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31 October 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

I write to inform you that a Meeting of Cabinet will be held at the Council Chamber, Neuadd Cyngor Ceredigion, Penmorfa, Aberaeron and remotely via video conference on Tuesday, 7 November 2023 at 10.00am for the transaction of the following business:

1. **Apologies**

2. **Personal matters**

3. **Disclosure of Personal/ Prejudicial Interests**

4. **To confirm as a true record the Minutes of the previous Meeting of the Cabinet and any matters arising from those Minutes**
   FOR DECISION (Pages 3 - 6)

5. **Any petitions received**

6. **Reports of any decisions (if any) having been called in from Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

7. **Any feedback from Overview and Scrutiny Committee not otherwise on the agenda (Pages 7 - 8)**
   a. Recommendation from the Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Parking Proposals and Opportunities

8. **To consider the report of the Corporate Lead Officer for Schools upon The Post-16 Education Provision in Schools including feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
   FOR DECISION (Pages 9 - 56)

9. **To consider the report of the Corporate Lead Officer for Schools upon LA Representative on Governing Bodies**
FOR DECISION (Pages 57 - 58)

10. **To consider the report of the Corporate Lead Officer for Porth Gofal upon Yr Hafod Residential Care Home Site, Cardigan - Feasibility Study**
FOR DECISION (Pages 59 - 94)

11. **To consider the report of the Corporate Lead Officer for Highways and Environmental Services upon the New Residential Roads for Adoption: Maes yr Halen, Cross Inn (ED4069)**
FOR DECISION (Pages 95 - 98)

12. **To consider the report of the Corporate Lead Officer for Highways and Environmental Services upon the New Residential Roads for Adoption: Cae Bach y Rhiw, Rhydyfelin (ED4257)**
FOR DECISION (Pages 99 - 102)

13. **To consider the report of the Corporate Lead Officer for Policy, Performance and Public Protection upon the Ceredigion County Council Self-Assessment Report 2022/23**
FOR DECISION (Pages 103 - 168)

14. **To note the report of the Corporate Lead Officer for Policy, Performance and Public Protection upon the Annual Report of Compliments, Complaints, and Freedom of Information (2022-2023) including feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
FOR INFORMATION (Pages 169 - 210)

15. **To note the report of the Corporate Lead Officer for Policy, Performance and Public Protection upon the Tackling Hardship Strategy Annual Report 2022-23 including feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
FOR INFORMATION (Pages 211 - 232)

16. **Any other matter the Chairman decides is for the urgent attention of the Cabinet**

Members are reminded to sign the Attendance Register.

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

Yours faithfully

Miss Lowri Edwards
Corporate Lead Officer: Democratic Services

To: The Leader of the Council and Members of the Cabinet
The remaining Members of the Council for information

Notice of the Decisions of the **Meeting of the Cabinet** held at the
Council Chamber, Neuadd Cyngor Ceredigion, Penmorfa, Aberaeron and remotely
on **Tuesday, 3 October 2023**

This Notice is published at 5.00pm on Thursday, 5 October 2023. Requests to call-in any decision to be delivered to the Head of Democratic Services by 5.00pm on Thursday, 12 October 2023. The decisions will come into force (if no valid call-in application is received) on Friday, 13 October 2023.

PRESENT: Councillor Bryan Davies (Chair), Councillors Catrin M S. Davies, Clive Davies, Keith Henson, Wyn Thomas, Matthew Vaux and Alun Williams.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Keith Evans, Rhodri Evans, Wyn Evans, Gareth Lloyd and Caryl Roberts.

(10.00am- 11.53am)

76   Apologies
Councillor Gareth Davies apologised for his inability to attend the meeting.

77   Personal matters
Condolences were extended to Nerys Lewis, Corporate Manager: Direct Services and her family on the loss of her father.

78   Disclosure of Personal/ Prejudicial Interests
Councillor Keith Henson declared a personal interest in relation to item 84 and 90.

79   To confirm as a true record the Minutes of the previous Meeting of the Cabinet and any matters arising from those Minutes
To confirm as a true record the Minutes of the previous Meeting of the Cabinet held on 5 September 2023.

Matters arising: There were no matters arising from the minutes.

80   Any petitions received
None.

81   Reports of any decisions (if any) having been called in from Overview and Scrutiny Committee
None.

82   Any feedback from Overview and Scrutiny Committee not otherwise on the agenda
None.

83 **To consider the report of the Corporate Lead Officer for Porth Cymorth Cynnar upon the Housing Strategy, setting out Ceredigion's vision and plans for housing in the county for the next 5 years including feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
DECISION:
1) To accept the additions to the draft Housing Strategy referenced in the report.
2) To recommend that Council approves the Housing Strategy.
3) To note the feedback from the Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Reason for the decision:
To enable the Council to fulfil the requirements in relation to the strategic housing function.

84 **To consider the report of the Corporate Lead Officer for Porth Gofal upon the outcome of the Ceredigion Dementia Implementation Plan including feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
DECISION:
• To create an Integrated Ceredigion Dementia Development Group to oversee the delivery of the implementation plan.
• To communicate the initial findings of the engagement with the public, and to develop a Communication and Engagement plan ensuring that the public are aware of the on-going progress relating to the delivery of the implementation plan.
• To provide the Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an Annual Progress report.
• To note the feedback from the Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Reason for the decision:
To support and develop an integrated approach in meeting the needs of individuals living with dementia and their carers through a range of health, social care and 3rd sector resources.

85 **To consider the report of the Corporate Lead Officer for Schools upon the LA Representative on Governing Bodies**
DECISION:
To confirm the nominations outlined in the report as LA representatives on the Governing Bodies of the relevant School.

Reason for the decision:
To nominate representatives of the LA on Governing Bodies.

86 **To consider the report of the Corporate Lead Officer for Policy, Performance and Public Protection upon the Revised Integrated Impact Assessment Tool including feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
DECISION:
1. To approve the revised Integrated Impact Assessment tool.

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2. That a workshop to explain the tool and its importance in the decision-making process is arranged for Elected Members.
3. To note the feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee.

Reason for the decision:
The revised Integrated Impact Assessment tool reflects current legislation and will enable an informed decision-making process.

87   **To consider the report of the Corporate Lead Officer for Policy, Performance and Public Protection upon the Draft Performance Management Policy Statement and Performance Management Framework including feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
DECISION:
1. To approve the Performance Management Policy Statement and Performance Management Framework.
2. To note the feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee.

Reason for the decision:
To adopt an updated Performance Management Policy Statement and Performance Management Framework which outlines the guiding principles for performance management in the Council.

88   **To note the report of the Corporate Lead Officer for Policy, Performance and Public Protection upon the Strategic Equality Plan - Monitoring Report 2022-23 including feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
Cabinet noted the report and the feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee.

89   **To consider the report of the Corporate Lead Officer for Policy, Performance and Public Protection upon the Draft Ceredigion Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28 including feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
DECISION:
1) To approve the Draft Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28.
2) To approve a public consultation on the Draft Plan over winter 2023.
3) To note the feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee.

Reason for the decision:
This will progress the aim of the Council to address inequality, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not in Ceredigion.

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90   **To note the report of the Corporate Lead Officer for People and Organisation upon the Gender Pay Report 2023 and Workforce Equality Report 2023 including feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Cabinet noted the report and the feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee.

91   **To note the report of the Corporate Lead Officer for Porth Cynnal upon the CYSUR/CWMPAS Combined Local Operational Group Safeguarding Report Qtr 4 2022-23 including feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Cabinet noted the report and the feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee.

92   **To note the report of the Corporate Lead Officer for Porth Cynnal upon the Independent Reviewing Service Performance Management Report Qtr 4 2022/23 including feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Cabinet noted the report and the feedback from the Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

93   **Any other matter the Chairman decides is for the urgent attention of the Cabinet**

None.

Confirmed at the Meeting of the Cabinet held on 7 November 2023

Chairman:_____

Date:_____

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CYNGOR SIR CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

<u>Report to:</u>	**Cabinet**
<u>Date of meeting:</u>	**7 November 2023**
<u>Title:</u>	**Recommendation from the Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Parking Proposals and Opportunities**
<u>Purpose of the report:</u>	**To provide feedback from the Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 23 October 2023**

<u>Background:</u>
The Committee received a detailed report relating to the following recommendations made to Cabinet by the Committee on the 05 September 2023:

I. That Cabinet consider undertaking a review of charging for parking along the Promenade in Aberystwyth; and
II. That Cabinet consider offering 2 hours of free parking between 8am and 10am on Monday to Friday in one car park in Lampeter, Aberaeron and Cardigan.

<u>Recommendation(s):</u>
Following discussion, the Committee agreed to recommend that Cabinet:

- Undertake a review of charging for parking along the Promenade in Aberystwyth throughout the year and to introduce free parking before 10am in all Ceredigion County Council Pay and Display car parks. Cabinet would be required to review the financial implication of adding Aberystwyth to this proposition as the Committee would not want the changes to have a negative financial impact for the Authority.

Councillor Gwyn Wigley Evans
Chairman of the Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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CYNGOR SIR CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to: **Cabinet**

Date of meeting: **7 November 2023**

Title: **The Post-16 Education provision in schools**

Purpose of the report: **For decision**

For: **Decision**

Cabinet Portfolio and Cabinet Member:
Councillor Wyn Thomas, Cabinet Member for Schools, Lifelong Learning and Skills

Introduction
At the Cabinet meeting held virtually on 11 January 2022, it was agreed that it would be timely to undertake a review of the post-16 provision in Ceredigion.

The aim of the review was to provide an analysis and appraisal of the current post-16 provision in Ceredigion and identify sustainable options for the future, along with their potential advantages and disadvantages.

The aim of the review was to:
- create a set of agreed principles that were learner-centric
- offer a range of accessible and sustainable options whilst ensuring that the voices of the learners, governors, parents, headteachers and Local Authority officers are an integral part of the process
- ensure that full consideration has been given to the findings and recommendations of Estyn's national reviews and the background to Welsh Government's current policy, including the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act
- consider rurality and the implications for carbon footprints

There was also a wider context to this review, namely:
- Welsh Government's decision to establish the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (CTER) which will be responsible for the strategy, funding, and oversight of the further education sector, including colleges and the sixth forms in schools
- Estyn's Thematic Report regarding Post-16 Partnerships (January 2021)
- The opportunities available through the Mid Wales Growth Deal, the Economic Strategy, and the Regional Partnership Board with regards to the needs and skills of the workforce for the future and the central role of the Regional Skills Partnership (RSP) in the collection and analysis of information
- The need to ensure a broad and quality vocational offer, along with a wider offering of A-Level subjects, which allows learners to pursue different combinations of subjects and to specialise in their interests, regardless of where they live in the county

1

- Estyn Report – A review of the current 16-19 curriculum in Wales (October 2022)

It was agreed that a set of "agreed principles which were learner centric" should be created, to ensure that the voices of learners, governors, parents and headteachers are an integral part of the report.

6 principles were created –
1) The needs of the learner should be prioritised over any organisational needs.
2) The generally high standards in Ceredigion schools should be maintained and improved.
3) There should be more fairness and equal opportunities for all learners across the county in terms of the offer, advice and guidance, pastoral care and wellbeing, travel requirements, learning pattern and access to support. This includes ensuring bespoke and specialist support for pupils with additional learning needs ensuring a continuum of education for them in the absence of a special school in the county.
4) The Welsh-medium offer should be improved to be at least consistent with the English-medium offer to increase the number of Welsh speakers in Ceredigion and to contribute to a bilingual workforce and community.
5) Access to a wide range of quality academic and vocational courses should be ensured, increasing the number of vocational courses currently available for pupils in all parts of the county.
6) The governance of the post-16 provision should promote the above principles, consider the strategic quality improvement processes, ensure that expenditure is kept as much as possible within the post-16 budget and allow decisions to be made that consider environmental sustainability and carbon footprint.

A key part of the review included gathering the views of a broad group of stakeholders. Surveys were sent to key groups, namely learners, parents / carers, teachers and employers, and a total of 1,306 responses were received from these individuals. In addition, interviews were conducted with representatives from educational providers, the local authority and other partners.

The responses were analysed and placed under six main themes -
- Wide choice
- Language
- Location
- Connections with the world of work
- Collaboration between schools or the establishment of centres of excellence
- Teachers and good, unbiased advice

The next step was to consider the current situation, i.e, the number of pupils, the financial situation, the range of subjects available to the learners etc, and to produce options to consider that look at the advantages and disadvantages in the context of the principles.

In short, the review asks for views regarding four possible options:

Option 1: Maintain the Current Situation

Option 2: Develop the Current Situation
Post-16 provision would continue on the 6 existing sites. The 6 current Governing Boards would continue with their current roles in terms of governance up to 16 but agree with the Local Authority to form a Strategic Board which would manage the Authority's post-16 budget, ensure suitable arrangements for joint planning of the curriculum and then commission the provision from the schools, e-sgol and other partners.

Option 3: Provision in some schools
This option would be a development of Option 2 above. It would mean closing the post-16 provision at one or more sites. Then, as in Option 2, those Governing Boards would continue with their current roles in terms of governance up until the age of 16 and agree with the Local Authority to form a Strategic Board that would manage the Authority's post-16 budget, ensure suitable arrangements for joint planning of the curriculum and then commissioning the provision from the schools, e-sgol and other partners. The Board would also be responsible for monitoring the quality of the provision and make recommendations to the Local Authority and the providers for improvement.

Option 4: One Centre
This option would offer a more far-reaching change. It would mean closing the current post-16 provision and establishing a Centre of Excellence, involving a range of partners, at one or more suitable geographical sites. A Governing Body independent of the schools would be responsible for the funding and the curriculum and would appoint a small number of core staff to steer and manage the work.

Wellbeing of Future Generations:
Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If not, please state why.

Not applicable at present.

Summary of Integrated Impact Assessment:
Long term: Not applicable
Collaboration: Not applicable
Involvement: Not applicable
Prevention: Not applicable
Integration: Not applicable

Recommendation(s):
1. **Note the contents of the report – 'A REVIEW OF THE POST-16 PROVISION IN CEREDIGION'.**
2. **Undertake a Feasibility Study to give detailed consideration to Option 2 and Option 4 in the Review.**

Reasons for decision:
1. **Cabinet to note the contents of the report.**
2. **Further consider the advantages and disadvantages of Option 2 and Option 4 in the context of the six principles.**

Overview and Scrutiny:
The Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to recommend to Cabinet that the Schools and Lifelong Learning Service undertake a Feasibility Study to give detailed consideration to Option 2 and Option 4 in the Review, however, Option 3 should also be considered if the information provided for Option 2 and 4 was not viable.

Policy Framework:
Not applicable at present

Corporate Well-being Objectives:
Not applicable at present

Finance and Procurement implications:
Not applicable at present

Legal Implications:
Not applicable at present

Staffing implications:
Not applicable at present

Property / asset implications:
Not applicable at present

Risk(s):
Not applicable at present

Statutory Powers:
Not applicable at present

Background Papers:
Not applicable

Appendices:
Appendix 1- Report - A REVIEW OF THE POST-16 PROVISION IN CEREDIGION

Corporate Lead Officer:
Elen James, Corporate Lead Officer: Lifelong Learning & Clive Williams, Corporate Lead Officer: Schools

Reporting Officer:
Elen James, Corporate Lead Officer: Lifelong Learning & Clive Williams, Corporate Lead Officer: Schools

Date:
16-10-2023

A REVIEW OF THE POST-16 PROVISION IN CEREDIGION

Summer 2023

Contents

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Post-16 provision in Ceredigion

1. Background and context

This review is intended to provide an analysis of the current post-16 provision in Ceredigion and identify sustainable options for the future, along with their potential advantages and disadvantages.

'To establish a brief and conduct a review of post-16 education to be presented to Cabinet' and the reason noted for the decision was 'to gain a recent analysis and appraisal of post-16 provision within the County.'

The aim of the review was to:

- create a set of agreed principles that are learner-centric
- offer a range of accessible and sustainable options

and in doing so:

- ensuring that the voices of the learners, governors, parents, headteachers and Local Authority officers are an integral part of the process
- ensuring that full consideration has been given to the findings and recommendations of Estyn's national reviews and the background to Welsh Government's current policy, including the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act
- considering rurality and the implications for carbon footprints.

There is also a wider context to this review, namely:

i)   Welsh Government's decision to establish the **Commission for Tertiary Education and Research** (CTER) [1] which will be responsible for the strategy, funding, and oversight of the further education sector, including colleges and the sixth forms in schools. The responsibilities of the CTER will be as follows:

- protect the interests of learners, ensuring vocational and academic learning are equally valued

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[1] https://www.gov.wales/tertiary-education-and-research-commission

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- align education and training more closely with the needs of employers
- monitor performance and governance whilst protecting the academic freedom of institutions
- monitor and promote improvement in education and training providers
- take a whole system approach to research and innovation funding with an ability to provide funding to a wide range of higher education and further education institutions
- increase the availability of Welsh-medium tertiary education and encourage individuals to learn through the medium of Welsh.

The intention is that local authorities will come to an agreement with the Commission on how funding is used. In addition, the Commission will have a strategic responsibility to ensure suitable facilities for educating 16–19-year-olds. The Commission shall have the right to direct local authorities to terminate or commence sixth form provision in a particular school or area. The Commission will be operational from September 2023.

ii) **Estyn's Thematic Report regarding Post-16 Partnerships**[2] *(January 2021)* which includes the following recommendations:

Schools and colleges should:

- ensure strong partnership working to develop collaborative provision with other providers where this helps to improve quality or expand choice
- ensure that post-16 provision delivered in partnership with other providers is underpinned by written agreements of responsibilities, and is included fully within improvement planning processes
- ensure that advice and guidance to learners is impartial, focused on learners' needs, and informed by the provision, standards and support available at all local post-16 education and training providers.

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[2] https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2022-01/Post-16%20partnerships%20en.pdf

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Local authorities should:

- ensure that strategic planning involves the wider community of local schools and colleges
- work together with colleges on joint professional learning activities where appropriate
- work with colleges to ensure that a suitable range of post-16 provision is available locally through the medium of Welsh.

iii) The opportunities available through the **Mid Wales Growth Deal,** the **Economic Strategy**[3] and the **Regional Partnership Board**[4] with regards to the needs and skills of the workforce for the future and the central role of the **Regional Skills Partnership (RSP)** in the collection and analysis of information.

iv) The need to ensure a broad and quality **vocational offer,** along with a **wider offering of A-Level subjects,** which allows learners to pursue different combinations of subjects and to specialise in their interests, regardless of where they live in the county.

v) Since commencing the work on the review, Estyn has published a further report in this field, **A review of the current 16-19 curriculum in Wales**[5] *(October 2022).* The recommendations from this report include:

Post-16 education and training providers should work together to:

- ensure that all learners have equitable access to vocational options, and that these options are valued as equally as general education options
- ensure that all learners have equitable access to Welsh-medium education
- ensure that all learners in key stage 4 receive impartial information, advice and guidance that covers all post-16 options available in their local area

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[3] https://growingenglish.powys1-prd.gosshosted.com/MidWalesGrowthDeal
[4] https://growingenglish.powys1-prd.gosshosted.com/midwalesskillspartnership
[5] https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2022-10/A%20review%20of%20the%20current%2016-19%20curriculum%20in%20Wales_0.pdf

5

and, more generally, that it is necessary to:

- ensure that providers collaborate to offer learners access to a wider range of courses that individual providers either do not offer or offer but do not run due to low numbers (including Welsh-medium provision).

In addition to the above it became apparent during the review, in conversations with senior officers and elected member, that the economic outlook for the authority, particularly considering the findings of the 2021 census, is not promising and that rationalisation of services was inevitable. It was noted that there is a lack of certainty regarding the sustainability of Ceredigion's relative generosity in school funding, and that the post-16 provision would be no different in this regard. The Cabinet Member for Schools, Lifelong Learning and Skills noted the importance of maintaining the education standards in Ceredigion and that the standards should not be negatively affected by any change.

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2. Principles

It is stated in the brief, as part of the compass of the review, that a set of "agreed principles that are learner centric" should be created when preparing options for the County Council's Cabinet and Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee. These principles should ensure that the voices of learners, governors, parents and headteachers are an integral part of the process. Their purpose is to assist the Scrutiny Committee and the Cabinet to create a suitable criterion for deciding which option they prefer from the continuum presented in section 9.

In making decisions on the development of the post-16 provision in Ceredigion, the evidence presented in this review has led us to propose the following principles:

Principle 1:

The needs of the learner should be prioritised over any organisational needs.

Principle 2:

The generally high standards in Ceredigion schools should be maintained and improved.

Principle 3:

There should be more fairness and equal opportunities for all learners across the county in terms of the offer, advice and guidance, pastoral care and wellbeing, travel requirements, teaching method and access to support. This includes ensuring bespoke and specialist support for pupils with additional learning needs ensuring a continuum of education for them in the absence of a special school in the county.

Principle 4:

The Welsh-medium offer should be improved to be at least consistent with the English-medium offer to increase the number of Welsh speakers in Ceredigion and to contribute to a bilingual workforce and community.

Principle 5:

Access to a wide range of quality academic and vocational courses should be ensured, increasing the number of vocational courses currently available for pupils in all parts of the county.

Principle 6:

The governance of the post-16 provision should promote the above principles, consider the strategic quality improvement processes, ensure that expenditure is kept as much as possible within the post-16 budget and allow decisions to be made that consider environmental sustainability and carbon footprint.

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3. Evidence Base

The review gathered the views of a broad group of stakeholders. Surveys were sent to key groups and a total of 1,306 responses were received from these individuals.
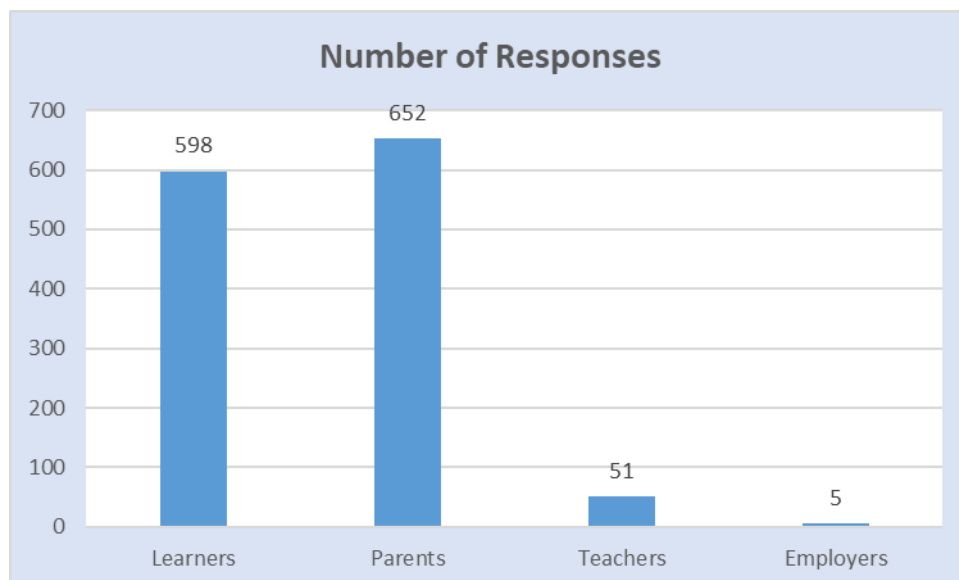
Number of Responses

Learners	Parents	Teachers	Employers
598	652	51	5

In addition, interviews were conducted with representatives from educational providers, the Local Authority and other partners.

The following contributed fully to the discussions (see Appendix 11.1 for further details):

- **Learners –** an online questionnaire was created with appropriate questions for learners from primary school age to 25 years of age. 598 responses were received.

- **Parents –** an online questionnaire was created with appropriate questions for parents of learners from primary school age to 25 years of age. 652 responses were received.

- **Headteachers** and **Chairs of the Governors of 3-16, 11-18 and 3-19 schools –** virtual meetings were held with each school separately followed by a further face-to-face meeting with all headteachers together.

- **Deputy Headteachers, Heads of Sixth Forms** and **Senior Managers** – a virtual meeting was held with representatives from the above schools.

- **Teachers** - an online questionnaire was created with appropriate questions for all school staff. 51 responses were received.

- **Coleg Ceredigion** – a virtual meeting was held with the Headteacher and Senior Manager.

- **Hyfforddiant Ceredigion Training (HCT)** – there was a visit to the site in Aberystwyth and a discussion was held with the Headteacher and Senior Manager.

- **Representatives from Ceredigion Council** – as well as regular virtual meetings with the staff in the education department, meetings were held with the Chief Executive and Corporate Director and with the Council Leader and Cabinet Member for Schools, Lifelong Learning and Skills.

- **Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership** – a virtual meeting was held with the Partnership's Manager.

- **Employers** – an online questionnaire was created with appropriate questions. 5 responses were received.

The review also considered historical and current data. This included information regarding:

- learner numbers
- finance
- number of courses in Welsh and English
- number of learners taking individual courses in Welsh and English
- destinations and information on existing partnership arrangements.

4. Analysis of the responses received

Following the interviews and the analysis of the questionnaires, trends were considered. A more detailed analysis of the questionnaire is available in Appendix 11.1. Below is a summary of the main themes that arose in the responses.

- **Broad selection –** the need for an rich choice of courses with high quality learning was identified. The need for a curriculum to meet the needs of a full range of vocational learners, apprenticeships and Additional Learning Needs was noted.

- **Language –** the ability to learn through the medium of Welsh or English and the importance of continuity from Key Stage 4 to Key Stage 5.

- **Location –** several responses noted the benefits of staying in the same organisation in terms of aspiration, ethos, and transport.

- **Connections with the world of work –** experiences in the world of work were identified as beneficial to help with choices, particularly with vocational courses.

- **Collaboration between schools or the establishment of centres of excellence –** Aberystwyth and Cardigan were named by some respondents as locations for centres. Others wished to combine the sixth forms in the schools in Aberystwyth, whilst the other proposal was to combine timetables and allow staff to travel between schools.

- **Teachers and good, unbiased advice –** the importance of having supportive specialists who know the learners was noted. In addition, when transitioning to post-16 education there is a need to raise awareness of jobs and opportunities beyond the traditional offering.

5. Current situation

5i) Pupil numbers, the range of choices and the options available to learners

The table below notes the average number of pupils per course, the qualifications per school and the language medium of their exams (Summer 2022). Further details are available in Appendix 11.2.

	2022 Summer exams data	Aberaeron		Aberteifi		Penglais		Penweddig		Bro Pedr		Bro Teifi		Ceredigion	
		WEL	ENG	WEL	ENG	WEL	ENG	WEL	ENG	WEL	ENG	WEL	ENG	WEL	ENG
Excluding BACC	*Language of qualification*														
	Number of courses	1	15	0	18	0	27	17	10	5	22	12	8	20	45
	Pupils average	1.0	5.3	-	5.6	-	12.7	4.4	4.2	3.4	7.3	4.2	6.5	7.1	17.2
	Total courses	15		18		27		21		23		20		50	
	Pupils average	5.3		5.6		12.7		5.5		7.7		5.1		18.3	
Including BACC	Total courses	16		19		28		22		24		21		51	
	Pupils average	7.2		7.1		16.3		7.0		9.8		6.6		24.2	
	Number of courses ≥ 12 pupils	1		3		13		2		5		1		21	
	As a %	6%		16%		46%		9%		21%		5%		41%	

* It's not possible to know the "language" of the BACC from the official data, so it's been excluded from the first half of the table above

The average number of pupils on post-16 courses is less than 12 pupils in 5 out of 6 schools and less than 6 pupils in 4 out of 6 schools, if the data doesn't include the Welsh Baccalaureate qualification (referred to in the table above as the 'BAC'). When including the Baccalaureate, the average remains less than 12 pupils in 5 out of 6 schools.

A limited number of subjects are taught in partnership, with one school providing the subject to others, including their own pupils. For example, in 2021 Bro Pedr provided Further Maths, Drama and French for Bro Teifi; but there was also provision from outside the county with Penweddig receiving German lessons from Crickhowell and Bro Teifi receiving Criminology from Bro Myrddin.

Ceredigion's retention rate has fallen across the past five years, and now only 54% of year 11 pupils remain in school into year 12. At its peak, the retention rate was 69% in 2017-18. Further detail on individual schools is available in Appendix 11.3.

Ceredigion

		14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21
	Y13	448	461	409	358	382	308	367
Retention rates from...	Y12	-	86%	84%	80%	83%	83%	93%
	Y11	-	-	56%	51%	58%	49%	52%
	Y12	535	485	449	459	372	393	390
Retention rates from...	Y11	-	66%	64%	69%	59%	55%	54%
	Y11	736	698	662	631	711	728	709

There are sound examples within the authority of key post-16 provision for learners with more significant Additional Learning Needs to help their transition to living an independent life in their communities.

Coleg Ceredigion and Hyfforddiant Ceredigion (HCT) are very eager to avoid unnecessary duplication and ensure that post-16 curriculum planning is done more strategically across all partners. It should be noted that Coleg Ceredigion doesn't offer any Welsh-medium courses, and further detail about their courses is available in Appendix 11.4.

5ii) Wellbeing

Schools have many provisions that support the wellbeing of sixth form pupils, such as having learning mentors who offer sound pastoral and academic support to learners, librarians and access to counselling where appropriate.

5iii) The Welsh language

There is a significant difference between the numbers who start in year 7 and are recognised as learners with bilingual skills, and the number studying through the medium of Welsh by the time they reach the 6th form.

Two of the schools, Ysgol Penweddig and Ysgol Bro Teifi, define themselves as dedicated Welsh medium schools and are currently hastening their journey towards protecting the Welsh medium provision from year 7 to year 13.

Generally, only very small numbers study through the medium of Welsh in 6th forms across the county. Concern was expressed about the possibility that one option of trying to solve the post-16 challenge would be offering learning in both languages in the same classroom as

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the norm. In addition to the subject provision through the medium of Welsh, some leaders noted that there was a concern about the loss of the Welsh ethos in the 6th form.

5 iv) Vocational provision available to learners

All of the schools offer some vocational subjects, which are generally within the Health and Care, Business, Leisure and Sports fields. In some cases, it's possible to take courses such as Product Design, Photography (BTEC), ICT (BTEC), blacksmithing, agriculture and support for learners to pursue an Engineering diploma which is equivalent to 3 A levels. Further detail is available in Appendix 11.2.

It has become apparent that the offer varies significantly and unevenly across the county, which inevitably raises a question about the fairness of the offer for post-16 students. Also, the offer varies from year to year which makes it difficult to pre-plan e.g. photography, outdoor activities, and engineering may be available during one year but not the next due to learner demand or staff availability.

The schools note different levels of confidence in the courses available from the college – with high praise for the carpentry course at Coleg Ceredigion.

There is a strong feeling among the schools that there should be effective provision within Ceredigion for vocational education in agriculture.

5 v) Learning and staffing situation

In recent years several schools have mentioned the growing challenge of recruiting for certain subjects – especially the sciences and vocational subjects. When recruitment challenges arise, as well as having a potential impact on the quality of provision, staff who aren't fluent Welsh speakers sometimes join the schools, which in turn reduces the schools' ability to offer equal options in both languages.

In some cases, this has started to affect the medium of choices lower down in the school and the day-to-day language of the school.

Several teachers are dedicated to trying to develop their bilingualism. There is a sabbatical provision available to them on a national level, but schools feel that a flexible approach to learning Welsh needs to be developed for their development to fit in with their work in the

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school. It has been noted by some schools that they do not have staff who have changed to teaching through the medium of Welsh following periods on the language programme. However, the authority's contribution to this initiative is greatly appreciated.

Some of the schools have developed their partnerships with the teacher training centres across Wales, to attract new teachers when they enter the profession. However, there is a strong feeling that the recruitment challenges are increasing annually in those schools requiring bilingual staff.

5 vi) Partnerships between schools and partnerships with other providers

There has been an increase in interdependence between schools, with the growth of e-sgol and other forms of collaboration. Often the links between two or three schools around a particular subject are positive. There is also a strong view that the partnerships' practical arrangements, including travel and timetable restrictions, are significantly impeding the development.
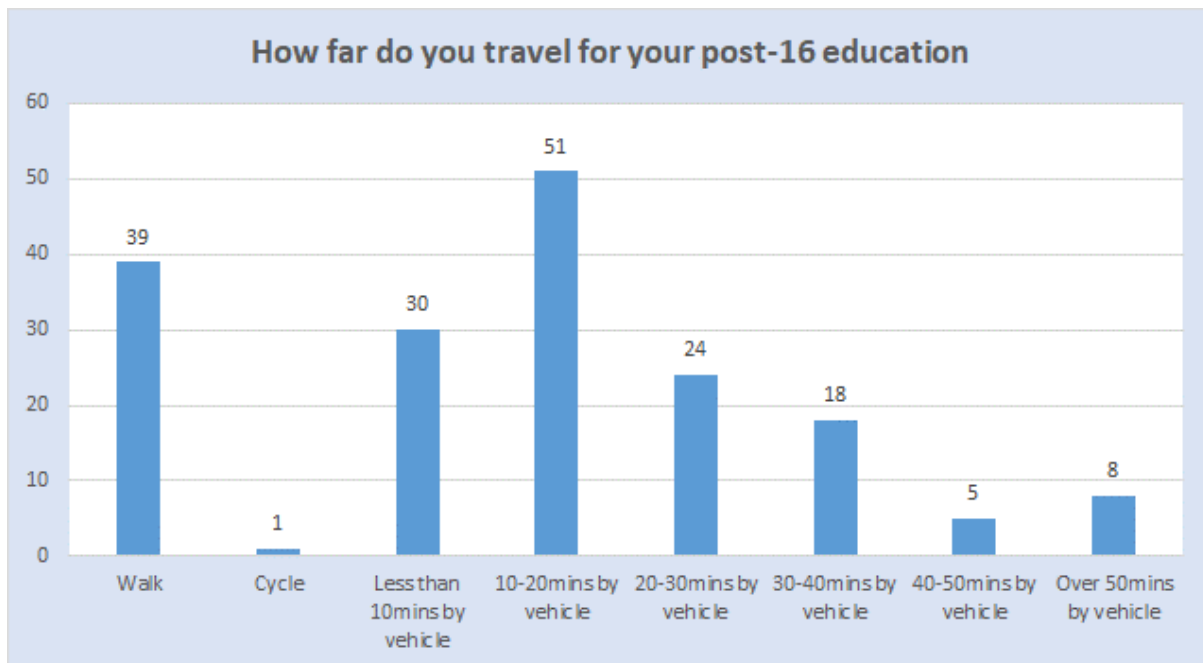
There are some obstacles, such as sharing tracking data and balance between the providers and recipients. It has been noted by two schools that things work better when the two schools are responsible for teaching different modules to shared A-level courses, thus retaining expertise and a sense of ownership in both schools.

Reference was made to the collaboration with Skillstart in Engineering which is an additional cost for schools, and blacksmithing work with HCT. However, this offer isn't available to all schools within the county.

It was also noted that too often learners return to school during their first term due to difficulties with their college experience, which is often associated with travelling great distances for their sixth form education, or to Pembrokeshire College in Haverfordwest.

Examples of co-working were identified across county boundaries, with schools in Powys evident in this. Examples are also developing of collaboration with schools in Carmarthenshire, which clearly demonstrate the challenge that exists in seeking county-wide solutions in a county that is geographically vast and sparsely populated.

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The learners who share courses between schools / organisations noted that they travel varying distances to reach their post-16 provider. Some reported being able to walk there whilst others travelled over an hour.

How far do you travel for your post-16 education

Category	Value
Walk	39
Cycle	1
Less than 10mins by vehicle	30
10-20mins by vehicle	51
20-30mins by vehicle	24
30-40mins by vehicle	18
40-50mins by vehicle	5
Over 50mins by vehicle	8

When asked how far they would be willing to travel for a wider choice of courses, that increased to around 30 minutes. When questioned, on average the parents confirmed the same willingness to see the travel distance increase from around a quarter of an hour to around half an hour if a wider choice of courses were available. However, many indicated that better transport arrangements are needed, especially from the more rural areas.

Some schools raised a question about the need to look to the University as a partner for post-16 education, particularly due to the veterinary and nursing training now available in Aberystwyth. It was vital for the schools to see possibilities for post-16 students to begin forward planning to benefit from these courses in higher education after they finish school, but after the schools and university have created learning pathways towards higher education. The Chief Executive and Strategic Director were supportive of the concept of a centre or centres of excellence, with Coleg Ceredigion and HCT as partners as well.

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6. Analysing the principles

P1.   The needs of the learner should be prioritised over any organisational needs.

Overall, this principle was not consistently applied across the county when making decisions on the offer available to the learners. As a results, some opportunities have been missed to forge stable and deeper partnerships between organisations that would have allowed the offer to be expanded, limit the number of unviable classes [6] and reduce recruitment problems. Where larger classes allow smaller classes to be run in other subjects, the strategic benefits of that should be considered more widely than within a single organisation. Estyn's report on Post-16 Partnerships (January 2021) provides useful guidance.

P2.   The generally high standards in Ceredigion schools should be maintained and improved.

As previously noted, the results of Ceredigion schools' post-16 external assessments are generally good and there are hard-working and enthusiastic members of staff who are well led by their headteachers and committed governors. They have a key role to play going forward.

P3.   There should be more fairness and equal opportunities for all learners across the county in terms of the offer, advice and guidance, pastoral care and wellbeing, travel requirements, teaching method and access to support.

The offer, as well as the advice and guidance available to the learners, is currently over-reliant on the institution in which they are enrolled. There needs to be greater consistency across the county not only in terms of the courses offered but also the teaching method (face-to-face, virtual, blended, e-sgol, etc.). Where there is virtual or e-sgol provision, consistency is also needed in the support offered beyond the usual lessons.

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[6] A viable class is considered to be 12 learners. This is the number of learners that attracts adequate post-16 funding directly from Welsh Government to be sustainable without having to draw on funding delegated by the Local Authority for 11-16 education.

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P4. **The Welsh-medium offer should be improved to be at least consistent with the English-medium offer.**

The offer through the medium of Welsh is currently severely lacking, linguistic continuity is weak and some organisations are reporting of recruitment difficulties in specialist areas. Considering the objectives of Ceredigion's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, this needs to be addressed in a robust and swift manner.

P5. **There should be more focus on the vocational offer.**

With around 40% of Ceredigion's Year 11 cohort leaving school at 16, the partners need to pay more attention to the vocational offer, including apprenticeships, across the county. The needs of the local economy and the demand for specific skills have been identified within the plans of the Growth Deal and the Regional Partnership Board. The Regional Skills Partnership will build on this and it will be the basis for developing learning pathways that develop skills to meet the requirements of local employers and beyond.

P6. **The governance of the post-16 provision should promote the above principles, consider the strategic quality improvement processes, ensure that expenditure is kept as much as possible within the post-16 budget and allow decisions to be made that consider environmental sustainability.**

At present, the nature of the governance arrangements means that the main focus is on the offer within one organisation rather than looking more strategically across the county and, where necessary, beyond. In all schools except Penglais, over 80% of post-16 courses are unviable (see table in section 5i). The result of this is the need to draw funding from the funding earmarked by the Local Authority for 11-16 education in order to provide a subsidy to maintain post-16 education.

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7. The numbers of sixth form learners

The Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 provides a statutory basis for 14-19 Learning Pathways. It obliges 16-18 education providers to develop a local curriculum offering with at least 30 courses as options, including at least five general courses and five vocational courses. This offer should be in conjunction with other post-16 providers. Introducing the 30 options is more of a challenge for schools with small sixth forms. This has led to concerns about the ability of such schools to deliver the curriculum in a cost-effective manner, with maximum benefit for learners. These concerns increase when trying to provide a full post-16 curriculum through the medium of Welsh.

