to the areas that need it most.



Extended Area Service (EAS)

EAS is part of the Emergency Services Network (ESN), the new 4G critical communications system for Britain's emergency services being delivered by the Home Office. The network for ESN is being built by EE through upgrades to its existing network, with The Home Office supplementing this by building additional masts to give the emergency services 4G coverage in some of the most rural and remote parts of Britain. Ceredigion will see an additional 11 masts across the County through the EAS, with the earliest mast set to 'go live' by late 2022 and the remaining masts set to be operational by mid-2023.

It will transform how the emergency services and other first responders operate and will give them access to life-saving data and information in live situations on the frontline and while on the move. ESN will offer improved coverage for the emergency services in remote areas and give them priority on the network at times of peak congestion.

As network provider, EE will decide whether it is possible to activate sites for commercial coverage and will do so wherever it is technically possible. This will largely be dependent upon the capacity of the transmission to each EAS site. Other mobile network operators (MNOs) will also offer a commercial service where technically and financially feasible. The Home Office and Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) are working to make all EAS sites available as part of the SRN programme.

5G

5G is next generation of mobile internet connection and offers much faster data download and upload speeds. It is anticipated that as MNO's deploy increased infrastructure within the region through the programmes mentioned above and mobile phones increasingly become 5G enabled that network providers will increasingly look to deploy 5G infrastructure within Ceredigion to meet customer need.

5G operates on the same radio frequencies that are currently being used for current smartphones, satellite communications and for Wi-Fi networks within the home. Beyond being able to download a full-length HD movie to your phone in seconds, 5G is about connecting things with greater reliability and without lag – so people can measure, understand and manage things in real time which can have benefits for businesses as well as for home users.

It is worth noting that the Council may receive queries upon the use of 5G within Ceredigion. Public Health England (PHE) leads on health matters related to radiofrequency electromagnetic fields, or radio waves. It also has a duty to advise the Government on any health effects that may be caused by EMF emissions. On 5G, PHE's view is that 'the overall exposure is expected to remain low relative to guidelines and, as such, there should be no consequences for public health'.

Further details around 5G and health can be found upon Ofcoms website –

<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet/advice-for-consumers/advice/what-is-5g>

County wide LoRaWAN Network

LoRaWAN (Long Range Wide Area Network) is a Low Power Wide Area Network (LPWAN) made for the Internet of Things (IoT). It is designed to allow low-powered devices and sensors to communicate with Internet-connected applications over long range wireless connections. These sensors or devices require very low power consumption and work off batteries or energy-harvesting devices (typically solar), which means that they can be in place in remote areas for up to 10 years without the need to replace them. The use of LoRaWAN can have applications in transportation, agriculture, tourism, environmental management, social care and housing.

During 2021 Ceredigion County Council have completed a project to install 40 LoRaWAN Gateways upon several Council assets in order to create a County wide LoRaWAN network. This being the most extensive network across any other Local Authority in Wales and the first Local Authority to have coverage across much of the County. As well as the Council having access, the network will also be available and accessible to all businesses, organisations and residents, with

the freedom for the network to be used in the manner in which they feel most effective.

Allowing public usage of gateways ensures that the platform will grow more readily (meaning it is more likely to be supported into the future) and as a popular growing platform, it means more people will develop sensors for LoRaWAN, creating more hardware and more software in the marketplace. As the network of gateways increases, it also adds capacity and resilience where areas may be covered by multiple gateways. This means that if a gateway fails, connectivity will be maintained via another gateway in range.

Through the provision of free access to the Ceredigion LoRaWAN network and collaboration between internal Council departments, business owners and other local organisations such as Aberystwyth University and Farming Connect, we are offering developers, adopters, and end-users the opportunity to trial and deploy solutions to address a wide range of challenges that are facing local people, businesses and institutions.

As part of the Welsh Government's ambitions to exploit the use of LoRaWAN technologies across Wales, Ceredigion County Council have been successful in receiving a significant amount of equipment, including LoRaWAN gateways and relevant sensors, to further extend the coverage and build resilience of the existing network as well as enabling the development of use cases by the Council. These use cases will be shared and highlighted with the aim to inspire businesses and other organisations to make use of the LoRaWAN network to bring about cost savings and improved efficiencies. The possible uses of sensors provided by the Welsh Government is currently being explored with Council departments to decide upon their effective use and how they can be deployed.

Collaborations with public sector bodies are currently being established to enable access to gateways which these organisations can make use of to develop their own projects and use cases. By doing so it will be possible to diversify the use of the network that the Council have put in place and drive innovation.

Ceredigion SMART Towns

In collaboration with Powys County Council, Ceredigion County Council have been successful in receiving funding to progress a project to enable 'SMART Towns' in Ceredigion. The project will initially involve the installation of wi-fi access points in Aberaeron, Llandysul, Lampeter, New Quay and Tregaron, with Aberystwyth and Cardigan already having systems in place.

As well as providing 'Town wi-fi' across each of the Towns, the equipment will provide the ability to collect anonymised data upon footfall, space usage and dwell time, and will enable Town Councils and the County Council to conduct before and after analysis, helping towns identify which approaches are best during the post Covid recovery.

The project will complement the SMART Town initiative proposed by the Welsh Government (<https://www.hwbmentor.cymru/en/smart-towns>), which several of the towns are now engaged with. The installation of this equipment will enable businesses, Town Councils and the County Council to

access data and analytics which will support future planning and more efficient business operating and growth, as well as the possibility of provided a greater visitor experience.

It is viewed that this technology will support businesses and positively benefit regeneration. This will enable businesses to plan projects which lead to economic growth as well as helping them make the best use of digital technology. This includes utilising data to help businesses better understand their customer base and trends which will support businesses in their future planning and marketing activities.

As well as Town centre analysis the project will provide the ability to promote local businesses through targeted marketing campaigns and through a 'Town Centre App', replicating much of the positive work that has been carried out in Cardigan around this. As part of this project Town Councils and businesses will be provided with the following support to ensure its success -

- Digital resources upon how to effectively make use of the equipment for Town Councils and businesses, and will be made available online.
- The identification of a 'SMART Town Champion' will ensure the data from the system is collated and shared regularly with relevant businesses in each town.
- The provision of a digital marketing toolkit will be made available.
- Businesses and Towns will be assisted through the aforementioned Welsh Government initiative with Town Councils currently engaging with the project.
- Individual support to businesses to aid in the effective use of data and digital technologies which will act as case studies to motivate others.

Digital Website

A dedicated page upon Ceredigion County Councils website has been developed to raise awareness of the Councils initiatives in improving connectivity across the County as well as providing details and information to both businesses and residents about possible funding options available through UK and Welsh Government to improve their broadband connections. The website largely covers broadband, mobile and LoRaWAN, but also provides details for both businesses and residents about how to exploit and make the most of digital technology through the 'Digital Skills' section.

Details upon the page have been shared via social media as well as local press providing coverage. It is hoped that through greater awareness of the site and the information contained within it, residents and businesses will be better informed upon the options that may be available to support improved broadband, digital literacy and opportunities.

Ceredigital

Ceredigion County Council are committed to being one of the best connected rural Counties in the UK, with the aim to improve all types of fixed and mobile connectivity in order to support:

- Business growth and the economy
- The quality of life for residents
- Tourism
- The environment

The below section provides details of the current projects and work being carried out in order to achieve this, as well as information regarding what support is available to improve the levels of connectivity through various schemes and funding options.



Broadband

How your business or community can access funding to support a quicker connection.

[➤Broadband](#)



Mobile

Information upon coverage and planned improvements to increase coverage across the County.

[➤Mobile](#)



Internet of Things

Discover the possibilities for your business or home through Ceredigion's LoRaWAN network.

[➤Internet of Things](#)



Digital Skills

Make the most of technology and improve your digital skills for both your business and home.

[➤Digital Skills](#)



Public Wi-Fi

Find out where it is possible to access free Wi-Fi in Ceredigion.

[➤Public Wi-Fi](#)



Contact Us

How to get in touch if you have any questions about digital connectivity.

[➤Contact Us](#)

Digital Connectivity Mapping

An exercise has taken place to collate and record data upon Ceredigion's digital connectivity from several sources such as Welsh government, Ofcom and Openreach in order to use the data easily accessible to influence where efforts and projects should be focused to support 'not spot' areas.

This data has been used to map levels of connectivity across the County in order to identify areas that are well connected and those that are not, with particular focus upon broadband connectivity. It will be used to form base line data to recognise where improvements have taken place over time. From using this tool it will be possible to establish where future interventions or the focus of Welsh Government or UK Government funding should be aimed and influence future strategies aimed at improving the level of connectivity, whether this be broadband, mobile or other connectivity networks.

It has also been used to advocate and lobby for improvements in the levels of infrastructure that providers are applying in the County with some areas seeing improvements as a result of lobbying fibre suppliers through the use of this data. The information has also been highly influential when provided to fibre infrastructure suppliers and their decision making in project proposals within the County, enabling them to focus on areas with the poorest levels of connectivity to ensure that proposals are commercially viable and they are progressed.

Conclusion

Access to enhanced and reliable digital connectivity, and accelerating its deployment is fundamental to transforming the Ceredigion economy and enabling improvements in wellbeing. Digital technologies are transforming communications, services, learning and business opportunities at an ever-increasing pace. New digital technology such as the LoRaWAN network and access to data analytics have the potential to open up new businesses as well as improving the lives of our communities.

While Ceredigion has seen improvements in digital infrastructure over the past 12 months and some areas experience some of the quickest broadband speeds in the UK, there are areas of the County that still fall below the levels of other areas of Wales and the UK in regards to superfast broadband and mobile connectivity. As suggested previously, the past 12 months has seen significant energy put into demand stimulation exercises and raising awareness of this demand and the commercial opportunities that are available to suppliers, with this work now coming to fruition through suppliers starting to deploy the infrastructure and making connections over the next 12 months which will see an increase in connectivity and access to fibre broadband.

The Council are committed to developments within this sector and action is being taken, with support and funding available through multiple streams. It is hoped that through technologies such as LoRaWAN and initiatives such as the SMART Towns project that Ceredigion will be seen as a place for innovation and will attract businesses and suppliers to the region to further support the economy and where appropriate for Ceredigion to be seen as a test bed to explore the advantages available through increased use of digital technology.