The numbers of year 12 learners within Ceredigion schools' sixth forms have fallen from 535 in 2014/15 to 390 in 2020/21. See more detail in Appendix 11.3. The transfer rates vary between schools.

Inevitably, the aforementioned reduction in learner numbers has had a negative impact on the funding awarded by the Welsh Government for post-16 provision in Ceredigion. Following two stable years in 2020/21 and 2021/22, the 2022/23 financial year saw a reduction of over £273k (7.05%) in funding, the highest reduction of any authority in Wales. The predictions in terms of future learner numbers do not suggest that this funding will be recovered soon.

8. The financial situation

Funding to maintain post-16 education provision is provided by the Welsh Government in the form of an annual grant.

The total amount of this grant for 2023-24 was **£3,786,591**

This grant has been allocated according to a formula which includes the following:

- Pupil numbers: £4333 is allocated for each post-16 learner. PLASC (Pupil Level Annual School Census) data is used annually on the basis of actual numbers over the previous 2 years and an estimate of transfer numbers for the current year;
- Deprivation (a total of £16k is allocated to each sixth form based on the numbers who are entitled to free school meals);
- Sparsity - a total of £332k; and
- Welsh medium – a total of £186k

When estimating the true cost of maintaining a sixth form in a school, the following costs are considered:

- Teaching costs (the cost of the teacher) modelled on teaching hours + 15% PPA (Planning, Preparation, Assessment) and assumptions of the teacher's salary modelled on the main pay scale + TLR1a to consider that teachers who teach post-16 classes are likely to carry additional Teaching and Learning Responsibilities, some more than TLR1a and some less.
- The cost of the head of the sixth form based on a 30% non-contact timetable
- Data and examination officer on a 0.5fte basis at pay scale 8
- Cost of exams @£109.20 per whole qualification
- Teaching resources: a total of £200 per pupil (not for all courses)
- Additional Learning Needs Support (1:1 support and additional intervention)
- Free School Meals

The estimated cost of running sixth form courses in 2023-24 is **£4,194,750, which is £408,519 more than the sixth form grant.**

Modelling the above on a lower cost basis of 10% PPA and TLR 2c for teachers and 0.3fte for the examination officer, the total falls to **£3,946,208, which is £159,617 more than the sixth form grant.**
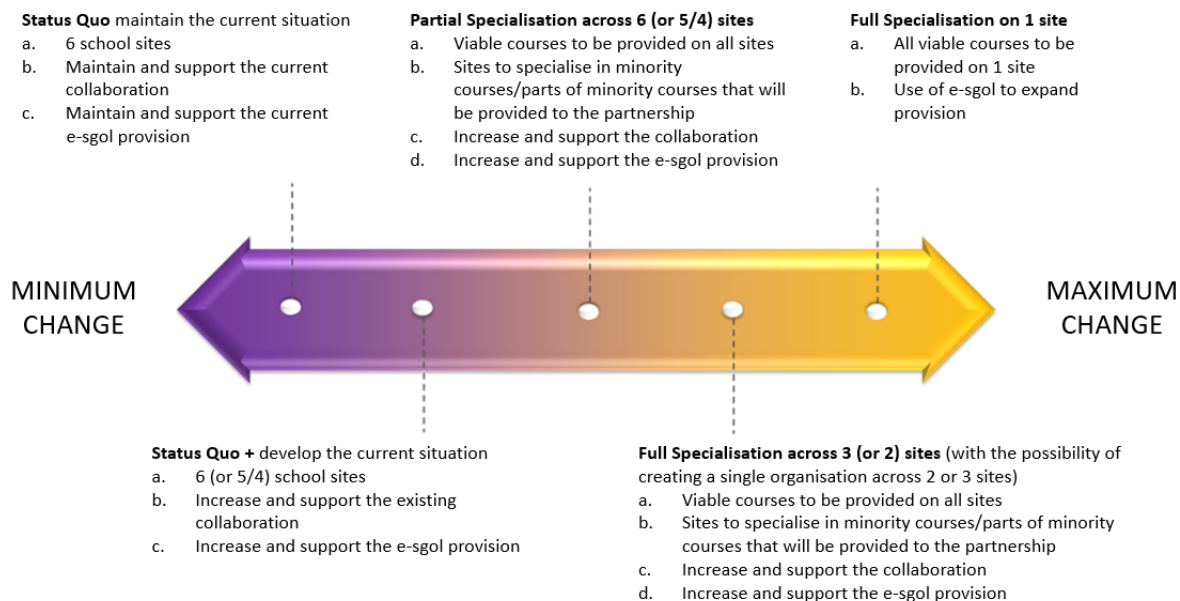
All schools have overhead costs and these can be calculated per pupil as a basis for calculating these costs for post-16 pupils. These costs include energy (mainly fuel), maintenance, cleaning, leadership, administrative team, exam invigilators (where appropriate) and librarians (where appropriate). The total of these overhead costs for post-16 in Ceredigion schools is **£1,412,280**. An analysis of these costs can be seen in Appendix 11.5.3.

From the above, it is clear that the Post-16 grant from the Welsh Government is not sufficient to maintain post-16 provision in its current form in Ceredigion as the expenditure is between **£1,571,897** and **£1,820,799** more than the value of the grant.

Based on the assumptions above, all but one school in Ceredigion have to use core 11-16 funding to varying degrees to maintain their sixth forms. Ysgol Penglais is the exception, where relatively large numbers in the sixth form allow more viable classes and economies of scale to maintain their provision.

9. Options to consider

Possible post-16 model

Status Quo maintain the current situation
a.   6 school sites
b.   Maintain and support the current collaboration
c.   Maintain and support the current e-sgol provision

Partial Specialisation across 6 (or 5/4) sites
a.   Viable courses to be provided on all sites
b.   Sites to specialise in minority courses/parts of minority courses that will be provided to the partnership
c.   Increase and support the collaboration
d.   Increase and support the e-sgol provision

Full Specialisation on 1 site
a.   All viable courses to be provided on 1 site
b.   Use of e-sgol to expand provision

MINIMUM CHANGE

MAXIMUM CHANGE

Status Quo + develop the current situation
a.   6 (or 5/4) school sites
b.   Increase and support the existing collaboration
c.   Increase and support the e-sgol provision

Full Specialisation across 3 (or 2) sites (with the possibility of creating a single organisation across 2 or 3 sites)
a.   Viable courses to be provided on all sites
b.   Sites to specialise in minority courses/parts of minority courses that will be provided to the partnership
c.   Increase and support the collaboration
d.   Increase and support the e-sgol provision

At the right end, which is the maximum change, the post-16 provision can be combined with other partners such as Hyfforddiant Ceredigion Training and Coleg Ceredigion (Coleg Ceredigion is part of the Coleg Sir Gâr Cyf company within the University of Wales Trinity Saint David Group and does not come under the control of Ceredigion County Council.) In addition, it is recognized that joint work could be done to varying degrees with the college and HCT as part of the other options.

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10.Consideration of the different options in the context of the principles

The intention of this section is to consider options based on what has been set out in section 9 in turn and to consider each one's potential to meet the principles from section 6. This is done by looking at the advantages and disadvantages of the different options in the context of the principles.

OPTION 1 - Maintain the Current Situation

Description of the option

This option would mean that the current situation in Ceredigion would remain the same. Post-16 provision would continue on the 6 existing sites. The Local Authority would continue to maintain, develop and support the current collaboration arrangements between the schools and with partners. That would include the e-sgol provision. Formal partnership agreements would be in place including e-sgol. The 6 current Governing Boards would continue with their current roles in terms of post-16 governance.

Advantages of Option 1	Disadvantages of Option 1
1. This is the option that creates the least change within Ceredigion's post-16 organisation. It would meet the aspirations of those learners who are eager to see the current sixth form arrangements remain as they are. 2. In the short term, at least, staff and unions would not see this option as one that would threaten their job security and thereby create uncertainty in the schools.	1. In the past, the learners' needs were not consistently prioritized across the county when making decisions on the offer to them. As a result, some strategic opportunities have been missed to create stable, deeper partnerships between schools. This would have allowed the offer to be expanded, limited the number of non-viable classes and reduced recruitment problems. Where larger classes in terms of numbers allow smaller classes to be run in other subjects, the strategic

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	benefits of that were not fully considered beyond a single institution.
	2. The current arrangements with partners beyond the schools for curriculum planning or for monitoring and improving standards are not satisfactory.
	3. There are major shortcomings in the Welsh medium offer, linguistic progression is poor and some institutions note recruitment difficulties in specialist areas.
	4. The current arrangements do not effectively address the significant financial challenges facing the authority and the schools, and schools will continue to rely on 11-16 funding to provide subsidies to maintain post-16 education.
	5. There is no fairness or equal opportunity for all learners in the county in terms of the offer, the pastoral care and well-being, the travel requirements, the learning method or access to support. All of this is highly dependent on the institution in which the learner is enrolled. There is no consistency in terms of the courses offered or the learning method (face-to-face,

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	virtual, combined, e-sgol etc.). Where there is virtual or e-sgol provision there is also a need for consistency in terms of the support offered beyond the usual lessons.
	6. In general, the advice and guidance given to learners is too focused on the provision within the school.
	7. Although approximately 40% of Ceredigion's Y11 cohort leave school at the age of 16, the vocational offer, including apprenticeships, has not received due attention and does not respond to the needs of the local economy.
	8. The current governance arrangements, particularly the lack of strategic partnership agreements, lead to decisions being made that do not necessarily take into account the wider needs of the county's learners.
	9. The disadvantages above suggest that Ceredigion's current post-16 arrangements could be challenged by the CTER when it is established in 2023.

OPTION 2 – Develop the Current Situation

Description of the Option

This option would build on the current situation in Ceredigion. In the first place, post-16 provision would continue on the 6 existing sites. The 6 current Governing Boards would continue with their current roles in terms of governance up to 16 but agree with the Local Authority to form a Strategic Board which would manage the Authority's post-16 budget, ensure suitable arrangements for joint planning of the curriculum and then commission the provision from the schools, e-sgol and other partners. The Strategic Board would be supported by an Executive Board in order to implement the curricular offers. The Strategic Board would be responsible for monitoring the quality of the provision and making recommendations to the Local Authority and the providers for improvement. Over time, these recommendations could include adjusting the number of sites and what is provided at each site. All providers would be represented on both boards, with representation from the Local Authority and an appropriate place for the voice of the learner and parents.

Advantages of Option 2	Disadvantages of Option 2
1 This option would not destabilize Ceredigion's current post-16 organization in the short term and is therefore likely to meet the aspirations of those learners who are eager to see the current sixth form arrangements remain as they are. 2 While recognizing the need for a strategic overview, the system that led to the generally high post-16 standards in Ceredigion schools would remain. As with Option 1, it is likely that this would be seen as	1. The slowness of partnership developments to date (even with a strategic board in place) suggests that continuing on this path would not deliver the improvements quickly enough or to the necessary extent. 2. Some governors might oppose the surrendering of post-16 responsibilities to a Strategic Board. 3. The Board might not be able to act at the necessary speed to make changes in a timely manner.

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supporting the efforts and successes of school staff and governors, learners and their parents.	4. Mistrust and a tendency to protect the needs of individual institutions could undermine the work of the Board.
3 In the short term, at least, staff and unions would not see this option as one that would threaten their job security and thereby create uncertainty in the schools.	5. The Board may struggle to reach an agreement on making more challenging recommendations and therefore fail to effectively address the significant financial challenges facing the authority and the schools.
4 The formation of a Strategic Board would provide a structure to allow the needs of learners across the county to be prioritised when making decision on the offer to them. This could lead to the creation of stable, deeper partnerships between schools and other providers, expand the offer, limit the number of non-viable classes and reduce recruitment problems. Where larger classes in terms of numbers allow smaller classes to be run in other subjects, the Board would be able to consider that across the entire provision.	6. There is no guarantee that the scale of change in this option would be sufficient in order to reach a point where the sixth form provision is self-sustainable (i.e. without subsidy from 11-16 funding).
5 The Board would be responsible for developing arrangements with partners beyond the schools for curriculum planning and for monitoring and improving standards.	

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6. One of the core roles of the Board would be to ensure an improvement in the offer through the medium of Welsh, in line with the aspirations and objectives of Ceredigion's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. 7. The Board would have a responsibility to ensure greater fairness and equal opportunity for all learners in the county in terms of the offer, advice and guidance, pastoral care and well-being, travel requirements, the teaching method and access to support. 8. The Board would consider the suitability of the vocational offer, including apprenticeships.	

OPTION 3 – Provision in some schools

Description of the Option

This option would be a development of Option 2 above. It would mean closing the post-16 provision at one or more sites. Then, as in Option 2, those Governing Boards would continue with their current roles in terms of governance up until the age of 16 and agree with the Local Authority to form a Strategic Board that would manage the Authority's post-16 budget, ensure suitable arrangements for joint planning of the curriculum and then commissioning the provision from the schools, e-sgol and other partners. The Board would also be responsible for monitoring the quality of the provision and make recommendations to the Local Authority and the providers for improvement. These recommendations could include further adjusting the number of sites. All providers, including all schools, would be represented on the Board, with representation from the Local Authority and an appropriate place for the voice of the learner and parents.

Advantages of Option 3	Disadvantages of Option 3
1 The formation of formal federalism would provide a structure for allowing the needs of learners across the county to be prioritised when making decisions on the offer to them. This could lead to the creation of stable, deeper partnerships between schools and other providers, expand the offer, limit the number of non-viable classes and reduce recruitment problems. Where larger classes in terms of numbers allow	1 This option would begin to destabilize Ceredigion's current post-16 organisation. 2 Closing the post-16 provision of one or more schools while keeping others open would likely create animosity between areas and the perception that some areas are gaining at the expense of other areas. 3 Staff and unions could see this option as one that would threaten their job security and

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smaller classes to be run in other subjects, the Board would be able to consider that across the entire provision.	thereby create uncertainty in the schools.
2 The Board would be responsible for developing arrangements with partners beyond the schools for curriculum planning and for monitoring and improving standards.	4 The expectation for teachers and staff to travel would likely increase and therefore increase costs and the carbon footprint.
3 One of the core roles of the Board would be to ensure an improvement in the offer through the medium of Welsh, in line with the aspirations and objectives of Ceredigion's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.	5 The Board might not be able to act at the necessary speed to make changes in a timely manner.
4 The Board would have a responsibility to ensure greater fairness and equal opportunity for all learners in the county. This would be specific in terms of the offer, the advice and guidance, the pastoral care and well-being, the travel requirements, the teaching method and access to support. This would include learners from other schools where there would be no post-16 provision under this option.	6 The Board might struggle to reach agreement on making more difficult recommendations and therefore fail to effectively address the significant financial challenges facing the authority and the schools.

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5 The Board would consider the suitability of the vocational offer, including apprenticeships.	

OPTION 4 – One Centre

Description of the option

This option would offer a more far-reaching change. It would mean closing the current post-16 provision and establishing a Centre of Excellence, involving a range of partners, at one or more suitable geographical sites. A Governing Body independent of the schools would be responsible for the funding and the curriculum and would appoint a small number of core staff to steer and manage the work.

Advantages of Option 4	Disadvantages of Option 4
1 This option would allow the needs of learners across the county to be prioritised when making decisions on the offer for them. This could lead to the creation of stable, deeper partnerships between the new centre/centres and other providers. It would also expand the offer and limit the numbers of non-viable classes.	1 This option would destabilize Ceredigion's current post-16 organisation. It could create significant local opposition.
2 The Governing Body would have a responsibility to develop arrangements with partners beyond the schools for curriculum planning and for monitoring and improving standards.	2 Staff and unions could see this option as one that would threaten job security and morale. That could create significant uncertainty in the schools.
3 There would be a clear responsibility for the Governing Body to ensure improvement in	3 The expectation for teachers and staff to travel would likely increase and therefore increase costs and the carbon footprint.
	4 Although there is a solid opportunity here to develop the curriculum through the medium of Welsh, there is no guarantee that the Welsh ethos of the schools will be maintained in the new institutions.

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the offer through the medium of Welsh, in accordance with the aspirations and objectives of Ceredigion's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.	5 If the Centre of Excellence were to follow a model of commissioning staff from the County's schools, those schools might not prioritize post-16 requirements when appointing.
4 There would be a clear responsibility and opportunity to ensure greater fairness and equal opportunity for all learners in the county. That would include the offer, the advice and guidance, the pastoral care and well-being, the travel requirements, the teaching method and access to support.	
5 The Governing Body would consider the suitability of the vocational offer, including apprenticeships. By co-locating provision on one or more sites, there is the opportunity for students to combine A-level and vocational courses.	
6 The formation of a single Governing Body would allow quicker action than Options 2 and 3.	
7 A single Governing Body would have a better chance of responding to the significant	

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financial challenges in the future.	
8 As there is only one Governing Body in this option there is no opportunity for individual schools to opt out.	
9 An experience for students in a larger institution, whether socially or in terms of experiencing a life more similar to what they will face when moving on to University.	
10 This option would allow co-location with providers such as Coleg Ceredigion / HCT in order to further expand the offer and allow learners to follow different combinations of courses. This would also likely increase the number of learners, with the benefits of that including providing a wider range of courses and extracurricular opportunities.	
11 Without having to maintain a sixth form, schools would be free to spend all money delegated by the Local Authority for 11-16 education in accordance with the basic intention of this funding.	

A SUMMARY OF THE OPTIONS AGAINST THE PRINCIPLES

Option	Principle 1	Principle 2	Principle 3	Principle 4	Principle 5	Principle 6
1	Red	Green	Red	Orange	Red	Red
2	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green
3	Orange	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Orange
4	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Orange	Green	Green

Green	Met to a large extent
Yellow	Met to some extent
Orange	Met to a lesser extent
Red	Met to a low extent

Acknowledgments

Thank you to everyone who has given their time and expertise to assist in the production of this report. Thanks to the headteachers, staff and governors of the schools, to Coleg Ceredigion and Hyfforddiant Ceredigion Training, to the Regional Skills Partnership and to the learners, parents and employers for responding to the questionnaire. A special thanks to Ceredigion Council staff for their support throughout.

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11. Appendices

11.1 – Summary of Questionnaires

Parents of primary age learners

- **Wide choice** - a large number have identified the need for a rich choice of subjects with high learning quality. The need for a curriculum to meet the needs of a full range of vocational learners, apprenticeships, ALN, was noted.
- **Language** – there was a whole continuum of attitudes on this subject. From ensuring Welsh language pathways in all subjects through all key stages, to not learning subjects through the medium of Welsh as it does not prepare learners for their future in further education and the workplace.
- **Local** – The opinion of many was that post-16 education should remain local within the schools.
- **Pathways to the world of work, work experience** - many identified the need for a curriculum that developed the skills needed for Ceredigion's workforce. Early world of work education in order to generate interest and prepare learners and put them on the right paths.
- **Collaboration between schools or the establishment of centres of excellence** – Aberystwyth and Cardigan were named as centres of excellence by some. Combining the 6th form of Aberystwyth schools was another suggestion, while another proposal was to combine timetables and allow staff to travel between schools.

Parents of Y7-11 learners

- **Wide choice** – across traditional and vocational courses, apprenticeships and ALN learners.
- **Local** – The opinion of many was that post-16 education should stay local within the school including a number noting the reopening of Henry Richard. The importance of a 6th form within schools was noted and the need to travel across the County for College courses.
- **Collaboration between schools or the establishment of centres of excellence** – Aberystwyth schools were noted by a few as an opportunity to combine, others noted 1 Centre in the County for all provisions.
- **Connections with the world of work** – Experiences in the world of work to help with choices especially with vocational courses. Developing strong links with employers to build the necessary skills is also noted.
- **Language –** the ability to learn through Welsh or English was noted by a number of people

Parents of KS5 learners

- **Offering** – Choice is limited, need more vocational options and ones that are relevant to the agricultural nature of the county, and apprenticeships.
- **Local** – Many felt there were great benefits to staying in the same institution in terms of aspiration, ethos, mental health and transport.
- **Create 1 College or develop and add to what we have** – Staff expertise, increased choice, flexibility, prepare learners for further education, eliminate the attitude of College v School and A Level v Vocational.
- **Workplace advice and work experience** – Develop the understanding at pre-16 level so that they can make meaningful choices.

Parents of post-18 learners

- **Offering** – Increasing the offering across all qualification types was the main theme with the majority noting this.
- **Development of a centre/college** - a number noted this as a way of getting a better offering and higher quality provision with expertise in subjects.
- **Keeping post-18 education local** - a few expressed that this is the way forward.

Yr 7 and 8 Learners

- **Wide choice –** options to suit learners' interests
- **Local –** stay in their school and don't want to travel far
- **Language –** choose the language in which they study
- **College –** Somewhere central to everyone
- **Work experience**

Yr 9 -11 Learners

- **Wide choice** – equality, diversity, practical, vocational, ALN
- **Good teachers** – Experts, face to face, supportive, know the learner, good advice about post-16 options
- **Local** – a mixture here of staying at their current school to more local Colleges
- **Language** – ability to study in the language of their choice, ability to learn subjects in Welsh
- **Facilities** – Learning, computers, sports, relaxation

Yr 12-13 Learners

- **Wide choice** – Beyond traditional subjects, get rid of the Bacc, apprenticeships
- **Good advice** - when transitioning to KS5, raise awareness of jobs and opportunities beyond the traditional offering
- **Language** – study in the language of their choice and continuation from KS4 to 5

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Post-18 learners

- **Local –** consider travelling to be an obstacle
- **Offering** – More options especially in line with technological developments
- **Small classes** - a number noted that good results have come as a result of this

11.2

A level subjects

Data Arholiadau Bl13 Haf 2022 / Summer 2022 Y13 Exams Data	Aberaeron CYM	Aberaeron ENG	Aberteifi CYM	Aberteifi ENG	Penglais CYM	Penglais ENG	Penweddig CYM	Penweddig ENG	Bro Pedr CYM	Bro Pedr ENG	Bro Teifi CYM	Bro Teifi ENG	Ceredigion CYM	Ceredigion ENG
WJEC Level 3 Advanced GCE in Art and Design	-	8	-	4	-	7	1	3	1	4	6	-	8	26
WJEC Level 3 Advanced GCE in Biology	-	5	-	9	-	34	6	3	-	15	-	9	6	75
WJEC Level 3 Advanced GCE in Business	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	-	-	-	-	-	8	-
WJEC Level 3 Advanced GCE in Chemistry	-	3	-	15	-	32	4	1	-	11	-	6	4	68
WJEC Level 3 Advanced GCE in Design and Technology	-	-	-	2	-	16	4	-	-	10	-	-	4	28
WJEC Level 3 Advanced GCE in Drama and Theatre	-	-	-	-	-	2	5	-	-	-	1	-	6	2
WJEC Level 3 Advanced GCE in English Language and Literature	-	-	-	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	-	15
WJEC Level 3 Advanced GCE in English Literature	-	9	-	-	-	14	-	13	-	6	-	-	-	42
WJEC Level 3 Advanced GCE in French	-	-	-	1	-	2	2	-	-	1	-	-	2	4
WJEC Level 3 Advanced GCE in Further Mathematics	-	1	-	2	-	1	1	1	-	2	-	-	1	7
WJEC Level 3 Advanced GCE in Geography	1	5	-	6	-	19	8	-	7	4	6	-	22	34
WJEC Level 3 Advanced GCE in Health and Social Care, and Childcare	-	8	-	3	-	11	4	-	-	8	6	-	10	30
WJEC Level 3 Advanced GCE in History	-	7	-	4	-	26	8	-	2	17	6	-	16	54
WJEC Level 3 Advanced GCE in ICT	-	-	-	-	-	4	5	-	-	-	7	-	12	4
WJEC Level 3 Advanced GCE in Mathematics	-	4	-	9	-	24	3	5	1	9	6	-	10	51
WJEC Level 3 Advanced GCE in Media Studies	-	7	-	-	-	23	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	30
WJEC Level 3 Advanced GCE in Music	-	-	-	2	-	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11
WJEC Level 3 Advanced GCE in Physical Education	-	-	-	-	-	11	6	-	-	10	-	-	6	21
WJEC Level 3 Advanced GCE in Physics	-	5	-	6	-	13	3	8	-	6	-	7	3	45
WJEC Level 3 Advanced GCE in Psychology	-	-	-	13	-	36	-	-	-	-	3	-	3	49
WJEC Level 3 Advanced GCE in Religious Studies	-	-	-	8	-	-	3	-	-	6	-	-	3	14
WJEC Level 3 Advanced GCE in Sociology	-	-	-	-	-	23	-	-	-	16	-	-	-	39
WJEC Level 3 Advanced GCE in Spanish	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
WJEC Level 3 Advanced GCE in Welsh First Language	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	6	-	3	-	12	-
WJEC Eduqas Level 3 Advanced GCE in Electronics	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	4
AQA Level 3 Advanced GCE in French	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
AQA Level 3 Advanced GCE in Polish	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	3
OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in Classical Greek	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in Computer Science	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in Latin	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
WJEC Advanced Welsh Baccalaureate	35		35		115		38		57		37		317	

Vocational Subjects

Data Arholiadau Bl13 Haf 2022 / Summer 2022 Y13 Exams Data	Aberaeron CYM	Aberaeron ENG	Aberteifi CYM	Aberteifi ENG	Penglais CYM	Penglais ENG	Penweddig CYM	Penweddig ENG	Bro Pedr CYM	Bro Pedr ENG	Bro Teifi CYM	Bro Teifi ENG	Ceredigion CYM	Ceredigion ENG
WJEC Level 3 Applied Diploma in Criminology	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	-
WJEC Level 3 Certificate in Criminology	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	-
WJEC Level 3 Certificate in Food Science and Nutrition	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
WJEC Level 3 Certificate in Medical Science	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
WJEC Level 3 Diploma in Food Science and Nutrition	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
WJEC Level 3 Diploma in Medical Science	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	-	6
Pearson BTEC Level 3 Certificate in Art and Design	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	2
Pearson BTEC Level 3 Certificate in Business	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Pearson BTEC Level 3 Certificate in Travel and Tourism	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Sport	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Sport and Fitness	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Pearson BTEC Level 3 Subsidiary Diploma in Agriculture	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
Pearson BTEC Level 3 Subsidiary Diploma in Art and Design	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Pearson BTEC Level 3 Subsidiary Diploma in Blacksmithing and Metalworking	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	3
Pearson BTEC Level 3 Subsidiary Diploma in Business	-	2	-	-	-	11	-	-	-	20	-	9	-	42
Pearson BTEC Level 3 Subsidiary Diploma in Engineering	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Pearson BTEC Level 3 Subsidiary Diploma in Public Services	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	-	-	-	7
Pearson BTEC Level 3 Subsidiary Diploma in Sport	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	4	-	7
Pearson BTEC Level 3 Subsidiary Diploma in Travel and Tourism	-	-	-	-	-	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12
OCR Level 3 Cambridge Technical Introductory Diploma in IT	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6

11.3 Retention Rates

Retention Rates to the 6th Form (PLASC)

Aberaeron

		14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21
	Y13	64	58	59	56	51	53	48
Retention rates from…	Y12	–	–	74%	89%	91%	102%	102%
	Y11	–	–	49%	60%	65%	60%	60%
	Y12	74	80	63	56	52	47	46
Retention rates from…	Y11	–	66%	68%	71%	58%	59%	47%
	Y11	121	93	79	89	80	97	96

Aberteifi

		14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21
	Y13	42	62	31	40	40	26	33
Retention rates from…	Y12	..	..	89%	75%	75%	74%	89%
	Y11	..	..	39%	49%	40%	30%	31%
	Y12	56	35	53	53	35	37	43
Retention rates from…	Y11	..	44%	65%	54%	40%	35%	36%
	Y11	79	82	99	88	105	121	101

Penglais

		14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21
	Y13	151	144	139	96	105	86	119
Retention rates from…	Y12	–	–	84%	66%	70%	70%	93%
	Y11	–	–	70%	49%	58%	53%	60%
	Y12	172	166	145	151	122	128	142
Retention rates from…	Y11	–	83%	74%	84%	75%	64%	75%
	Y11	199	195	180	162	200	190	184

Penweddig

		14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21
	Y13	63	77	55	62	60	45	49
Retention rates from…	Y12	..	..	92%	87%	95%	80%	92%
	Y11	..	..	67%	63%	67%	51%	62%
	Y12	85	60	71	63	56	53	41
Retention rates from…	Y11	..	73%	72%	70%	64%	67%	45%
	Y11	82	98	90	88	79	92	97

Bro Pedr

		14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21
	Y13	66	74	77	63	68	64	71
Retention rates from…	Y12	–	–	84%	85%	96%	96%	91%
	Y11	–	–	72%	53%	68%	59%	62%
	Y12	95	92	74	71	67	78	72
Retention rates from…	Y11	–	86%	62%	71%	62%	68%	73%
	Y11	107	119	100	108	114	98	109

Henry Richard

		14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21
	Y13	15	0	0	0	0	0	0
Retention rates from…	Y12	..	..	-	-	-	-	-
	Y11	..	..	-	-	-	-	-
	Y12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Retention rates from…	Y11	..	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Y11	56	32	36	30	43	43	29

Bro Teifi

		14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21
	Y13	47	46	48	41	58	34	47
Retention rates from…	Y12	..	–	92%	95%	89%	85%	94%
	Y11	..	–	56%	63%	81%	59%	56%
	Y12	53	52	43	65	40	50	46
Retention rates from…	Y11	..	61%	66%	90%	69%	60%	59%
	Y11	85	65	72	58	84	78	88

Ceredigion

		14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21
	Y13	448	461	409	358	382	308	367
Retention rates from…	Y12	..	..	84%	80%	83%	83%	93%
	Y11	..	..	56%	51%	58%	49%	52%
	Y12	535	485	449	459	372	393	390
Retention rates from…	Y11	..	66%	64%	69%	59%	55%	54%
	Y11	736	698	662	631	711	728	709

11.4 Courses offered by Coleg Ceredigion

Course	Level	Location
Art	Foundation/3	Aberystwyth
Creative Arts	2	Aberystwyth
Light Vehicle Maintenance and Repair	1/2/3	Cardigan
Public Services	2	Aberystwyth
Business	3	Aberystwyth
Accounting	AAT	Aberystwyth
Public Services	3	Aberystwyth
Construction	2	Cardigan
Construction and Building Services Engineering	2	Cardigan
Construction Trades	Level 3 Apprenticeship	Cardigan
Construction Trade Skills	1	Cardigan
Brickwork	3	Cardigan
Carpentry and Joinery	1/2	Cardigan
Brickwork	2	Cardigan
Furniture	2/3	Cardigan
ESOL		Aberystwyth
Vocational studies	Intorductory Diploma	Cardigan
Vocational	Access	Aberystwyth
Hairdressing	Certificate/1/2/3	Cardigan
Beauty Therapy	2/3	Cardigan
Beauty	1	Cardigan
Leadership & Management of Children's Care, Play, Learning & Development	5	Aberystwyth
Children's Care, play, learning and development	2	Aberystwyth
Health & Social Care	3	Aberystwyth
Early Years Health and Social Care and Childcare	1	Aberystwyth
Children's Care, play, learning and development	3	Aberystwyth
Health Science	Higher Education Access Diploma	Cardigan
Professional Cookery and Food & Beverage Service	1/2/3	Aberystwyth
Professional Cookery and Food & Beverage Service	1/2/3	Cardigan
IT	2/3	Cardigan
Creative Media	2	Aberystwyth
Creative Media Production	3	Aberystwyth
Animal Care	1/2/3	Aberystwyth
Online Introduction to Animal Behaviour	Access	Aberystwyth
Performing Arts	3	Aberystwyth
Creative Arts	2	Aberystwyth
Sport	2	Cardigan
Sport & Outdoor Activities	3	Cardigan

11.5 Estimates of post-16 costs

11.5.1 Costs of providing post-16 courses 2023-24 (Model 1)

	A	Aberaeron	Aberteifi	Penglais	Penweddig	Bro Pedr	Bro Teifi	TOTAL	Notes
1		Aberaeron	Aberteifi	Penglais	Penweddig	Bro Pedr	Bro Teifi	TOTAL	Notes
2	No of pupils	81	66	221	106	127	101	702	
3									
4	Teaching costs	370,478	344,016	683,347	511,869	549,102	447,697	2,906,508	UPS3 + TLR1a, and Includes 15% PPA plus extra
5	Coleg Ceredigion		42,642					42,642	Aberteifi Uwch
6	Head of 6th form 30% non contact time	25,801	25,801	25,801	25,801	25,801	25,801	154,807	UPS3 + TLR1a, and Includes 15% PPA plus extra, @ 30% for 6 schools
7	Data & Examinations officer 50% Gr8	17,111	17,111	17,111	17,111	17,111	17,111	102,666	0.50 FTE Grade 8
8	Exam costs @ £109.20 per exam	16,052	9,500	37,674	16,708	18,346	17,363	115,643	353 pupils @ £109.20 per A level
9	Capitation (Teaching materials)	16,200	13,200	44,200	21,200	25,400	20,200	140,400	702 pupils @ £200
10	SEN 1:1 Support	153,930	68,023	161,589	59,385	138,666		581,593	Not included TA3 - 3 in Units. TA2 - 4 in units
11	SEN - Extra intervention	4,928	3,584	4,032	2,240	6,272	3,584	24,640	55 @ £448
12	Free School Meals	23,492	18,458	26,848	13,424	30,204	13,424	125,850	75 @ £1678
13	TOTAL	627,993	542,335	1,000,602	667,738	810,902	545,180	4,194,750	
14									
15	Grant available 23/24 (excl 3% admin)	475,634	409,782	1,081,969	582,245	675,809	561,152	3,786,591	
16									
17	Variance	- 152,359	- 132,553	81,367 -	85,493 -	135,093	15,972 -	408,159	
18									
19									
20	ASSUMPTIONS								
21	Teacher cost based on teacher at top of scale,plus TLR1a, plus 15% non contact time								
22	Head of 6th form, assumed extra 30% non contact time								
23	Data & Exam officer - based on 50% of a Gr8 post								
24	Teaching materials @ £200 per pupil								

11.5.2 Costs of providing post-16 courses 2023-24 (Model 2)

	A	Aberaeron	Aberteifi	Penglais	Penweddig	Bro Pedr	Bro Teifi	TOTAL	Notes
1		Aberaeron	Aberteifi	Penglais	Penweddig	Bro Pedr	Bro Teifi	TOTAL	Notes
2	No of pupils	81	66	221	106	127	101	702	
3									
4	Teaching costs	345,315	320,650	636,934	477,103	511,807	417,289	2,709,098	UPS3 + TLR2c, and Includes 10% PPA plus extra
5	Coleg Ceredigion		42,642					42,642	Aberteifi Uwch
6	Head of 6th form 30% non contact time	24,049	24,049	24,049	24,049	24,049	24,049	144,293	UPS3 + TLR1a, and Includes 15% PPA plus extra, @ 30% for 6 schools
7	Data & Examinations officer 30% Gr8	10,267	10,267	10,267	10,267	10,267	10,267	61,600	0.30 FTE Grade 8
8	Exam costs @ £109.20 per exam	16,052	9,500	37,674	16,708	18,346	17,363	115,643	353 pupils @ £109.20 per A level
9	Capitation (Teaching materials)	16,200	13,200	44,200	21,200	25,400	20,200	140,400	702 pupils @ £200
10	SEN 1:1 Support	153,930	68,023	161,589	59,385	138,666		581,593	Not included TA3 - 3 in Units. TA2 - 4 in units
11	SEN - Extra intervention	4,928	3,584	4,032	2,240	6,272	3,584	24,640	55 @ £448
12	Free School Meals	23,492	18,458	26,848	13,424	30,204	13,424	125,850	75 @ £1678
13	TOTAL	594,233	510,373	945,593	624,374	765,010	506,175	3,945,758	
14									
15	Grant available 23/24 (excl 3% admin)	475,634	409,782	1,081,969	582,245	675,809	561,152	3,786,591	
16									
17	Variance	- 118,599	- 100,591	136,376 -	42,129 -	89,201	54,977 -	159,167	
18									
19									
20	ASSUMPTIONS								
21	Teacher cost based on teacher at top of scale,plus TLR2c, plus 10% non contact time								
22	Head of 6th form, assumed extra 30% non contact time								
23	Data & Exam officer - based on 30% of a Gr8 post								
24	Teaching materials @ £200 per pupil								

11.5.3 Post-16 overhead costs 2023-24

	A	Aberaeron	Aberteifi	Penglais	Penweddig	Bro Pedr	Bro Teifi	H	TOTAL
1		Aberaeron	Aberteifi	Penglais	Penweddig	Bro Pedr	Bro Teifi		TOTAL
2	Energy	162,102	166,398	249,413	239,006	209,381	155,000		1,181,300
3	R&M	20,500	41,500	35,696		31,000	66,000		194,696
4	Cleaning	74,792	110,659	151,117		175,476	134,864		646,908
5	Caretaker	48,974	39,999	72,978		38,754	53,759		254,464
6	Leadership	461,888	904,862	1,298,066	463,897	614,528	565,680		4,308,921
7	Admin team	222,905	220,230	486,130	185,450	164,952	188,475		1,468,142
8	Exam Invigilators	20,000	47,407	18,000	13,573	-	4,000		102,980
9	Librarian	14,394	29,744	31,416	-	30,839	-		106,393
10	TOTAL	1,025,555	1,560,799	2,342,816	901,926	1,264,930	1,167,778		8,263,804
11									
12	Total Pupils	599	604	1085	619	669	554		4,130
13	Total Post 16 pupils	84	66	221	106	134	101		712
14									
15	Overheads for Post 16	143,817	170,551	477,200	154,449	253,364	212,898		1,412,280

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CYNGOR SIR CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to: **Cabinet**

Date of meeting: **7 November 2023**

Title: **Recommendation from the Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to the Post-16 Education provision in schools**

Purpose of the report: **To provide feedback from the Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 28 September 2023**

Background:

The Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the Post-16 Education provision in schools at its meeting on 28 September 2023.

It was reported that at the Cabinet meeting held virtually on 11 January 2022, it was agreed that it would be timely to undertake a review of the post-16 provision in Ceredigion. The aim of the review was to provide an analysis and appraisal of the current post-16 provision in Ceredigion and identify sustainable options for the future, along with their potential advantages and disadvantages.

The aim of the review was to:
- create a set of agreed principles that were learner-centric
- offer a range of accessible and sustainable options whilst ensuring that the voices of the learners, governors, parents, headteachers and Local Authority officers were an integral part of the process
- ensure that full consideration had been given to the findings and recommendations of Estyn's national reviews and the background to Welsh Government's current policy, including the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act
- consider rurality and the implications for carbon footprints

There was also a wider context to this review, namely:
- Welsh Government's decision to establish the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (CTER) which would be responsible for the strategy, funding, and oversight of the further education sector, including colleges and the sixth forms in schools.
- Estyn's Thematic Report regarding Post-16 Partnerships (January 2021).
- The opportunities available through the Mid Wales Growth Deal, the Economic Strategy, and the Regional Partnership Board with regards to the needs and skills of the workforce for the future and the central role of the Regional Skills Partnership (RSP)in the collection and analysis of information.
- The need to ensure a broad and quality vocational offer, along with a wider offering of A-Level subjects, which allows learners to pursue different combinations of subjects and to specialise in their interests, regardless of where they live in the county.
- Estyn Report – A review of the current 16-19 curriculum in Wales (October 2022).

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It was agreed that a set of "agreed principles which were learner centric" should be created, to ensure that the voices of learners, governors, parents and headteachers are an integral part of the report.

Member were informed that 6 principles were created -

1) The needs of the learner should be prioritised over any organisational needs.
2) The generally high standards in Ceredigion schools should be maintained and improved.
3) There should be more fairness and equal opportunities for all learners across the county in terms of the offer, advice and guidance, pastoral care and wellbeing, travel requirements, learning pattern and access to support. This include ensuring bespoke and specialist support for pupils with additional learning needs ensuring a continuum of education for them in the absence of a special school in the county.
4) The Welsh-medium offer should be improved to be at least consistent with the English medium offer to increase the number of Welsh speakers in Ceredigion and to contribute to a bilingual workforce and community.
5) Access to a wide range of quality academic and vocational courses should be ensured, increasing the number of vocational courses currently available for pupils in all parts of the county.
6) The governance of the post-16 provision should promote the above principles, consider the strategic quality improvement processes, ensure that expenditure was kept as much as possible within the post-16 budget and allow decisions to be made that consider environmental sustainability and carbon footprint.

A key part of the review included gathering the views of a broad group of stakeholders. Surveys were sent to key groups, namely learners, parents / carers, teachers and employers, and a total of 1,306 responses were received from these individuals. In addition, interviews were conducted with representatives from educational providers, the local authority and other partners.

The responses were analysed and placed under six main themes -
- Wide choice
- Language
- Location
- Connections with the world of work
- Collaboration between schools or the establishment of centres of excellence
- Teachers and good, unbiased advice

The next step was to consider the current situation, i.e, the number of pupils, the financial situation, the range of subjects available to the learners etc, and to produce options to consider that look at the advantages and disadvantages in the context of the principles.

In short, the review asks for views regarding four possible options:

Option 1: Maintain the Current Situation

Option 2: Develop the Current Situation
Post-16 provision would continue on the 6 existing sites. The 6 current Governing Boards would continue with their current roles in terms of governance up to 16 but

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agree with the Local Authority to form a Strategic Board which would manage the Authority's post-16 budget, ensure suitable arrangements for joint planning of the curriculum and then commission the provision from the schools, e-sgol and other partners.

Option 3: **Provision in some schools**
This option would be a development of Option 2 above. It would mean closing the post-16 provision at one or more sites. Then, as in Option 2, those Governing Boards would continue with their current roles in terms of governance up until the age of 16 and agree with the Local Authority to form a Strategic Board that would manage the Authority's post-16 budget, ensure suitable arrangements for joint planning of the curriculum and then commissioning the provision from the schools, e-sgol and other partners. The Board would also be responsible for monitoring the quality of the provision and make recommendations to the Local Authority and the providers for improvement.

Option 4: One Centre
This option would offer a more far-reaching change. It would mean closing the current post-16provision and establishing a Centre of Excellence, involving a range of partners, at one or more suitable geographical sites. A Governing Body independent of the schools would be responsible for the funding and the curriculum and would appoint a small number of core staff to steer and manage the work.

Recommendation(s):
The Committee recommend Cabinet undertake a Feasibility Study to consider Option 2 and Option 4 in the Review, however, Option 3 should also be considered if the information provided for Option 2 and 4 was not viable.

Councillor Endaf Edwards
Chairman of the Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

3

CYNGOR SIR CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to: **Cabinet**

Date of meeting: **07 November 2023**

Title: **LA Representative on Governing Bodies**

Purpose of the report: **To confirm the nomination of LA Representative on Governing Bodies**

For: **Decision**

Cabinet Portfolio and Cabinet Member:
Councillor Wyn Thomas, Cabinet Member for Schools, Lifelong Learning & Skills

Introduction
Aberporth Community Primary School: Re-nominate Helen Harries as LA Governor at the request of the Governing Body of Aberporth Community Primary School.

Ysgol Uwchradd Aberteifi: Re-nominate Eleri Maskell as LA Governor at the request of the Governing Body of Ysgol Uwchradd Aberteifi.

Comins Coch Community Primary School: Nominate Pepe Sepulveda as LA Governor at the request of the Governing Body of Comins Coch Community Primary School.

Wellbeing of Future Generations:
Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If, not, please state why.

No, the report does not refer to a Policy or Service change.

Summary of Integrated Impact Assessment:
Long term: N/A
Collaboration: N/A
Involvement: N/A
Prevention: N/A
Integration: N/A

Recommendation(s):
Members are requested to confirm the nomination of the above named as LA representatives on the Governing Bodies of the relevant School.

Reasons for decision:
To nominate representatives of the LA on Governing Bodies.

Overview and Scrutiny:
N/A

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Policy Framework:
N/A

Corporate Well-being Objectives:
N/A

Finance and Procurement implications:
None

Legal Implications:
None

Staffing implications:
None

Property / asset implications:
None

Risk(s):
N/A

Statutory Powers:
N/A

Background Papers:
N/A

Appendices:
N/A

Corporate Lead Officer:
Clive Williams, Corporate Lead Officer, Schools Service

Reporting Officer:
Nia James, Corporate Manager, Learning Resources, Schools Service

Date:
13 October 2023

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CYNGOR SIR CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to: **Cabinet**

Date of meeting: **7th November 2023**

Title: **Yr Hafod Residential Care Home Site, Cardigan - Feasibility Study**

Purpose of the report: **To seek approval to appoint consultants to complete a feasibility study providing re-development options in line with the strategic objectives of the Through Age Wellbeing (TAW) Strategy.**

For: **Decision**

Cabinet Portfolio and Cabinet Member:
Cllr. Alun Williams, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Through Age and Wellbeing

Introduction

Following the Residential Care Home Review on the 28th of July, 2015, Cabinet approved the following recommendation in relation to Yr Hafod Residential Care Home;

"It is recommended that the Yr Hafod site is redeveloped to provide for changes in demand in line with Approach 7* of developing new and specialist homes on existing sites. The Authority commits to capital funding to ensure the medium-term sustainability of the fabric and structure of the home"

* Approach 7
Redevelop existing sites, either all at once or in several phases, as either new build Registered Care Settings with EMI and Nursing beds, or as Specialist Housing schemes.

The progress of this recommendation has not been possible to date due to the lack of Capital funding available to support such developments.

An opportunity has now become available for the authority to access funding through the Welsh Government (WG) and the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) to initially complete a feasibility study, to explore the best options for the redevelopment of Yr Hafod in line with the Through Age Wellbeing Strategy meeting the current and future needs of the population of Ceredigion.

The feasibility will include Yr Hafod Residential Care Home and Canolfan Meugan which is adjoined to the home.

1

Undertaking feasibility studies for the development of integrated capital project proposals:

The feasibility study aims to develop options for the redevelopment of 'Yr Hafod Residential home in Cardigan on a Through age basis. The feasibility study seeks to commission a consultant to complete, develop options through a feasibility study identifying potential future uses for the site. The feasibility study will comprehensively explore the viability of integrating social enterprises within the facility as well as increasing the accommodation offering to meet wider and complex needs. The initiative aims to create an inclusive and sustainable environment that not only provides essential residential settings, but also fosters meaningful community engagement with wider social and health care services, 3rd sector partners and the wider community. Options to be explored would be refurbishment of existing building or build of new facility on the existing site.

This programme will also align with the ongoing development of Cardigan Wellbeing Centre due to the location of Yr Hafod, thus creating further opportunities for integrated service delivery.

The next steps will be to:
- Procure a consultant/cy to complete the initial feasibility study.
- To present the findings of the feasibility study to the Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee prior to returning to Cabinet.
- Develop a business case in line with funding requirements and complete any necessary consultation to ascertain the views of the residents, families, staff, stakeholder and wider community.

Wellbeing of Future Generations:
Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If, not, please state why.

An IIA has not been completed at this stage, but will be developed as part of the feasibility study.

Summary of Integrated Impact Assessment:

Long term:	The Local Authorities Through Age and Wellbeing Strategy sets out the vision for the next 10 years. Alongside this there are several National and Regional strategies that provide short and long-term targets and measures that will need to be considered as part of the feasibility study.
Collaboration:	The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 places new requirements on all organisations that commission and provide care. The West Wales Care Partnership is working together to respond to those requirements, improving services and joining them up as far as possible so they deliver the best outcomes for our citizens.
Involvement:	Collaboration between partners and stakeholders will be at the heart of the consultation and the implementation plan. The main collaboration will be between public sector colleagues including the Hywel Dda University Health Board, Third Sector organisations and officers from across the authority.

2

Prevention:　　　　The feasibility study will explore prevention opportunities as part of the objectives of the redevelopment.

Integration:　　　　A stakeholder analysis will be completed as part of the Engagement and Communication plan ensuring that key stakeholders are kept updated throughout the project.

Recommendation(s):
1. **To approve the proposal to progress and complete the feasibility study exploring the re-development of Yr Hafod Residential Care Home, Cardigan in line with the TAW Strategy.**
2. **To present the findings of the feasibility study and the proposed plan to the Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee prior to returning to Cabinet.**

Reasons for decision:
To enable the Authority to progress with the re-development of Yr Hafod Residential Care Home in line with the Through Age and Wellbeing Strategy.

Overview and Scrutiny:
N/A

Policy Framework:
Corporate Strategy
The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014
Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016
A healthier Wales: long term plan for health and social care
Age friendly Wales: our strategy for an ageing society West Wales Learning Disability Charter
Autism Code of Practice
ALN Code for Wales 2021
Strategy for an ageing society: delivery plan
Learning Disability Action Plan (2022 – 2026)
Improving health and social care (COVID-19 looking forward)

Corporate Well-being Objectives:
Creating Caring and Healthy Communities

Finance and Procurement implications:
None

Legal Implications:
None

Staffing implications:
None

Property / asset implications:
Linked to the future use of Yr Hafod Adults Residential Home

Risk(s):
To be reviewed as part of the initiation work relating to the feasibility study

3

Statutory Powers:
None

Background Papers:
28th of July 2015 – Cabinet Report

Appendices:
Appendix A- IRCF

Corporate Lead Officer:
Donna Pritchard, Corporate Lead Officer: Porth Gofal

Reporting Officer:
Nerys Lewis, Corporate Manager – Direct Services, Porth Gofal

Date:
17.10.23

4

Health and Social Care Integration and Rebalancing Capital Fund

GUIDANCE 2022–25

Health and Social Care Integration and Rebalancing Capital Fund Guidance 2022-25

1

Introduction and background

The Health and Social Care Integration and Rebalancing Capital Fund (IRCF) is a new programme set up to directly support the Programme for Government (PfG) commitments of developing 50 integrated health and social care hubs and to support rebalancing the residential care market.

It has been established to

a) support a coherent approach to planning the co-location and integration of <u>health and social care</u> services within the community across Wales

It is also recognised that there are further opportunities to actively support individual wellbeing through the co-location and integration of wider services such as early years, housing, childcare, education and community support services. Joint planning arrangements will need to be established both within Welsh Government and externally with delivery partners, including health boards, local authorities, the third sector and service providers, including Registered Social Landlords in order to achieve a coherent response that maximises opportunities offering a more joined up holistic service experience for people.

b) support the rebalancing of adult residential care provision by increasing delivery from within the <u>not-for-profit sector</u>.

This guidance outlines how the investment will be targeted towards the public and not for profit sectors to enable them to grow. However, in relation to adult care, small independent providers may also be able to benefit from investment if the Regional Partnership Board determines that growing or enhancing their service offer is of strategic importance for the region and that sufficient capacity cannot be achieved through the public sector."

c) support the elimination of profit from the provision of children's residential care.

In line with the Programme for Government commitment to eliminate profit from the care of children looked after the fund could be used to support the growth of not-for-profit children's residential care provision.

Further detail on the types of projects that can apply for funding can be found further on in this guidance document.

The Role of the Regional Partnership Board (RPB)

Regional Partnership Boards (RPBs) have been identified as critical vehicles to lead the development of a joined-up approach to planning health, social care and housing capital investment that can enable seamless service delivery closer to home.

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Specifically, they will have a key role in taking forward the development of integrated health and social care hubs as well as rebalancing the market.

RPBs were established under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA) to facilitate the strategic partnership arrangements between a local health board and one or more local authorities. A Healthier Wales, the Welsh Government's Long-term Plan for Health and Social Care, positions RPBs in a key leadership role to drive forward health and social care integration.

In addition to health and social care partners, RPB membership includes representatives from housing, education, the third sector, independent providers, citizens and carer representatives to take forward the effective delivery of seamless services in Wales. Their purpose is to improve the outcomes and well-being of adults and children with care and support needs, and carers who need support. RPBs work as a partnership to strategically plan, manage, and develop effective care and support services required to best meet the needs of their respective populations.

It is the distinct functions and makeup of the RPBs which ideally places them to oversee the strategic investment of the IRCF.

As part of this new programme, RPBs will have developed and submitted to the Welsh Government for agreement a regional planning and governance architecture which will further enable better alignment between various revenue and capital programmes and ensure engagement of wider partners and stakeholders with the necessary expertise to support the development of integrated hubs and accommodation-based solutions.

This architecture will ensure a joined-up approach across key partners in health, social care, early years, housing and education creating capacity to maximise resources, skills and opportunities.

Capital Budget

The three-year IRCF programme budget is as follows:

£50m – 2022/23

£60m – 2023/24

£70m – 2024/25

The fund will focus on delivering three priorities:

1. The delivery of Integrated Health and Social Care Hubs
2. Rebalancing the adult residential social care market
3. Eliminating profit from the provision of children's residential care.

This guidance provides additional information around the expectations of delivering against these priorities and further detail on the funding process.

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Revenue Budget

Alongside this Capital funding, Welsh Government is also making specific revenue funds available for RPBs to aid programme delivery. Those funds must be used to: -

- Resource RPBs to develop and implement a 10-year Strategic capital plan (£200,000 per RPB per annum for 3 years).
- Co-ordinate and facilitate the development of seamless, integrated delivery of services through health and social care hubs, including feasibility studies (£500,000 per RPB per annum for 3 years).

In addition to the revenue funding being directly provided to RPBs, funding has also been agreed to facilitate the development of a national 'blueprint' for integrated health and social care hubs. This will provide additional capability at a national level to undertake the mapping of existing hubs across Wales to determine our current baseline, to support the development of an Integrated Health and Social Care Hub definition / blueprint and work with the Community Based Care Community of Practice to achieve a consistent approach to integrating services and provide seamless care and support services via Hubs. RPBs will be expected to connect with and support this national work to develop a 'blueprint' and engage with the associated communities of practice.

Wider Strategic context

This capital fund must not be viewed in isolation of wider policy or resources available to support the integration and co-location of services. Aligned with other key programmes of work and resources it will support the delivery of several policy agendas and commitments, some of which are listed below.

The Programme for Government

This fund will support delivery of a wide range of PfG commitments including: -

- Reform primary care, bringing together GP services with pharmacy, therapy, housing, social care, mental health, community and third sector.
- Prioritise service redesign to improve prevention, tackle stigma and promote a 'no wrong door' approach to mental health support.
- Introduce an all-Wales framework to roll out social prescribing to tackle isolation
- Support innovative housing development to meet care needs.
- Eliminate private profit from the care of looked after children during the next Senedd term.
- Fund regional residential services to ensure children with complex needs have their needs met as close to home as possible and in Wales wherever practicable.
- Invest in the learning environment of community schools, co-locating key services, and securing stronger engagement with parents and carers outside traditional hours.

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- Explore where services and contracts can sustainably and affordably be brought back into a strengthened public sector.
- Invest in a new generation of integrated health and social care centres across Wales
- Legislate to deliver better integrated care and health, paying attention to the responses to our white paper on Rebalancing Care and Support
- Develop more than 50 local community hubs to co-locate front-line health and social care and other services

Primary Care Model for Wales

Projects under priority 1 must be fully aligned to the principles of the Primary Care Model for Wales and A Healthier Wales: Long Term Plan for Health and Social Care (2019), in providing a whole system approach that demonstrates integration of health, social care, local authority and voluntary sector services, and has facilitated collaboration and consultation to reach a consensus on the type of primary care provision that patients and staff would like to see that gives the best support to people, gives easy access to local services for care when needed and technological solutions to improve access to support self-care.

The principles seek to explain how the direction of travel for primary and community care services in Wales should be provided at a range of primary care facilities. The outputs have been designed following feedback from multiple clinical, professional and public services stakeholders in order to understand and review the actual need in the context of best practice design principles. The principles are not intended to be prescriptive, but rather they should be interpreted in a local context.

The vision is focused on flexible functions and adaptable design that supports changing service provision. Feedback from engagement activities has highlighted the following key principles that are important elements of the future development of the primary care estate in Wales:

- The importance of establishing new facilities as a focus for the wider community.
- The need to move away from single partner pure General Medical Services models, in favour of more sustainable, collaborative, co-located multi-disciplinary services
- The need to optimise the use of the wider public estate (e.g., libraries and community halls).
- Recognition that separation of unscheduled / urgent primary and community care pathways may require different facilities.
- No one size fits all design approach, must be flexible and able to respond to local needs.
- The importance of equity for all patients in terms of access, service offer, and environment is of critical importance.

Further detail on the principles and the types and scale of Integrated Health and Social Care Centres are included below at Annex 1.

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The Strategic Programme for Primary care has introduced an Accelerated Cluster Development (ACD) Programme to ensure more rapid implementation of the Primary Care Model for Wales and to address system barriers.

The Programme includes the introduction of Professional Collaboratives and Pan Cluster Planning Groups to broaden and strengthen clinical engagement and to increase the influence from the community to RPB decisions.

ACD is about reinforcing and improving a suite of mechanisms and infrastructure that are already, in most cases, in place. It is about a clear line of sight from the local front-line health and care services through to the RPB in terms of understanding the needs of the local population and being able to translate such knowledge into meaningful strategic priorities at an RPB / cluster level.

Regional Integration Fund

The Regional Integration Fund (RIF)[1] is a revenue fund which will be delivered over 5 years (2022-27). It builds on key successes and learning from the Integrated Care Fund and the Transformation Fund and aligns several funding streams into a streamlined, focused investment programme. All activity funded by the RIF must directly support the development and delivery of the six national models of integrated care, and it is expected that any investment issued through the IRCF will consider the wider regional strategic vision around these models of care.

- Community based care – prevention and community coordination
- Community based care – complex care closer to home
- Promoting good emotional health and well-being
- Supporting families to stay together safely, and therapeutic support for care experienced children
- Home from hospital services
- Accommodation based solutions

Some aspects of these integrated models of care can or should be co-located and/or delivered through health and social care hubs/centres or through integrated accommodation and residential based solutions. Regional Partnership Boards will be required to ensure that both capital and revenue investment plans are aligned to provide an optimal opportunity to strategically target investment in creating genuine system change to deliver seamless services.

The Housing with Care Fund

The Housing with Care Fund[2] (HCF) is a housing capital fund whose objectives are to increase the stock of housing to meet the needs of people with care and support needs and provide temporary accommodation with care and intermediate care

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[1] https://gov.wales/health-and-social-care-regional-integration-fund
[2] https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-05/housing-with-care-fund-hcf-guidance-2022-2023_0.pdf

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settings in the community. This complements the investment delivered through the RIF and the IRCF.

It is important that investment plans for IRCF and the HCF fund are considered alongside each other to ensure strategic alignment and to maximise benefits to Wales.

Sustainable Communities for Learning

The Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme[3] is delivered by the Welsh Government in partnership with local authorities, further education institutions and dioceses.

This Programme will see a further £2.3 billion investment in school and college infrastructure utilising both public capital and revenue. In order to support the deliverability and affordability of delivery partners' individual programmes, the Welsh Government grant intervention rate for capital schemes is now 65% of their cost. The revenue funded arm of the programme is funded 81% by Welsh Government with associated capital costs of revenue funded schemes funded at 65%.

Flying Start

Flying Start[4] is the Welsh Government's targeted Early Years programme for families with children under 4 years of age who live in some of the most disadvantaged areas of Wales. Flying Start aims to make a decisive difference to the life chances of children by mitigating the impact of poverty, which is linked to poor life outcomes in early childhood, including health outcomes. It currently serves 36,000 children under four and their families. The Programme comprises of four entitlements which provide:

• funded, quality, part-time childcare for 2-3 year olds;

 • an enhanced health visiting service;

• access to parenting support; and

• support for speech, language and communication development.

The programme is expanding from September 2022[5] to reach a further 2,500 children under four as the first part of a phased expansion. Co-located services and multi-agency working are at the core of the programme. Strategic join-up is essential and should be factored into the planning for and delivery of Integrated Health and Social Care Hubs. Where possible learning should be drawn from the Early Years Transformation Programme on multi-agency approaches and ways of working across the Health Board footprint.

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[3] sustainable-communities-for-learning-business-case-guidance-2022.pdf (gov. wales)
[4] Flying Start: guidance | GOV.WALES
[5] Flying Start expanded in Wales | GOV.WALES

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Capital funding for Flying Start and childcare sits within the wider Sustainable Communities for Learning programme. A budget of £70m is available for investment in these services over this budget period, with a desire to see greater co-location of services including with wider early years and family services such as Families First.

Early Years Transformation Programme

The Early Years Transformation Programme is delivered by Public Service Boards (PSBs) working on a Health Board footprint. It is funded by Welsh Government (£6m in 2022/23 and 23/24). The programme is enabling PSBs to take a strategic approach to planning and delivering Early Years services, working in partnership with multiple agencies. Each PSB is testing approaches to meet the needs of children in the early years (0-7) and their families drawing on 'what works' in programmes like Flying Start, Families First and the Healthy Child Wales Programme. They are also testing the core components of an early years system as a means of delivering services in a more co-ordinated and joined up way. The learning from the work being undertaken by the PSBs will help inform the development of a national framework to support the transformation of early years services in Wales. RPBs should draw on learning at a local / regional level to support an integrated approach to service provision

Regeneration and Town Centre first

Future Wales (the National Development Framework) requires that significant new commercial, retail, education, health, leisure, and public service facilities must be located within town and city centres. They should have good access by active and public transport to and from the whole town or city and, where appropriate, the wider region. A sequential approach must be used to inform the identification of the best location for these developments, and they should be identified in strategic plans. Town centres first principles should be considered as a priority by RPBs and if the preferred solution is not aligned then Welsh Government will require clear rationale as part of any business case.

Strategic Capital Plan (SCP)

Each RPB is required to develop a 10-year Strategic Capital Plan (SCP) that brings together health, social care, housing, third sector, education and regeneration partners to develop integrated service delivery facilities and integrated accommodation-based solutions.

The plans will take the form of a Programme Business Case as set out in Guide to developing the Programme Business Case (gov.wales)

RPBs will be required to develop their SCP and submit a first draft to Welsh Government by 30th April 2023 alongside their 5-year strategic Area Plan. The final document will be submitted to the Welsh Government by 31st July 2023. This is a new expectation on RPBs and so revenue funding has been made available from 2022-23 for three years to support RPBs to build staff capacity and expertise to develop these plans. We are, however, cognisant that this is a significant new area

of expertise and so would expect plans submitted by April 2023 to be as a minimum, outline plans for the short and medium term, to align with the 5-year Area plans, on the understanding that longer term planning and priorities will follow.

To further support RPBs, Welsh Government have commissioned Local Partnerships to develop more detailed guidance and advice on the Strategic Capital Planning process with the aim of issuing the final guidance by the end of September 2022 followed by workshops to be held during the autumn.

However, in order to support early planning and action, it is expected that as a minimum, strategic capital plans will include the following: -

1 – Description of your regional strategic context in relation to your area plan priorities (supported by your PNA and MSR) and your approach to establishing the six national models of care:-
- Community based care – prevention and community coordination
- Community based care – complex care closer to home
- Promoting good emotional health and well-being
- Supporting families to stay together safely, and therapeutic support for care experienced children
- Home from hospital services
- Accommodation based solutions

2 –An overview of strengths and weaknesses of current capital infrastructure in the region for delivering integrated health and care services in the community including: -
  - o Frontline service delivery for health and social care services
  - o Integrated Hubs and centres
  - o Accommodation based solutions

3 –Your strategic Priorities for investment (as supported by PNA, MSR and Area Plan) over
- Short term – 1-3 years
- Medium term 3 – 5 years
- Longer term 5 – 10 years

4 – An outline of your shared governance arrangements to support effective planning and delivery

5 – An overview of your service user, carer and stakeholder engagement in planning, design and delivery processes

6 – Your approach to building skills and capacity to assure delivery

7 – Your commitment and approach to decarbonisation

8 – Appendix 1 – your capital project portfolio – this will be a live document for ongoing project tracking

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Types of projects which can be funded under IRCF

The IRCF has three distinct priority areas of investment to support implementation of A Healthier Wales and Programme for Government commitments. The three-year budget profile set out earlier in this document does not indicate the split between the priorities of the fund. Instead, decisions will be based on a robust and rigorous assessment process, described later in this guidance. A description of each priority is outlined below:

- ### Priority 1 – Development of integrated health and social care hubs and centres

The PfG commitment to develop integrated health and social care community hubs and centres provides an opportunity to support the delivery of seamless services through creating local single points of access and co-location of staff and services delivering integrated care pathways. These hubs could also provide the opportunity to combine residential care facilities or housing developments such as extra care with open community spaces to provide outreach into communities or assist people with living independently in their own homes longer.

All proposals for funding under this priority must adhere to the following key principles that will underpin the investment:

- **Co-location of services to enable seamless delivery.** RPBs should look across the range of community facilities and assets available to them (including those beyond the health and social care estate, for example early years facilities, schools, leisure centres, shop fronts) to seek opportunities to co-locate services that could realise greater benefits for service users by being physically located in the same space. However, it is vital to recognise that co-location alone will not secure seamless service delivery and plans will need to be established to support governance, cultural and practice change (including data and information sharing) to facilitate seamless service delivery from co-location sites. As far as is reasonably practicable, these plans should seek to eliminate charging different parts of the system for use of community facilities, to encourage co-location and seamless working.

- **A 'Hub and Spoke' network of integrated facilities.** This principle is built on the recognition that not every hub will have every service in it but that facilities should be clearly networked to ensure they make a coherent integrated health and social care service offer across a locality.

- **A 'no wrong door' principle.** The networking of hubs and spokes should be underpinned by a no wrong door principle meaning that no one is ever turned away because a service or the support they need is not available on that site. Individuals should be actively supported to access the services they need

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wherever they first enter the door. Increasing the number of direct access services, that do not require 'referral through different points of the system will add value and reduce unnecessary use of appointments or contacts.

- **A graduated response.** This principle recognises that support delivered through hubs can range from information, advice and assistance (IAA) on key important life matters (such as parenting, housing, managing debt, employment, activities to prevent loneliness and isolation, foodbanks) through to more complex health and social care services (such as GP services, social work teams, occupational therapy, podiatry, physiotherapy, mental health practitioners, substance misuse, district nursing, domiciliary care, homeless health services, speech, language and communication. It is important that the hub and spoke network developed is able to cover a wide range of integrated services covering this spectrum.

- **Town Centre first.** In line with the Welsh Government regeneration policy on developing town centres, hub and spoke developments should strongly consider whether town centre sites could provide suitable locations for the delivery of integrated services and as detailed above, if the preferred solution is not aligned then Welsh Government will require a clear rationale as part of any business case.

- **Proportionate and planned investment.** It is anticipated that some activity under this priority will require significant investment for redevelopment and some new build while other activity will require smaller investment to refurbish and repurpose existing community-based settings, including premises in town centres. It is important that RPBs carefully plan their investment priorities to secure and demonstrate best value and impact.

- **Decarbonisation.** RPB's Strategic Capital Plans and project business cases must evidence how the investment will support a Net Zero Wales, by demonstrating areas such as low carbon energy use and energy efficiency measures, in both the built environment and service delivery.

RPBs have already been guided to align their revenue and capital investment plans and revenue resources to support the development and operation of co-located services through these integrated hubs which should come from core statutory partners' resources and discretionary funds through the RPBs such as the RIF[6].

- Priority 2 - Rebalancing the adult residential care market

The White Paper 'Rebalancing Care and Support' sets out Ministerial ambitions to rebalance the social care sector away from cost to quality, from outputs to outcomes and from profit towards social value. Capital investment is available to support local

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[6] Page 12 of RIF guidance   https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-02/health-and-social-care-regional-integration-fund-revenue-guidance-2022-2027.pdf

authorities and not for profit organisations, including housing associations to make this shift in the following ways: -

- Investing in community settings/residential/nursing care premises to ensure they can meet individuals more complex needs closer to home i.e., nursing, allied health professional and intermediate care capacity. This could include increasing access to NHS services, (such as community therapy, rehabilitation/ reablement and podiatry) for residents, recognising they remain members of the health board population

- Supporting and incentivising local authorities and not for profit providers to grow in house provision - which could include expansion of in-house care homes (additional beds), upgrades to facilities to bring them in line with regulation to enable them to be re-registered as a not-for-profit provision.

- Support for local authorities to bring failing provision back under local government management.

- Increasing residential and nursing care capacity where there are identified gaps/shortages of provision.

- Support for smaller independent care homes to access resources for investment (on a case-by-case basis - further advice to follow).

- **Priority 3 – Eliminating profit from the provision of children's residential care.**

Our Programme for Government contains a number of commitments that set out our vision for children's services in Wales. Our ambition is for whole system change and, at its heart, we want to see more children and young people being enabled to live with their families and in their home neighbourhoods with many fewer needing to enter care. We also want to ensure the period that young people are in care is as short as possible.

We are committed to keeping families together. Our vision is to redesign how we look after children and young people so we can do the best for our young people, their families and communities by providing services that are locally based, locally designed and locally accountable.

As part of the Co-operation Agreement between the Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru, there is a clear commitment to 'eliminate private profit from the care of children looked after' as a key component of this radical agenda, including children's residential care.

Feedback from children and young people suggests they have strong feelings about being cared for by privately owned organisations that make a profit from their experience of being in care. The Welsh Government does not believe there should be a market for care for children, or that profits should be made from caring for children facing particular challenges in their lives and intends to bring forward legislation to end this. This means the future care of children that are looked after in Wales will be provided by public sector, charitable or not-for-profit organisations.

Our aim is to ensure that public money invested in the care of children looked after does not profit individuals or corporate entities, but instead is spent on children's services to deliver better experiences and outcomes for children and young people, addressing service development and improvement and further professional development for staff.

Alongside the IRCF, the Housing with Care Fund is also available to support investment in developing and/or growing not for profit residential care provision for children and young people.

RPBs should consider how both of these funds can work to support and develop capacity in not for profit residential care services for children and young people, including provision run by local authorities. To assist with decision making in relation to which fund to signpost applications to the following guide has been developed;

- For *both the IRCF and HCF* any applications for funding for children's residential care mut come via the Regional Partnership Board.

- Applications for children's residential care funding **can only be** for a not for profit provider or for a provider with a clear commitment to changing to a not for profit delivery model (would become a condition of funding)

- *The Housing with Care fund* will focus on increasing, expanding and/or enhancing not for profit children's residential care provision. This could include;

  o the development of new not for profit residential care provision in line with local and regional needs assessments and market stability reports.
  o the expansion of existing not-for-profit provision (additional beds),
  o upgrades to facilities to bring them in line with regulation to enable them to be registered as a not-for-profit provision.

- The Integration and Rebalancing Capital Fund can provide incentives to support a change of business model in children's residential care towards a not for profit model. This could include;
  o support for local authorities to bring existing for profit provision of children's residential care under local government management,
  o supporting and incentivising the not-for-profit sector to grow provision of children's residential care

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Pathfinder Phase – April 2022

Work started in April 2022 with the commencement of the IRCF pathfinder phase of the fund to ensure that RPBs can submit expressions of interest for projects that meet the priorities and principles of the IRCF fund to ensure timely grant allocation.

RPBs were invited to complete a checklist for projects they deemed suitable for a cross-Governmental panel to assess the suitability at 3 stages in April, May and June 2022.

The pathfinder phase will have no effect on further funding through the IRCF in subsequent years as money is issued on a bidding basis rather than by set allocations.

Through the pathfinder phase, proposals were submitted under both priority 1 and 2 and included proposals for Community Wellbeing Hubs, integrated care hubs and bed based intermediate care. By committing to projects within the pathfinder phase, the Welsh Government are not committing to further funding projects over subsequent years, this would be subject to further business cases or additional required paperwork which will be discussed on a case-by-case basis with RPBs.

The pathfinder phase has allowed the Welsh Government to undertake a lesson learned exercise to develop this guidance for the formal introduction of the IRCF to ensure necessary improvements are made to the process going forward.

Financial Management

Funding will not be allocated upfront on a regional basis nor against any of the three priorities. Instead, investment will be based on submission of RPB approved proposals that will be considered by a cross government group of Welsh Government officials who will in turn make recommendations to Ministers for their approval.

All schemes in receipt of IRCF funding with a contract value in excess of £2 million will be required to open a Project Bank Account (PBA). This is a key policy objective of Welsh Government to ensure prompt payment though the construction supply chain. Evidence that a PBA has been opened will be a requirement of the construction grant payment stage.

Further information on PBA policy can be found here and guidance on the deployment of PBAs can be found here.

Queries in relation to Welsh Government's PBA policy can be directed to Welsh Government's Procurement Policy team on the following email address: CommercialPolicy@gov.wales

Application and Approval Process

Regional Partnership Boards have been identified as the lead bodies to co-ordinate and manage this capital programme given their unique positioning as a multi-agency partnership forum. Partners (including health, housing, social care, education,

housing, regeneration and the third sector) should work through the RPB to feed in their own service specific information, resources and opportunities to support the development of the strategic capital plan that will identify capital investment priorities to support integrated service delivery. The guidance and advice highlighted above on the Strategic Capital Planning process due to be issued to RPBs by the end of September 2022 will help RPBs recognise the different processes between lead organisations in developing integrated plans.

The Strategic capital plan and project applications will be submitted to Welsh Government for approval.

The IRCF and the HCF will each have their own assessment panels made up of cross government officials including representatives from health, social care, education, housing and regeneration. Programme Directors for both the IRCF and the HCF will sit on both assessment panels and will work closely together to ensure applications are allocated to the most appropriate fund and that opportunities for wider alignment are recognised and developed.

Assessment panels may come back to RPBs for further information to support applications if necessary.

Once approved by the assessment panel applications will be submitted to Ministers for final approval.

Figure 2 below shows the planning and assessment process for the HCF and the IRCF.

Integrated Capital Funding
– planning, assessment and approvals process

Fig 2

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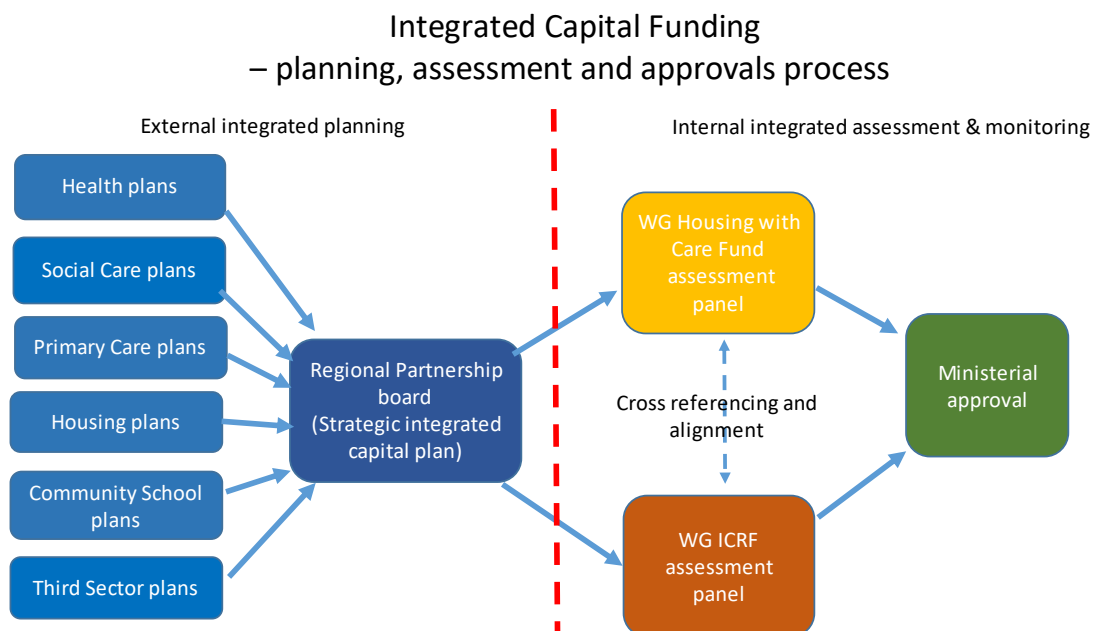
As highlighted above, RPBs will need to develop and maintain a Strategic Capital Plan and a supporting project portfolio which will clearly identify the strategic need for any project submitted under the IRCF. Only applications included within the SCP will be accepted through IRCF. However, noting the longer-term nature of the strategic plan it is expected that this be managed as a live document so that it can be updated to meet changing needs or new opportunities that may arise over time. Similarly, the project portfolio should be regularly updated and used to track progress of delivery.

Projects submitted under IRCF will be subject to a multi staged application and approval process; the number of stages is determined by the scale and risks of the project, for example larger, more complex investments, outline and full business cases (OBC/FBC) would be required.

RPBs should put in place their own internal processes to appraise and approve projects before these are submitted to the Welsh Government. RPB approval should be recorded on the application form.

The cross-government panel will meet bi-monthly to appraise the applications that have been received.

Applications received within 10 working days of the panel date will be appraised at the next panel to allow sufficient time for paperwork to be assessed and distributed ahead of the panel.

Step 1 – Initial application

The first stage application sets out the principles, description, and estimated costs of the project, as set out in the application form. If agreed, the Welsh Government will issue an 'in principle' endorsement for the scheme at this stage, and, where appropriate, funding of fees to achieve the next stage of the process.

Step 2 – Business Case Development

Optimising public value is the primary aim of public sector spending. The Better Business Case approach, using the Five Case Model, is the Welsh Government's best practice for planning and cost justifying infrastructure investment proposals and enabling effective funding allocation decisions.

The Better Business Case approach is a requirement for all schemes seeking investment from the IRCF programme and based on best practice set out in the HMT Green Book[7].

All submitted Business Cases are underpinned by a Programme Business Case (PBC (formerly known as Strategic Outline Programme (SOP)), which provides an overarching view of the project/programme. Your Strategic Capital Plan will serve as the Programme Business Case.

[7]
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1063330/Green_Book_2022.pdf

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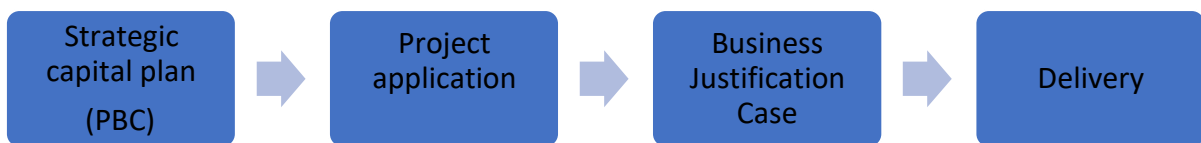Individual projects can then be approved subject to receipt of a satisfactory Business Case.

For projects over £5 million, Business Cases are to be submitted in two stages:
- Strategic Outline Case (SOC) and Outline Business Case (OBC) – following approval of the PBC the SOC and OBC can be submitted at the same time
- Full Business Case (FBC)

For smaller projects less than £5 million in value the SOC, OBC and FBC are replaced by a single document, the Business Justification Case (BJC).