RECOMMENDATION (S):

To help inform Members of the digital connectivity agenda in Ceredigion and the work of the Council to help improve connectivity - to help Members raise awareness and promote opportunities within their communities.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION (S):

Contact Name:	David Owen
Designation:	Digital Programme Manager, Growing Mid Wales
Date of Report:	December 2021
Acronyms:	

Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council

REPORT TO: Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee

DATE: 13 January 2021

LOCATION: Virtual meeting

TITLE: Draft Forward Work Programme 2021/22

PURPOSE OF REPORT: Review the current work programme of the Committee

REASON SCRUTINY HAVE REQUESTED THE INFORMATION: The forward work programme of the Committee is reviewed and updated at each meeting

BACKGROUND:

Overview and Scrutiny Committees oversee the work of the Council to make sure that it delivers services in the best way and for the benefit of the local community.

The role of Overview and Scrutiny is to look at the services and issues that affect people in Ceredigion. The process provides the opportunity for Councillors to examine the various functions of the council, to ask questions on how decisions have been made, to consider whether service improvements can be put in place and to make recommendations to this effect.

Scrutiny plays an essential role in promoting accountability, efficiency and effectiveness in the Council's decision making process and the way in which it delivers services.

The main roles of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees:

- Holding the cabinet and officers as decision-makers to account
- Being a 'critical friend', through questioning how decisions have been made to provide a 'check and balance' to decision makers, adding legitimacy to the decision making process
- Undertaking reviews of council services and policy
- Undertaking reviews to develop council services and policies
- Considering any other matter that affects the county
- Ensuring that Ceredigion is performing to the best of its ability and delivering high quality services to its citizens
- Assessing the impact of the Council's policies on local communities and recommending improvement
- Engaging with the public to develop citizen centred policies and services

Effective Overview and Scrutiny can lead to:

- Better decision making
- Improved Service Delivery and Performance
- Robust Policy Development arising from public consultation and input of independent expertise
- Enhanced Democracy, Inclusiveness, Community Leadership and Engagement
- Adds a clear dimension of transparency and accountability to the political workings of the Council
- Provides an opportunity for all Members to develop specialist skills and knowledge that can benefit future policy making and performance monitoring processes
- Creates a culture of evidence based self-challenge

CURRENT SITUATION:

Questions to consider when choosing topics

- Is there a clear objective for examining this topic?
- Are you likely to achieve a desired outcome?
- What are the likely benefits to the Council and the citizens of Ceredigion?
- Is the issue significant?
- Are there links to the Corporate Strategy
- Is it a key issue to the public?
- Have the issues been raised by external audit?
- Is it a poor performing service?

Choosing topics

Overview and Scrutiny Committees should consider information from the Corporate Strategy, Improvement Plan, Strategic Plan, Service Plans, the Corporate Risk Register, budget savings – proposals and impact, Quarterly Corporate Performance Management panel meetings and departmental input in choosing topics and designing their Forward Work Programmes, as well as any continuing work.

RECOMMENDATION (S):

To review and update the current Forward Work Programme.

Contact Name:	Dwynwen Jones
Designation:	Overview and Scrutiny Officer
Date of Report:	4 January 2022
Acronyms:	FWP – Forward Work Programme

Committee	Item (description/title)	Invited Speakers	Purpose i.e. monitoring, policy, recommendation
Corporate Resources			
13 May Special Meeting	Driving at Work Policy Carers' Policy Managing slurry on County Farms	Geraint Edwards Geraint Edwards Russell Hughes-Pickering	Pre-Cabinet Pre-Cabinet Requested by Committee and Thriving Members during Budget meeting
7 July 2021	Corporate Concerns & Complaints Policy Health and Wellbeing Strategy	Marie-Neige Hadfield Geraint Edwards	Pre-Cabinet Pre-Cabinet
14 October 2021	A report on Poverty during the pandemic to include the Hardship Strategy Talking, Listening and Working Together, Draft Engagement Policy of Ceredigion County Council Clic update Libraries update	Sian Howys Diana Davies Cathryn Morgan Michael Smith Joy Lake/Anna Gawthorpe/Gareth	Requested by Members Pre-Cabinet Request

	Report on Ceredigion Senior Coroner's 2020 Statistical Return	Griffiths/Rheinallt Lewis Hannah Rees/Elin Prysor	
Special meeting 27 October	Dignity at Work Policy Council fleet and Driving at Work – use of private vehicles Sickness Absence in Schools Policy	Geraint Edwards	
Special meeting 29 November 2021, 2pm	A Vision towards creating a pathway to Home Ownership for the Younger Generation of Ceredigion by the Independent Group		
2022 13 January	Council fleet and Driving at Work Sickness Absence Digital Connectivity	Geraint Edwards Geraint Edwards David Owen	Returned to Committee Request Request
7 February	A Vision towards creating a pathway to Home Ownership for the Younger Generation of Ceredigion by the Independent Group		
25 February Budget Preparation			

1:30pm			
17 March			
Task and Finish Group	Estates – County Farms – informal meeting arranged with Farm Tenants (April meeting cancelled due to Covid)	Invite	
Future meetings	Task and Finish County Farms meeting arrange for 13 th July 2021 at 3pm (not open to the public)		

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Minutes of the Meeting of Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee

held remotely via video-conference on Thursday, 14 October 2021

PRESENT; Councillor Ivor Williams (Chair), Councillors John Adams-Lewis, Bryan Davies, Ceredig Davies, Gareth Davies, Ifan Davies, Peter Davies, Endaf Edwards, Keith Evans, Lyndon Lloyd MBE, Dai Mason, Dan Potter, Rowland Rees-Evans, Lynford Thomas and Wyn Thomas

Also in attendance: Councillor Ellen ap Gwyn, Dafydd Edwards and Rhodri Evans (Cabinet Members) together with Councillor Lloyd Edwards