This process is highlighted in the diagram below in fig 1:

For projects less than £5m:

```
Strategic          Project          Business
capital plan   →   application  →   Justification  →   Delivery
(PBC)                               Case
```

For projects £5m and over:

```
Strategic Capital      Project
Plan              →    application  →   SOC/OBC
(PBC)                  form                │
                                           ▼
                    Delivery   ←    FBC
```
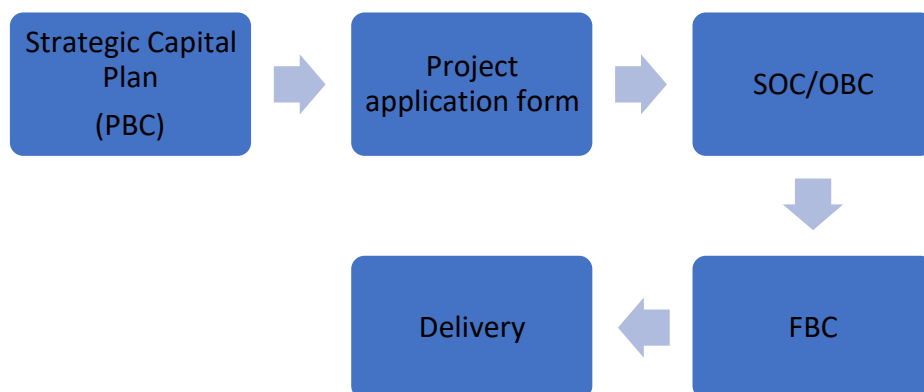
Fig 1

An independent land or property valuation is required **before approval** for any acquisition is granted. Evidence of title is required before any funding is paid. We do not require original signed documents to be submitted but these should be retained for future reference.

Evidence of detailed planning permission and a signed construction contract is required before FBC (or BJC) approval will be granted.

When a project application is approved, the Welsh Government will issue a grant award letter in favour of the RPB's nominated lead organisation. An RPB is not a body corporate so cannot hold funds or employ people. The lead organisation is the recipient of the grant award letter and is subject to the legal responsibilities and obligations conferred by the letter.

Claims

When Welsh Government funding is awarded to an external body it is important that public funding is protected and used for the purposes for which it was allocated.

Where health boards are the lead organisation, the funding will be through the Capital Resource Limit Schedule as is the case for all funding allocations for health boards, this will be detailed within the grant award letter issued.

Where the lead organisation is not health board led, the lead organisation may claim quarterly in arrears based on costs incurred for the delivery of the project. A claim proforma will be made available to use and an example is at Annex [TBC].

Claims may be submitted quarterly except in the final quarter, when claims must be received by 28/29 February or the last working day of the month if the 28 or 29 falls on a weekend.

All claims will require confirmation based around the following requirements: -
- Details are correct and no other Welsh Government grant or external contributions have been or will be made towards the expenditure detailed in the claim unless agreed.

- the funding claimed is for agreed purposes, for eligible expenditure and is within expenditure limits approved.

- The organisation is operating in all respects in accordance with its constitution; and

- The organisation declares that if any part of the funding is used to provide a grant or to procure any goods or services from third parties, then the appropriate financial and control systems are in place.

The grant award letter issued will provide further detail on the claims process for IRCF.

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Legal Charges and Restrictions

Schemes in receipt of more than £100,000 of IRCF funding are subject to legal charges and/or restrictions. The form of legal charge and restriction will be appended to Grant Award Letters.

If IRCF funding is paid to the Local Health Board, and kept by the Local Health Board, there are no legal charge and/or restriction requirements. Please note that Local Health Boards require Ministerial approval to acquire or dispose of land or property.

If IRCF funding is paid to the Local Health Board who pay it onwards to a delivery organisation, such as an RSL or a local authority, a legal charge and/or restriction in favour of the Local Health Board must be placed on the property.

If IRCF funding is paid directly to a local authority, a restriction must be registered against the land or property in favour of the Welsh Ministers. If funding is between £50,000 and £250,000 this will remain in place for 5 years, if over £250,000 then the restriction remains in place for 10 years.

If IRCF funding is paid directly to an RSL or any other third sector or independent provider, a legal charge and restriction must be placed on the land or property purchased at acquisition stage in favour of the Welsh Ministers. If the property is already owned by the applicant, the legal charge and restriction must be placed on the property at construction stage.

Programme Delivery

The programme delivery process may include some or all the following stages depending on the size and scope of the project:

- Technical scrutiny at concept stage and pre-planning stage
- Project approval and award
- Grant payment
- Technical scrutiny post completion review

Roles and Responsibilities

Welsh Government

The IRCF team will administer funding for Priority 1,2 and 3 projects, with appraisal and panel support from key policy leads within Welsh Government. The Welsh Government's role includes:

- Reviewing applications and liaising/ working with RPBs.

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- Liaising with the key policy areas required such as Housing, Education, Regeneration, Early Years and poverty as well as Health & Social Services teams and other policy areas within Welsh Government.

- Checking and processing scheme approval applications and grant claims.

- Liaising with applicants where applications are incomplete or appear incorrect.

- Determining the proportions of IRCF and RIF funding for each scheme.

- Issuing scheme approvals by grant award letter and paying grant.

- Where applicable, putting in place any legal charges or restrictions

- Undertaking spot checks of documentation held on the review files.

- Monitoring SCPs and applications to ensure all grant is paid when due.

- Monitoring scheme completions to ensure outputs and benefits are recorded and post completion review reports are received.

All project approval applications and grant claims relating to IRCF funded schemes should be sent electronically to the Partnership and Integration mailbox: partnershipandintegration@gov.wales.

RPBs, local health boards, local authorities RSLs and other third sector or independent providers are asked to clearly state the name of the scheme in the title of the e-mail and the type of correspondence.

Regional Partnership Boards

RPBs are responsible for:

- Managing and maintaining the regional Strategic Capital Plan, and wider strategic regional capital planning to maximise the synergies between HCF and RIF.

- Approving schemes prior to applications being submitted to Welsh Government.

- Maintaining a Decisions Log to record decisions by the RPB.

- Submitting applications for approval and claims for funding.

- Liaising with Welsh Government, delivery organisations, stakeholders and service users.

- Ensuring IRCF capital schemes are sustainable and supported by appropriate revenue funded services.

- Ensuring legal charge and restriction obligations are discharged and recorded promptly.

- Recording, monitoring and escalating risks.

- Monitoring value for money and reporting outputs and benefits.

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- Ensuring cross cutting priorities such as decarbonisation, active travel routes and Welsh language have been considered.

Delivery organisations

Local authorities, Health boards, RSLs and other third sector or independent providers ("delivery organisations") delivering Priority 1, 2 or 3 projects are responsible for:

- Liaising with RPBs, Welsh Government and others, as appropriate.

- Securing written RPB agreement to commit IRCF funding.

- Submitting applications for approval and claims for grant, providing all supporting evidence required.

- Putting in place appropriate legal charges and/or restrictions.

- Monitoring, recording and escalating risks.

- Monitoring schemes continuously for Value for Money.

Procurement

All delivery organisations should ensure the procurement of both specialist design services and appropriate delivery agents are undertaken in line with the organisation's standard procurement policies and procedures.

Procurement should also be aligned with the [Wales Procurement Policy Statement](#).

The use of existing framework agreements is acceptable provided they were awarded appropriately and are compliant with current public procurement regulations.

The Welsh public sector is the largest user of services and goods from the private and voluntary sectors in Wales. The Welsh Government actively seeks to derive benefits for the local community from procurement activity through the application of Community Benefits policy approach. This approach is further endorsed by Principle 4 of the Wales Procurement Policy Statement, which makes delivery of social, economic and environmental benefit through effective application of Community Benefits policy must be an integral consideration in procurement.

The approach covers:
- Apprenticeship opportunities – creating new opportunities or providing hands-on training weeks for current apprentices
- Job opportunities for economically inactive people
- Training opportunities for economically inactive people
- Retention and training opportunities for the existing workforce
- Promotion of open and accessible supply chains that provide opportunities for SMEs to bid for work; and promote social enterprises and supported businesses
- Code of Practice Ethical employment in supply chains
- Fair payment
- Contribution to education in Wales through engagement with school, college and university curriculums

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- Contributions to community initiatives that support tackling poverty across Wales and leave a lasting legacy within the community
- Opportunities to minimise the environmental impact of the contract and to promote environmental benefits.

All projects financed through the IRCF are required to apply Community benefits to 'all' procurement irrespective of value, reporting using the Community Benefits Measurement Toolkit[8] on contracts over £2 million 'where such benefits can be realised'. Use of the toolkit enables the capture of the full range of Community Benefits outcomes, including jobs, educational support initiatives and training, and provides a consistent way of measuring such benefits.

The Welsh Government has laid out expectations of what type of community benefits should be targeted and have also included benchmarks for these targets. Some of the data is required for information only and is not set as a hard target.

The targets that form part of the contract should be included in the Full Business Case/Business Justification Case and will also be included in the grant award letter when the application for funding is approved.

Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM)

All Welsh Government funded projects (non-domestic) with a capital cost over £2 million (i.e., comprising works, fees, non-works, contingency etc. and VAT) and over 1,000m2 in floor area are required to commit to the appropriate standard as defined below from scheme commencement.

New Build Schemes – EXCELLENT rating (assessed against BREEAM New Construction)

Major Refurbishment Schemes – VERY GOOD rating (assessed against BREEAM Non-Domestic refurbishment and fit-out)

It is accepted that there may be some exceptional circumstances where due to the nature and complexity of the works it is not realistic to achieve the required target level. In these circumstances it should be identified at the earliest opportunity and the issue highlighted to WG who will review the evidence and work with the project team to identify an appropriate target level which ensures that the best possible outcome is achieved.

Further information can be found at https://gov.wales/sustainable-building-standards

Working Towards Whole Life Net Zero Carbon

The Welsh Government is committed to a carbon neutral public sector by 2030 and a 100% reduction in emission of greenhouse gases in Wales by 2050.

All new–build projects requesting funding support through the IRCF, that have not yet reached OBC stage, will be required to demonstrate delivery of Net Zero Carbon in operation plus a 20% reduction on the amount of embodied carbon – that is the carbon emitted through construction materials and the construction process. For projects already under development or refurbishments, we appreciate that there may

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[8] https://gov.wales/procurement-community-benefits-measurement-tool-v9

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need to be a transition phase, but it is expected that all projects will strive to work towards being energy efficient and meeting best practice energy performance standards, supporting the target of net-zero carbon by 2030, ensuring buildings are fit for purpose for the future and achieve the highest environmental standards.

The change required to do this should not be underestimated; there are many technical, material, developmental and operational challenges in achieving 'true' carbon neutrality. However, the desire to change is emerging throughout the supply chain. There is an element of competitiveness clearly emerging in design teams, contractors and material manufacturers.

The IRCF programme presents a unique opportunity, right at the very heart of our communities, to make significant advancements towards a net zero whole life carbon health and social care infrastructure in Wales.

Business cases will be scrutinised through the usual process with additional scrutiny of the Net Zero Carbon element. Projects will also be required to regularly monitor and review the building's performance over a five-year period reporting any lessons learned during the process to the Programme team.

Further advice, including targets to be achieved, is currently being developed and will be provided by October 2023.

Programme monitoring

Effective monitoring and evaluation arrangements are important to provide assurances that IRCF capital funding is being fully utilised in the support of the aim of the fund to achieve the Programme for Government (PfG) commitments of developing 50 integrated health and social care hubs and rebalancing the residential care market.

RPBs must ensure they have robust monitoring arrangements in place to ensure schemes funded via IRCF deliver their intended outcomes on time and within budget.

The Welsh Government will hold bi-monthly monitoring meetings with each RPB to review progress and financial performance. More frequent meetings will be held as required, particularly in the second half of the financial year. RPB Leads will be the main point of contact to ensure a strategic view is maintained across each region, however leads can nominate suitable colleagues to engage with the Welsh Government if required

Welsh Government requires RPBs to submit bi-monthly monitoring reports, including:
- Financial assumptions
- Delivery of project – timeframes to include targets as well as any identified slippage against spend profile.
- Programme risks and RAG status of scheme and project progression
- Outputs and outcomes – by set dates e.g., by 30 September and 31 March.
- Benefits realisation.

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Other than risks, reporting must be cumulative and summarise the overall position at the relevant point of the financial year.

RPBs should include progress updates on their capital activity as part of their annual report. Welsh Government may publish periodic report to illustrate the activity.

A template which includes the criteria set out above for the quarterly reports is attached at Annex [TBC].

Communications and branding

To enable stakeholders and citizens to understand how the IRCF is making a difference, RPBs will be asked to share their communication plans for the IRCF in context to wider regional planning.

RPBs must acknowledge Welsh Government support on all publicity, press releases and marketing materials produced in relation to the funding and associated projects. Such acknowledgement must comply with the approved Welsh Government's [branding guidelines](#).

The Welsh Government logo or acknowledgement logo must be displayed on signage or plaques when projects have received funding from the Welsh Government in line with the [guidance-on-using-the-welsh-government-logo-capital-projects.pdf](#)

Communities of Practice

Several Communities of Practice (CoPs) have been or will be established that align to the six national Models of Care. The CoPs will offer key partners and stakeholders the opportunity to share learning and experiences to help us develop our national blueprint for these Models including integrated health and social care hubs and are an essential part of this programme. The CoPs will be key the vehicle to share examples of good practice, compare learning and experiences, identify areas of focus, and create and test out resources and materials that can be shared widely across Wales. Workshops are already being held across the existing CoPs to shape topics and are being led by a commissioned facilitator who will manage the networking arrangements supported by a Welsh Government team.

The Community Based Care Community of Practice has already been established and has begun to identify emerging practice and share learning to achieve a consistent approach to integrating community-based services. This Community of Practice will focus on what is delivered through a Hub, how the inclusion of all key partners (e.g., the community, third sector, housing) can be realised, how Hubs engage people with live experiences, the role of social prescribing within a Hub arrangement and develop approaches to measure success and outcomes for Health and Social Care Hubs. Furthermore, an Accommodation Based Solutions

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Community of Practice will be established, and early conversations will begin in early Autumn 2022 as to topic areas to focus on.

CoPs will be established to support the capital investment and will play an essential role in sharing learning and supporting projects and RPBs with the development of the broader national models of integrated care. Communication channels will be established between capital investment (design and build) CoPs and the Community Based Care CoPs (the functions to deliver an integrated approach) to ensure there is mutual sharing of learning, good practice, identify solutions, and the development of synergist materials that support the blueprints for the national Models of Care.

Measuring Success

It should be for the RPB to ensure that benefits register with baselines is developed so that success can be judged against this. Each individual project will have its own success criteria. Any business case developed should include benefits register. However, RPBs need to align their benefits register to the RIF Outcomes Framework and the Model of Care high level outcomes that relate to, for example community-based care and accommodation-based solutions, and to the other Models of Care outcomes where there is interface and relevance to provide the story of intended change for the priority population groups. The RIF Outcomes Framework Technical Handbook provides practical advice and suggests tools to use to gather robust and coherent evidence of what works including how to present case studies from multiple perspectives.

Contact Details for IRCF

Queries can be sent to IRCF@Gov.Wales

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Annex 1 Primary Care Model for Wales

The following have been identified as important considerations in the design of models of care that may be provided at integrated primary care health and social care facilities:

- No 'one size fits all' model exists; demographics and local population needs should be assessed and reflected in areas of focus e.g., the focus could be on issues of substance misuse and unemployment, as well as services for diagnostic services or chronic conditions management.
- Value exists in exploring non-medical satellite practices, to act as an additional level of care but linked to the wider cluster of care delivery.
- Wider well-being need is heightened with a focus on non-medical community facilities (e.g., gyms, gardens etc).
- Improvements to signposting and wayfinding services to encourage patients to access early help – 'no wrong door' approach
- Additional capacity is required where new services are provided – for example: ear wax treatments, physiotherapy gyms, optometry diagnostic capacity. This needs to be factored in to space requirements
- Voluntary sector and wider community support organisations should be considered for accommodation within health and wellbeing facilities
- Consideration is needed for appropriate types of out of hour's services, as it is critical to ensure efficient space utilisation and service provision that reflects the needs of all age groups.

<u>**Type and Scale of Integrated Health and Social Care Centre**</u>

It is understood that not all facilities will need to be the large integrated centre, but that works to support and upgrade smaller satellite facilities will be needed in order to deliver a comprehensive integrated model of care.

The range and type of services delivered from the facilities will vary, the following list of services is not exhaustive and should be viewed as a foundation for local population and clinical consultation and planning.

- **Core health and social care services:**

Core GMS (potentially including extended hours / out of ours)	Dentistry	Pharmacy	Ophthalmology	Audiology (including Primary Care Earwax Service	Podiatry
IAPT (Mild-Moderate Depression and Anxiety)	MSK Service, and Wider Physio, OT, SLT services	Virtual MDTs Older People and Active Aging	Frailty assessment and support services	Cancer Screening	Case Management, care coordination complex multi-condition cohort
Sexual Health Services including Contraception clinics	Community mental health, LD and Autism Spectrum services	CAMHS consultation / therapeutic spaces	Minor Surgery	Ambulatory urgent care and urgent treatment (in and out of hours)	Diagnostics including X-Ray, CT, Echo, ECG, Ultrasound etc
Digital consultations	Maternity, health visiting and wider family care services.	Shared prescribing hub and Medicines Management	Peer-mentoring for chronic conditions	Wound Care and minor injuries	Minor procedures- Day Case surgery

- **Wider community and wellbeing services:**

Learning through Play Areas for young people	Employment Services	Community Social, performance and Arts Spaces	Community Gardens and Kitchens	Care Navigators
Nutrition and Physical Fitness education and facilities (Gym/Pool?)	Libraries (Virtual and Actual)	Therapies Animals and Community Farms	Citizens Advice Bureau	Support for victims of Crime / Domestic Abuse
Wellbeing services and social prescribing	Health Screening, immunisation and Fit Testing	Social Hub for young people with community sports teams and activities	Wrap around childcare for low-income working households	Prevention, Immunisation and wider health improvement (smoking cessation, weight loss, Substance misuse support support)
	Third sector advisors such as Age UK, Arts, Hedway, National Autistic Society and Young Peoples charities	Charities meeting spaces to support fundraising/community engagement	Signposting and wellbeing library to support selfcare	

While not being prescriptive so as to allow for flexibility of use, it is anticipated that centres will, depending on size and service provision, include space for the following:

- **Core:** Services and facilities that need to be a permanent offer at the facility; requiring full time, ring fenced clinical or non-clinical spaces.

- **Sessional:** Services that are offered on a regular basis (over agreed sessions per week) either by satellite services, mobile clinical service sessions or part time practice staff; a proportion of clinical space will be allocated within each facility for each service. These sessional services may also be able to be

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provided in non-practice type facilities (for example local shops, care facilities, schools) for remote communities to access services locally.

- **Periodic:** Occasional visiting services at fixed points or on an ad hoc basis throughout the year, e.g., flu vaccinations or monthly public health screening sessions; access on a flexible basis to shared bookable spaces. These periodic services may also be able to be provided in non-practice type facilities (for example local shops, care facilities, schools) for remote communities to access services locally.

- **Virtually/via remote multi-disciplinary team**: essential services are provided for patients and the public to engage remotely either via online resources or digital consultation and counselling functionality; digital consultation facilities also allocated on both bookable and drop-in basis.

The scale and range of services offered will be dependent on service design and need. A profile has been developed that identifies a range of models based on size and service provision.
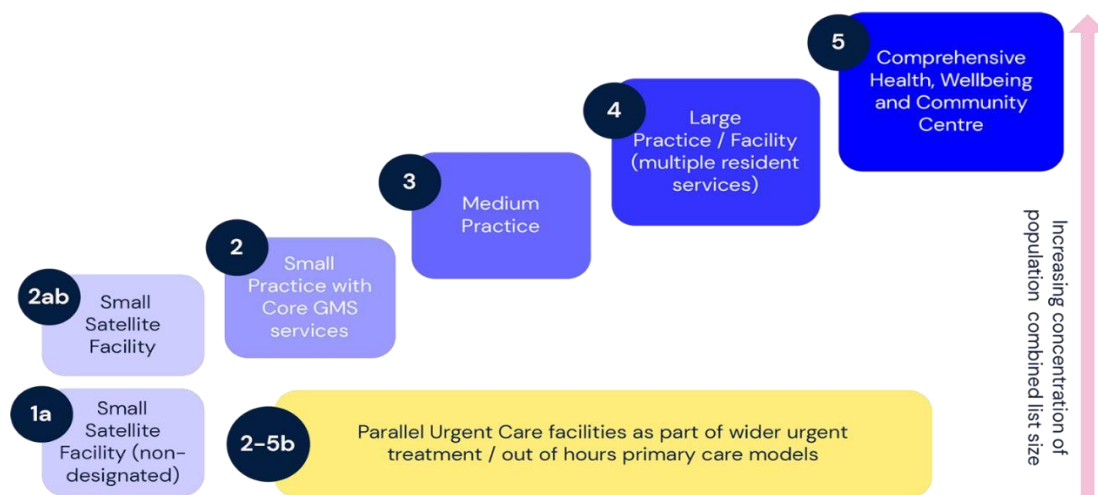
Level 1a facilities are a departure from the established norms around health owned and operated premises. These facilities are focused on enabling access and enhancing community facilities in small and/or rural populations. The agreed service provision may be offered from a range of premises, which may not be a traditional General Practice, but delivered in a shared accommodation and accessible on a flexible basis over an agreed number of days per week.

Level 2a are Similar to Level 1a but this level of provision includes some limited designated clinical capacity to provide a facility both for scheduled/sessional services and a space where community teams can safely access/treat patients without asking them to travel to larger designated health facilities for all appointments

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Level 2 facilities are most similar to current General Medical Services aligned, small practices. Operating either five or six days a week with smaller catchment population these facilities are likely to host two to three fixed clinical staff (GP and/or practice nurse) and periodic additional multidisciplinary services.

Level 3 will likely have between four and six fixed GPs, core nurse capacity and training status. This facility should offer all substantive General Medical Services with a wider provision for visiting complimentary services and community-initiated activities.

Level 4 facilities offer an opportunity to provide a hub for primary and community services across a wider locality and catchment population. In addition to core and enhanced community services these facilities should provide wide range of fixed community and health resources on substantive and/or sessional basis. This is a significant step change in capacity with a diverse range of both clinical and commercial capacity with the introduction of fixed Pharmacy, care navigation and wider advisory services.

Level 5 facilities should seek to provide services for 35-50,000 population and be able to combine several practices. This model may indicate a change in the provision of primary health care in that patients may not register with a specific GP or practice but would be able to access a wider range of integrated services as directed by a core team of advisory clinical navigators. The location of the facility should be planned to maximise access and generate significant consolidation benefits for the public estate.

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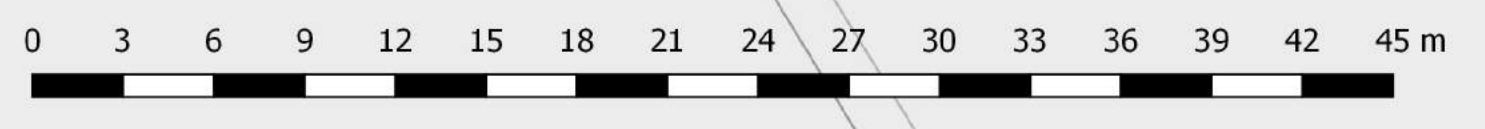
CYNGOR SIR CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 7th November 2023

Title: New Residential Roads for Adoption:
                            Maes yr Halen, Cross Inn (ED4069)

Purpose of the report: To recommend that the road set out below be adopted
                            as highway maintainable at public expense.

For: Decision

Cabinet Portfolio and Cabinet Member:
Councillor Keith Henson, Cabinet Member for Highways and Environmental Services and Carbon Management

Introduction
The developer responsible for constructing the estate road serving residential dwellings constructed under planning permission A040851 entered into a Highways Act 1980 s.38 agreement with the Council which agrees that the Council will maintain the highway at the public expense provided that it is constructed in accordance with Council approved drawings and specification.

A final inspection of the site was undertaken by Officers on 12/09/2023 and all defects that were identified following the expiry of the 12-month maintenance period has been rectified to the Council's satisfaction.

This Cabinet report details the additional highway assets that are being proposed for future maintenance at the public expense and the legislative powers that are applicable to do so.

Wellbeing of Future Generations:
Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If, not, please state why.

No Service or Policy change – IIA not required.

Summary of Integrated Impact Assessment:
Long term: N/A
Collaboration: N/A
Involvement: N/A
Prevention: N/A
Integration: N/A

1

Recommendation(s):
It is recommended that the estate road *Maes yr Halen, Cross Inn, New Quay* as detailed on the plan shown in Appendix A of this report is adopted as highway maintainable at public expense under the legislation given in s.38 and s.278 Highways Act 1980.

Reasons for decision:
To enable the road to be maintained at public expense for the benefit and future wellbeing of the public using the highway.

Overview and Scrutiny:
N/A

Policy Framework:
Producing better and safer roads.

Corporate Well-being Objectives:
- Boosting the Economy, Supporting Businesses and Enabling Employment
- Creating Caring and Healthy Communities
- Providing the Best Start in Life and Enabling Learning at All Ages
- Creating Sustainable, Green and Well-connected Communities

Finance and Procurement implications:
Highways Maintenance Budget, Additional SSA.

Legal Implications:
Highways Act 1980

Staffing implications:
None

Property / asset implications:
The following highway assets will be added to the inventory of assets to be maintained by Highways & Environmental Services:

Footpath	210 m
Verge	Nil.
Carriageway	150 m
Structures	Nil.
Streetlighting Columns	7 No.

Risk(s):
None

Statutory Powers:
Section 278 and 38 of the Highways Act 1980

Background Papers:
None

2

Appendices:
Appendix A – Highway Extent Plan – Maes yr Halen

Corporate Lead Officer:
Rhodri Llwyd, Corporate Lead Officer: Highways and Environmental Services

Reporting Officer:
Steve Hallows, Service Manager - Highways Development

Date:
4th October 2023

3

Cyngor Sir Ceredigion
Ceredigion County Council

Neuadd Cyngor Ceredigion, Penmorfa,
Aberaeron, Ceredigion SA46 0PA
Ffôn/Tel. 01545 570881

Maes yr Halen, Cross Inn, New Quay

Graddfa / Scale: 1:250
Argraffwyd ar / Printed on: 2023-10-03

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G/N

Legend
Adoptable Highways
▢ Footpath
▢ Verge
▢ Carriageway
▢ Adoptable Extents

Gorlan

5

Haulwen

Cilmeri

Dôl Alen

Castell

Ty-Clyd

Ty Cornel

Lon Rhydalen

3

1

Sinks

Glas

2

1

141.5m

Delta One

Maes yr Halen

12

Pendre

Brynalen

Cartrefle

Arms (PH)

Arwel

Ardwyn

Bettina Lodge

Page 98

0 3 6 9 12 15 18 21 24 27 30 33 36 39 42 45 m

CYNGOR SIR CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

<u>Report to:</u>	**Cabinet**
<u>Date of meeting:</u>	**7th November 2023**
<u>Title:</u>	**New Residential Roads for Adoption:** **Cae Bach y Rhiw, Rhydyfelin (ED4257)**
<u>Purpose of the report:</u>	**To recommend that the road set out below be adopted as highway maintainable at public expense.**
<u>For:</u>	**Decision**

<u>**Cabinet Portfolio and Cabinet Member:**</u>
Councillor Keith Henson, Cabinet Member for Highways and Environmental Services and Carbon Management

<u>**Introduction**</u>
The developer responsible for constructing the estate road serving residential dwellings constructed under planning permission A020340 entered into a Highways Act 1980 s.38 agreement dated 12/11/2008 with the Council which agrees that the Council will maintain the highway at the public expense provided that it is constructed in accordance with Council approved drawings and specification.

A final inspection of the site was undertaken by Officers on 22/09/2023 and all defects that were identified following the expiry of the 12-month maintenance period have been rectified to the Council's satisfaction.

This Cabinet report details the additional highway assets that are being proposed for future maintenance at the public expense and the legislative powers that are applicable to do so.

<u>**Wellbeing of Future Generations:**</u>
Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If, not, please state why.

No Service or Policy change – IIA not required.

Summary of Integrated Impact Assessment:
Long term: N/A
Collaboration: N/A
Involvement: N/A
Prevention: N/A
Integration: N/A

1

Recommendation(s):
It is recommended that the estate road *Cae Bach y Rhiw, Rhydyfelin* as detailed on the plan shown in Appendix A of this report is adopted as highway maintainable at public expense under the legislation given in s.38 and s.278 Highways Act 1980

Reasons for decision:
To enable the road to be maintained at public expense for the benefit and future wellbeing of the public using the highway.

Overview and Scrutiny:
N/A

Policy Framework:
Producing better and safer roads.

Corporate Well-being Objectives:
- Boosting the Economy, Supporting Businesses and Enabling Employment
- Creating Caring and Healthy Communities
- Providing the Best Start in Life and Enabling Learning at All Ages
- Creating Sustainable, Green and Well-connected Communities

Finance and Procurement implications:
Highways Maintenance Budget, Additional SSA.

Legal Implications:
Highways Act 1980

Staffing implications:
None

Property / asset implications:
The following highway assets will be added to the inventory of assets to be maintained by Highways & Environmental Services:

Footpath	86 m
Verge	140 m
Carriageway	110 m
Structures	Nil.
Streetlighting Columns	4 No.

Risk(s):
None

Statutory Powers:
Section 278 and 38 of the Highways Act 1980.

Background Papers:
None

2

Appendices:
Appendix A – Highway Extent Plan – Cae Bach y Rhiw

Corporate Lead Officer:
Rhodri Llwyd, Corporate Lead Officer: Highways and Environmental Services

Reporting Officer:
Steve Hallows, Service Manager - Highways Development

Date:
4th October 2023

Cyngor Sir Ceredigion
Ceredigion County Council

Neuadd Cyngor Ceredigion, Penmorfa,
Aberaeron, Ceredigion SA46 0PA
Ffôn/Tel. 01545 570881

Cae Bach y Riw, Rhydyfelin

Graddfa / Scale: 1:250
Argraffwyd ar / Printed on: 2023-10-04

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Legend
Adoptable Highways
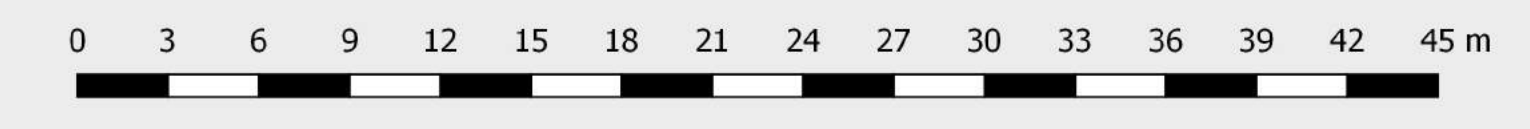
- Footpath
- Verge
- Carriageway
- Adoptable Extents

Jays

Gerlan

Dryscol

Llys y Cwm

Cae Bach y Rhiw

Kartrev

West

Bron-y-Glyn

Arfryn

Drain

24.2m

CYNGOR SIR CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to: **Cabinet**

Date of meeting: **7 November 2023**

Title: **Ceredigion County Council Self-Assessment Report 2022/23**

Purpose of the report: **To present the Council's Self-Assessment Report 2022-23 as required by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021**

For: **Decision**

Cabinet Portfolio and Cabinet Member:
Councillor Bryan Davies, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Democratic Services, Policy, Performance and People and Organisation

Background
Part 6 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 introduced a new Self-Assessment based performance regime for Principal Councils.

The new performance regime is intended to build and support a culture in which councils continuously seek to improve and do better in everything they do, regardless of how well they are performing already. It is the expectation of the Act that councils will always be striving to achieve more and seek to ensure best outcomes for local people and communities.

There are 5 specific duties for Councils introduced by the Act:

- Duty to keep performance under review
- Duty to consult on performance
- Duty to report on performance
- Duty to arrange a Panel Performance Assessment
- Duty to respond to a Panel Performance Assessment

Under its duty to report on performance, the Council is required to publish a Self-Assessment Report once in respect of every financial year setting out the conclusions as to the extent to which the Council met the performance requirements during that financial year, and any actions it will take, or has already taken, to increase the extent to which it will meet the performance requirements. The emphasis of the Report is on understanding how the Council is operating now, the likely demands it will face in the future, and how it can build sustainability.

Current Position
Since April 2023, Ceredigion County Council has been undertaking its latest round of Self-Assessment and a timetable of the activities is attached at Appendix 1 for reference.

1

The evidence collected has been used to produce the Self-Assessment Report which is attached at Appendix 2. This is the main output from the Self-Assessment process and sets out how the Council is currently performing and the actions it intends to take going forward. The Report has been developed by assessing a wide variety of evidence including internal reports and reviews, external regulatory and inspection reports and crucially engagement and consultation activities.

It is important to note that the Self-Assessment Report for 2022/23 discharges the requirements of both:

- The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 – to set and review progress against our Corporate Well-being Objectives

- The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 – the duty to keep performance under review, consult on performance, report on performance, arrange a Panel Performance Assessment and respond to a Panel Performance Assessment.

Although the Self-Assessment Report is the key output from the process the work on improving outcomes is an ongoing year-round activity. Throughout the year we conduct consultation in support of self-assessment, we collate evidence to inform the workshops, we deliver the actions in our Self-Assessment action plan and we monitor their progress towards completion.

Following positive feedback from Welsh Government and our peers on last year's report, we have retained a similar format for this year to help in disseminating key messages and keeping it succinct, as requested by Welsh Government. A number of improvements have been made this year to strengthen the report:

- Providing further detail on the consultation and engagement undertaken during the year and how it is used.
- Providing details of the stakeholder consultation to support self-assessment.
- Providing further detail in the evaluation commentary of the Council's overall performance.
- Updating the Self-Assessment Action Plan, adding the new actions identified along with a progress update.
- Expanding the benchmarking section (further work is ongoing to develop this in conjunction with Data Cymru).
- Added "Council Structure" section to provide details of how the Council is structured.
- Included links to other related reports and strategies, which is seen as best practice.

The Council's Corporate Strategy 2022-27 sets out its Corporate Well-being Objectives, which were developed to promote sustainability and improve the well-being of the citizens of Ceredigion. They were identified through extensive analysis of evidence and engagement with residents, including the ambitions of the new political administration, the Ceredigion Assessment of Local Well-being and public consultation. Pages 33-48 of the Self-Assessment Report review the Council's

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progress in delivering the Objectives. Following this year's review of the Objectives it is proposed that they remain unchanged for the next year:

- Boosting the economy, supporting businesses and enabling employment
- Creating caring and healthy communities
- Providing the best start in life and enabling learning at all ages
- Creating sustainable, green and well-connected communities

The Governance and Audit Committee has a statutory responsibility to consider the Self-Assessment Report and make recommendations on the conclusions and the actions that the Council proposes to take. The Report was considered at its meeting on 27 September 2023 and approved to proceed for approval at Cabinet and Council. No formal recommendations were made to the conclusions or the actions, although minor formatting amendments have been made to improve the quality of the report prior to Cabinet.

Next Steps
The Self-Assessment Report is scheduled to proceed to Council on 30 November, before being submitted to Ministers, Estyn and the Auditor General for Wales, as well as being published on the website.

Panel Performance Assessment Update
Part of the new Self-Assessment Performance Regime is the duty to undertake a Panel Performance Assessment once in every election cycle. Panel Assessments are intended to provide an independent and external perspective of the extent to which the Council is meeting the performance requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. The aim is to support councils to achieve their aspirations through developing and understanding how they are operating and how they can ensure they are able to deliver effective services long-term. Work is continuing to organise the Council's first Panel Performance Assessment due to take place during 2024/25 and supported by the Welsh Local Government Association.

Wellbeing of Future Generations:
Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If not, please state why.

No, the Self-Assessment Report does not introduce any new policies or strategies.

Summary of Integrated Impact Assessment:
Long term: N/A
Collaboration: N/A
Involvement: N/A
Prevention: N/A
Integration: N/A

Recommendation(s):
1. **That Cabinet recommends that Council approves the Self-Assessment Report 2022/23 including the Annual Review of Performance and Well-being Objectives.**
2. **That Cabinet recommends that Council approves the Corporate Well-being Objectives to remain unchanged for the next year.**

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3. That Cabinet approves the Council's first Panel Performance Assessment to take place in early 2024/25.

Reasons for decision:
To ensure compliance with Part 6 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 / Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Overview and Scrutiny:
Governance and Audit Committee 27/09/2023
Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Committee 6/11/2023

Policy Framework:
Part 6 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021
Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Corporate Well-being Objectives:
All, the Self-Assessment Report assesses the Council's overall performance

Finance and Procurement implications:
None, all actions contained in the Self-Assessment Action Plan will be delivered within existing structures and budgets

Legal Implications:
The Council has a duty under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to set Well-being Objectives and Steps to deliver those Objectives

Staffing implications:
None, all actions contained in the Self-Assessment Action Plan will be delivered within existing structures and budgets

Property / asset implications:
None, all actions contained in the Self-Assessment Action Plan will be delivered within existing structures and budgets

Risk(s):
The Self-Assessment Report 2022-23 and review of Well-being Objectives is not published leading to failure to comply with legislation

Statutory Powers:
N/A

Background Papers:
Performance and governance of principal councils: Statutory guidance on Part 6, Chapter 1, of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

Appendices:
Appendix 1 – Timetable of activities undertaken in Support of Self-Assessment in 2022-23
Appendix 2 - Self-Assessment Report 2022/23

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Corporate Lead Officer:
Alun Williams (Corporate Lead Officer Policy, Performance and Public Protection)

Reporting Officer:
Rob Starr (Performance and Research Team)

Date:
28 September 2023

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Appendix 1: Timetable of the activities undertaken in support of Self-Assessment 2022/23

- The review of Year 1 of the Self-Assessment process was undertaken in **December 2022** and resulted in a series of minor adjustments to make the process more efficient in Year 2 and the strengthen the robustness of the evidence recorded.

- The desktop analysis was undertaken in **April to June** to collate and analyse the evidence available (internal data, external evidence and consultation).

- The first Leadership Group Self-Assessment Workshop was undertaken on **18 April** to identify evidence, challenges, opportunities for improvement and scores.

- The Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Committee Workshop was held on **24 April** to record Member's perspectives on Council performance and opportunities for improvement.

- A second Leadership Group Workshop was subsequently held on **18 May to review the evidence and scores**, and sign off the Key Lines of Enquiry Matrix that contains the results of the exercise.

- The 2022/23 Self-Assessment Report was drafted between **June and August** 2023 by the Performance and Research Team.

- The Corporate Stakeholder Survey was run between **28 June and 31 August**.

- The Draft Self-Assessment Report was presented to Leadership Group **on 30 August** and approved to proceed to Governance and Audit Committee.

- The Draft Self-Assessment Report was presented to Leadership Group/Cabinet on **19 September**.

- The Draft Self-Assessment Report was presented to the Governance and Audit Committee on **27 September** as part of the Committee's statutory role in reviewing and making recommendations on the conclusions drawn in the report and the actions that the Council intends to take. The Governance and Audit Committee approved the report to proceed to publication and no formal recommendations were made.

- Feedback from the Governance and Audit Committee on the Draft Self-Assessment Report was reported to Leadership Group on **28 September.**

- The Self-Assessment Report was updated in **October** with minor formatting amendments to improve the quality of the report prior to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

- The Draft Self-Assessment Report was presented to Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Committee on **6 November**.

Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg

This document is also available in Welsh

2022/23
SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT

Annual Review of Performance and Well-being Objectives

Cyngor Sir
CEREDIGION
County Council

Page 110

CONTENTS

Caru · Love
Ceredigion

Photo: Aberporth Beach
Approved: Not yet approved

INTRODUCTION

From the Leader of Ceredigion County Council

Welcome to Ceredigion County Council's latest Self-Assessment Report. This report reviews our overall performance and progress towards delivering our Corporate Well-being Objectives in 2022/23.

We conducted our most recent Self-Assessment in the summer of 2023, looking at a wide range of evidence, regulatory reports and extensive consultation feedback. It confirms that Ceredigion County Council continues to perform above its stature and makes good use of the resources it has available, despite the challenges faced in recent years such as extensive budget cuts, the COVID-19 pandemic and the cost of living crisis affecting many households in the County.

In the last year we have pushed ahead with delivering our new Corporate Well-being Objectives and good progress has been made. For example, the £110m Mid Wales Growth deal is a further step closer to unlocking the potential of the local economy after the positive portfolio assessment review. The Lampeter Well-being Centre is now open and offering a range of services to support local people and plans are progressing for centres in the north and south of the county. We also underwent a Care Inspectorate Wales inspection of our social services in February/March 2023. The inspection reflected positively on our Through Age Well-being Programme that is transforming the delivery of social care in Ceredigion.

We are also investing in new ways of working and new technology to transform the way services are provided to our customers. This is to ensure they meet growing demand, are sustainable in the future, and provide an enhanced experience for our customers.

By adapting the way we work, we can enable the Council to deliver modern services that will enhance the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of the people of Ceredigion.

However, like all local authorities, there are challenges and opportunities ahead, and these are reflected in this report. The principles of self-assessment are not new to Ceredigion. We have long been using self-assessment as a learning tool to reflect on how we are doing things now, and how we can deliver improvements or provide greater efficiency.

In the last year, self-assessment has helped us identify key actions that will help to drive better outcomes for the county and its citizens. We will be conducting further consultation with citizens, businesses, council staff and Trade Unions over the coming months, to capture further views on how we can improve performance and we look forward to hearing your thoughts.

We hope you find this report informative and a useful way to keep in touch on our performance improvement journey.

Councillor Bryan Davies
Leader of Ceredigion County Council

ABOUT CEREDIGION

Ceredigion covers an area of 1,900km² and is mostly made-up of agricultural land, moorland and forestry, with the upland areas to the east forming a significant portion of the Cambrian Mountains.

The County has a variety of natural landscapes and habitats: coastal cliffs and beaches, marshlands and open upland. The County's landscapes and natural environment are highly valued by local people and visitors alike.

Ceredigion has a high proportion of land recognised for its high environmental value through official designations, including two internationally important wetland areas (the Dyfi estuary and Cors Caron); 13 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC); around 100 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) seven National Nature Reserves and three Local Nature Reserves. The Cambrian Mountains uplands are important for wildlife as are the wet 'rhos pastures'.

The County is bordered by over 90km of coastline, with four sections (around 35km) designated as Heritage Coast. The Wales Coast Path follows a 60 mile (96km) route between the Teifi and Dyfi estuaries. The Coast Path links towns and villages dotted along the spectacular Cardigan Bay coastline.

The rivers in the Ceredigion catchment are the Rheidol, Ystwyth, Clarach, Aeron and Teifi rivers. Ceredigion's river catchment is varied and distinctive, with each river flowing through a variety of landscapes, before reaching the sea. The Teifi River is one of the longest rivers in Southwest Wales, at 122km long.

The attractive landscapes and remote locations in Ceredigion form the basis of 'rural well-being' tourism, which draws in many visitors to the area. Overall, there are almost 3 million visitors to Ceredigion each year.

Although the environment has always been a valued feature of well-being, over the past few years protecting the environment has become much more important to people. The adverse effects of climate change on the environment and nature are far more recognised and people want to do more to protect our environment. In 2020 Ceredigion County Council declared a global climate emergency, prior to this the Council had also committed to being a net zero carbon council by 2030.

The economy of Ceredigion is fairly typical of that of many rural and coastal areas. A high proportion of jobs are in the tourism industry (12.9%), wholesale and retail (12.9%) and human health and social work activities (12.3%). Education is the largest sector in the county, employing around 4,300 people and accounting for around 13.9% of jobs in the county.

Unlike many rural areas, the County has two universities at Aberystwyth and the

Photo: Aberystwyth Promenade

University of Wales Trinity St. David's Campus at Lampeter. It is also home to national institutions such as the National Library of Wales. The knowledge economy is strong in Ceredigion and it has a growing 'green economy' focusing on low carbon emissions, efficient use of resources and being socially inclusive.

Self-employment is an important element in the local economy, and Ceredigion has one of the highest proportions of self-employed people nationally. Many are farmers with others working in a range of established small-scale enterprises such as building repair and maintenance.

The vast majority (99%) of enterprises in Ceredigion are 'micro' or 'small' sized (up to 49 employees). Only 1% of enterprises in Ceredigion have fifty or more employees. The survival rates of newly established businesses are consistently amongst the highest nationally, making Ceredigion a great place to start and grow a business

Ceredigion is one of the heartlands of the Welsh language, despite a substantial student population. The 2021 Census showed that 45.3% of Ceredigion's residents could speak Welsh, the third highest of all counties nationwide.

There are 43 schools in Ceredigion, a mixture of primary, secondary and through age schools. 37 are Welsh medium schools, meaning that the majority of our younger population are learning and using the Welsh language

from a young age.

Ceredigion's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-32 aims for all pupils in the Authority's schools to attend Welsh-medium immersion education until the age of seven and increase the pupils' opportunity to follow a fully bilingual path throughout their school career and in their future work and social life. It also contributes to the national well-being goal and Welsh Government's aim of increasing the number of Welsh speakers to 1 million by 2050.

Ceredigion is a County well known for its cultural and heritage sites. There are castles and museums situated across the County, which draw many tourists to the area throughout the year.

OUR COUNTY IN NUMBERS

71,468 people

48 years average age

4% BAME population*

7,845 university students

22% with a disability

30,893 households

43 schools and 9,560 pupils

6 leisure facilities

2,265km of roads

2,500km of bridleways and footpaths

2,810 active enterprises

45.3% of residents are Welsh speakers

*BAME = Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic population

THE COUNCIL

At the local elections in May 2022, Ceredigion residents returned 38 councillors in 34 wards across the County. As at March 2023, the new administration is a Plaid Cymru majority with 20 councillors, along with 9 independents, 7 Welsh Liberal Democrats and 2 un-grouped. The new Leader of the Council is Councillor Bryan Davies and Councillor Maldwyn Lewis is the current Chairman of the Council.

Ceredigion is investing in new technology to transform the way services are provided to our customers. This is to ensure they meet growing demands, are sustainable in the future, and also provide an enhanced experience for our customers.

The Through Age Well-being Programme that is transforming social care and the Customer Contact Centre called 'CLIC' are two good examples of this.

We are operating in a challenging environment with escalating budgetary pressures. To deliver our Corporate Well-being Objectives whilst maintaining effective and efficient services, our workforce's journey must be one of continuous review and change. It is critical we maintain an innovative and agile approach, are open and resilient to change, with the skills to support smarter ways of working in a digitised world.

CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL
MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE:

EIFION EVANS
Chief Executive

BARRY REES
Corporate Director

ELEN JAMES	CLIVE WILLIAMS	ELIN PRYSOR	DUNCAN HALL	ALUN WILLIAMS	RHODRI LLWYD	RUSSELL HUGHES-PICKERING
Corporate Lead Officer	Corporate Lead Officer	Corporate Lead Officer	Corporate Lead Officer	Corporate Lead Officer	Corporate Lead Officer	Corporate Lead Officer
Lifelong Learning and Culture	Schools	Legal & Governance Services	Finance & Procurement	Policy, Performance & Public Protection	Highways and Environmental Services	Economy & Regeneration

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Council Chamber, Penmorfa

Our aim is to enhance the efficiency of our internal processes and systems, enabling us to measure our performance effectively.

The Council employs 2,037 staff (1,567 full-time equivalent (FTE). Our goal is to advocate for, and build upon, our 'Team Ceredigion' ethos. Promoting our sense of belonging, connection and shared purpose. We aspire for all Team Ceredigion members to be proud of the work that they do, and to recognise the significance of their contribution to the overall success of the Council.

The County is made up of three geographical areas covering the north, mid and south of the County. The Council's services are aligned with these three areas to assist in workforce development and ensure consistency and equity in the delivery of service across the County ▶
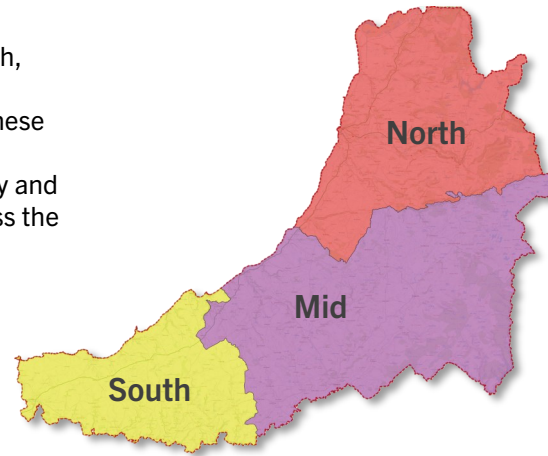
ONE TEAM

WE ARE ONE TEAM: TEAM CEREDIGION

The One Team approach is part of the Council's culture and is integral to its new ways of working

One Team supports Self-Assessment by facilitating collaborative working, joining-up thinking and cross-service support to deliver our Corporate Well-being Objectives and improve outcomes for local people and stakeholders

---

JAMES STARBUCK
Corporate Director

DONNA PRITCHARD	GREG JONES	RICKY COOPER	ALAN MORRIS	LOWRI EDWARDS	GERAINT EDWARDS
Corporate Lead Officer	Corporate Lead Officer	Corporate Lead Officer	Corporate Lead Officer	Corporate Lead Officer	Corporate Lead Officer
Porth Gofal (Targeted Intervention Services)	Porth Cymorth Cynnar (Community Wellbeing and Housing)	Porth Cynnal (Specialist Through Age Services)	Customer Contact & ICT	Democratic Services	People & Organisation

BACKGROUND TO 2022-23 SELF-ASSESSMENT

This is the second of Ceredigion County Council's Self-Assessment Reports. We have learnt a great deal since first implementing the new local government performance regime introduced by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

During winter 2022 we reviewed our approach to self-assessment and made a number of minor adjustments to strengthen the process. This included allocating more time for the desktop review of evidence, adjusting the timescales to start the workshops earlier in the year and providing an additional workshop to review the scores prior to publication. The aim was to fine tune the process based on our experiences in the previous year. We will continue to review the way we conduct self-assessment annually.

In producing this year's Self-Assessment Report which reviews our progress during 2022/23, we have learnt a great deal. The exercise has brought together a wide variety of evidence to assess our performance and review our Corporate Well-being Objectives. It has also highlighted and focused our attention on the challenges we face. These are important because we need to continue to adapt to meet these challenges in order to ensure our services are sustainable and continue to identify opportunities to raise performance levels, identify efficiency savings, or both.

We have built on the first Self-Assessment Report by including further information on the consultation and engagement undertaken during the year, highlighting the outcomes achieved from our activities and providing links to other key strategies and policies that link to, or support, the Self-Assessment Report.

The exercise provides an organisation-wide view of performance. There are seven themes that we assess ourselves against:

- Exercising our functions effectively
- Using our resources economically, efficiently and effectively
- Ensuring our governance is effective
- Innovation and creativity
- Collaboration
- Involvement
- Risk Management

These themes are derived from a combination of the Statutory Guidance on the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 along with the Sustainable Development Principle. They reflect the seven core activities of public bodies as defined in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. For each theme we assess whether we have plans and objectives in place, whether those plans and objectives are being delivered and whether they are sustainable over the longer-term. These form our Key Lines of Enquiry and the way in which we assess our overall performance.

The following pages provide a summary of the findings and scores from each theme. The scoring system used is aligned to the Council's Annual Governance Statement for consistency. The Council's Governance Framework is based on the CIPFA/SOLACE Delivering Good Governance in Local Government framework. It provides a Red-Amber-Green scale to indicate where performance is good and where further action needs to be taken, see diagram to the right.

KEY TO ASSESSMENT

GOOD
Overall considered to be good and meets best practice no further action required

ACCEPTABLE
Minor adjustments may be required

SATISFACTORY
Action required (before end of year 9-12 months)

BELOW SATISFACTORY
Urgent action required (within 3-6 months)

UNACCEPTABLE
Immediate action required

SUMMARY OF 2022-23 PERFORMANCE

EXERCISING OUR FUNCTIONS EFFECTIVELY

The Council's new Corporate Strategy for the period 2022 to 2027 was published in November 2022, setting out its new Corporate Well-being Objectives. The Council has a suite of key strategies in place to support and help deliver the Objectives. These include the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, the Through Age Well-being Strategy, and the Economic Strategy. During 2022/23 we updated our Engagement and Participation Strategy and published new strategies on Equity and Deprivation in schools and adopted the new Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. We are currently reviewing and rewriting our Procurement, Asset Management and Welsh Language Strategies, while our new Workforce Plan has been drafted and is currently going through the democratic process.

Progress in delivering these key strategies continues to be good. The Growing Mid Wales and Regional Skills Partnerships are good examples of this. During 2022/23, the updated Strategic Portfolio Business case was formally submitted to Welsh and UK Governments, which means that we are moving closer to receiving the first tranche of the £110m funding as part of the Growth Deal for the region, which is expected during the 2023/24 year.

Priority setting is also considered to be strong and positive work with the Council's new administration took place during the year to develop the new Corporate Strategy and Corporate Well-being Objectives. The new objectives are based on extensive consultation and research including the Ceredigion Assessment of Local Well-being.

Some other examples are the Through Age Well-being Programme objectives which were endorsed and strengthened through the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) inspection.

Outcomes from the Through Age Strategy are being strengthened as the programme continues to be implemented.

The relaunched business planning process has been further embedded, along with strengthening the 'golden thread', which shows how everyone's activities help to deliver the Corporate Well-being Objectives and maximise our impact on the national well-being goals.

There is a recognition that the Council's Strategies are constructed in-line with 5 Ways of Working which increases their level of resilience and sustainability.

The Council has an ambitious vision for the future, and the overall assessment is that the strategies in place are sustainable and consider the short, medium and long-term context.

However, like all local authorities, there are challenges to delivering these ambitions. There is limited capacity and resources available whilst demand from customers continues to grow. Although the Council has a track record of innovation and creativity in service delivery and seeking new ways of working, it is recognised that managing expectations on services is also important as we move forward. Keeping these strategies up to date is a key way of helping us achieve that by putting in place strong foundations from which to invest in new technology, find new ways of delivering services and maintaining performance levels.

Although it has been a positive start to our performance journey post COVID-19, we recognise there is still a lot of work to do, in particular completing the refresh of key strategies. The Procurement Strategy, Asset Management Strategy, Housing Strategy, Performance Management Framework and Corporate Risk Policy are all in the process of review and due for completion in 2023/24.

SUMMARY OF SCORING BY THEME

Does the Council have a set of corporate and service strategies in place which set out the Council's vision and priorities?

Are these strategies delivering their aims and objectives?

EXERCISING OUR FUNCTIONS EFFECTIVELY

Are Service Business Plans delivering their objectives and performance targets?

Are these strategies sustainable in adapting to the future needs of the organisation?

Does the Council have an effective performance management framework and democratic scrutiny in place to support delivery of the Council's vision and priorities?

Putting these plans in place provides a solid foundation from which to deliver an improved customer experience by working and delivering services in a different way.

During 2022/23 none of the 35 complaints made to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales against the Council were upheld, however, the number of complaints per 1,000 residents referred to the Ombudsman was the highest across Wales. A half yearly report on complaints has been put in place along with the full annual report and are considered by the Council's Governance and Audit Committee.

Last year we reported on the challenges around obtaining regular benchmarking data. Since then, Data Cymru has developed a Self-Assessment Performance Tool which has been used in the production of this report. We

are working proactively with Data Cymru to help support the tool's ongoing development to strengthen the provision of nationally available benchmarking data. This longer-term action will be invaluable in helping to communicate the Council's performance and aligns with our long-term aim of becoming more performance and data-driven.

We recognise there is a lot of work to do around strengthening performance management and realising the benefits that it can bring. The first step is publishing the new Performance Framework that sets out the overall approach and standardised processes for managing performance in the Council, including the new Self-Assessment process. This work has been completed and the Framework is due to go through the democratic process in autumn 2023.

SUMMARY OF 2022-23 PERFORMANCE

There are a number challenges facing all local authorities at the current time, such as local authority funding, recruitment in areas such as social care, the cost of living crisis and our ongoing work to tackle poverty in the County. To help us mitigate these challenges, we are continuing to monitor their impacts and adjust our action plans accordingly.

USING OUR RESOURCES ECONOMICALLY, EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY

The Council has strategies in place for its core activities of Workforce Planning, Financial Management, Procurement and Asset Management. The overall position is assessed as being good, particularly in relation to financial management.

Regulatory reports are positive, notwithstanding that there is further work to do to respond to Audit Wales' Planning service review report. This is evidenced by the unqualified audit opinion on the Council's accounts and the positive feedback from regulators at the Joint Regulatory Workshop in January 2023. This places the Council in a strong position to deliver the new Corporate Strategy and Corporate Well-being Objectives. During the budget setting process for 2023/24 there was unanimous approval from Members for the budget, which demonstrates a coherent approach towards funding resources to deliver front-line services.

Furthermore, the Hybrid Working Policy and home working arrangements are working well overall, and the Council continues to monitor progress and staff feedback closely.

Over the longer term, £60m of cumulative savings have been made since 2013, which has involved a major restructuring of all services.

The financial resilience of the Council is a strength, particularly when assessing the sustainability of services. However, we recognise the ongoing budgetary challenges that exist and the impact that could have on the delivery of our ambitions. We also recognise that further work is required to maximise the expenditure and impact of the capital programme and we are addressing this through our Self-Assessment Action Plan.

Our learning has also shown that we need to ensure we update key strategies that will impact on our economy, efficiency and effectiveness. These include the Medium Term Financial Strategy which will be refreshed in the first quarter of 2023/24 and the revised Joint Procurement and Commissioning Strategy 2023-27 which is complete and will shortly go forward for approval. Work is also continuing on developing the new Asset Management Plan setting out how we will maintain our property portfolio and maximise the use of our assets.

In the last year the Council has made good and innovative use of its buildings to support new ways of working. Canolfan Rheidol in Aberystwyth for example, is now being used by Hywel Dda to provide outpatient physiotherapy services. The updated strategy will help in developing opportunities for those buildings no longer needed and in repurposing them for other uses or the delivery of improved services.

The other key challenge is the re-writing of our Workforce Plan. We recognise the challenges around recruitment and retention that are being experienced across the whole of Wales. This is important because recruitment to key posts is essential to delivering our ambitions. As a result, a new Workforce Plan has been developed to address these key challenges, including recruitment, retention and succession planning to ensure stable staffing levels, a sustainable workforce and that vacant posts are filled with appropriately qualified staff.

SUMMARY OF SCORING BY THEME

Are these strategies sustainable in adapting to the future needs of the organisation?

Does the Council have comprehensive strategies in place for Workforce Planning, Financial Management, Procurement and Asset Management?

USING OUR RESOURCES ECONOMICALLY, EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY

Are these strategies delivering their stated aims and objectives for Workforce Planning, Financial Management, Procurement and Asset Management?

ENSURING OUR GOVERNANCE IS EFFECTIVE

Overall, the evidence shows that the Council's governance arrangements are robust and supporting the work of the Council in delivering its Corporate Well-being Objectives and improving outcomes for residents. The Annual Governance Statement, Governance Framework and Code of Local Governance are all in place and relationships with regulators are productive.

Internal and external regulator reports evidence this. For example, the most recent Governance Review conducted in March 2023 provides high assurance that there is a sound system of scrutiny and robustness in place. The 2022/23 Annual Governance Statement shows that good progress has been made during the year across the seven core principles of governance, and an action plan is in place to resolve a number of minor issues identified.

In the last twelve months, the robustness of the Governance and Audit Committee, in particular its role in challenging the Council, has been working well. It was also recognised that the Development Committee is also working well, although it is accepted that there is further work to do to respond to Audit Wales' Planning Service Review Report.

Ceredigion is also leading on complex work in relation to regional partnerships for Corporate Joint Committees (CJC) and Growing Mid Wales (GMW). The Mid Wales Corporate Joint

Committee has been set up and governance structures are in place.

LONG-TERM INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY

One of the Council's strengths is its long-term innovation and creativity. The Council has a track record of embracing new ways of working and identifying new ways of delivering services to provide an enhanced customer experience, efficiency savings, or both.

The COVID-19 pandemic created windows of opportunity to learn from, to transform services and to bring about sustainable change and improvements. In essence, it allowed us to reconsider the way we work and reorganize it in a way that benefits the customer, the workforce, and has much less impact on our environment.

There are many examples of this, including the new hybrid working model that maintains the high level of service delivery whilst also providing employees with greater flexibility in balancing their work and home lives. Our learning shows that hybrid working has resulted in increased productivity, improved collaboration and provided a more flexible working environment to help maintain the health and well-being of the workforce. The sustainability of the organisation is also supported through a reduction in costs and overall expenditure per employee.

The Through Age Well-being Programme is transforming social care in Ceredigion. This is in response to the changing demographics of the County which has seen increased demand and greater financial pressure on services. Providing support for all ages and needs is a significant challenge for the Council with limited resources.

Many of the individual elements of Through Age Well-being are working well, for example the investment in accommodation for children

in care. The programme improves outcomes by maximising people's independence and enabling them to remain in their own home and in their own community wherever possible. We will continue to push forward with transforming how people's health, wellbeing and safety are supported in Ceredigion.

The Council also worked with partners as part of a multi-agency delivery group to support 90 Ukrainian families fleeing their country. The The Urdd Gobaith Cymru Gwersyll site at Llangrannog was the first Welcome Centre of its kind in Wales and received national acclaim. Refugees were supported and offered unique 'wrap-around' services.

In addition was the improvement actions identified by the Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee in response to waste collection issues during the winter of 2022. Ceredigion was the first authority in Wales to put in place the missed refuse collections reporting, which is now being adopted by other authorities.

Good feedback was also received from Estyn and Welsh Government in supporting schools with digital innovation and collaboration across ICT. Ceredigion is also the only authority across the UK to have a full Lorawan rollout.

Other projects that demonstrate innovation are the setting up of the Well-being Centres across the County, the setting up of Warm Hubs and leading on the rollout of the Additional Learning Needs Code of Conduct systems in schools.

Looking ahead, the adoption of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) has the potential to be transformative for Welsh Language education in Ceredigion.

The investment in and nurturing the use of innovation and creativity in the organisation

SUMMARY OF SCORING BY THEME

Does the Council work productively with its external regulators and demonstrate good compliance?

Does the Council have a comprehensive local code and governance framework in place for maintaining the corporate governance of the organisation?

ENSURING OUR GOVERNANCE IS EFFECTIVE

How effective is the code and governance framework applied and observed?

Does the Council embrace innovation and creativity in its activities and implement transformation?
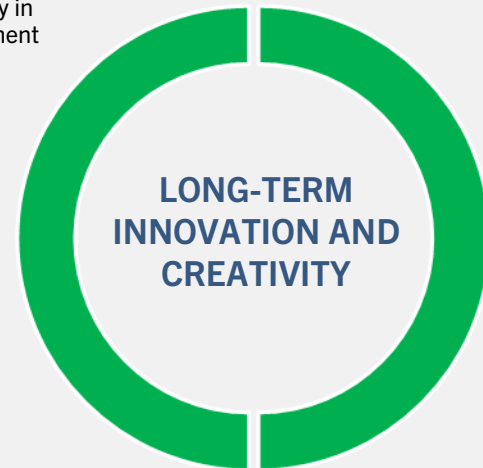
How effective have Council transformation projects been in identifying and implementing creativity and innovation across the organisation?

LONG-TERM INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY

SUMMARY OF 2022-23 PERFORMANCE

cannot be overstated. We recognise that tapping into this creativity is essential to the Council's overall performance and its long term sustainability. The Medium Term Financial Strategy highlights the future funding challenges for the Council. The response to the COVID-19 pandemic was good but the Council will need to identify further areas for alternative service delivery to ensure sustinability of services.

COLLABORATION

The Council is proactive in engaging in local, regional and national partnerships. There are good examples of where this collaborative working is improving outcomes such as through Growing Mid Wales, the Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership, and the Mid Wales Education Partnership.

During 2022/23, we have also worked jointly with Pembrokeshire County Council and Hywel Dda University Health Board in transforming the Contract Tracing Service set up to support the response to the COVID-19 pandemic to an All-Hazards approach to health protection. The Risk Share Oversight Group (RSOG) with Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire County Councils is also working well in supporting community cohesion and people with protected characteristics.

Nationally, the Council also led on, and completed, a project on behalf of Welsh Government to investigate using the Cyber Assessment Framework (CAF) for national critical infrastructure across all Welsh Local Authorities. The Cyber Assessment Framework provides a systematic and comprehensive approach to assessing the extent to which cyber risks to essential functions are being managed by the organisation responsible.

However, the Council focuses on engaging with partnerships which are beneficial for the

people and communities of Ceredigion, and where there are demonstrable benefits. The Council proactively engages in these partnerships and challenges the value of the arrangement if not, pursuing alternative arrangements where necessary. An example of this is in the decision to withdraw from Education through Regional Working (ERW) and instead pursue more effective arrangements through the Mid Wales Education Partnership. In these cases, a robust rationale is always provided to set out why it is not in Ceredigion's interests to pursue the partnership arrangement. This proactive approach to assessing the value of collaborative working is recognised as essential to maximising the impact of collaboration and improving outcomes for local people.

INVOLVEMENT

In July 2022, the Council published its new Engagement and Participation Strategy to ensure compliance with new legislation and keep up to date with best practice.

The new Strategy puts plans in place to ensure the best methods are used to maximise engagement and deliver a consistent approach across the organisation. In doing so, the new Strategy will help ensure that all communities in Ceredigion have a voice, and that we actively seek the views and lived experiences of those groups whose voices are seldom heard. It also adds the new decision making and participation elements required by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

Considerable work has been undertaken in embedding engagement and consultation best practice. This is particularly important following the COVID-19 pandemic period when our ability to engage and consult was compromised by the restrictions in place.

Some of this work includes a new

SUMMARY OF SCORING BY THEME

Does the Council proactively engage in local, regional and national partnerships?

How effective are the partnerships in which the Council is invested in delivering their aims and objectives?

COLLABORATION

Does the Council have a comprehensive strategy and action plan for engagement and consultation in place?
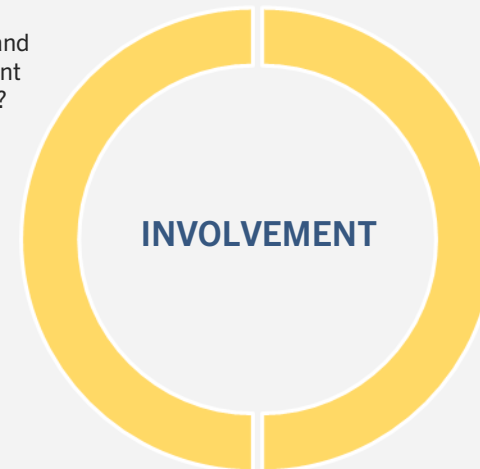
How effectively does the Council use engagement and consultation feedback to review and improve its services?

INVOLVEMENT

engagement and consultation register, and an annual report on progress. The Strategy itself includes a detailed action plan which the Council is currently delivering. The outcomes from the Plan have not been fully realised yet but there are some actions still to be delivered such as the relaunch of Integrated Impact Assessments and the introduction of a performance measure around consultation.

There are still some areas to strengthen in moving forward, such as ensuring that consultation feedback is more widely disseminated and in recording respondents' lived experiences to further involve people in, and support, decision making. There are also concerns that there are a low number of responses to some key consultations which need to be increased to ensure they are statistically significant. There are plans in place to achieve this, such as the new E-Newsletter which should help encourage people to respond and the wider use of the Engagement HQ platform that provides new ways of engaging with the Council.

There are some good examples of engagement during 2022/23 where the results are being used to drive improvements and shape services. These include the consultation on the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) which included a pupil friendly version which received a 100% response, the consultation on the Equity and Deprivation Strategy for schools which involved consultation with particular groups who were disproportionately affected, and further engagement on Traffic Regulation Orders which is being used to inform decisions around the measures. Further plans are in place for the year ahead which include the introduction of the Corporate Stakeholder Survey and the consultation on the second Well-being Centre.

The combination of these actions will help us demonstrate that we have listened and considered the feedback from engagement and consultation. Overall, engagement and consultation is considered to be good in some areas, but there are areas where further work is needed. Work will continue to deliver the Engagement and Participation Strategy action plan over the next twelve months.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The Council's management of risk has developed well over the las three years. The Corporate Risk Register has developed into a 'living' and evolving document as risks change and new risks emerge. The Register is updated regularly, consistently includes a full set of updates and is reviewed regularly by Leadership Group and quarterly by Governance and Audit Committee. The level of understanding of individual risks has increased over time and the quality of scrutiny by the Governance and Audit Committee increased as a result.

We review the risk management process every three years and are in the process of conducting the latest review. Overall, the process is working well, but the review has identified a number of specific improvements needed. In particular, is the need for greater consistency in the management of service risks along with strengthening the process of escalation/de-escalation of risks to the Corporate Risk Register.

We have updated the Risk Management Policy, Strategy and Framework with a more effective way of managing service risks. The review also highlighted a series of other adjustments such as clarifying the role of Internal Audit and introducing the use of target risk scores. We are currently consulting on the updated Risk Management Policy, Strategy and Framework before seeking approval during autumn 2023. The updated Policy will aim to ensure our arrangements remain up to date and fit for purpose and

SUMMARY OF SCORING BY THEME

Does the Council have a comprehensive strategy and framework in place for managing risk?

Are these strategies delivering their aims and objectives?

RISK MANAGEMENT

Are these strategies sustainable in adapting to the future needs of the organisation?

based on best practice.

As part of our drive to continually improve, we are also working with the Council's insurers, Zurich, to deliver workshops to support services in strengthening risk management. The Council has a good working relationship with Zurich and has regularly used them to provide training and an independent view on our approach to risk management.

THE SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTION PLAN

In response to these findings, we have identified a number of opportunities for improvement. Through consultation with Council services and elected Members, the actions we propose to take in response to this learning are contained in the action plan overleaf and are also reflected in services' business plans.

Most of the actions will be delivered over the next twelve months but some are longer term and will extend into the following year. The Action Plan retains previously completed actions as a log of progress on our self-assessment performance journey. The Plan builds on last year's action plan as our learning develops and as new opportunities are identified. All actions will continue to be monitored through to completion as part of our ongoing performance management arrangements and progress will be reported in the Self-Assessment Report.

We have prioritised the actions in order to lay the foundations for future work across the seven themes by ensuring the essential building blocks of our Key lines of Enquiry are met before developing further. We have already identified a list of emerging actions that we will reassess during the coming year and move into the live action plan if, and when, appropriate.

SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTION PLAN: OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

DESCRIPTION	TIMESCALES	LEAD OFFICER	OUTCOMES
PROVIDE A STANDARDISED AND EFFECTIVE METHOD OF ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION ACROSS THE COUNCIL AND ENSURE THE COUNCIL ENGAGES WITH THE PEOPLE OF CEREDIGION IN THE BEST AND MOST APPROPRIATE WAY			
Publish the new Engagement and Participation Strategy to improve engagement and participation opportunities for Ceredigion's citizens and stakeholders	January 2023 - March 2024	Alun Williams (Corporate Lead Officer Partnerships, Performance and Public Protection)	• Provides a standardised and effective method of engagement and participation across the Council • Ensures the Council engages with the people of Ceredigion in the best and most appropriate way • Keeps the Council up to date with best practice in the field of engagement and consultation • Citizens and stakeholders are involved in the decision making process and in shaping Council services • Ensures Council resources are directed to priority areas, such as the current cost of living crisis, as identified through engagement and consultation. • Ensures that the voices of all those in Ceredigion are heard

STATUS: In Progress 🟢

Ceredigion County Council is committed to engaging with its residents, service users and other key stakeholders. The new Engagement and Participation Policy has been developed and was approved by Cabinet in October 2022. The new Policy provides corporate direction and guidance to the Council's elected members and officers in order to bring engagement into the heart of the Council's work and to ensure that engagement activities are of a consistently high standard. Further developments will be made over the next twelve months include launching an engagement toolkit and ensuring that all consultation results are shared with decision makers.

DESCRIPTION	TIMESCALES	LEAD OFFICER	OUTCOMES
DELIVER WORKFORCE PLAN TO ENSURE THE COUNCIL HAS A SUSTAINABLE AND QUALIFIED WORKFORCE			
Update and deliver the Workforce Plan to address key issues including recruitment, retention and succession planning to ensure stable staffing levels, a sustainable workforce and that vacant posts are filled with appropriately qualified staff. The Workforce Plan to be aligned with the Council's new Corporate Strategy for 2022-27.	January 2023 - March 2027	Geraint Edwards (Corporate Lead Officer People and Organisation)	• Ensures vacant roles are filled by appropriately qualified and experienced staff to provide a high quality customer experience and level of service • Ensures that capacity exists in services to provide quality services • Ensures the sustainability of services over the longer-term • Allows us to identify and respond to changing customer needs • Improves employee recruitment and retention • Improves productivity and quality of service

STATUS: In Progress 🟢

A draft of the updated Workforce Plan 2023-28 has been produced and sets out the Council's approach to managing its workforce to meet its current and future service delivery needs. The Plan has been updated to address key issues including recruitment, retention and succession planning to ensure stable staffing levels, a sustainable workforce and that vacant posts are filled with appropriately qualified staff. The draft Workforce Plan was considered by Scrutiny in July 2023 and is scheduled to go to Cabinet for approval in September 2023.

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DESCRIPTION	TIMESCALES	LEAD OFFICER	OUTCOMES
DELIVER PHASE 2 OF THE THROUGH AGE WELL-BEING PROGRAMME TO TRANSFORM SOCIAL CARE IN CEREDIGION			
Monitor and review progress of the Through Age Well-being Programme to ensure delivery of services that will deliver the outcomes of the programme and enhance the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of the people of Ceredigion	January 2023 - March 2027	Ricky Cooper (Corporate Lead Officer Porth Cynnal and Statutory Director of Social Services)	• Manages the increased demand and financial pressures on services to provide sustainable services in the future • Ensures people get the right level and type of support at the right time • Promotes positive health and well-being and supports people to self-support • Strengthens families so that children and young people remain with their family • Enables individuals to live independently in their own community • Provides proportionate approaches to managed care and support • Protects individuals and keeps them safe from abuse, harm and neglect

STATUS: In Progress 🟢

Work is continuing to deliver the Through Age Well-being Programme. In November 2022 the governance structure of the Programme was reviewed, and as a result, refreshed workstreams commenced, new supervision arrangements have been published, the new Quality Assurance Model has been approved, the Quality Assurance Team is being recruited to progress with thematic and case file audits, the data sharing strategy is being developed and the longer term solution to the end of the contract for the Wales Community Care information System (WCCIS) is under review by the Steering Group. The CIW inspection in February/March 2023 reflected positively on the Through Age Well-being model.

DELIVER ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY THAT IMPLEMENTS NEW WAYS OF WORKING FOR THE STAFF OF CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL AND IMPROVES THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE			
Update the Asset Management Strategy to reflect current issues, in particular supporting new ways of working and taking advantage of the opportunities that exist post COVID-19 to ensure sustainable and high quality services	January 2023 - March 2025	Russell-Hughes Pickering (Corporate Lead Officer Economy & Regeneration)	• Provides an updated and long-term strategy to manage the Council's physical assets • Ensures efficient and effective use of council assets (funds, land, buildings, staff and information communication technology) • Supports new ways of working post COVID-19 including the rationalisation of assets • Provides a strategy to release efficiency savings and potential new income streams • Ensures the Council's approach to asset management is fit for purpose and that services are sustainable • Supports more joined-up and high quality services

STATUS: In Progress 🟢

The updated Asset Management Strategy is currently in the process of being developed and will reflect the new ways of working, the investment to improve the customer experience and the opportunities that exist post COVID-19 pandemic. The Council's approach to developing its portfolio of assets is underpinned by the Council's Corporate Strategy.

SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTION PLAN: OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

DESCRIPTION	TIMESCALES	LEAD OFFICER	OUTCOMES
ENSURE CAPITAL EXPENDITURE IS MAXIMISED AND UTILISED			
Develop monitoring system to enable the Council to make full use of its capital resources and increase the proportion of capital expenditure in each year	January 2023 - March 2024	Duncan Hall (Corporate Lead Officer Finance & Procurement and Section 151 Officer)	• Ensures the Council's Capital Programme is delivered and spend maximised • Supports partnership working with the Welsh Government on capital projects • Supports the delivery of the Council's vision and Corporate Well-being Objectives • Supports the reduction of long-term costs and increases in productivity • Along with the revenue budget provides the resources to meet the delivery of the services' business plans

STATUS: In Progress 🟢

The Council continues to work to ensure that capital expenditure is maximised. Good use has been made in recent years of capital expenditure, including investment in key areas such as in county children's facilities, the establishment of Well-being Centres, Local Authority Care Homes and piloting for Technology-Enabled Care. A revised Multi Year Capital Programme for 2023/24 to 2025/26 was approved by Cabinet in July 2023. The Capital Programme continues to be reported to Cabinet detailing the outturn position and the amended programme for the next three years.

SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESSES AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY THROUGH IMPLEMENTING THE UPDATED PROCUREMENT STRATEGY			
Update the Council's Procurement Strategy to support local businesses and the local economy, and to ensure the Council provides value for money in the use of its financial resources	January 2023 - March 2024	Russell Hughes-Pickering (Corporate Lead Officer Economy & Regeneration)	• Ensures procurement practices are up to date and fit for purpose • Helps to achieve value for money by ensuring the Council spends its financial resources economically, efficiently and effectively • Supports the identification of efficiency savings and eliminates waste • Delivers savings by capitalising on the savings achievable through greater buying capacity of Local, Regional and National Frameworks • Maintains high ethical standards of investment and purchasing • Maximises the contribution towards sustainable development through the procurement of sustainable solutions • Supports the delivery of the Council's vision and Corporate Well-being Objectives • Supports local businesses, supply chains and development of the local economy

STATUS: In Progress 🟢

The revised and updated draft Joint Procurement and Commissioning Strategy 2023-27 is complete and will shortly be considered by the Council's Leadership Group before going to Cabinet in autumn 2023 for approval. The updated strategy is aligned to the Council's Corporate Strategy timescales and has been designed to specifically assist in the delivery of its new Corporate Well-being Objectives in accordance with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 through its procurement and commissioning. The Strategy builds on the Council's strengthened approach to procurement in recent years including the corporatisation of the procurement process, and reflects the situation post COVID-19 pandemic.

DESCRIPTION	TIMESCALES	LEAD OFFICER	OUTCOMES
DEVELOP THE USE OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEYS			
Introduce regular customer satisfaction surveys such as the annual stakeholder survey	November 2023 - March 2025	All Corporate Lead Officers	• Keeps the Council up to date with customer perceptions of services and the organisation at large as part of its ongoing engagement activity • Helps to identify areas for improvement to help raise performance levels or achieve efficiencies • Strengthens and develops the ongoing dialogue with customers and their perceptions • Provides a greater understanding of customer's needs, wants and priorities • Helps to strengthen local democracy through greater customer involvement in decision making and service design • Helps to identify where additional communication is needed to support customers and / or advertise services • Aids the Council's learning to improve the customer experience

STATUS: **New action** 🔵

Introduced a new Corporate Stakeholder Survey in the summer of 2023, asking a series of questions about the Council's overall performance, how performance is monitored and the progress being made in delivering the new Corporate Well-being Objectives. The survey closes on 31st August 2023 and the results will be presented to Leadership Group in September 2023. Other activities are being developed such as the possibility of including satisfaction surveys as part of customer contacts via the contact centre (CLIC).