Officers in attendance Mrs Diana Davies, Corporate Manager- Partnership & Performance, Ms Cathryn Morgan, Families First & Refugee Coordinator, Mr Michael Smith, Engagement and Equalities Officer, Ms Joy Lake, Corporate Manager, Clic, Miss Anna Gawthorpe, Customer Services Manager, Mr Arwyn Morris, Corporate Lead Officer – Customer Contact, Mr Rheinallt Lewis, Assistant Librarian, Ms Hannah Rees, Governance Officer, Ms Elin Prysor, Corporate Lead Officer – Legal Services and Monitoring Officer, Mrs Dwynwen Jones, Scrutiny Support Officer and Mrs Dana Jones, Democratic and Services Officer

(10:00pm -12:45pm)

- 1 Apologies**
Councillor Elizabeth Evans together with Cabinet Members, Councillor Catrin Miles and Ray Quant.
- 2 Disclosures of personal and prejudicial interest**
None.
- 3 Ceredigion Public Service Board Poverty Sub-group - Tackling Hardship Strategy progress report July 2021**
Consideration was given to the Report upon the Ceredigion Public Service Board Poverty Sub-group - Tackling Hardship Strategy progress report July 2021. The report was presented by the Leader, Councillor Ellen ap Gwynn.

She reported that the Tackling Hardship Strategy 2020-22 was published in August 2020 as a successor to the Ceredigion Combatting Poverty Strategy 2016-20. The Strategy had three key objectives and the Action Plan includes 65 actions which were delivered by a range of PSB partners.

The Tackling Hardship Strategy was monitored by Ceredigion PSB Poverty Sub-group which met four times a year. The report shows progress of delivery of the strategy and proposed next steps, these are set out below:

1. The PSB Poverty Sub-group would continue to develop the data dashboards to ensure that a shared understanding of the evolving impact of COVID-19 on hardship in Ceredigion through the collation and analysis of data.
2. There was a need to review the list of contributing partners, there were opportunities to work collaboratively with more partner agencies in order to promote and take advantage of all available help and assistance.
3. The Action Plan was a live document designed to be updated during the life of the Hardship Strategy. Some contributing partners had completed their actions while other actions were still in progress. The Action Plan would be reviewed to ensure the partners work together effectively to strengthen individual and community resilience and to adjust to the impact of COVID-19.
4. The framework established to monitor delivery of the Hardship Strategy does not include a mechanism for partners to flag up specific issues of concern. In particular, those that the PSB may be able to address effectively on a multi-agency basis. The monitoring framework would be adapted so that it includes a clear way of proactively identifying specific issues of concern that can be raised by support providers, citizens and PSB Sub-group members.

Following questions from the floor, it was AGREED

- (i) to note the progress made in delivery of the three key objectives of the Ceredigion Tackling Hardship Strategy and supports the 'next steps' presented; and
- (ii) to thank the Families First & Refugee Coordinator for her work on this strategy

4 Talking, Listening and Working Together, Draft Engagement Policy

Consideration was given to the Report upon 'Talking, Listening and Working Together,' Ceredigion County Council's draft Engagement Policy. The Leader, Councillor E E ap Gwynn reported that the policy sets out the corporate approach to engagement with the people of Ceredigion. By engagement it was reported the ways in which the Council –

- Inform. To provide the public with balanced and objective information.
- Consult. To obtain public feedback on proposals.
- Involve. To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.
- Collaborate. To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision or service delivery, including defining the issue, developing alternatives and identifying and delivering preferred solutions.
- Empower. Explore ways in which to place the final decision making and service delivery in the hands of the public – to delegate.

The policy includes innovative ways to engage, including the use of online engagement platforms. The policy includes a toolkit of resources and techniques. The policy also includes an action plan which sets out better corporate management and control of engagement and accountability, for example via a corporate engagement timetable and annual reporting.

The Engagement and Equalities Officer reported that the current Community Engagement Policy dates from 2012 and needs to be replaced to take into account new methods of engagement and recent legislation and guidance. There was also a need to take into account the increasing use of digital engagement.

Following questions from the floor, it was AGREED:-

- (i) to receive and endorse 'Talking, Listening and Working Together' the draft Engagement Policy of Ceredigion County Council prior to public consultation over winter 2021-22; and
- (ii) to note that the report would be presented to Cabinet on the 2nd of November 2021.

5 Update on CLIC Service

Consideration was given to the Report updating Members on the Clic Service. The Cabinet Member, Councillor Dafydd Edwards, together with the Corporate Manager- Clic and Customer Services Manager presented the report. It was reported that the CLIC service was made up of the Corporate Contact Centre, Corporate Mail Room, Direct Contact (Face To Face), Blue Badge Team and Libraries.

Members were informed that the Contact Centre (CLIC) started taking calls September 2017 and was now providing the initial contact service for nearly all service areas. In the coming months, the final service area, Social Care would be transferred over to CLIC through the Through Age and Wellbeing Programme ensuring that CLIC will be the first point of contact for all services. Two cohorts of Customer Services staff had undertaken training to prepare for the introduction of Social Care calls in line with TAWP. Customer contact had also been involved in the development of the initial contact forms that would, in due course, be used by staff to handle Social Care enquiries

It was reported that since the start of the Pandemic and the first lockdown, 23rd March 2020 the Contact Centre team had worked wholly from home, operating a full service with little change to hours or duties. The Team had also provided additional hours of coverage, Easter Weekend in 2020 and supported the Election services during the Welsh Government and Police and Crime Commissioner elections in May 2021, offering a telephony service from 7am on 10pm on Election day.