SELF-ASSESSMENT ACTION PLAN: OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

DESCRIPTION	TIMESCALES	LEAD OFFICER	OUTCOMES
DELIVER THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE CIW INSPECTION OF SOCIAL SERVICES			
Implement the ten recommendations made in the CIW inspection report to help the Council deliver its vision for the delivery of social socials across Ceredigion according to the Through Age Well-being model	May 2023 - March 2025	Ricky Cooper (Corporate Lead Officer Porth Cynnal and Statutory Director of Social Services)	• Ensures that people's voices are central to the work we undertake • Increases provision of respite for parents and carers and positively impacting on people's outcomes • Ensures people are kept informed of how well social care services are being delivered in Ceredigion • Prioritises a sufficient and sustainable workforce with the capacity and capability to consistently meet statutory responsibilities • Ensures a standardised approach to supervision and oversight of practice • Ensures a competent and confident workforce • Provides a robust quality assurance framework • Ensures complaints are consistently responded to in accordance with the prescribed timescales

STATUS: New action ●

An action plan has been formulated to respond to the recommended improvements outlined in the CIW report. The majority of these are already in progress as the issues identified were already being addressed before the inspection took place. The areas that the Council sought to improve were reflected in the evidence to the inspectors in advance of the inspection and the production of the final report. There were no areas of non-compliance identified during the inspection. The action plan was approved by the Council's Cabinet in June 2023 and progress will be monitored after six months through the Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee for a period of one year to maintain progress and track through to completion.

DESCRIPTION	TIMESCALES	LEAD OFFICER	OUTCOMES
DEVELOP AND PUBLISH A NEW DIGITAL STRATEGY FOR CEREDIGION			
Develop and publish a new Digital Strategy to continue the development of Information Communication Technology and digital services across Ceredigion	September 2023 - September 2024	Alan Morris (Corporate Lead Officer Customer Contact, ICT and Digital)	• Provides a clear strategic vision to develop digital services • Ensures the Council has modern, stable and resilient Digital Infrastructure • Supports the delivery of the Council's Corporate Strategy and Corporate Well-being Objectives, such as the drive to create well-connected communities through improved digital connectivity and digital services • Supports easier digital access to Council services and an enhanced customer experience • Supports the Council's work to improve digital inclusion. • Support colleagues to make the best, fullest use of the tools and technologies available to them, developing high levels of digitally skilled collaboration
STATUS: New action ●			
Ceredigion County Council is currently reviewing the impact of the previous strategy and consulting with stakeholder to understand needs, latest digital trends and issues to address. Later in the year, once these lessons and stakeholder engagements have been undertaken, we will produce a draft strategy for wider consultation.			

WHAT IS SELF-ASSESSMENT?

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 introduced a new process for monitoring the performance of all local authorities, based on self-assessment.

The new performance regime defines principal councils as 'self-improving organisations' through a system based on self-assessment and panel performance assessment. The new approach is intended to build on, and support, a culture in which councils continuously challenge the status quo and ask questions about how they are operating and how they can learn from best practice. A transparent and open self-assessment of a council will form a fundamental part of this approach.

Effective self-assessment provides reliable assurance both internally and externally to regulators and inspectorates and above all helps councils to continually learn and achieve sustainable improvement and better outcomes for citizens, service users and their own workforce.

There are five specific duties introduced by the Act:

1. **Duty to keep performance under review**
   Ceredigion County Council has a duty to keep under review the extent to which it is fulfilling its 'performance requirements by determining the extent to which it is:
   - Exercising its functions effectively
   - Using its resources economically, efficiently and effectively
   - Ensuring its governance is effective for securing the above

2. **Duty to consult on performance**
   Councils must consult a range of people at least once in every financial year about the extent to which they are meeting their

performance requirements. The statutory consultees are:
   - Local people
   - Other persons carrying on a business in the County
   - The staff of the Council
   - Every Trade Union which is recognised by the Council

3. **Duty to report on performance**
   The Council must produce a self-assessment report each financial year. The report must set out its conclusions on the extent to which it met the performance requirements, and any actions it intends to take, or has already taken to further improve.

4. **Duty to arrange a panel performance assessment**
   At least once in each election period, the Council must arrange for an independent panel to undertake an assessment of the extent to which the council is meeting the performance requirements and report its results. The Council is currently making preparations to undertake its first Panel Performance Assessment during 2024/25.

5. **Duty to respond to a panel performance assessment**
   The Council must prepare a response to a Panel Assessment Report setting out
   - The extent to which it accepts the conclusions in the report
   - How it intends to follow any recommendations
   - Any further actions the Council intends to take to improve

performance

The purpose of the performance and governance provisions in the Act is to build on and support a developing culture in which councils actively seek and embrace challenge, whether presented from within the council, for example through scrutiny procedures, or externally. The provisions are designed to develop a framework which supports councils, through an ongoing process of review, to think about their performance and effectiveness now and for the future; to encourage more inquisitive organisations willing to challenge themselves to do more; and to be more innovative and more ambitious in what they do.

Reflective Practice

For Ceredigion, the principles of self-assessment already form an integral part of its ongoing strategic and corporate governance arrangements.

We recognise the opportunity for self-reflection and constructive challenge. For example, this form of reflective practice is already an integral part of the Council's Business Planning and Annual Governance Statement, and already well-established in the Council. Reflective practice is a core element of the Council's overall performance management process, and focuses on evaluating *how we do things* and not just *what we do.*

We have taken a similar approach with Self-Assessment - reflective practice forms a key part of our Self-Assessment Workshops where we reflect on how we are currently operating, the challenges we face in the future and how we build sustainability into our activities moving forward.

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act came into force in 2021

The Five Duties on Principal Councils are:

KEEP PERFORMANCE UNDER REVIEW

CONSULT ON PERFORMANCE

REPORT ON PERFORMANCE

ARRANGE A PANEL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

RESPOND TO A PANEL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

HOW WE CONDUCT SELF-ASSESSMENT

Our Approach to Self-Assessment

Our approach to Self-Assessment is based on assessing ourselves against a set of Key Lines of Enquiry. "KLOEs" as they are sometimes referred to, are a series of relevant key questions that we ask ourselves as we work through the Self-Assessment.

The Key Lines of Enquiry approach is a tried and tested approach to conducting self-assessments in Local Government and across the wider public sector. It ensures we remain focused on the corporate or 'holistic' view of the Council's performance as required by the Act. It also provides the clarity of self-evaluation needed to help us identify opportunities for improvement, and in doing so, provides a strong audit trail to explain the actions we have undertaken in response.

The findings are recorded in our Self-Assessment Matrix document. The Matrix records the evidence demonstrating how we are currently performing, our ambitions for the future and the actions we need to take in order to achieve those ambitions. This document is used to identify the opportunities that exist for improvement and is used to develop our Self-Assessment Action plan. The Self-Assessment Matrix is available on request.

Continuous Cycle

Self-Assessment is an ongoing process of improvement - throughout the year we conduct consultation in support of self-assessment, we collate evidence to inform our workshops, we deliver the actions in our Self-Assessment action plan and we monitor their progress towards completion. The Self-Assessment Report is the key output from the process but the work on improving outcomes is an ongoing year round activity.

The diagram below summarises the main steps and timescales involved in conducting the Self-Assessment and the production of the Self-Assessment Report.

Evaluation, Reflection and Identifying Opportunities

During April each year we bring together a wide variety of evidence to help us in assessing our current performance. This includes internal performance monitoring such as performance dashboards and complaints reports, regulatory reports from inspections and the results from consultation and engagement activities.

We undertake an exercise of reviewing the evidence to identify key findings - where performance has improved, where there are opportunities for improvement and what the key themes are from our consultation.

The findings from this exercise are presented to Self-Assessment Workshops with the Council's Leadership Group and Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Committee to help in assessing our performance.

The workshops are where we re-assess ourselves against the Key Lines of Enquiry, updating our evidence for each question and using this to identify actions for improvement. They review the evidence available to them and add their own perspective to provide updated scores for each question.

The findings workshops are collated by the Performance and Research Team. They produce the draft Self-Assessment Report by drawing on the evidence matrix, scores and the improvement actions identified in the workshop, along with other key sources such as key strategies and inspection reports.

Part of the collation includes cross- checking the scoring with the evidence provided and seeking clarity on our conclusions where necessary. Gaps in evidence and understanding of our performance are also highlighted, all of which is designed to ensure the process is robust.

By focusing on this, we can learn from our experiences and tap into the innovation and creativity that exists in the Council to identify opportunities to improve our performance, whether that's through raising performance levels, identifying efficiencies or improving customer satisfaction.

The Council's Governance and Audit Committee play a key role in the Self-Assessment process. They are responsible for reviewing the draft Self-Assessment Report and making recommendations for changes to the conclusions drawn or the actions the Council intends to take. The draft Report is reviewed by the Governance and Audit Committee in September.

The Self-Assessment Report is updated following the Committee's recommendations and the final report published in January and submitted to the statutory recipients.
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Steps and timetable for completion of Ceredigion's Self-Assessment Report

March /April	April / May	May to July	July to August	September	November	January
Conduct Desktop Review of Evidence	Conduct workshops with Councillors and Officers	Collate Evidence and produce Draft Self-Assessment Report	Leadership Group and Cabinet Review Draft Self-Assessment Report	Governance and Audit Committee Review Draft Self-Assessment Report and make recommendations	Self-Assessment Report Reviewed / signed off by Cabinet and Council	Final Self-Assessment Report Published

SELF-ASSESSMENT IN OUR PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Integration into the Council's Performance Framework

Self-assessment is not a standalone process, rather it is integrated as part of the Council's ongoing corporate planning and performance management arrangements. The diagram below demonstrates how self-assessment fits into our overall performance framework.

It is integral to driving Business Planning and Risk Management, and in turn draws on the outcomes from monitoring business plans and the corporate risk register to evaluate our current performance and complete the self-assessment. It is, in essence, a two-way communication between each pillar of the Performance Framework.

The timing of Self-Assessment is also important. It has been timed to transparently inform and influence the Council's strategic planning, financial management and budget process, risk management reviews, improvement planning and ongoing performance management. For example, the publication of the Self-Assessment Report in November ensures it is prepared in time to drive the annual business planning and target setting process in the final quarter of each year between January and March.

Self-Assessment in the Wider Performance Framework

Ceredigion has a long history of using self-assessment to good effect in identifying innovative ways of delivering services, most recently in the 'Through Age Well-being Programme' being implemented to transform the delivery of social care in the County over the next five years.

It is also an integral part of operational performance and used in the setting of annual business plans for each service. We all recognise that capacity is at a premium and demand is high, and as a result effective business planning has never been so important to ensure we are delivering 'the right services in the right way'. Having the opportunity to 'reflect' on past and current performance is crucial to understanding our strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. This form of reflective practice is critical in helping us determine our actions and priorities for the years ahead.

The Golden Thread

The Council uses a 'Golden Thread' diagram (shown right) to show the links between its key strategies and plans. It describes the flow of information from national and regional priorities for improvement contained in the Local Well-being Plan and Corporate Strategy, through to individual services, teams and members of staff in the Council responsible for delivering them.

A strong Golden Thread is important as it shows how each level of planning and action contributes to the next level, and how each role within the Council contributes towards achieving Ceredigion's Corporate Well-being Objectives.

Self-Assessment occupies a key place in the Golden Thread as the way in which we measure success and drive performance improvements, along with Business Planning and management and risk.

The 'Golden Thread' in Ceredigion

National Well-being Goals	Public Services Board Local Well-being Plan
Our Strategy and Corporate Well-being Objectives	Corporate Strategy (Council Vision & Corporate Well-being Objectives)
How will we deliver and measure success	Self-Assessment, Performance Framework, Risk Register, Scrutiny & Performance Board
Our Business Plans	Business Plans (for all Council Services)
How will we manage and deliver with our teams and staff	Team Plans, Team Meetings and 1:1 meetings with line managers
	Annual Appraisal and Individual Development Plans

Self-Assessment

Business Plans | Performance Board | Corporate Risk Register | Audit Monitoring

MANAGING OUR PERFORMANCE

Our Performance Journey

Put simply, performance management is taking action in response to actual performance and predicted performance to make outcomes for the people of Ceredigion better than they would otherwise be.

Over the last four years, Ceredigion's approach to performance management has been revitalised and updated. Since then, good progress has been made in building a strong performance management culture across the organisation and preparing for the Self-Assessment performance regime introduced by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

This is reflected in the new business planning process, the relaunched Performance Board and the positive feedback on the Council's approach to self-assessment.
The new legislation emphasizes the importance of embedding a strong performance management culture and achieving this is the overriding principle of the Council's ongoing performance journey.

The learning during the COVID-19 pandemic has created the opportunity to bring about sustainable change and improvements through new ways of working and investing in new technologies to deliver high quality services in an efficient and environmentally friendly way.

The Council has a track record of innovation and over the next five years it will continue to develop this innovative approach and move to more agile and smarter ways of working. Performance management will play a key role in this transformation.

Who is Responsible for Performance Management?

Performance management is everyone's responsibility – everyone has a role to play in delivering business plan objectives, tasks and measures which support the delivery of the Council's Corporate Well-being Objectives and its overall vision.

Performance Management Framework

To ensure we achieve this, we have a new Performance Management Framework in place which allows us to regularly review and track progress, check how we are performing and ensure we are delivering the Corporate Wellbeing Objectives and improving outcomes for the people and communities of Ceredigion.

The Performance Framework operates alongside the overall structure of Corporate Strategy, Medium Term Financial Strategy, Corporate Well-being Objectives, Annual Governance Statement and Programme/ Project Management.

It is part of the Council's corporate planning process and ensures a ensure a consistent understanding of the principles of performance management, and how they are applied in Ceredigion.

The Continuous Improvement Cycle

Our overall approach to performance management is based on a continuous cycle of improvement, following the industry recognised Plan-Do-Review cycle as shown in the diagram below. This cycle is underpinned by the following steps:

- **Plan** our activities to deliver our vision and Corporate Well-being Objectives

- **Do** or deliver the activities

- **Review** our progress regularly to assess whether we are delivering our objectives

- **Reflect** on how we are delivering our activities to identifying opportunities for improvement, efficiencies, or both

Performance Management is a high priority in Ceredigion. The Council is committed to continuous improvement, regularly seeks citizen's views and undertakes self-evaluation to identify opportunities for improvement.

The Continuous Improvement Cycle in Ceredigion

- **Plan**
- **Do**
- **Review**
- **Reflect**
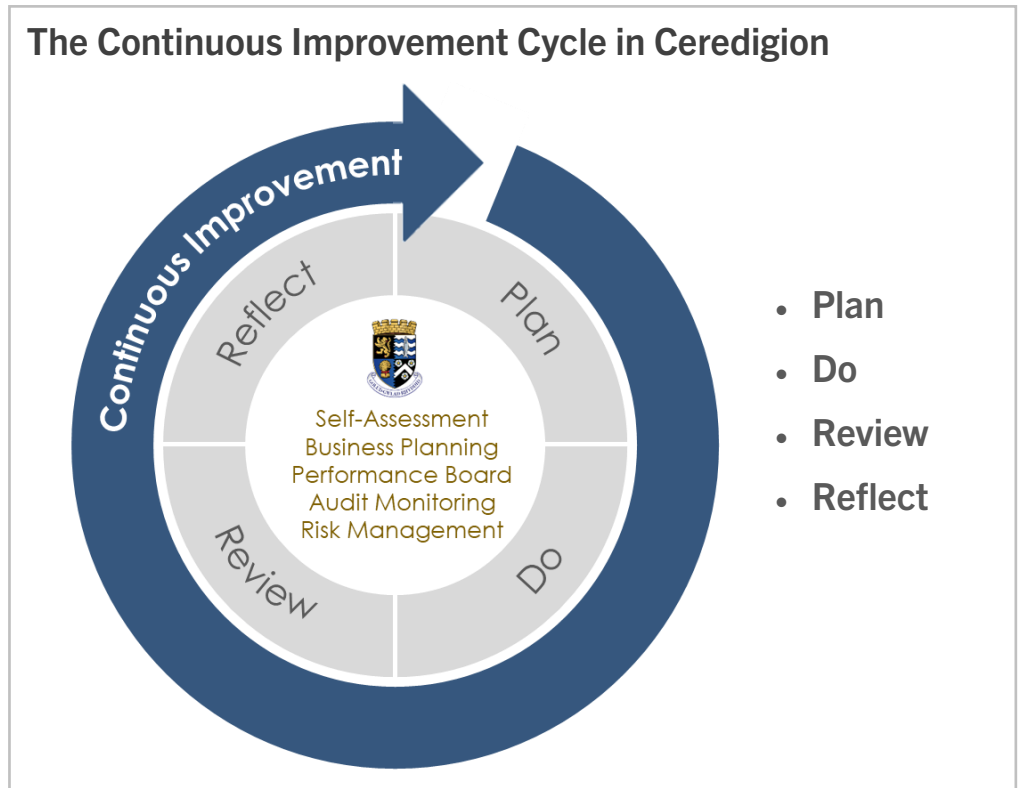
EVIDENCE-BASED ASSESSMENT

Ceredigion strives to be an evidence and data driven organisation. A wide variety of evidence has been used in assessing our performance and in the production of this report.

These sources are split into three categories which help us check that our conclusions are correct and provide an accurate picture of our current performance.

The three categories are the **internal evidence** available to us through key strategies and internal monitoring, such as the Medium Term Financial Strategy, our Annual Governance Statement and complaints monitoring. This provides us with an internal view of how the organisation is performing.

We also draw on the extensive **regulatory and external evidence** that exists. This includes inspection reports from Estyn, Care Inspectorate Wales and the ongoing work conducted by Audit Wales. This provides us with the regulatory or external view of how we're performing from independent bodies.

The third category of evidence is the **consultation and engagement** undertaken on an ongoing basis. This records the views of all stakeholders in Ceredigion, including citizens, businesses, council staff and Trade Unions, offering the perspective of those receiving services from the Council.

The Council has an ongoing process of engagement and consultation in place throughout the year which is used to record residents' views on a variety of Council functions (see pages 22-27).

These three categories of evidence help us 'triangulate' or check that the conclusions we draw are robust by allowing us to compare the key findings from each and ensure they align before producing the Self-Assessment Report. This relationship is shown in the diagram opposite, where the evidence equally feeds into the desktop analysis and ultimately the self-assessment report.

Types of evidence used in conducting self-assessment

Regulatory / Inspections

Desktop Analysis of Evidence & Self-Assessment Report

Internal Evidence

Consultation / Engagement
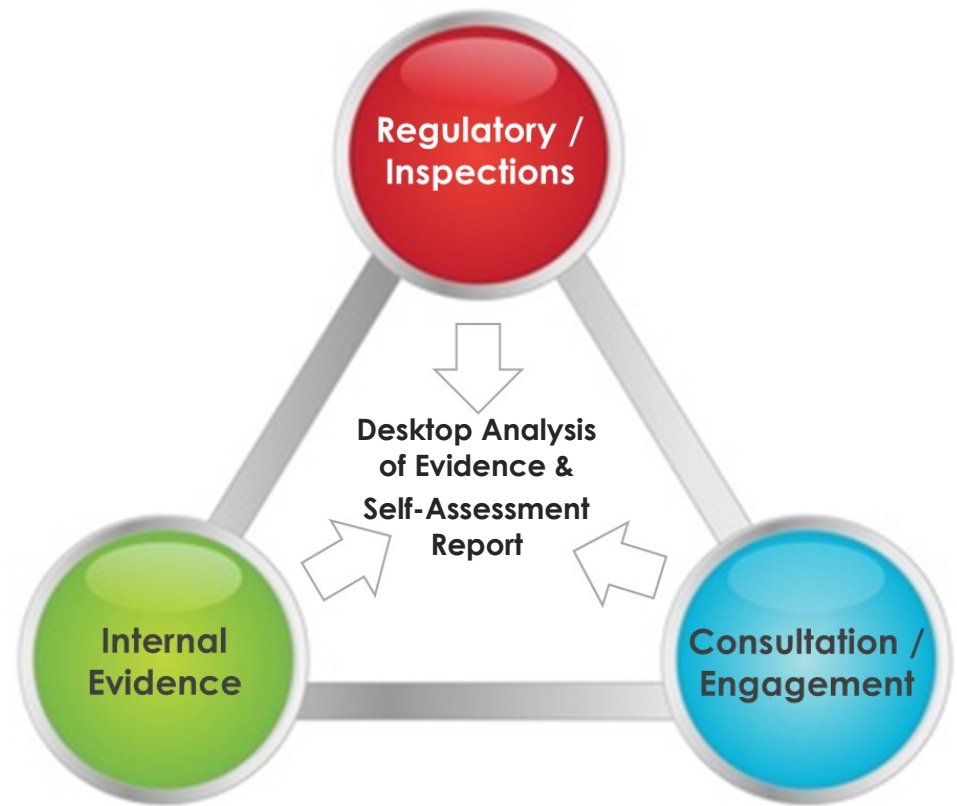
CATEGORIES OF EVIDENCE

Data Quality

Every stage of the self-assessment and wider performance management process relies on evidence and data to allow the Council to make judgements on what Ceredigion's needs are, what its customers' needs are, what it has achieved, and how it compares. It is therefore vital that all this information is based on high quality, reliable, and timely data to ensure that the judgements that based upon it are sound.

Our performance framework supports this by helping to ensure the provision of complete, accurate and timely data used in internal monitoring and published externally to communicate the Council's progress in delivering its vision and Corporate Well-being Objectives to the public and stakeholders.

The table opposite provides a list of the types and sources of data that are taken into account in Ceredigion's self-assessment, and split by category type. ▶

Sources used in conducting the Self-Assessment and Review of Well-being Objectives

INTERNAL EVIDENCE

- Corporate Strategy
- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Statement of Accounts
- Annual Governance Statement
- Overview and Scrutiny Committee Feedback and Reports
- Director of Social Services Annual Report
- Quarterly Performance Dashboards
- Business Plan Monitoring
- Corporate Strategy Dashboard
- Self-Assessment Dashboard
- Corporate Risk Register
- Internal Audit reports
- Compliments, Comments & Complaints Reports
- Performance Measures Results
- Previous Self-Assessment Reports
- National Survey for Wales Results
- Council Tax / Collection Rate
- Digital Skills Audit 2022
- Review of Hybrid Working Arrangements

REGULATORY & EXTERNAL EVIDENCE

- Audit Wales Annual Improvement Report
- Care Inspectorate Wales Annual Performance Report
- Audit Wales Review reports
- Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) reports
- Estyn inspection reports
- Public Service Ombudsman Wales (PSOW)
- Panel Performance Assessment (PPA)
- Future Generations Commissioner Reports
- Ceredigion PSB Annual Report
- Ceredigion PSB Assessment of Local Well-being
- West Wales Population Assessment
- Data Cymru
- StatsWales
- National Well-being Indicators

CONSULTATION & ENGAGEMENT

- Consultation Feedback reports incl.
  - Annual Stakeholder Consultation
  - Childcare Sufficiency Assessment
  - Engagement and Participation policy
  - Maternity and Early Years Strategy
  - Ceredigion Corporate Strategy
  - Local Well-being Plan
- Engagement exercises including:
  - Development of Regional Investment Plan to deliver UK Shared Prosperity fund
  - Mid Wales Employment and Skills survey
  - Flooding at Llanybydder, Llandysul and Pont-Tyweli
  - Post-16 education
  - Crime and Disorder Strategic Assessment
  - Future uses in Council Buildings
- Regional Well-being Survey
- Engagement with stakeholder groups including Disability Forum, Older Persons Forum
- Ceredigion Budget Challenge
- Trade Unions monthly meetings
- Staff New Ways of Working surveys
- Staff Health and Well-being Surveys

LEARNING FROM CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Consultation and engagement with stakeholders is a core theme throughout our self-assessment process and wider performance management approach.

It is an integral part of the evidence used in our performance management and will continue to play an even greater role as we explore opportunities for improvement with a variety of individuals and groups across the County.

It's important that we give residents and stakeholders the opportunity to tell the Council about their own vision for their communities and about what they want in terms of service provision.

Our new **Engagement and Participation Policy**, that was approved in October 2022, sets out how we will talk and listen with all of those who live, work or study in Ceredigion, including people whose voices are seldom heard.

Our legal duty to consult is set out in various pieces of legislation, including:

- The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 – the Council must involve people with an interest in achieving the National Well-being goals.
- The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 – the Council must encourage public participation in our decision making.
- The Welsh Language Measure 2011 –

the Council must ask the public for their views on the impact that our decisions will have on the Welsh Language.

- The Equality Act 2010 – the Council must involve and engage with people who share Protected Characteristics.
- The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 – the Council must consult with organisations specified in the Regulations and must inform people that are likely to be affected by a traffic order.
- School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 – the Council must comply with the School Organisation Code which outlines the principles that should be taken into account when proposing to make changes to school provision.

Where more feedback is needed from particular groups, we adjust our approach during the year to target those areas and ensure that all of Ceredigion's communities are involved. We engage with the many groups and organisations that represent specific groups in the county, and in particular to ensure that the voices of those seldom heard are indeed heard.

It's not just about our legal duty, however, as engaging and consulting

with the public gives us better information to help our decision making. This can lead to better outcomes for our residents.

There is no 'one size fits all' solution to engagement. We aim to use the best type of engagement for the right situation.

Continuous engagement is achieved through an ongoing conversation between the Council and our local communities. Sometimes a targeted engagement or consultation exercise is the best method. In other instances, the Council has a legal duty to follow a specific process to inform the public and provide opportunity for feedback.

A lot is being done to engage with residents and stakeholders, Feedback on our engagement and consultation campaigns is usually presented to Cabinet meetings

Discussion sessions, thematic workshops, meetings with key stakeholders and face to face drops ins are also offered, particularly where feedback is sought from a specific cohort, for example the Youth Council, or in a specific place, for example flooding in Llanybydder, Llandysul/Pont-Tyweli.

In 2022/23 we have benefitted from some important engagement events that provide a unique insight into the views of citizens and stakeholders.

These include the Corporate Strategy

during September to October 2022, in which residents told us their views on the new Corporate Well-being Objectives, and the Future Use of Council Offices consultation in December 2022 to January 2023 which asked about how best to use the main Council offices in the future. Both of these have been used in the production of this report.

Trade Unions

Monthly meetings are in place between the Council and recognised Trades Unions. These are chaired by the Corporate Lead Officer for People Organisation and provide a consultative forum to engage in and help steer direction for workforce matters and individual concerns around wellbeing and conduct. This ongoing dialogue is important to the Council through ensuring staff have a voice and to build on the intelligence gained from our staff surveys and consultations.

As part of the self-assessment, we met with the Trade Union representatives to outline the process and their role as statutory consultees. No specific issues have been raised by the Trade Unions at this point, although this is likely to develop as the process becomes increasingly embedded. Working in partnership with our Trade Unions is critical to the successful delivery of Workforce Plan, and feedback on the Council's performance can be provided at any time.

Staff Consultation

Ceredigion has a strong history of keeping staff informed and measuring staff sentiment, even before the COVID-19 pandemic and the adoption of the new ways of working initiative. In 2022/23 staff engagement took place in the form of the Interim Hybrid Working Policy to record views on the new working arrangements, the latest annual Health and Well-being Survey to record staff sentiment across a range of issues from their well-being to working arrangements, and the New Ways of Working Project Hybrid Working Review in March 2023 to record feedback on the effectiveness of the new hybrid working arrangements. Some of the regular surveys undertaken to ensure the Council engages with its staff are listed below. The findings from these exercises have been used in the self-assessment.

- IT Working From Home Survey (June 2020)
- Coronavirus Health and Well-being Survey (November 2020)
- The Way We Work Staff Survey (March 2021)
- Interim Hybrid Working Policy Staff Survey (July 2022)
- Heath and Well-being Survey (February 2020)
- Employee Health and Well-being Pulse Survey (November 2021)
- Employee Health and Well-being Survey (December 2022)

- NWOW Project Hybrid Working Review

We welcome your views on our Self-Assessment Report, the Council's Corporate Well-being Objectives and our current performance. We would also like to know how you, your family and your community have been affected by our work to improve well-being for everyone in the county.

Public Engagements

Seven targeted engagement exercises were undertaken during 2022-23. Some were run by the Council alone and some were run in partnership with others as we try and reduce 'consultation fatigue'. Feedback from these exercises will contribute to the development of future plans and strategies. Details of these exercises are contained overleaf.

CORPORATE STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

Have your say on Ceredigion's Wellbeing Objectives

Closing date: 31 August 2023

During 2023 we ran our first in an ongoing series of 'Stakeholder Surveys' to support self-assessment and the council's ongoing performance journey.

It allowed us to check in with residents, businesses and other stakeholders such as community groups, on a variety of issues such as progress against our corporate well-being objectives, the priorities moving forward and the way in which we monitor and measure performance.

The first of these was run during the summer of 2023 and the results will be used to inform the next round of self-assessment.

Your views are important to us. We welcome your views on this report, our performance and the actions we are delivering at any time. Please use the contact details on the back cover of this report to get in touch or look out for the annual stakeholder surveys.

CONTACT US

Email: clic@ceredigion.gov.uk

Post: Performance and Research
Canolfan Rheidol
Rhodfa Padarn
Llanbadarn Fawr
Aberystwyth
Ceredigion
SY23 3UE

Telephone: 01545 570881
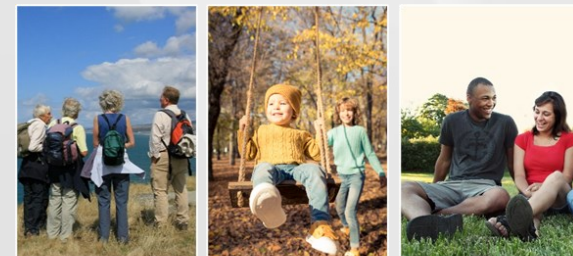
ENGAGEMENT EXERCISES IN 2022/23

Title of Activity	Description	Response	What next
Development of Regional Investment Plan to deliver UK Shared Prosperity fund (May/June 2022)	Growing Mid Wales (Ceredigion County Council and Powys County Council) ran an internal and external engagement exercise to invite views on how the UK Shared Prosperity Fund should be used over the next 3 years.	176 responses to an online survey plus over 150 stakeholders who attended a webinar and 20 member organisations of the Growing Mid Wales Partnership.	Responses were used to help shape the high-level priorities of the Mid Wales Regional Investment Plan 2022-25. The Plan provides guidance to local businesses and organisations who wish to apply for funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
Flooding at Llanybydder, Llandysul and Pont-Tyweli (June - August 2022)	Highways and Environmental Services ran a 12-week engagement run in partnership with National Resources Wales and Carmarthenshire County Council to seek views of the public to get a better understanding of the impact that flooding has on the communities.	124 (58: Llanybydder and 66: Llandysul/Pont-Tyweli).	Responses will feed into the next stage of the work and form part of decision making that Natural Resources Wales and Welsh Government will undertake to design and implement any flood risk reduction scheme.
Mid Wales Employment and Skills survey (July - September 2022)	A 7-week engagement run by the Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership (Ceredigion County Council and Powys County Council) to inform the Mid Wales Employment and Skills Plan 2022-25.	69 (73% from Powys / 27% from Ceredigion)	The Mid Wales Employment and Skills Plan 2022-25 was launched in March 2023. The Plan identifies key sectors and skills and priorities for regional investment to support jobs and growth in the Mid Wales region.
Post-16 education (October 2022)	Schools and Culture ran a 4-week engagement with businesses, parents, primary and secondary school pupils and university students. Respondents were asked for their views about the range of courses and type of provision needed for post-16 learners.	1,307 to the online survey.	Responses will feed into the review of post-16 provision in Ceredigion.
Future uses in Council Buildings (December 2022/ January 2023)	Economy and Regeneration ran an 8-week engagement with the public to ask for their views on how best to use the main Council offices in the future.	533 (508 to the online survey and 25 to a paper version). Additional responses also received via Clic	Feedback will be considered, alongside feedback from Council staff and data on the use of desks and meeting rooms in pilot hybrid office areas.
Crime and Disorder Strategic Assessment (January – March 2023)	Ceredigion Community Safety Partnership ran an 8-week engagement to gather views about crime and disorder in the county	89 responses to the online survey, 3 responses on a paper survey and 9 responses from a Ceredigion Youth Council event.	Responses will inform the Ceredigion Community Safety Delivery Plan which aims to protect local communities from crime and to help people feel safer.
Ceredigion Dementia Action Plan (Feb/March 2023)	Our Through Age Well-being programme ran a 6-week engagement with the public, with particular emphasis on older people, to establish how we are doing and what we can do to improve the lives of people living with dementia and those who care for them.	35 from the online survey plus 10 from drop-in sessions at 6 locations across the county. Additional responses were collected from face-to-face visits to 5 groups/care homes, focus sessions with service providers and 55 x one to one video calls.	Responses will feed into the development of a Ceredigion Dementia Action Plan.

CONSULTATION EXERCISES IN 2022/23

Five consultation exercises were undertaken to obtain public feedback on specific plans or proposals. Results of the consultation exercises were presented to Cabinet alongside the final plan or policy. All approved plans and policies are now published on the Council website (apart from the Maternity and Early Years Strategy for Mid Wales which will be presented to Cabinet on 06/06/23).

Title of Activity	Description	Response	Impact of the Consultation
Childcare Sufficiency Assessment report (May/June 2022)	Schools and Culture ran a 4-week consultation to seek the views of interested parties on the draft Childcare Sufficiency Assessment report. The draft document was based on the results of an extensive assessment of the availability of childcare in Ceredigion.	17	People generally agreed with the content of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment. This is probably due to the extensive consultation undertaken in 2021-22 to inform the assessment report. The action plan was developed in line with the original document.
Engagement and Participation policy (July-Sept 2022)	Policy, Performance and Public Protection ran an 8-week consultation to seek the views of interested parties on how the council should engage with the public and to ask for feedback on the draft Engagement and Participation policy.	112	The final policy was amended in response to the feedback received.
Maternity and Early Years Strategy for Mid Wales (July/August 2022)	A 13-week regional consultation was run by Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire Local Authorities and Hywel Dda University Health Board to seek the views of interested parties on this strategy which focusses on integrated support in the first 7 years of a child's life.	137	Amendments were made to the strategy based on feedback received.
Ceredigion Corporate Strategy 2022-27 (August/September 2022)	Policy, Performance and Public Protection ran a 5-week consultation to seek the views of Ceredigion residents on Ceredigion Council's draft Corporate Strategy and steps we'll take to achieve our proposed Corporate Well-being Objectives over the next 5 years.	51	Amendments made as a result of the consultation were incorporated into the final document.
Ceredigion Public Services Board Local Well-being Plan 2023-28 (October 2022-January 2023)	Ceredigion Public Services Board ran a 14-week consultation to seek feedback from the public on the content of the draft Local Well-being Plan for Ceredigion. The draft Plan was based on the results of an extensive assessment, including consultation, carried out in 2021-22 on the state of well-being in Ceredigion.	34 completed surveys, plus feedback from focus sessions with 16 schools and Ceredigion Youth Council. 7 detailed responses from local and national organisations and 15 responses on the ideas wall on 'Have your Say'.	Comments and feedback were incorporated into the final document and will also enhance the development of the detailed delivery plan.

INFORM EXERCISES IN 2022/23

In some instances, the Council has a duty to inform the public about a proposal and provide a way for interested parties to respond. Four 'inform' exercises took place during the period.

Title of Activity	Description	Response
Application for the Registration of Erw Goch Field	All correspondence, including minutes of Cabinet meetings relating to this matter, are listed on the Council website	2
Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders (ETRO)	Two ETRO's were made to retain and amend a number of traffic management measures that were previously introduced during the Covid-19 pandemic in Aberaeron, Aberystwyth, Cardigan & New Quay via Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders.	34, plus discussions with the Disability Forum
Architect Plans for Aeron Valley Community Area School	An open evening was held at Theatr Felinfach campus for people to view the architect plans which were also available on the Council website.	48
Aberaeron Secondary School Footpath closure	A copy of the Traffic Regulation Order, responses, and comments on responses from the Council are listed on the Council website. All respondents also receive a written response from the Council.	8

CORPORATE STRATEGY CONSULTATION

One example of consultation undertaken was on the Council's new Corporate Strategy covering the period 2022 to 2027. This document is important because it sets out the Council's new Corporate Well-being Objectives (corporate priorities) in moving forward. Stakeholders were asked a series of questions about the Strategy between September and October 2022. Although we recognise that the consultation produced a low number of responses, the responses are crucial to understand what is and remains a priority for Ceredigion.

Overall, there was a high degree of support for the Corporate Well-being Objectives and the written comments where respondents highlighted themes relevant to them, align closely to the ambitions and the steps in the Strategy. The diagram opposite demonstrates this.

WHAT YOU TOLD US

78%
Agree or strongly agree with the Boosting the Economy Objective (6% disagree or strongly disagree)

75%
Agree or strongly agree with the Creating Caring and Healthy Communities objective (8% disagree or strongly disagree)

71%
Agree or strongly agree with the Providing the Best Start in Life objective (4% disagree or strongly disagree)

73%
Agree or strongly agree with the Creating Sustainable, Greener and Well-connected Communities objective (2% disagree or strongly disagree)

CORPORATE STRATEGY CONSULTATION

WHAT YOU TOLD US	HOW OUR CORPORATE STRATEGY ALGINS
Support for businesses, SME's and new start-ups	• Continue to develop the £110m Mid Wales Growth Deal • Supporting Ceredigion's UK Shared Prosperity Fund bid • Support the development of the Smart Towns project in Cardigan in our other Ceredigion towns
Digital connectivity for all, not just a percentage	• Support the roll-out of 4G Broadband
Environmental impact from development and economic growth	• Enable initiatives and mitigation measures to help with the resolution to the phosphates and nutrient ecological issue in the Teifi Valley and other catchments • Pursue the Ceredigion Local Development Plan • Prioritise locally-sourced produce and supply chains in council business
Leisure facilities and opportunities for young people	• All children and young people have opportunities to access after-school, evening and weekend activities, including opportunities for freely chosen self-directed Play and that these services are registered to enable parents to access financial support • Support pupils and families to access local youth clubs, social groups and organised activities
Active travel opportunities particularly walking and cycling	• Provide modern, accessible and inspiring leisure facilities across all three areas of Ceredigion (north, mid and south) • Encouraging people to Get Physically Active so they can benefit from positive health and wellbeing • Introducing an improved membership package for use of council operated leisure facilities • Providing outreach physical activity opportunities outside of the county's towns
Challenges facing provision of social care	• Pursue the building of a new nursing home in the Aberystwyth area and fully provide for the nursing care needs of our population • Support the aspiration of creating a National Care Service for Wales • Progress the Through Age Delivery Model providing 70% of services within universal and early help services, 20% in Assessment and short-term services and 10% in Specialist services

WHAT YOU TOLD US	HOW OUR CORPORATE STRATEGY ALGINS
Learning opportunities for adults and older people	• Develop through the Regional Skills Partnership, Economy and Regeneration, and LL&S a robust employer forum • Develop online/ social connectivity and pop-up events to market roles/ sectors within Ceredigion • Undertake a review of post-16 education and implement the approved recommendations • Continue to develop the E-sgol provision • Ensure that the UK Shared prosperity fund is utilised on identified projects to develop appropriate skills to support the local economy
Connecting communities via active travel routes	• Securing increased funding for the delivery of a wide range of active travel improvements • Campaigning for active travel routes alongside the whole length of our trunk roads • Pushing for our smaller towns and rural areas to be included in Welsh Government's criteria for funding active travel routes.
Public transport improvements and high costs	• Support the Bwcabus on-demand service in our rural communities subject to continued and increased Welsh Government funding opportunities • Make the case strongly for any Welsh Government ambitions to franchise public transport routes to include small locally-based bus companies • Working with stakeholders to support and sustain the public transport network, and identify funding/improvement where appropriate
Provision of childcare and recruitment of Welsh speakers	• Promoting the Childcare Offer to working parents of 3 to 4 year-olds • Parents/guardians who are in education or training and meet the eligibility criteria will be able to access the Childcare Offer • Supporting childcare availability for 2-year-olds • Raising awareness/promote Tax Free Childcare for working parents • Supporting the development and sustainability of registered childcare provision
Rural deprivation	• Developing a resource centre to support vulnerable / low-income families • Household income above national average

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REVIEW OF OUR WELL-BEING OBJECTIVES

The Council's new Corporate Strategy 2022-27 was published in November 2022 and the new Corporate Well-being Objectives agreed:

- Boosting the Economy, Supporting Businesses and Enabling Employment
- Creating Caring and Healthy Communities
- Providing the Best Start in Life and Enabling Learning at All Ages
- Creating Sustainable, Green and Well-connected Communities

The Council's Corporate Well-being Objectives enable the delivery of services that will enhance the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being for the citizens and communities of Ceredigion. The Objectives were reviewed during 2022 and a new set agreed to coincide with the new Corporate Strategy. The new Objectives were identified through a wide variety of evidence, including public engagement, the Ceredigion Assessment of Local Well-being and the ambitions of the new political administration.

The process started with a desktop analysis of a variety of evidence, in order to identify the main issues affecting the well-being of Ceredigion's citizens. This included reviewing the Ceredigion Public Service's Board Assessment of Local Well-being, which provides a comprehensive picture of well-being in the county, and included extensive public engagement during 2021. This told us

about the concerns people had and the areas they would like to see improve.

A triangulation exercise was then conducted, looking at the new Administration's priorities for the next five years and comparing with the Assessment to identify any gaps. Workshops were run with Council services to provide a further check and to develop the individual steps to be taken to deliver the Objectives.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act requires the Council to set and publish Well-being Objectives that are designed to maximise our contribution to the achievement of the seven Well-being Goals for Wales specified in the Act. At the same time we must publish a statement explaining why meeting the objectives will contribute to the achievement of the well-being goals and what actions we will take to meet the objectives

We review our Corporate Well-being Objectives and steps annually to ensure they remain the right Objectives for Ceredigion and ensure we are delivering them.

The following pages provide a summary of how our 2022/23 Well-being Objectives contribute to the national Well-being Goals, a review of progress against delivering the Objectives and how we have applied the Sustainable Development Principle.

Our Vision:

Ceredigion County Council delivers value for money, sustainable bilingual public services, that support a strong economy and healthy environment, while promoting well-being in our people and our communities

Our Corporate Well-being Objectives:

CORPORATE WELL-BEING OBJECTIVES
2022-23

BOOSTING THE ECONOMY, SUPPORTING BUSINESSES AND ENABLING EMPLOYMENT

CREATING CARING AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

CREATING SUSTAINABLE, GREEN AND WELL-CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

PROVIDING THE BEST START IN LIFE AND ENABLING LEARNING AT ALL AGES

ASSESSING PROGRESS

Local authorities are required by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to review progress in delivering their well-being objectives. Although we keep progress under continuous review, we publish our latest performance every year in our Self-Assessment Report.

This report combines the statutory reporting requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

In assessing our overall progress, we use the Future Generations Journey Checker to assist in providing a standardised assessment of progress against each Corporate Well-being Objective.

The Journey Checker is a useful tool that categorises progress according to five criteria, ranging from 'No Change' where no progress has been made to 'Leading the Way', where not only good progress has been made and our level of understanding of the issues affecting

well-being is comprehensive but where the needs of future generations are understood and considered by everyone. These categories are highlighted in the scoring system in the table below.

The Journey Checker provides a useful way of assessing not only the delivery of individual actions taken, but also provides an assessment of *how* we're delivering the objectives.

The following pages provide a review of our progress during the last year, including some recent highlights and key successes, along with some of the longer term achievements in the delivery of our Corporate Well-being Objectives.

Future Generations Journey Checker

NO CHANGE	SIMPLE CHANGE	MORE ADVENTUROUS	OWNING AMBITION	LEADING THE WAY
◢	◢	◢	◢	◢

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

During 2022/23 our customer contact centre (CLIC) handled the following enquiries:

130,908
Telephone calls received during the 2022/23 year

35,852
Emails responded to during the 2022/23 year

95,421
Enquiries logged during the 2022/23 year (an increase of 17,500 on the previous year)

16%
Of telephone calls (or 20,970) were in Welsh

BOOSTING THE ECONOMY, SUPPORTING BUSINESS AND ENABLING EMPLOYMENT

Progress Made

- The Mid Wales Growth Deal is making real progress since the signing of the Final Deal Agreement by the Welsh and UK Governments and regional delivery partners in January 2022.

- The Growth Deal, developed from the Vision for Growing Mid Wales, reached a significant milestone in 2022 when the Final Deal Agreement was signed by the Welsh Government, UK Government and Ceredigion and Powys Councils, based on the development and submission of the Portfolio Business Case. Both governments agreed to provide £55m totalling £110m over a period of up to 15 years. The updated Strategic Portfolio Business Case was formally submitted in March 2023 to the Welsh Government and the UK Government and release of the first tranche of Growth Deal funding is now expected during 2023/24 via a formal Grant Award.

- The Council has been successful in applying for £10.9m of Levelling Up funding for Aberystwyth from the UK Government. This is being used to deliver three regeneration projects that will help transform 'The Old College' in Aberystwyth, revitalise the promenade and create a 'Living harbour'.

- The Council has worked in partnership with Powys County Council and a range of local businesses to launch the Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership Employment and Skill Plan 2022-25. The plan addresses the barriers and issues affecting businesses in Mid Wales. It identifies key sectors and skills, priorities for regional investment to support jobs and growth, and sets out the mechanism to create a more prosperous skills infrastructure for the region for the next 3 years and beyond.

- Ceredigion Workways+ has continued to help people that are not in employment to access funded face-to-face and online training, work experience, volunteering opportunities and jobs. The scheme is staffed by officers from Ceredigion County Council and is part funded through the Welsh Government. Support is available to help people affected by work-limiting health conditions or disabilities; carers; those with low or no qualifications; people with childcare responsibilities; the over 54's; people in a single adult or jobless household or anyone from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic group.

- Investments have led to Ceredigion being the first county to have a county-wide LoRaWAn network that is available to private and public sector partners to improve the use of technology as a business efficiency aid. Ceredigion County Council has completed the installation of 40 LoRaWAN Gateways on several Council assets in order to create the network. Ceredigion's is the most extensive network across any other local authority in Wales and the first to have coverage across much of the county. Crucially, 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.

- £2.8m worth of investment has been secured from the UK Government's Community Renewal Fund, and is currently being delivered via 12 projects involving stakeholders supporting individuals and businesses directly linked to actions identified in the Economic Strategy.

- One project, led by Antur Cymru addresses increased numbers of people considering necessity-based entrepreneurship who face barriers to engaging with established business support services. The project is empowering individuals to acquire transferrable skills through participation in a project delivering basic business skills

- £379k of funding from Welsh Government has been secured to support a range of projects to bring town centre assets into economic use and to enhance green infrastructure in town centres. Investment includes the purchase of 10/11 Harford Square in Lampeter, and the development of a Green Infrastructure project in Market Street, Lampeter.

- The Council is the lead authority for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) in the Mid Wales Region. The indicative funding for Ceredigion is £12.4m for the years 2022/23 to 2024/25. £2.9m is funding for capital projects with £9.5m for revenue projects. The UKSPF is part of a suite of funding from the UK Government as part of its Levelling Up Policy and is intended to build pride in local areas and empower local communities.

- Four projects in Ceredigion, along with five in Powys, have received funding totalling just over £1.3m from the Welsh Government Transforming Towns programme, which is anticipated will trigger potential investment worth just over £3m. These projects are part of the overarching Placemaking Grant scheme which sits under the Transforming Towns programme. The town centres in Ceredigion where the projects are taking place are in Aberystwyth, Cardigan and Llandysul. Transforming Towns is a Welsh Government programme providing a further £7million to town centre regeneration in mid Wales over three years.

- With the support of Leader funding through the Cynnal y Cardi programme, a Towns Development Officer is in place to engage with town representatives to help facilitate and support ideas to reinvigorate Ceredigion's rural towns.

- Over £250,000 has been secured to improve access to Ceredigion's natural assets through Access Improvement Grants and the Local Places for Nature programme.

- In March 2023, Ceredigion County Council approved the adoption of the continuation of the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Rates Relief Scheme for 2023/24, which allows an estimated 800 businesses in Ceredigion to take advantage of a 75% discount on non-domestic rates, with a total of £3.6m available to businesses under the scheme.

- Ceredigion County Council and its partners on the Ceredigion Public Services Board continue to work proactively in mitigating the causes and impacts of poverty in Ceredigion.

- Ceredigion County Council has provided food banks across the county with a share of £30,000 from the discretionary homeless prevention fund which is provided to local authorities by the Welsh Government. The boost comes as food banks have seen a large increase in demand due to the cost-of-living crisis.

- The ECO4 scheme, aimed at low income, vulnerable and fuel poor households living in energy inefficient properties, was launched in October 2022.

- Significant work has been undertaken to raise the profile of the Direct Payment Personal Assistant workforce through active recruitment with team members attending job fairs and drop-in events at job centres. 56 Personal Assistants have been recruited so far, which is a significant increase.

- Porth Cymorth Cynnar are leading on a project to work with regional partners in the development of social and micro enterprise opportunities. Shared Prosperity Funding has been secured and the Council has supported the planning for a specification for micro enterprises to go out to tender in the second quarter of 2023/24. The Council is actively involved in establishing how Direct Payments can be one of the payment mechanisms when micro enterprises are established.

- To support a sustainable and resilient independent care sector, the new Domiciliary Care specification and tender programme has been completed with new contracts to be awarded in the second quarter of 2023/24.

- The Council supports the independent sector through collaborative working providing mutual aid, funding and resources, equipment as well as health and safety advice.

- 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 analysis to assist towns and businesses to identify which approaches are best to improve efficiencies and the effectiveness of their business.

- The Planning Service follow-up review found that the Council has taken swift action to begin responding to the recommendations made by Audit Wales and good progress is being made, including changes to the governance arrangements to support new Development Management Committee. We are continuing to work through the remaining recommendations as well as any additional recommendations made.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

£10.9m
of capital funding secured through the Levelling Up Fund 2022-25

£760,000
of external capital funding attracted

37
Businesses supported across Ceredigion

7,547
Winter Fuel Grant Recipients paid during the cost of living crisis, with a total value of £3.2m

21,363
£150 Cost of Living Support payments made to recipients with a total value of £1.51m

41
New jobs created during the year

703
Carers Grant Scheme recipients paid with a total value of £352,000

£42.4m
Mid Wales region's application for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund approved

IMPROVING OUTCOMES

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

The Mid Wales Growth deal has continued to progress during 2022/23 with some significant developments that bring the £110m investment into the region a step closer. The Final Deal Agreement was signed by the Welsh Government, UK Government and Ceredigion and Powys Councils in 2022. At the end of the year, in March 2023, the updated Strategic Portfolio Business case was formally submitted to Welsh and UK Governments and the first tranche of the funding is expected during the 2023/24 year.

The Growth Deal is a ground-breaking partnership to bring a combined investment of £110m from UK and Welsh Government, which is expected to lever in significant additional investment from other public and private sources. The programmes and projects supported by the Growth Deal are expected to produce wider social and economic benefits, such as **enhanced quality of life**, **creating business opportunities** following the impact of COVID-19, **decarbonisation** in industry and consideration of climate change impacts.

The outcomes that are achievable in Mid Wales through Growth Deal investment are:
- To create between 1,100 and 1,400 new jobs in Mid Wales by 2032.
- To support a net additional Gross Value Added (GVA) uplift of between £570m and £700 million for the Mid Wales Economy by 2032.
- To deliver a total investment of up to £400 million in the Mid Wales economy by 2032.

DEVELOPING SKILLS

Over the last year, the Council has worked in partnership with Powys County Council and a range of local businesses to launch the Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership Employment and Skills Plan 2022-25.

The plan addresses the barriers and issues affecting businesses in Mid Wales. It identifies key sectors and skills, priorities for regional investment to support jobs and growth, and sets out the mechanism to create a more prosperous skills infrastructure for the region for the next 3 years and beyond.

Through engaging closely with businesses and **giving them a voice to influence priorities** for the region, the Plan addresses the importance of making **strong connections between the local learning system and the skills needed across the region**, so that we are **creating the right conditions for a thriving workforce**.

Launched at the Grow - Define - Deliver Together event, the Plan identifies key sectors and skills, priorities for **regional investment to support jobs and growth** in the Mid Wales region and sets out the mechanism to create **a more prosperous skills infrastructure** for the region for the next 3 years and beyond.

During 2023, the Partnership will be consulting with businesses and stakeholders about the challenges faced by businesses and, in particular, the recruitment of skills now and in the future, to help us inform the skills provision needed for the economy and the people across the region to thrive.

SHARING PROSPERITY

Ceredigion's fifteen year Economic Strategy sets out how we will work together towards achieving strong, sustainable and more resilient economic growth for Ceredigion, created and shared by all. The Strategy is focused on the areas of influence where the Council can make a difference to the economy, i.e. how it uses its capital, human and revenue assets to positively impact the economy in Ceredigion.

The strategy document sets out the actions that will address the challenges and opportunities that exist in the local economy. It focuses on four main priority areas – People, Enterprise, Place and Connectivity, with each section outlining some of the early interventions considered.

Many initiatives have already been developed and implemented under the strategic direction set by the Economic Strategy. A significant amount of external funding has been secured from a range of key stakeholder organisations, which will enable the building blocks for further economic growth to be put in place.

For example, a Welsh Government funded Small Capital Grant Scheme led to almost £500,000 of grant investment in local businesses, attracting a further £631,000 of private sector funding, which led to the creation of 146 new jobs and a further 408 jobs safeguarded in 81 businesses. A further funding package worth £173,000 was secured in 2022 leading to the level of £250,000 worth of private sector funding match funding across 10 businesses in

Ceredigion, creating 35 new jobs and safeguarding 86.

The investment and the delivery of these projects to date has supported the strategy's aims to **support businesses to get started and grow**, **promoting Ceredigion as a place to live, work and visit**, **leading to developing skills in the workforce**.

The Strategy will continue to guide the development of further projects to deliver the aims of the Strategy over the next fifteen years.

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

In December 2022 the Mid Wales region's application for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund was approved, enabling access to £42.4 million which has been allocated to invest in the Mid Wales region up to March 2025, with Ceredigion entitled to nearly £15m worth of funding.

The Council is working hard to put the arrangements in place to enable local organisations to bring their ideas forward which require funding.

The funding will support Levelling Up objectives that seek to **boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards** by growing the private sector, **improving public services**, **restoring a sense of community, local pride and belonging**, **empowering local leaders and communities** and **increasing levels of numeracy in the adult population**.

DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Overall assessment of the journey so far

Progress in delivering this objective is **good** and prospects for improvement are also **good**. The steps to *boost the economy, support businesses and enable employment* are progressing well. Of particular note is the move closer to drawing down the £110m growth deal for the region to unlock the local economy's potential and create a variety of opportunities for local businesses employment and skills development.

The Growing Mid Wales Partnership is an example of collaborative working to ensure that we strengthen the local and regional economy as part of a prosperous and resilient Wales post COVID-19.

OWNING OUR AMBITION

MAXIMISING OUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE NATIONAL WELL-BEING GOALS

The **Boosting the economy, supporting businesses and enabling employment** corporate well-being objective supports the following national well-being goals. ▶

Prosperous
Resilient
Healthier
More Equal
Cohesive
Culture
Global

Long-Term

- The Economic Strategy plans for the long-term development of the economy up to 2035
- The Mid Wales Growth Deal and the Economic Strategy addresses structural weaknesses for long-term benefit
- The Growing Mid Wales Partnership sets the vision for 15+ year timeframe
- Future trend analysis has been used to develop the Growing Mid Wales vision

Prevention

- Increased economic opportunities will prevent further out-migration of skilled young people
- Economic growth will prevent the future negative impact of migration patterns on Welsh language and culture
- Interventions in the Economic Strategy will prevent further growth in the productivity gap
- Attracting and creating high paid job opportunities will help prevent households falling into poverty and hardship

Collaboration

- The Growing Mid Wales Partnership brings together public, private and academic sectors to achieve shared goals
- Working with Powys County Council and Welsh and UK Government to maximise use of resources and capitalise on opportunities through Growing Mid Wales
- The Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership brings together business leaders and stakeholders across the region to understand skills provision and labour market needs, in order to drive investment that meets the requirements of both employers and the workforce

Involvement

- Private sector businesses, drivers of future economic growth are involved in identifying key priorities and strategies
- Private, public and third sectors involved in shaping the emerging Growth Deal programme
- Extensive engagement was undertaken in the development of the Economic Strategy
- The Regional Well-being Survey that is instrumental in driving all local strategies was based on extensive public and stakeholder engagement

Integration

- The Economic Strategy provides a shared vision and action for development of the local economy and the interventions contained within it will be delivered by a variety of partners and stakeholders over the next 15 years
- Economic growth strategies are integrated with other service provision, including education, skills, planning and infrastructure

CYNNAL Y CARDI

Cynnal y Cardi continues to support rural community regeneration through pilot projects, feasibility studies, facilitation, networking activities and training and mentoring.

Approximately 70 activities have been supported including:

- **"Ceredigion360",** a feasibility to discover whether there is desire to create and maintain lively, sustainable local area websites across areas of Ceredigion.
- Feasibility work into the opportunities for developing "**Canolfan Tir Glas Centre**" on the Lampeter UWTSD campus.
- Piloting a **Community Fridge** scheme in Aberporth.
- Piloting **bilingual, digitised learning** in the outdoor environment through developing woodland-based courses.
- Supporting with engagement activities and exploring the feasibility of the Vale of Aeron Community Pub community venture

Cynnal y Cardi is a LEADER project, which has received funding through the Wales Rural Development Programme. The project aims to stimulate innovations that increase the value and variety of sustainable economic opportunity for the people of Ceredigion.

Progress Made

- Ceredigion has responded to the challenges in the provision of social care by moving towards combining the previously separate children and adults' service into a single Through-Age Well-Being Service. This eliminates departmental barriers, provides a more consistent, lifelong service for users and maintains the generic skills and flexibility of staff.

- The transformed social care service focusses on prevention, intervening at an early stage to help connect people to the communities and facilities around them, building individual and family resilience and preventing problems from escalating into a need for higher end services.

- The Council now operates a Through Age Wellbeing model (TAW) for the delivery of what would traditionally be considered Social Care services.

- Implementation and delivery of the Through Age Wellbeing Programme (TAW) continues as the transformation of services progresses well with the integration of Social Care and Lifelong Learning into 3 Services - Porth Cymorth Cynnar, Porth Gofal and Porth Cynnal who, along with Customer Contact, make up the 4 main areas that fall within the Through Age Wellbeing Programme of change.

- Social Care however continues to see increased demands on services driving significant cost pressures across the TAW model. These are particularly prevalent in areas such as Looked after Children (in county), Children's Out of County Placements, older persons' placements and Learning Disability placements. The Council is also seeing an increased complexity of cases across these services adding a further dynamic to the increased demand.

- Capital investment is being made into key areas such as In county Children's facilities, the establishment of Wellbeing Centres, Local Authority Care Homes and piloting for Technology-enabled Care.

- As part of its prevention work, the Council has invested in giving full recognition and support to the role of carers, in particular by providing opportunities for respite, allowing carers to take a rest from what can be a demanding 24/7 role.

- The Disabled Facility Grant and associated Welsh Government funding has been maximised to provide adaptations to homes, in order to enable people to remain within their communities.

- As the first Welsh local authority to volunteer to welcome refugees from Syria, Ceredigion has welcomed and integrated 74 Syrian refugees to the county and 90 Ukrainian families during 2022/23. The displaced people resettlement programmes are progressing well.

- Community Connectors assist residents of all ages in Ceredigion, by helping them access support opportunities in their area that could maintain and improve their wellbeing.

- Throughout winter 2022/23, Ceredigion's team of Community Connectors worked with the Ceredigion Association of Voluntary Organisations and many community groups to set up Warm Welcome Spaces. Warm Welcome Spaces are safe warm places that are free and welcoming to all ages, some of them also provide hot drinks, snacks and activities. Cafes, churches, community centres, village halls, libraries and book shops across the county opened their doors and welcomed people of all ages. The Warm Welcome Spaces provided a social meeting place for people to come together and build friendships. There were 42 Warm Welcome Spaces across Ceredigion.

- The "On your Bike" project funded by Cynnal y Cardi and managed by Rural Health and Care Wales installed 9 exercise bikes in three towns to encourage young people to take part in more outdoor physical activity, which is proven to improve both physical health and mental well-being. The towns covered by the project are Cardigan, Aberaeron and Lampeter.

- Ceredigion County Council approved the transfer of Hafan y Waun Care Home to Council ownership in September 2023 with a focus on ensuring continuity of home operations for residents and staff alike. The decision is an important step towards maintaining the future of this vital resource and providing certainty to residents and their families. Hafan y Waun is the County's main residential facility with capacity for 90 beds.

- Plans are progressing to create a Well-being Centre in Lampeter, and additional projects are developing to create Well-being Centres in the north and south of the county as well.

- The National Exercise Referral Service (NERS) is now very busy - 1,011 referrals were received in 2022-23 with 343 clients completing the 16-week programme during the year. The Service is one of a range of health intervention classes and activities, including Fit4Life and Wellbeing Walks. 424 classes and activities were offered each month in North, Mid and South of the County. The programmes are proving very popular amongst clients across Ceredigion.

- The Cylch Caron Integrated Health and Social Care project in partnership with Hywel Dda University Health Board continues to progress. The Project Board are developing the tender specification and working with Welsh Government in relation to develop the proposal.

- Ceredigion County Council is supporting the aspiration of creating a National Care Service for children, families and adults in Wales and how care could be made free at the point of need. This is a national programme following the cooperation agreement between the Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru.

CREATING CARING AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

- Work has commenced in relation to identifying the Council vision for Technology Enabled Care (TEC) services. This will inform the Development of our Technology enabled care strategy including digital improvements to the Local Authority estate.
- Our Through-Age approach to triage and assessment has now been embedded.
- The Review of Direct Services is continuing and is due to be complete at the end June 2023. An implementation plan will then be developed.
- The Family Group Meeting Coordination Service is now up to capacity and work is progressing to develop and maximise opportunities in relation to supporting prevention and early help.
- The Through Age respite model review is continuing and due to complete at the end June 2023. An Implementation plan will then be developed.
- A new Domiciliary Care specification and tender programme has been completed with new contracts to be awarded during the second quarter of 2023/24
- During 2022/23, the expansion of Flying Start in Ceredigion included Llechryd, joining Cardigan, Penparcau, Llanarth, Llandysul and Aberporth. Flying Start is a Welsh Government initiative that helps families with young children in the most disadvantaged areas of Wales. Ceredigion Flying Start includes early years health service, funded sessional childcare for children aged 2-3, parenting support to develop children's talking, language and communication skills.
- Following the implementation of Ceredigion County Council's Hybrid Working Strategy and Interim Hybrid Policy, there are significant opportunities to reconfigure and make better use of the Council's office space to provide other public services by working with partner organisations. Part of Canolfan

Rheidol in Aberystwyth is now being used by Hywel Dda to provide outpatient physiotherapy services. This move provides the opportunity to enable the health board to bring clinical services closer to home for residents in the north of Ceredigion to help them live active and healthy lives.
- During the 2022/23 year, £116,197 was awarded from the Ceredigion Carers Fund to 776 carers to help improve their health and well-being. The majority of the awards were spent on short breaks and holidays, therapies and spa sessions and sports, fitness and outdoor activities to help carers in Ceredigion look after their physical and mental health.
- Supported Gofalwyr Ceredigion Carers to deliver information advice and guidance to 805 adult carers across Ceredigion and provide 2,016 hours of replacement care to give carers a break from their caring role.
- The Carers Information Service membership has increased by 14% to 1,888 carers. The service provides support, useful information relating to services, and support in relation to legislation which is tailored to individual needs. Membership provides information relating to the Carers Forum which meets regularly to share support, information and friendship, information about events for carers, relevant training courses, and notification about consultations taking place on local and national issues. The service ensures that carers have a voice on issues affecting them.
- Between May and September 2022, a total of £351,500 was paid to 703 eligible applicants for the Welsh Government's £500 support payments for unpaid carers.
- The Regional Community Cohesion Team lead on supporting this work in Ceredigion. Weekly Tension Monitoring meetings are held to horizon scan and consider operational matters in a timely manner.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

607
Referrals to the Community Connectors for support received

99,457
Views of Ceredigion resources on the Dewis Cymru website that aims to support people's well-being

4,250
Carers magazines printed and distributed across Ceredigion

146
Refugees resettled across Ceredigion

42
Warm Spaces available across Ceredigion during winter 2022/23

531
People in receipt of a direct payment to support their own social care

1,150
Public protection enforcement actions taken to improve the well-being and public health of people and communities

1,567
People experiencing mental health issues receiving support in the community

453,000
People engaging in physical activity programmes supported / delivered by the Well-being Centre

15
Engagement exercises completed by the Council in 2022/23

IMPROVING OUTCOMES

SUPPORTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE

A new Refugee Resettlement team was established in response to the increase of refugees due to the Ukrainian conflict.

The Council has continued to provide ongoing support to 7 families that have fled the dangerous situations in Afghanistan and Syria, welcomed 1 new Afghan family and welcomed 114 new Ukrainian families to Ceredigion during the 2022-23 year.

Many of the Ukrainian families, particularly those who arrived to the Welcome Centre, have now moved out of Ceredigion to other locations in the UK and across the world. Preparations are being made to make sure that we're ready to welcome asylum seekers to Ceredigion as part of our contribution to the National Asylum Seeker Dispersal Plan.

Ceredigion has a history of supporting families fleeing from war, hunger and homelessness. Over the past few years the Council has successfully supported refugees from Syria to be welcomed into the community, and we will continue to play a leading role in helping refugees and resettling them into our communities. In doing so, we can **provide a safe place for them and their families**, a chance to have a **safe home**, to **rebuild their life** and to **contribute to society**. Not only does this support our ambition of creating caring communities, it also supports the national well-being goal of a Globally Responsible Wales.

ENHANCING WELL-BEING FOR ALL

Providing support for all ages and needs is a significant challenge for the Council with limited resources. The profile of society and demographics have changed considerably over the last decade with a significant increase in the prevalence and impact of substance misuse, poor mental health and domestic abuse and older age groups living in Ceredigion.

As a consequence, demand for certain services has increased placing a greater financial pressure on those service areas.

The Through Age Wellbeing strategy sets out the vision and approach that will be taken to transform how the wellbeing and safety of the people of Ceredigion is supported.

To achieve our vision we have developed a Through Age Wellbeing operating model that is designed to **ensure people get the right level and type of support**, at the right time, **to prevent, reduce or delay the need for ongoing support,** and to **maximise people's independence** and to be able to **remain in their own home in their own community wherever possible**.

We are in the third year of the Programme and progress is continuing in delivering the programme to enhance the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being for the people of Ceredigion.

In February/March 2023 we underwent a Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) inspection of our social services. The inspection reflected positively on our Through Age Well-being Model, highlighting several areas of good practice, and also providing us with

constructive recommendations to help us in delivering the programme and transforming the delivery of social care in the County.

In particular, the strong corporate and political support for social services in Ceredigion was noted, along with strong senior leadership within social services.

Feedback gathered by the inspectors demonstrated a culture which was focused on **well-being**, **building and maintaining relationships** and achieving **safe outcomes for people.**

INDEPENDENT AND FULFILLING LIVES

The first residents at Aberystwyth's new extra care scheme have spoken about how it has transformed their lives, from sparking new friendships to providing the platform for a fresh start in life.

Maes y Môr, provided by Wales & West Housing in partnership with Ceredigion County Council, is located at Pen yr Angor in Aberystwyth, overlooking the town and harbour. For many of its new residents, it has offered much more than just spectacular sea views.

Their new homes provide easy access to a range of facilities, 24-hour on-site care and support as well as a Wellbeing Officer, ensuring that residents **lead an independent**, **healthy**, and **fulfilling life**.

CONNECTING PEOPLE

Community Connectors support residents of all ages and their families to make connections, access advice and assistance opportunities as well as identify appropriate services and groups within their own communities, such as social groups that can have a **positive impact and improve their well-being**.

Community Connectors also look more widely at the opportunities that are available that can help **contribute to a fulfilled life.** This includes increasing the awareness of services and help to access them, such as provision of small home adaptations or assistance with shopping, an in doing so **building confidence**, improving **mental health, creating opportunities** and in doing so **building resilient communities**.

During the year 971 enquiries for support were logged through the Council's customer contact centre (CLIC), 845 referrals were received and 468 individuals and community groups were referred and signed posted to other council services, health services and third sector organisations.

DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

OWNING OUR AMBITION

MAXIMISING OUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE NATIONAL WELL-BEING GOALS

The **Creating Caring and Healthy** corporate well-being objective supports the following national well-being goals. ▶

Prosperous
Resilient
Healthier
More Equal
Cohesive
Culture
Global

Long-Term

- The Through Age Model involves long-term planning to ensure sustainable services for the next 15 years +
- Future Trends, such as demographic change have been utilised in the Model
- The Through Age Well-being Strategy covers a six year period from 2021 to 2027
- The recovery from the pandemic is projected to last for a number of years and our plans to improve physical and mental well-being take a long-term approach to support in response

Prevention

- The Through Age Model provides a coordinated approach to social care in order to prevent, reduce or delay the need for ongoing support, and allow people to remain in their own home in their own community wherever possible
- Preventing homelessness and promoting independence remains a priority for the Council and is the most effective way of tackling homelessness
- Developing the Well-being Centres across the County supports the ambition to create healthy and resilient communities
- As part of its prevention work, the Council has invested in giving full recognition and support to carers by providing opportunities for respite from their demanding 24/7 role

Collaboration

- Hywel Dda University Health Board, the Council and Third Sector partners work collaboratively to implement integrated health and social care programmes across West Wales
- Multi agency weekly tension monitoring meetings address early signs of community tensions through early intervention and prevention.
- The Council works proactively with partners through the Ceredigion Public Services Board Poverty Sub Group to tackle the causes and impacts of poverty across the County

Involvement

- Supporting people's physical and emotional well-being impacts on all of the national Well-being Goals and helps to build stronger and more resilient communities
- The Objective of creating caring and healthy communities included the findings of the Ceredigion Assessment of Local Well-being and extensive consultation

Integration

- Public and private sectors working together to maximise contribution to healthier Wales and other goals
- Supporting people's physical and emotional well-being impacts on all of the national Well-being Goals and helps to build stronger and more resilient communities

FURTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

100%
Of Carers Information Service members received the Welsh Government's Charter for unpaid carers

158
Young carers supported through working with Gofalwyr Ceredigion Carers to have a life outside of their caring role

3,000
Information for Young Carers booklets distributed to schools across the County

144%
Increase in Young Carers Information Service members

Progress Made

PROVIDING THE BEST START IN LIFE AND ENABLING LEARNING AT ALL AGES

- The Council is continuing to modernise education establishments, for example, using Band B of 21st Century Schools programme funding to build an area school for the Aeron Valley as well as improvements to Cardigan Secondary School, Cardigan Primary School and Canolfan y Mor at Aberaeron Secondary School.

- The Council was awarded funding of £5.7m in 2022 towards a Language Immersion Centre which will be based at Ysgol Cymraeg and new classroom buildings at the school.

- Plans to build the new the new Aeron Valley Primary School at Felinfach are progressing. The £13m design and build scheme will provide 30 places in the nursery and 210 places in the primary school, (see overleaf).

- Schools developments already underway include the £100k of construction work at Penglais secondary school, providing the school with new and improved facilities, £160k of construction work at Ysgol Henry Richard School and £5.4m of work on the Cardigan Secondary School as part of the 21st Century Schools Programme.

- Professional consultants and contractors are being appointed to deliver the new £5.4m extension at Ysgol Gymraeg, Aberystwyth, which was the first Welsh-medium school in Wales.

- Consultants are also being appointed to scope works to Aberystwyth Museum totalling approximately £1m.

- Ceredigion Nursery, Plas Gogerddan Nursery, won Nursery of the Year Award in Wales in the National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA) Awards in June 2022. Plas Gogerddan is one of many nurseries in Ceredigion that delivers the Foundation Phase education funded by Ceredigion County Council within their Cylch Meithrin sessions.

- Porth Cymorth Cynnar delivered 88 workshops to young people aged 16+ providing support and prevention. The workshops included volunteering in the community, indoor bowling, gardening and Welsh culture and heritage discovery.

- 125 young people who worked with a youth worker demonstrated an improvement to their wellbeing and confidence. For example, one young person who was unwilling to leave their home went on a well-being walk with a youth worker.

- The mobile youth provision engaged with 10 communities and 176 young people. Free weekly football sessions were delivered with Dyfed-Powys Police and Swansea Football Foundation, and one young person has been nominated as a young ambassador due to his commitment.

- Jobs Growth Wales + (new traineeships) Hyfforddiant Ceredigion Training engaged with 51 learners of which 75% progressed onto either employment or further learning. Jobs Growth Wales+ is a training and development programme for 16−19 year olds who need the skills, qualifications, and experience to progress onto an apprenticeship, set up a business or gain a new job.

- Sgiliau Gwaith / Work Skills received 126 referrals last year with 69 learners gaining qualifications.

- Hyfforddiant Ceredigion Training is in the process of including Health and Social Care and Electrical apprenticeships that will be delivered in Ceredigion. The apprenticeship contract continues to grow every year as part of the ACT network, strengthening the pool of highly skilled and qualified candidates in the County by developing new apprenticeships, micro-enterprises and social enterprises.

- Ceredigion's Lifelong Learning and Skills service constantly reviews its curriculum offer. Dysgu Bro continues to offer courses in blended learning with the majority of courses returning to face to face. Employment Support Team are delivering C4W+ which offers volunteering and work experience opportunities.

- Dysgu Bro are delivering a number of courses through Ceredigion in community venues. The Welsh Government have funded an engagement grant which is being used to promote courses via videos on our social media pages as well as being able to offer free courses. The Council is currently advertising for Numeracy Training Advisors as part of the Multiply programme (Shared Prosperity Fund).

- Hyfforddiant Ceredigion Training JGW+ offers paid work experience through its Engagement strand.

- Ceredigion's Education system continues to be considered amongst the most successful in Wales. The percentage of working age adults qualified at level 2 is 91.7% in Ceredigion, higher than average (86.6%) and one of the highest nationally. Level 2 qualifications are GCSE grades A*-C or equivalent.

- The Council has worked with the third sector and private businesses to provide

work experience opportunities for individuals/vulnerable groups.

- Work has begun on developing an employer working group which will include key partners such as Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Careers Wales, Business Wales and the Regional Skills Partnership.

- Lifelong Learning and Skills attend a number of agricultural shows to raise the profile of courses delivered. For example, the service has attended Aberystwyth show offering a number of tasters to the general public.

- Lifelong Learning and Skills have also attended Ysgol Bro Pedr and Ysgol Henry Richards promoting Jobs Growth Wales+ and apprenticeships.

- The Welsh language is integrated into Ceredigion County Council's new Corporate Strategy covering the period 2022 to 2027.

- The Council approved its new Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2022-32 Action Plan. The plan sets out the steps to deliver the actions within the WESP with the overall aim of increasing the number of Welsh speakers in the County by 2032.

- Cered, the Welsh language initiative, continues to support, influence and develop the use of the Welsh language in Ceredigion. They provide information, advice and leadership to ensure that the language thrives and continues to be a core language and has a central role in the communities of Ceredigion. Recent successes include the 'Start every conversation in Welsh' campaign, the 'Powerhouse Project' to improve the opportunities for communities to socialise

and contribute, and the Language Charter where over 26 organisations businesses and clubs have been awarded a gold, silver or bronze charter for their commitment to the Welsh language.

- The Council published a campaign, 'how to contact the Council by phone, online, face-to-face, and in your preferred language' to ensure customers are aware of their right to use their preferred language and the channels available to do that.

- The Council has provided a Welsh Language Awareness Session along with an overview of the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards for Councillors.

- We have also been working with the National Centre for Learning Welsh to pilot a Raising Confidence to Use Welsh residential course.

- The Council is committed to increasing recruitment of in-house Welsh speaking foster carers, and in response, recent recruitment campaigns have been supported and opportunities explored to achieve this.

- Following a £20,000 grant from Welsh Government's Transforming Towns programme, the former doctor's surgery in Aberaeron has been reopened as a gallery - Gallery Gwyn. The project was led by Ceredigion County Council and officially opened in April 2022, showcasing work from established artists as well as early career creative practitioners.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

907
Learners enrolled on all Lifelong Learning and Skills courses

189
People engaged with the Employment Support Team

53
People who engaged with the Employment Support Team were successful in acquiring a job

126
Referrals to Sgiliau Bwyd Sgiliau Gwaith

117
Apprentices attended Hyfforddiant Ceredigion Training in the last year

82%
Of apprentices attending Hyfforddiant Ceredigion Training completed their apprenticeships

87.5%
Of learners at the Pupil Referral Unit gained appropriate qualifications

98.65%
Children/young people reporting a positive benefit from extra curricular and holiday activities

8,620
Public access computer sessions used across all libraries

268,572
Loans by the Library Service (both physical and e-resource)

IMPROVING OUTCOMES

MODERN FACILITIES

Plans to build the new the new Aeron Valley Primary School at Felinfach are progressing. The £13m design and build scheme is for a single storey primary school with an Additional Learning Needs Unit, Canolfan Iaith, Meithrin, and infrastructure including new road access, parking and multiuse games area.

The project will bring together three primary schools - Ciliau Parc Primary, Dihewyd Primary and Felinfach Primary as well as Ysgol Feithrin and the language Immersion Centre at Felinfach.

The new 3-11 area school will cater for 30 nursery/wrap around places and 210 places in the primary school and approximately 56 teaching staff will be employed at the facilities.

The new facility will bring the learning accommodation within the Aeron Valley up to the Sustainable Communities Learning Programme standards (previously known as 21st Century Schools).

Apart from delivering **modern and improved teaching facilities**, the project will also deliver a **net zero carbon school** with **reduced running costs**, which supports the Council's carbon net zero ambition as well as provide more **opportunities for learning and physical activity** through the new sports pitch.

REDUCING INEQUALITY

A new Mid Wales Partnership Equity and Deprivation Strategy was approved by Cabinet in February 2023. The new strategy offers guidance for schools supporting disadvantaged young people.

The key message at the core of the strategy is that disadvantaged learners need more support, more often, in order to have the same opportunities as their peers.

The threshold for support to engage with the Educational Inclusion Officers has decreased for disadvantaged young people, meaning that they get support sooner than non-disadvantaged young people.

The life chances of children and young people are strongly influenced by their home and community. The strategy provides teachers with more support in addressing the issues some children and young people face.

Delivering the strategy ensures that the challenges faced by some of Ceredigion's children and young people are tackled and **fair and equal access to education and opportunities is provided**.