In addition to providing telephone support, the team also take payments, manage corporate mailboxes and provide additional COVID-19 information service. The service had experienced many challenging times due to staffing shortage and some technical issues but endeavors to provide a high level of customer service at all times.

The following information was presented which was based on enquiries received between 01/09/2020 and 31/08/2021.

- Total calls received = 113,203

	English	Welsh	Total
Sep-20	8820	1549	10369
Oct-20	8667	1527	10194
Nov-20	7478	1277	8755
Dec-20	5530	887	6417
Jan-21	8106	1405	9511
Feb-21	7483	1335	8818
Mar-21	9509	1755	11264
Apr-21	8236	1513	9749
May-21	7517	1379	8896
Jun-21	8419	1399	9818
Jul-21	8389	1453	9842
Aug-21	8191	1379	9570
Total	96,345	16,858	
Total Combined	113,203		

Abandoned calls = English 4% / Welsh 1%

- Total emails received = 17,980
- Total enquiries logged = 68,698

In relation to CLIC (CRM) Enquiries, it was stated that the system had 79 different categories (defined as service areas) and 407 sub categories. Calls/enquiries were recorded on the Customer Records Management (CRM) system in order to ensure a record of customer contact. Each enquiry was allocated a reference number.

Breakdown of the enquiries logged on the CRM was presented as follows, with the top 15 categories as follows:-

Category	Total Logged
Waste Management	11,357
Childcare	10,956
COVID 19	6,686
Highways	4,954
General Enquiry	3,792
Blue Badge	2,879
Housing Register/Homelessness	2,856
Council Tax	2,819
Elections	2,347
Payment	2,054
Planning	1,724
Social Services	1,166
Environmental Control	1,025
Parking and Civil Parking Enforcement	978
Residential Home Appointments	835
Total	56,428

Other Enquiries 12,270
 Total enquiries logged during this period 68,698
 Revenues and Benefits notes logged on the Comino system during this period:-

Housing Benefit 3,023
 Council Tax 14,900
 Non Domestic Rates 1,396
 Total 19,319

Breakdown per service area:-

Service	Total
Highways & Environmental Services	18,547
Schools & Culture	11,733
Customer Contact	10,151
Finance & Procurement	9,411
Porth Gofal Targetted Intervention	5,949
Economy & Regeneration	4,736
Policy Performance & Public Protection	4,191
Democratic Services	2,506
Porth Cymorth Cynnar	1,485
People & Organisation	192
Legal & Governance	158
Porth Cynnal	64

Councillor Enquiries

During the period 01.09.20 to 31.08.21, 2,034 enquiries were logged by County Councillors (696 in Welsh, 1338 in English). This is equivalent to 3% of total enquiries.

Welsh	696
English	1,338
Total Enquiries logged by Councillors	2,034
Percentage of total enquiries logged	3%

The Post Room had undergone the greatest change during this period with all post from other offices now redirected to Canolfan Rheidol. The post room team was assisted by the direct contact team to carry out daily duties. The Post Room team had been instrumental in the distribution of 38,000 vaccination letters to Ceredigion residents; 1,040 Carers Afternoon Tea Packs; Carers Wellbeing Packs; assisted with 70 educational resource packs for home educated pupils; supported the posting of all documents relating to the recently transferred Direct Payments service, whilst continuing business as usual.

Each day, post was opened, sorted into services and scanned to generic teams for processing. All timesheets, travel claims, invoices were scanned directly to payments and payroll; revenues and benefits correspondence was scanned and indexed; blue badge applications, financial assessments were all forwarded to teams along with any mail received for Complaints, Social

Care, Legal, Corporate Lead Officers & Chief Executive. All original documents received were recorded and returned to customers within two working days.

The post room continued to print out any cheques/BACS notifications for the Authority and post out all items of secure stationery. The post room also now dealt with the printing and packing of outgoing mail for all Council services. The post room staff also dealt with any monies received through the post or posted through the letter box outside Canolfan Rheidol. Cheques and cash received were recorded and processed the day they were received with receipts if requested being posted out or scanned to departments. The post boxes at Penmorfa, County Hall, Cardigan Office, Lampeter office were emptied and the contents processed regularly.

The Direct Contact team had experienced the greatest disruption during the COVID 19 pandemic, with offices being closed since 20th March 2020. These members of staff were now assisting the post room team and the Blue Badge team whilst two members of the team have been redeployed to Contact Tracing. This had offered the opportunity to learn new skills and gain additional experience. Direct Contact staff have also supported, since June 2021, with the reopening of the Libraries.

The Blue Badge team had continued to operate throughout the pandemic with staff working remotely from home throughout. Between 01.09.2020 and 31.08.2021 a total of 1,713 Blue Badges were issued.

The service is performing very well, dealing on average with approximately 9,400 calls, 1,500 emails and logging 5,600 customer enquiries every month.

Several members raised their concerns that they were not informed by the relevant service if a job logged by them had been actioned. In response, the Cabinet Member reported that this was being addressed by all services.

Following questions from the floor, it was AGREED to note the current position and to thank all officers within the service for their work.

6 Library Standard Report

Consideration was given to the Library Standard Report. It was reported that the Library had to report once a year to Welsh Government on the Welsh Public Library standards, and this is the resulting report for 2019/20.

It was AGREED to accept the report.

7 Report on Ceredigion Senior Coroner's 2020 Statistical Return

Consideration was given to the Report upon the Ceredigion Senior Coroner's 2020 Statistical Return. It was stated that a Report on deaths reported to the Coroner for Ceredigion was prepared annually by the Senior Coroner ('the Statistical Return') and sent to the Ministry of Justice, in order to be published as part of the Coroners' Statistics on the UK Government's website. The Report of the Chief Coroner to the Lord Chancellor included a Model Coroner blueprint. This recommends that the Senior Coroner also

presents a brief annual report to the Chief Coroner and the Council each July, which should be published on the Council's website, and include relevant statistics on current/concluded cases (with comparison figures for previous years), an update on Coroner work and relevant issues, a summary of the Coroner team and staffing arrangements, and any future plans. Such a Report has not been provided to the Council.

Currently, it was reported that the Statistical Return contained relevant information regarding the services of the Coroner of Ceredigion, for transparency with the Public, and given that the National Statistics publication has now been released, the Statistical Return was hereby presented to the Committee.

The Governance Officer stated that it was recommended that, following consideration of the Statistical Return by the Committee, it shall be published annually on the Coroner Services page of the Council's Website (taking care not to publish the Return prior to the release of the National Statistics publication by the Ministry of Justice). The Ceredigion Senior Coroner and the Ministry of Justice's Civil and Administrative Justice/Justice Statistics Analytical Services had been informed of this proposal.

The Ceredigion Senior Coroner had been invited to submit a Report to the Council and/or provide any additional comments/text and had confirmed that due to current workload commitments, court sitting availability and a recent staff vacancy (now filled), he was unable to prepare this year's annual report. It is hoped that a report shall be provided by the Coroner next year.

Following questions from the floor, it was AGREED:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Ceredigion Senior Coroner's 2020 Statistical Return; and
- (ii) that the annual publication of the (redacted) Ceredigion Senior Coroner's Statistical Return be placed on the Council's website (on the Coroner Services page).

8 Forward Work Programme

The Forward Work Plan was agreed as presented subject to noting that the Task and Finish group would be considering County Farms further in January 2022; as the estate service were unable to present a report earlier due to other work priorities.

9 To confirm minutes of the 7.7.2021 meeting and to consider any matters arising from those Minutes.

It was AGREED to confirm the minutes of the meetings held on 07 July 2021.

Confirmed at the Meeting of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 27 October 2021

Chairman: _____

Date: _____

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**Minutes of the Meeting of Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny
Committee
held remotely via video-conference on Wednesday, 27 October 2021**

PRESENT; Councillor Ivor Williams (Chair), Councillors John Adams-Lewis, Bryan Davies, Ceredig Davies, Gareth Davies, Ifan Davies, Keith Evans, Lyndon Lloyd MBE, Dai Mason, Dan Potter, Rowland Rees-Evans, Lynford Thomas and Wyn Thomas

Also in attendance: Councillor Dafydd Edwards, Rhodri Evans, Catherine Hughes, Catrin Miles and Alun Williams(Cabinet Members)

Officers in attendance Mr Geraint Edwards, Corporate Lead Officer – People and Organisation, Mrs Nia Roberts, Principle Human Resource Officer, Ms Marie-Neige Hadfield, Complaints and Freedom of Information Manager, Mr Alun Williams, Corporate Lead Officer – Policy, Performance and Public Protection Service. Mrs Dwynwen Jones, Scrutiny Officer and Mrs Dana Jones, Democratic Services and Standards Officer

(10:00am - 11:45am)

1 Apologies

Councillors Ellen ap Gwynn and Ray Quant (Cabinet Members) apologised for their inability to attend the meeting.

**2 Disclosures of personal interest (including whipping declarations)
Members are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and prejudicial interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Members Code of Conduct. In addition, Members must declare any prohibited party whip which the Member has been given in relation to the meeting as per the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.**

None.

3 Driving at Work - Council Fleet and Driving at Work - Use of Private Vehicles (Grey Fleet) policies

The Corporate Lead Officer – People and Organisation reported that the development of these two new policies by People & Organisation Service had been in collaboration with Highways and Environmental. Both policies had been subject to consultation with the relevant Trade Unions and their amendments had been incorporated where appropriate.

The purpose of all staff policies and procedures was to clearly set out the behaviours, processes and procedures required of staff, how they can gain advice or support and, where applicable, the consequences of not adhering to the policy and/or procedure.

In relation to the Driving at Work- Council Fleet Policy it was reported that

A Fleet and Driver Risk Management review was undertaken by a consultant on behalf of Zurich, the Council's insurance company. Its main purpose was to review the Council's policies and arrangements against best practice standards and to provide recommendations that assist with ensuring compliance, protecting our workforce from harm, and reducing the risk of incidents.

A key recommendation of the Review was the introduction of a Driving at Work Policy with embedded Driver Agreement which provides "clear unambiguous expectation as to driving standards". The Driving at Work – Council Fleet Policy was one of a suite of initiatives aimed at standardising recording and compliance across the vehicle fleet and achieving driving standards which improve driver and passenger safety, the number of fleet related incidents and accidents. Other initiatives include the introduction of a driver training e-learning module and robust checking systems for vehicles and licences.

It was stated that the Driving at Work – Council Fleet Policy introduced the following:-

- Driver/Plant Operator Agreement to be signed on an annual basis;
- The requirement to inform their manager of any change in health or physical/sensory impairments and an annual health assessment
- With cause drug and alcohol screening
- Employee paying up to £250 contribution to insurance excess costs, following a disciplinary procedure, if the damage is caused as a result of their negligence or driving without due care and attention

In relation to the Driving at Work - Use of Private Vehicle (Grey Fleet) Policy, it was reported that the Policy sets out the expectations of those employees who use their private vehicle for Council business purposes. An e- learning module would also be developed to complement the policy.

The Driving at Work – Use of Private Vehicle (Grey Fleet) Policy introduced the following:-

- Private Vehicle user Declaration to be signed on an annual basis;
- The requirement to inform their manager of any change in circumstances which may affect the use of a private vehicle for work purposes
- With cause drug and alcohol screening
- Employee confirming that their vehicle is roadworthy, is MOT certificated (where appropriate) and correctly insured for business purposes.

Following discussion and questions from the floor, it was AGREED to DEFER the recommendation of approval of the policy to Cabinet; in order to consider the points raised by the Councillors at the meeting to include the following :-

- In relation to the stipulation that "Drivers must ensure that they, and all passengers, are wearing seatbelts as required by law and Council policy"- Members were of the opinion that this should not be the responsibility of the driver, it should be the responsibility of the individual to wear a seatbelt; and that the policy should be amended accordingly;

- That further consideration should be given to the stipulation that “Employees who are found to have caused damage to either an item of the Council Fleet, third party vehicle or property through negligence or driving without due care and attention may be liable, following a disciplinary hearing, for an amount of up to £250 as a contribution to insurance excess costs” . In members opinion the employee should not be liable to contribute the £250.00 but rather be provided training, a written warning and disciplinary action if employee was not suitable for the position in question. It was a matter for the Magistrates Court to determine if the employee was guilty of the offence and not the Council;
- That employees who carry clients as passengers especially during the night in their private cars be also included within the scope of the policy (point 3);
- Consideration be given to the fleet drivers being given advanced driving training by RoSPA, as this could reduce the insurance premium for the authority, it was agreed that this recommendation would be passed on the CLO –Highways and Environmental Service who had responsibility for the Council’s vehicle fleet;
- That following the amendments stated and subject to possible further Trade Union input, that the Policy would be represented to Committee for further consideration

4 Human Resources Model Policies for Schools, Dignity at Work Policy and Procedure and Managing Sickness Absence at Work

The Corporate Lead Officer – People and Organisation reported that these policies had been developed and updated by People & Organisation Service and if approved would be provided to all school governing bodies in Ceredigion with a recommendation of their consideration and adoption. Both model policies had been the subject of consultation with the local teaching and support staff trade unions through the Schools Trade Union Forum. They had also been discussed, amended and agreed by the relevant Trade Unions.

The purpose of all staff policies and procedures was to clearly set out the behaviours, processes and procedures required of staff, how they can gain advice or support and, where applicable, the consequences of not adhering to the policy and/or procedure. It was stated that the Dignity at Work Model Policy for Schools outlined the value of a productive and supportive working environment and the commitment to eliminating bullying and harassment. All employees had the right to be treated with dignity and respect at work and no form of victimisation, discrimination, intimidation or behaviour that amounts to bullying or harassment would be tolerated. In addition to those school based staff employed by the Governing Body the policy also covered volunteers, trainees and students on placements within the school. This policy provided a framework to help prevent bullying and harassment of school employees and explains the procedure that should be followed if such incidents occur.

The Managing Sickness Absence at Work Model Policy for Schools had been revised to ensure that the policy and procedure were compliant with changes in legislation, whilst also strengthening the process for managing sickness. The policy outlines the value of ensuring and encouraging regular

attendance at work of all its employees and to identify the causes of absence in order to assist its employees. It aims to create a healthy and supportive working environment conducive to high levels of attendance. The policy acknowledges that ill health or injury could affect any one at any time and undertakes to treat those who were unable to work due to ill health fairly, confidentially and sensitively. This policy sets out procedures to provide a fair and consistent framework for handling long term and short term employee sickness absence.

Following questions from the floor, it was AGREED

(i) to recommend approval of the Dignity at Work Model Policy and Procedure for Schools and to commend to Governing Bodies for adoption within schools in Ceredigion

(ii) to commend that the Managing Staff Sickness at Work Model Policy and Procedure for Schools to the Governing Bodies for adoption within schools in Ceredigion.

5 Annual Report of Compliments, Complaints and Freedom of Information Activity 2020/2021

Consideration was given to the Annual Report of Compliments, Complaints and Freedom of Information Activity 2020/2021. The report provided information relating to the work of the Council's Complaints and FOI Service between 1st April 2020 and 31st March 2021. Specific details were provided on the number and type of compliments received, the different complaints stages, performance and outcomes relating to these and information on compliance with FOI and EIR legislation. There was also a section regarding the contact received by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) during the reporting period. The Ombudsman's Annual Letter to the Council which provides further details in relation to the Ombudsman activity for Ceredigion, as well as for other Council's across Wales.

This was the second consecutive report where there had been no PSOW investigations commenced or formal reports issued in relation to complaints made against the Council.

Whilst improvements had been made in comparison to previous years, this report also highlighted the challenges faced by the Council due to the pandemic and officers having to adapt to new ways of working. In addition, during the period covered by this report there were significant pressures placed on the Complaints and FOI Service, which inevitably had an impact on our ability to meet prescribed and statutory timescales.

The current situation was as follows:-

Brief overview of the figures for 2020 - 2021:

- 814 Compliments were received
- 435 Enquiries were processed by the Complaints and FOI Service
- 103 Complaints were received (61 at Stage 1 and 42 at Stage 2)
- 32 'Contacts' from the PSOW
- 756 FOI and EIR requests
- Internal Reviews under FOI / EIR legislation

The highlights of the year were provided:-

- As referred to previously, this was the second consecutive reporting period in over a decade where there have been no investigations or reports issued by the PSOW.
- The Council received almost double the amount of compliments from service-users compared with 2019 – 2020. The majority of these having been received by Porth Ceredigion. It is believed, however, that the actual number of compliments was likely to be far higher and more work was therefore needed to ensure that these were passed to the Complaints and FOI Service to be recorded.
- The Council received far fewer FOI/EIR requests during this reporting term and a fewer number of Internal Review requests compared with last year. Requests for Internal Review were usually only submitted when the Council refused to provide information (by applying the appropriate exemptions or exceptions). This therefore supports the Council's commitment to openness and transparency in accordance with legislation.
- However, it is noted that the Council's performance surrounding the response times for FOI, in particular, dropped significantly during 2020-2021. The cause for this could be attributed to several factors including the lack of capacity on the part of services to be able to prioritise FOI above all the new tasks arising; being unable to obtain hard-copies of documents due to home-working; lack of capacity within the Complaints and FOI Service (which undertakes the majority of the administrative work surrounding FOI activity; i.e. recording, acknowledging and distributing new requests and issuing all responses and applying any exemptions/exceptions and/or redactions as required).

The areas to focus on were as follows:-

- Improving adherence with timescales prescribed in complaints and FOI/EIR policies
- Improving system for capturing compliments and data surrounding lessons learned
- Continuing with open, transparent and citizen-centred approach to resolving concerns

Following questions from the floor, it was AGREED

- (i) to note the content of the report in advance of its presentation at the Council meeting on 9th of December 2021; and
- (ii) to congratulate the Complaints and Freedom of Information Manager and her team for an excellent report

Confirmed at the Meeting of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 13 January 2022

Chairman: _____

Date: _____

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**Minutes of the Meeting of CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE
held remotely via video-conference on Monday, 29 November 2021**

PRESENT; Councillor Ivor Williams (Chair), Councillors John Adams-Lewis, Bryan Davies, Ceredig Davies, Gareth Davies, Ifan Davies, Elizabeth Evans, Keith Evans, Lyndon Lloyd MBE, Dai Mason, Dan Potter, Rowland Rees-Evans, Lynford Thomas, Wyn Thomas and Matthew Woolfall Jones

Also in attendance: Councillor Ellen ap Gwynn, Dafydd Edwards, Rhodri Evans, Catherine Hughes, Gareth Lloyd, Catrin Miles, Ray Quant MBE and Alun Williams (Cabinet Members)

Councillor Gwyn James.

Officers in attendance: Mr Eifion Evans, Chief Executive, Miss Lowri Edwards, Corporate Lead Officer- Democratic Services, Miss Nia Jones, Corporate Manager – Democratic Services, Mrs Dwynwen Jones, Scrutiny Officer and Mrs Dana Jones, Democratic Services and Standards Officer.

(2:00pm - 3:30pm)

1 Apologies

Councillors Peter Davies MBE and Endaf Edwards apologised for their inability to attend the meeting.

2 Disclosures of personal and prejudicial interest

None.

3 A Vision towards creating a pathway to Home Ownership for the Younger Generation of Ceredigion by the Independent Group

Consideration was given to the Report upon A Vision towards creating a pathway to Home Ownership for the Younger Generation of Ceredigion by the Independent Group. The Chairman had requested that the matter be considered due to the economic situation facing young people in Ceredigion and the lack of opportunities to be able to purchase their first home.

It was reported that the Independent Group had developed a proposal for the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider and create a pathway to home ownership for young people. A report by the Independent Group outlining 'A Vision towards creating a pathway to home ownership for the younger generation of Ceredigion' was presented. It was reported that a request had been made for data to support the paper and this information was also presented. There was evidence to show that the economy in Ceredigion means that there are limited opportunities for young people to be able to purchase a first home.

It was reported that this proposal aims to provide a scheme that would support young people to be able to purchase their first home.

The Committee was requested to consider the report and the proposals contained, with the view of requesting a further report from Officers regarding its viability. If there was agreement to request Officers to consider the viability of the proposals, it was proposed that a further report would be considered by the Committee on 13th January 2022, subject to Officers being able to consider the proposal to meet that timeline.

The Committee were supportive of the proposal and all recognised the need to develop a scheme that would support and enable young people to purchase their first property that would also benefit the County's economy and culture.

Following questions and comments from the floor, it was unanimously AGREED:-

- (i) that the 'Vision towards creating a pathway to Home Ownership for Younger Generation of Ceredigion' was supported and passed to Officers to work up the viability of the scheme;
- (ii) that following consideration of the scheme, Officers revert to the committee with their recommendations;
- (iii) if the scheme was ultimately approved by Cabinet/Council, the preferred funding option was to be modelled into the annual budget setting.

Confirmed at the Meeting of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 13 January 2022

Chairman: _____

Date: _____