It also supports the Council's ongoing work to **tackle the impact of poverty**, including the **impact on educational attainment**, which **will help to achieve high standards and aspirations for all in the County.**

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

Lifelong Learning and Skills, the Youth Service, Careers Wales and Job Centre Plus are all members of the NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) Panel. Taster sessions have been offered in placements such as carpentry, mechanics, hairdressing, beauty and plumbing. Apprenticeships have been promoted at Careers festivals, schools and events throughout the county. 64% of learners supported by Porth Cymorth Cynnar gained qualifications in traineeships and 70% of learners gained qualifications in apprenticeships. **Creating opportunities** supports the Council's ambition to **enhance the provision of skills and learning opportunities for people aged 16+.**

STRONG COMMUNITIES

Ceredigion Museum is delighted to have been awarded £115,894 development funding by the National Lottery Heritage Fund for the following project: Perthyn 'belonging to/possessing': An exploration of how collections can **create community in Ceredigion**.

Perthyn is an ambitious project that aims to ensure that every Ceredigion resident can find something in the museum collection that resonates with their **sense of identity and values**, regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, beliefs, sexuality, ability or other characteristics that they identify with.

SUPPORTING EMPLOYMENT

Gwaith has seen an increase in numbers and has received 126 referrals over the last year. These are year 10 and 11 learners who are disengaged and at risk of exclusion.

The service ensures vulnerable learners have **access to a tailored vocational curriculum** to meet their needs with a range of different courses being offered giving them the **best opportunity to achieve and reach their full potential**.

A total of 69 learners achieved qualifications this academic year.

This is part of the Council's ambition to support those furthest from the labour market, including disengaged learners, and **ensuring every pupil in Ceredigion has a destination**.

DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Overall assessment of the journey so far

Progress in meeting this objective is **good** and prospects for improvement are **good**.

Capital investments in schools are progressing such as the refurbishment and extension to create a 3-16 school at Henry Richard. The educational attainment of Ceredigion's pupils remains amongst the highest nationally, and post-16 learning is continuing to provide training and support to open new opportunities for all of Ceredigion's learners.

Key strategies have been delivered in the last year to create the foundations for further improvements such as Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-32 to increase the number of Welsh speakers in the County and the Equity and Deprivation Strategy for schools which will support pupils who are disproportionately affected.

OWNING OUR AMBITION

MAXIMISING OUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE NATIONAL WELL-BEING GOALS

The **Providing the best start in life and enabling learning at all ages** corporate well-being objective supports the following national well-being goals. ▶

Prosperous
Resilient
Healthier
More Equal
Cohesive
Culture
Global

Long-Term

- Ceredigion's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) is a 10-year strategy to strengthen Welsh language provision and work towards a million Welsh speakers Wales wide by 2050
- School improvements provide improved facilities for future generations of learners
- Developing leadership skills within our children and young people takes a long-term view of their learning and future careers

Prevention

- Supporting learners at all ages helps to provide them with better learning and career opportunities
- Working to raise income levels across the County will help in the prevention of in-work poverty
- Developing children's and young people's skills and confidence to be physically active will help to improve the health and well-being of the County's population

Collaboration

- Working with the Third Sector to provide mental health support to young people following the COVID-19 pandemic
- Working with partners to deliver the Maternity and Early Years Strategy for West Wales will help to deliver the best start in life for Ceredigion's young people
- Supporting the provision of Free School Meals for primary school pupils and the funded childcare for all two year olds

Involvement

- Supporting the Ceredigion Youth Council as a forum for children and young people ensures the voices of young people across Ceredigion are heard

Integration

- Providing the best start in life will have a positive effect on all of the Corporate Well-being Objectives and the National Well-being Goals
- Better skills and jobs increase income levels and therefore allow the local economy to grow
- The Arfor Programme to support and strengthen the links between economic growth and the Welsh language also strengthen each of the four pillars of well-being (economic, social, environmental and cultural)

FURTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

51
Jobs Growth Wales + Learners engaged with Hyfforddiant Ceredigion Training

75%
of people engaged with Hyfforddiant Ceredigion Training progressed onto either employment or further learning

91.7%
of Ceredigion's working age population qualified to Level 2 or higher, above average nationally

75.7%
Of Ceredigion's working age population qualified to Level 3 or higher, above average nationally

CREATING SUSTAINABLE, GREEN AND WELL-CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

PROGRESS MADE

- The Council has continued to pursue funding and delivery of the coastal defence works at Aberaeron, Aberystwyth, Borth and Llangrannog, and the flood risk management works at Llandre, Aberaeron, Borth, Talybont and Capel Bangor.

- The Aberaeron Coastal Defence Scheme construction contract award is imminent. The Aberystwyth Outline Business Case will be completed during the 2023/24 year, while the business case for Llangrannog will be consulted upon during the autumn of 2023. In Talybont and Capel Bangor, the outline business cases are nearing completion, and discussions are ongoing with Natural Resources Wales. Llandre, Aberaeron and Borth are in development.

- Funding has been secured to develop the business case for solutions to flooding at both Llanybydder and Llandysul, with Natural Resources Wales anticipated to lead on construction delivery once the business case has been completed and agreed.

- The amenity grass cutting service has been reviewed and now incorporates 'No Mow May' to support wildlife and biodiversity in the County. The long-standing management of road verges to enable bio-diversity and wildflowers to thrive is being reviewed to further enhance this provision.

- The Council is working with the local bus operators and other key stakeholders. The Highways and Environmental Service has been able to secure the best level of service that operators were able to provide.

- The highway network continues to be inspected, maintained and repaired subject to available funding and additional funding is being sought through the Welsh Local Government Association for highway refurbishment.

- Climate change and carbon reduction has

- been prioritised. Since 2007 the Council has implemented a series of three 5-year Carbon Management Plans.

- In 2019, the Council declared a Climate Emergency and committed the Council to achieving Net Zero Carbon by 2030.

- Our programme of installing energy-saving LED bulbs in street lights has been completed. This involved replacing hundreds of bulbs around the county, resulting in a saving of over £2 million.

- In the last five years Ceredigion has consistently achieved one of the highest recycling rates in both Wales and the UK and is currently at 70.3% for the twelve months to June 2022, which is above the national average of 65.5% and third highest nationally. The high levels of recycling in the County divert waste away from landfill.

- The Council has delivered energy efficiency initiatives providing efficiency measures and advice in people's homes.

- Public transport infrastructure improvements have been delivered along the TrawsCymru corridor through Local Transport Funding.

- A new Net Carbon Zero Action Plan for Ceredigion Council has been published setting out its response to the county-wide climate emergency, explaining why we need to take this action and why the 2030 target is so important to tackling climate change.

- The Council has had a longstanding recognition of the importance of climate change and its long-term impact on communities and on the environment. It has an ongoing commitment to reduce its carbon footprint, which will benefit both the Authority and the wider community through reduced carbon emissions and also energy cost savings.

- As part of this commitment the Council is currently developing a three-phase roadmap to move towards its goal of achieving net zero carbon emissions status by 2030. This is a key priority for the Council and is consistent with Welsh Government's stated goal of decarbonisation of the Welsh public sector by 2030.

- The Waste Service has faced operational challenges during last winter, but new approaches have already been trialled to overcome some of these (e.g. bringing forward Bank Holiday collections) and recycling performance remains strong. 89.33% of waste collection routes collected on the scheduled day of collection, and 96.56% of waste collection routes collected on the scheduled week of collection.

- A new Waste Management Strategy will be forthcoming which will be used to review the service and prioritise where best to allocate resources. The Highways and Environmental Service is in the process of commissioning consultants to assist with the holistic review of the waste service.

- Following the successful application for funding in 2021, a sum of £420,000 has been awarded from the "Ultra Low Emissions Vehicle Transformation Fund" (ULEVTF) which has been used for the development of a Ceredigion ULEV Strategy in alignment with the Growing Mid Wales Energy Strategy for the development of ULEV work programmes.

- Ceredigion County Council has partnered with Silverstone Green Energy Limited as its charge-point operator and have begun to install EV charge-points in 11 public Pay and Display off-street car parks in the county. A significant growth in demand for public and private Electric Vehicle (EV) charge-points is forecast during the next 10 years as the sales of EVs increase.

- To date Ceredigion County Council have installed almost 450kW of solar panels

across a number of buildings, generating in excess of 400,000kWh of electricity. This has the potential to provide up to £113,000 of revenue savings per annum (at current prices).

- This Investment in carbon reduction equates to a cumulative 20.48% reduction in carbon emissions against a 15% target (2017/18 to 2021/22).

- Five of Ceredigion's most popular beaches will be flying Blue Flags once again in 2023 after receiving the award from Keep Wales Tidy. The Blue Flag beaches are Borth, Aberystwyth South, Llangrannog, Tresaith and Aberporth.

- A further four beaches have achieved Seaside Award status which are Aberystwyth North, New Quay Harbour, Traeth y Dolau, New Quay and Clarach. Beaches achieving Blue Flag and Green Coast award status must meet the highest "excellent" water quality standard and are judged for the provision of facilities for beach users and for demonstrating good management and safety provision.

- New Quay Traeth Gwyn, Cilborth, Llanrhystud, Mwnt and Penbryn have all won the Green Coast Award. The Seaside Award recognises beaches that have an overall "Good" standard of water quality, public facilities, safety provision and management.

- As a local authority , we have worked closely with developers and landlords to provide a range of affordable housing within the county. 657 net affordable homes have been completed since 2017.

- Significant lobbying by Ceredigion County Council and others has resulted in 40.9% coverage of full fibre broadband giving over 100 Mbps capability. Over the last two years, the provision of Fibre to the premises (FTTP) has increased from 28.3% to 40.9%.

- Following the completion of the Superfast

Cymru Programme it is expected that 90% of Ceredigion will be able to receive +30Mbps. Investment is taking place within the County with 4 differing alternative network providers proposing fibre projects across the County, with currently over 20 project areas being proposed and to be initiated in 2022 and 2023.

- The Council is currently developing a new Digital Strategy that will outline the high-level strategic direction and plans for its Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and digital delivery to customers.

- The Civil Contingencies Team prepare for and respond to civil contingency emergencies across the County. In order to achieve this, local exercising has been prioritised alongside regional exercising and training events. In addition, preparedness plans have been updated and reviewed over the past year along with updates to Business Continuity Plans.

- Air quality remained well within the legal limit for NO2 at all monitoring sites within the county. Monthly air quality monitoring is continuing along with annual reporting on trends.

- The Council is proactively working with Cadw (Welsh Government's historic environment service) and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales "Historic Place Names Task and Finish Group".

- 67% of households supported by the Homelessness Team were successfully prevented from becoming homeless.

- Following extensive public engagement, Ceredigion County Council developed Active Travel Network Maps (ATNMs) which were approved by the Minister for Climate Change in August 2022. The maps

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

70.3%
of waste recycled composted or reused for the twelve months to June 2022

1.8m
Total kilowatt hours of renewable energy generated by council assets

1.67
Days on average to clear fly-tips across the county

20.5%
Cumulative reduction in carbon emissions since 2017/18, above the target of 15%

14
Of Ceredigion's beaches recognised in this year's Wales Coast Awards

93.6%
Of category 1 highway defects repaired or made self by the end of the next working day

2
Regional Energy Efficiency awards to recognise the work in helping homeowners reduce their energy bills, tackle fuel poverty and reduce carbon emissions

40.9%
Provision of Fibre to the premises (FTTP) broadband, increased from 28.3%, due to investment in digital connectivity over the last two years

IMPROVING OUTCOMES

LOCAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING

A range of measures are used by the Housing service to maximise the availability of affordable housing in the county. This now includes a newly launched Community Housing Scheme using existing Council Tax Second Homes Premium monies.

In March 2022 the Council made a commitment to support the scheme which helps people meet their affordable housing needs in their local communities by creating a pathway to home ownership.

This is due to the increasing demand for rural properties and availability of affordable units in rural settlements. The scheme is designed to **prevent those eligible households from being priced out of the market**, **prevent further rural decline and depopulation,** and **provide new options for people to remain in their local community.** Schemes like this can lead to a greater sense of connection, leading to **long-term sustainability of a community**.

Funds raised from the Council Tax Second Homes Premium are ringfenced to fund the Community Housing scheme, to assist local residents purchase homes in the County by providing interest free shared equity loans. The scheme is due to be launched in September 2023.

RESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT

The new extension at Llwyn yr Eos School in Penparcau Aerystwyth, has become the Council's first net-zero building in operation.

Ground source heating and solar panels were installed as part of the scheme, and it is intended that this will set a benchmark for future building works undertaken by the Council in future.

Renewable energy is now also routinely being introduced as part of building refurbishment works and also as part of the 21st Century Schools programme. This demonstrates the Council's commitment to its carbon net zero target of 2030.

We know that children feel connected to their local natural environment and recognise the importance of protecting the environment for theirs and future generations. Climate change was recognised by children as the biggest challenge being faced currently in the Ceredigion Assessment of Local Well-being. Investing in renewable energy, reducing carbon emissions and proactively working with contractors to achieve the Council's net carbon zero ambitions will not only help to **protect the environment**, but also **reduce energy costs** and **lower its environment footprint**.

PROTECTING HISTORY AND CULTURE

The Street Naming and Numbering Policy has been updated to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language and to encourage homeowners to consider adopting Welsh house names, which may have linguistic origins, with reference to historical or cultural reference, within the geographical area.

This approach has received acknowledgement of good practice from Cymdeithas Enwau Lleoedd Cymru, who has asked for permission to share this good practice with other local authorities nationwide.

When house names are registered in Ceredigion, each applicant is informed of the Welsh language and culture of the area to help encourage the use of Welsh or historic names. The majority of house name applications in Ceredigion are Welsh and / or have historic significance.

This approach encourages the **retention of historical Welsh place names for future generations** and supports the national well-being goal of a **Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language**.

INCREASING ENERGY EFFICIENCY

In June 2022 at the Wales Regional Energy Efficiency Awards, Ceredigion County Council's Energy Efficiency Schemes scooped 2 awards.

The Energy Efficiency Awards recognise the work being undertaken by the energy efficiency sector in Wales. The measures were introduced to help homeowners **reduce their energy bills**, tackle **fuel poverty** and **reduce carbon emissions**.

The Council has been delivering the ECO Local Authority Flexibility scheme along with the Warm Homes Cozy Ceredigion Scheme for a number of years. These schemes have seen a number of insulation measures and heating systems being installed in properties improving their **energy efficiency**.

To date, the Council has invested over £5 million in energy efficiency and carbon reduction projects, and this investment has saved £2.8m to date.

DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Overall assessment of the journey so far

Progress in meeting this objective is **good** and prospects for improvement are **very good**.

Ceredigion has taken a leading role in its ambitions to achieve net zero and protect its unique environment for future generations. Despite the challenges that exist in achieving net zero the steps to reduce our carbon footprint, improve active travel and connect communities are on track and further developments are planned in the year ahead.

The Council's Carbon Management Plan, Community Housing Scheme and continued high performance in recycling are examples of how Ceredigion is leading the way in delivering this objective.

LEADING THE WAY

MAXIMISING OUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE NATIONAL WELL-BEING GOALS

The **Creating sustainable, green and well-connected communities** corporate well-being objective supports the following national well-being goals. ▶

Prosperous
Resilient
Healthier
More Equal
Cohesive
Culture
Global

LONG-TERM

- Long-term planning to reduce carbon emissions will help protect our beautiful landscape for future generations
- Future trend analysis utilised in developing the Council's 5-Year Carbon Management Plan

PREVENTION

- Creating sustainable, green and well-connected communities focuses on preventing further impact on the environment, particularly reducing carbon emissions, but also the impact on biodiversity across the County
- Active travel is a key part of Ceredigion's strategy to improve health and well-being, and thus preventing health related problems in the future
- Being connected has come to the fore since the COVID-19 pandemic, and investment in connectivity will help to create stronger and more resilient communities

COLLABORATION

- Collaborative working with partners and stakeholders will help to ensure a coordinated approach to minimising the impact of climate change and that we all focus on more sustainable forms of energy in the future
- We are working on projects in partnership with colleagues on the Ceredigion Public Services Board, for example, in the development of the Penglais District Heating Project where all public sector organisations in the locality will be able to take advantage of green solutions to energy.

INVOLVEMENT

- Everyone is involved and encouraged to make choices that will reduce costs now and protect the environment for the future

INTEGRATION

- Decarbonisation, improving the health of the County through encouraging active travel, and improving connectivity has clear benefits for maximising our contribution to all of the well-being goals

LONGER-TERM ACHIEVEMENTS

210
Units of Social Housing developed

£3.5m
Warm Homes Fund for heating and insultations / upgrades

£510,853
Spent on 35 Home Improvement Loans

56
Units of Extra Care accommodation at the new Maes y Mor site

CONTRIBUTION TO THE NATIONAL WELL-BEING GOALS

The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 seeks to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by requiring public bodies to work together to create a sustainable Wales. It is intended to help to create a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future. There are 7 national well-being goals that set out a shared vision for all public bodies to work towards (shown right).

We know that we face challenges in Ceredigion - the COVID-19 pandemic has been unprecedented in its impact on all walks of life, but more recently the cost of living crisis is impacting many households in the County. Some of these issues have been exacerbated by the pandemic and have come to the fore such as housing affordability, while others remain a consistent challenge such as tackling poverty.

There is also the need to grow the local economy and create opportunities for local people to stay and thrive in their local communities. The County's changing demographics towards an ageing population and out-migration of younger people will have far-reaching impacts across the four pillars of well-being.

Ceredigion County Council has worked collaboratively with its local and regional partners to tackle these complex issues to create the Ceredigion that we want. Some examples are the Mid Wales Growth Deal leveraging significant funding for regeneration across the region, the coordinated response to the COVID-19 pandemic with a variety of partners across the County, and the Public Services Board Poverty Sub Group in tackling the impact of Poverty across the County.

The Council's 2021/22 Well-being Objectives focused on the immediate response to the COVID-19 pandemic and supported the longer-term recovery. They were set based on evidenced local needs and on the views of local people. A variety of sources were used to determine these needs including the last Ceredigion Assessment of Local Well-being and Local Well-being Plan.

The Well-being Objectives will help us improve outcomes for local people and also maximise our contribution to the national Well-being Goals.

We monitor and review progress towards delivering the Objectives on a regular basis and produce an annual Self-Assessment Report in which we convey progress.

Ceredigion Public Services Board brings together the County's public service leadership and decision-makers, to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of the County by strengthening joint working across the County's services.

Like the Council, its priorities were developed using the evidence and engagement feedback from key sources such as the Assessment of Local Well-being. This ensures that both Ceredigion County Council and Ceredigion Public Services Board's Well-being Objectives are aligned to focus on the priority needs of the County, and maximise the contribution to the national Well-being Goals.

Common themes such as tackling poverty, environmental responsibility, creating opportunities and providing the best start in life are all closely aligned and together allow us to provide a coordinated and shared response to improving well-being. The table overleaf demonstrates how Ceredigion's Well-being Objectives contribute to the 7 national Well-being Goals.

THE 7 NATIONAL WELL-BEING GOALS
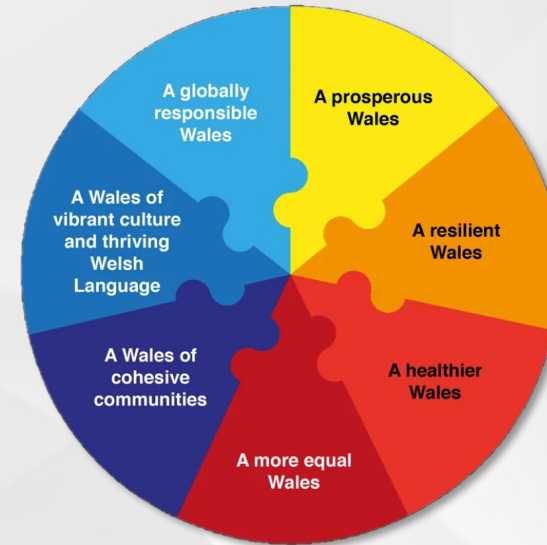
The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 puts in place 7 Well-Being Goals.

The Act gives us the ambition, permission and legal obligation to improve our social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being.

It requires public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.

▼ Well-being Goal	How the Council's Well-being Objectives contribute to the national Well-being Goals ▼
A Prosperous Wales	All of our Well-being Objectives reflect the importance of developing the local economy in Ceredigion. Enabling employment, developing skills, providing affordable housing, protecting the environment, supporting businesses and investing in regeneration will contribute to the national goal of a prosperous Wales. Supporting businesses to respond to the impacts of Covid-19 helps both the immediate response and the longer-term future as we seek to increase economic growth, create more and better paid jobs and support the workforce through opportunities for learning.
A Resilient Wales	Delivering our carbon net zero ambition, increasing opportunities for active travel and ensuring communities are well-connected will help to protect our natural environment and create strong and resilient communities. This contributes to the national well-being goal of creating a resilient Wales by reducing our impact on the environment and enhancing our capacity to adapt to change.
A Healthier Wales	Supporting learners in education and training, and protecting people from poverty, and the promotion of healthier, more active lifestyles seeks to build a healthier Ceredigion and a healthier Wales. It also enables independent living and provides early intervention and prevention services for the most vulnerable. Supporting citizens who have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 to improve their physical and emotional wellbeing will support other initiatives to deliver a healthier Wales.
A more Equal Wales	All of our Well-being Objectives seek to establish a more Equal Wales by ensuring equal opportunities for all in employment, housing, education, healthier lifestyles and sustainable communities.
A Wales of Cohesive Communities	Building the strength of our communities is a key feature in our Well-being Objectives. Providing support for our communities to be strong and well connected so that they are able to thrive despite Covid-19 will enhance the Wales of cohesive communities.
A Wales of Vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	The Council continues to promote the distinct and vibrant bilingual culture and identity of Ceredigion. The cultural pillar of Well-being was highlighted as being particularly important to Citizens in the Ceredigion Assessment of Local Well-being, and further measures to promote bilingualism and the Welsh Language are in place.
A Globally responsible Wales	In considering our Wellbeing Objectives we have taken into account the Ceredigion Assessment of Local Well-being and engagement activity to ensure we can make a positive contribution to global well-being. Support for active travel, other modes of transport and new ways of working that build on our zero-carbon ambition continues our work in this area.

THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLE

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 introduced the Sustainable Development Principle and outlines the 5 Ways of Working that all public bodies must adopt. Sustainable development is the central organising principle that shapes what we do and how we do it.

In essence, it means we must strive to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This approach provides an opportunity for innovative thinking, reflecting the way we live our lives and what we expect of our public services

We have embedded the principle across the Council and adopt the principle in the planning and delivery of our Well-being Objectives.

Some of the ways in which we have used the Sustainable Development Principle are outlined right.

	Ways of Working	How the Council has demonstrated the Sustainable Development Principle
	Long term Looking to the long term so that we do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs	• Medium Term Financial Planning ensures that decisions consider the impact on future generations. • Workforce Planning ensures the development of workforce skills for the future and ensures services are sustainable over the longer term. • The Council's Corporate Strategy seeks to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Ceredigion over the next 5 years and beyond. • The recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic is projected to last for a number of years and our plans to tackle poverty and take a long-term approach to economic development reflect this.
	Integrated Taking an integrated approach so that public bodies look at all the well-being goals in deciding on their Wellbeing Objectives	• The Well-being Objectives are aligned with those of the Ceredigion Public Services Board which promotes a shared understanding and coordinated response to the challenges Ceredigion faces to improve the well-being of citizens.
	Involvement Involving a diversity of the population in the decisions that affect them	• The Council's Corporate Strategy has taken into account the Public Services Board's Assessment of Local Well-being, which has been produced following extensive engagement with citizens, including those with protected characteristics. • The Council consults on an annual basis with citizens and its engagement groups on the review and setting of its annual Well-being Objectives. • The Council's Engagement and Participation Strategy will help to ensure the voices of all groups in Ceredigion are heard.
	Collaborative Working with others in a collaborative way to find shared sustainable solutions	The Council actively supports, amongst others, the following partnerships: • The Growing Mid Wales Partnership • The Ceredigion Public Services Board • The Community Safety Partnership The Council worked alongside Hywel Dda University Health Board and other partners in responding to COVID-19, including the setting up of two temporary hospitals, mass vaccination centres and a multi-agency panel to ensure the safe re-opening of community venues.
	Prevention Understanding the root causes of issues to prevent them from occurring	• The Council's Well-being Objectives have been set in order to prevent problems from occurring or getting worse. These include addressing the effects of poverty, the issues of rurality and improving the well-being of people of all ages, from early years through to older age. • The Through Age Model provides a coordinated approach to social care in order to prevent, reduce or delay the need for ongoing support, and allow people to remain in their own homes.

JOINING UP OUR PLANS - LINKS TO KEY RESOURCES

KEY RESOURCES

Our Self-Assessment Report discharges our duties under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) 2015 in respect of the Council's performance and the setting and review of well-being objectives.

The requirements of Self-Assessment align with, and support, the duties outlined in other Acts. The following pages provide a summary of these duties and the Council's appropriate policy or strategy in place to respond to the duty.

- Equalities
- Welsh Language
- Finance
- Procurement
- Governance
- Asset Management
- Human Resources
- Through-Age Well-being
- Economy
- Tackling Hardship
- Hybrid Working Strategy
- Housing

EQUALITIES

The Council's **Strategic Equality Plan** (SEP), sets out how we, as Ceredigion County Council, will ensure that our actions are fair to all. Being treated fairly and with respect is relevant to all of us and to our families and friends. The five Equality Objectives of the Strategy are:

- An exemplar equal opportunities employer
- Fostering good relations and tackling prejudice
- Engagement and participation
- Dignity, respect and access to services
- Fair and inclusive education

The Equality Act 2010 brings together and replaces previous anti-discrimination laws within a single act. It simplifies and strengthens the law and makes it easier for people to understand and comply with it. The Act protects the rights of individuals and advances equality of opportunity for all. It includes a general duty on public sector organisations to have 'due regard' to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

Public sector bodies are required to review their Strategic Equality Objectives and action plan every four years. To do this, we carry out consultation and engagement with our local communities to inform the plan and the objectives. The Mid and West Wales Regional Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group, of which Ceredigion Council is a member, agreed to take a regional approach to this piece of work. The regional engagement and consultation plan was developed in Q4 of 2022-23 and will be implemented during 2023-24 in order that our updated Strategic Equality Plans are ready for publishing by 31st March 2024.

WELSH LANGUAGE

To sustain viable Welsh communities where Welsh is a natural language of communication in Ceredigion, the Council's **Language Strategy** recognises three key areas of priority; they are to:

- Increase the Welsh Language skills of the people of Ceredigion,
- To increase opportunities to use the Welsh Language, and
- To create favourable conditions that will enable the Welsh Language to thrive in Ceredigion.

It is acknowledged that the sustainability of the Welsh language depends on the process of strengthening Welsh communities through providing educational, cultural and social opportunities to use the language daily.

In accordance with the Welsh Language Standards, the strategy sets out how the Council will encourage the Welsh language and facilitate its use more broadly within the local area, through cooperating with organisations that are members of Ceredigion's Bilingual Futures Language Forum. The Strategy supports the Council's overall vision to deliver value for money, sustainable bilingual public services, and also the Welsh Government's vision to achieve a million of Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050.

The Council believes that the publication of the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 strategy, alongside the implementation of the Welsh Language Strategy in Ceredigion, has instigated some change in attitudes towards the Welsh language, and as a result, the number of people wishing to learn and speak the language in Ceredigion has increased. A summary of the main achievements of implementing the Language Strategy are:

- The Ceredigion Association of Voluntary Organisations (CAVO) was one of the first county voluntary councils in Wales to earn recognition via the Welsh Language Commissioner's Welsh Offer scheme
- Natural Resources Wales won the Work Welsh Employer of the Year Award in 2022
- Hywel Dda Health Board has signed up to the Work Welsh scheme to provide confidence building courses for 100 of their staff
- Coleg Ceredigion has put a policy in place, requiring all staff to follow an internal training programme to create bilingual classes, 'Basic, Better, Best'
- The Council analysed the 2021 Census data as regards its implications on language use in Ceredigion and the full report was published on the Council's website, and results shared widely with partners
- Aberystwyth University has been investing in large-scale developments that support the use of the Welsh language including the welcoming of its first nursing students who will receive training to become Adult and Mental Health Nurses and will be able to study through the medium of Welsh.

The Language Strategy and **Action Plan** will be reviewed during 2023 and an updated Strategy published in early 2024 covering the next five years.

FINANCE

The **Medium Term Financial Strategy** provides a financial governance framework to operate within by setting out the issues that are considered and taken into account for financial planning for the medium term.

JOINING UP OUR PLANS - LINKS TO KEY RESOURCES

By bringing together financial assumptions; standards of service delivery; demographic needs; and workforce planning issues into this document it is expected that the Council will be better able to consider overall management of its resources to meet its objectives.

The Council's financial objective is for the careful and responsible use of resources and to ensure that the financial resilience of the Council is maintained and strengthened.

Understanding the overall financial context is important in order to deliver a robust and balanced budget during the next few years as it is recognised that funding for the Public Sector will be limited. The financial forecast includes a three year budget forecast. Despite the challenges that exist, from this challenge there are opportunities arising by considering how services can be delivered differently and better, and ensuring greater value for money for the taxpayer. A transformation savings plan has also been prepared and is being implemented, although Covid-19 has impacted on the timescales envisaged.

PROCUREMENT

The Council's vision for procurement, as published in its **Procurement Strategy**, is to achieve value for money through the effective procurement of its service requirements, and to demonstrate continuous improvement in its procurement activity.

The Council incurs annual third party expenditure of more than £60m while delivering wide-ranging public services. Through careful strategic procurement planning, this expenditure is targeted to support the delivery of the Council's overall vision and Corporate Well-being Objectives. The Council's Procurement Strategy aims to:

- Provide value for money by basing procurement decisions on an appropriate combination of quality and price.

- Deliver outcome focused public services procured with the needs of service users in mind and in the language of their choice, through consultation and incorporating the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure (2011) into contracts.
- Support a healthy environment through procuring sustainable solutions and by pre-qualifying prospective suppliers on their sustainability records and values.
- Maximise the contribution towards sustainable development through embedding the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Sustainable Development Principles in Procurement processes.

During 2023/24, we will be reviewing and updating the Procurement Strategy as part of its standard five-year review to ensure it is up to date and fit for purpose. The aim of the review will be to ensure that the strategy continues to support local businesses and the wider local economy, and ensure the Council provides value for money in the use of its financial resources.

GOVERNANCE

In discharging its overall responsibility, the Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs and facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which includes the arrangements for the management of risk.

This means ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. Its governance arrangements support the delivery of its Corporate Well-being Objectives and its ongoing commitment to improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of the County.

The Council's **Local Code of Corporate Governance** ensures that the Council is doing the right things, in the right way, in line with its values. The Local Code is supported by a **Governance Assurance Framework** that sets out what assurances the Council seeks to obtain, and how this will be done.

The Local Code of Corporate Governance brings together in one document all the governance and accountability arrangements the Council has in place. It is based on best practice guidance set out in the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government 2016. The most recent 2022/23 Code has been reviewed to take account of ongoing changes to governance due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

An annual review of the effectiveness of its governance against the CIPFA/SOLACE Delivering Good Governance Framework document has been conducted. This is the **Annual Governance Statement**. The review process involves a member/officer workshop in which the Council's Governance Framework Document is analysed and reviewed. The review of the 2021/22 Framework was approved by Council in July 2022 and provided 'high' assurance that there was a sound system of scrutiny and robustness in place. All Councils Officers must comply with the Code of Conduct for local Government Employees, while the Council's Councillors must comply with the Code of Conduct for Members.

ASSET MANAGEMENT

The purpose of the Council's **Asset Development Policy** is to set out Ceredigion County Council's approach to optimising its assets through leasing, disposals and acquisition in pursuit of its priorities and objectives. The key objectives of the Policy are:

- To set out key steps in the Asset Development review process.

- To set a strategic context to the management of vacant or underused land and buildings.
- To ensure that Ceredigion County Council has the most appropriate and effective asset portfolio in relation to its aims.
- To maximise revenue from assets owned by the Council.
- To identify assets that are surplus to requirements for original use and to maximise income through their development and / or disposal.
- To add to the asset portfolio where appropriate to achieve corporate aims.

The Council uses a range of different actions to deliver these objectives, including the disposal of land and buildings that are vacant or deemed to be surplus to requirements, investing in land and buildings to increase income through lease agreements and investing to develop land and buildings for alternative commercial or other uses in-line with the Council's Corporate Well-being Objectives.

Crucially, it also considers the Council's use of space. This is important because during 2023/24 we will be reviewing the Policy and publishing a new Asset Management Plan to reflect current issues. In particular, this will involve supporting the Council's new ways of working, investing in new technology and repurposing our assets to transform the way services are provided to our customers to ensure sustainable and high quality services for the long term.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Underpinning the success of the Council's Corporate Strategy is a high performing workforce, operating in a way that is innovative, digitally mature and sustainable. To achieve this, a **Workforce Plan** is in place, that outlines the Council's approach to managing its workforce to meet its current and future service delivery needs. It involves analysing the organisation's

workforce requirements, identifying any gaps, and focussing on the development plans to address them.

During 2023, the Workforce Plan is being updated to address key issues including recruitment, retention and succession planning to ensure stable staffing levels, a sustainable workforce and that vacant posts are filled with appropriately qualified staff. Following the publication of the new Corporate Strategy 2022-27, the updated Workforce Plan will be aligned to the new Corporate Well-being Objectives. It will also support the Council's new ways of working and the realisation of the benefits including increased productivity, reduced travelling and improved work life balance.

The updated **Workforce Plan 2023-2028** recognises the achievements over the course of the previous plan, the link with other corporate strategies, our workforce profile and sets out four key themed priorities to meet the identified challenges.

The four themed priorities set out in the plan are:

1. Realising Potential

2. Candidate Experience and Talent Attraction

3. New Ways of Working

4. Our Culture

The Workforce Plan 2023-2028 sets out an overview of each theme before detailing the actions which will be taken to meet the requirements of the Plan. A set of proposed measures are included at end of the document to allow effective monitoring of progress over the course of the three-year plan. The updated Workforce Plan is scheduled to go through the democratic process for approval during the summer of 2023.

THROUGH AGE WELL-BEING

Providing support for all ages and needs is a

significant challenge for the Council with limited resources. The profile of society and demographics have changed considerably over the last decade with a significant increase in the prevalence and impact of substance misuse, poor mental health and domestic abuse and older age groups living in Ceredigion. As a consequence, demand for certain services has increased placing a greater financial pressure on those service areas.

The **Through Age Well-being Strategy** sets out the vision and approach that will be taken to transform how the well-being and safety of the people of Ceredigion is supported.

To achieve our vision we have developed a Through Age Well-being operating model that is designed to ensure people get the right level and type of support, at the right time, to prevent, reduce or delay the need for ongoing support, to maximise people's independence and to be able to remain in their own home in their own community wherever possible.

ECONOMY

Ceredigion's **Economic Strategy** was published in March 2021. It sets out a framework for action covering the fifteen year period to 2035, outlining out how we will work together towards achieving strong, sustainable and more resilient economic growth for Ceredigion, created and shared by all.

It highlights the actions that will address the challenges and opportunities that exist in the local economy, and focuses on four main priority areas of People, Enterprise, Place and Connectivity, with each section outlining some of the early interventions considered.

Work will continue on developing the detailed implementation plans during 2023/24. Many initiatives have already been developed and implemented under the strategic direction set by the Economic Strategy. A significant

amount of external funding has been secured from a range of key stakeholder organisations, which will enable the building blocks for further economic growth to be put in place. The Strategy provides an exciting opportunity to build on Ceredigion's solid foundations and support an ambitious thriving economy for the future.

TACKLING HARDSHIP & POVERTY

The Ceredigion **Local Well-being Plan 2023-28** contains four well-being objectives plus a cross-cutting theme on tackling hardship and poverty because it links to each of the objectives covering economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being.

The Ceredigion Public Services Board (PSB) will prioritise tackling hardship and poverty in response to the cost of living crisis, cross referencing with economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being pillars. The mechanism for implementing the tackling hardship and poverty theme is through the PSB's Poverty Sub-Group which consists of a network of partner organisations who scrutinise the work of the PSB to enhance the work undertaken to combat poverty across each of the four objectives.

HYBRID WORKING

The **Interim Hybrid Working Strategy** sets out the vision and approach that will be taken to ensure the Council has a workforce with the skills and ability to work in a way that is fit for the organisation's future.

Having responded well to the initial challenges posed by the pandemic, focus shifted to how the Council could learn and build from the experience. Using research findings and staff engagement, the Hybrid Working Strategy was developed setting out the principles and implementation process of a hybrid working

model that maintains the required high level of service delivery whilst also providing employees with greater flexibility in balancing their work and home lives.

The interim policy will be in place for 12 months to allow for hybrid working to be trialled as the managers and our workforce identify an effective new way of working post-pandemic. As the interim period comes to an end during 2023, a review of the working arrangements will be conducted with a view to developing a permanent Hybrid Working Policy.

HOUSING

An updated **Housing Strategy 2023-28** has been developed during 2023 which sets out the Council's housing vision and ambitions for the period 2023 to 2028. We are currently consulting on the new strategy and will take it forward for adoption in October 2023.

The vision of the new strategy is: *there will be sufficient suitable and sustainable accommodation to meet residents' needs now and in the future*. We recognise the important role that housing plays together with the influence it has on the health and well-being of individuals, families and the wider community.

It responds to key challenges including the national picture of the economic recession, legislative changes, the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the phosphates issues affecting development in the County, that all play their part in affecting housing Ceredigion.

The two main priorities of the new Strategy are:

- Increasing supply and improving housing conditions
- Supporting residents in their own homes and communities.

The existing **Housing Strategy**, which ends in 2023 is available on the Council's website.

OUR PERFORMANCE

How We Benchmark Performance

The Council routinely monitors and benchmarks its performance as part of its ongoing performance management arrangements. Performance benchmarking contributes to our overall effectiveness and efficiency by allowing us to identify best practice and opportunities for improvement.

With the change in legislation concerning the performance regime for principal councils in 2021, the national set of Performance Accountability Measures (PAMs) used across all twenty-two councils in Wales were removed. Historically, Ceredigion had performed well against these measures. In the final full year of recording the PAMs in 2019/20, twenty-one measures were collected, with Ceredigion achieving 14 or

72% on target, with a further 3 or 14% slightly off target and 4 or 13% were significantly off-target.

Following the change in legislation, we now use four main forms of routine benchmarking; our Level 1 Business Plan measures, a set of key benchmarking measures, a set of community benchmarking measures and a periodic assessment of our individual performance against the national well-being indicators. The following pages provide a summary of these results.

Business Plan Performance

Our business plan performance is monitored through the Performance Board, and on an ongoing basis, by Leadership Group. At the end of 2022/23 our performance shows that 72% of our measures were on target and

71% of our objectives were either complete or on schedule (see charts below left). The measures and objectives off-target are scrutinised in more detail by the Performance Board and Leadership Group.

Value for Money

Value for Money can be defined as the relationship between Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness. It is a term used to

assess whether the Council has obtained the maximum benefit from the goods and services it procures and provides within the constraint of the limited resources facing the Council.
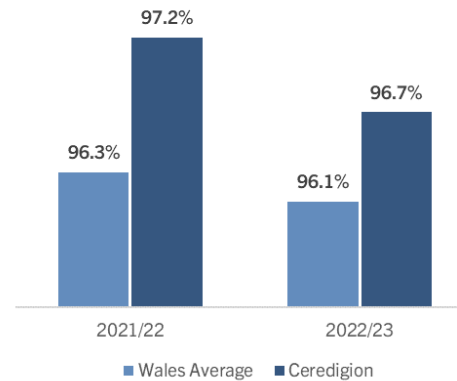
For example, two key measures of efficiency, the collection of Council Tax and Non-domestic (business) rates, both remain above average, although collection rates nationally were affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic.
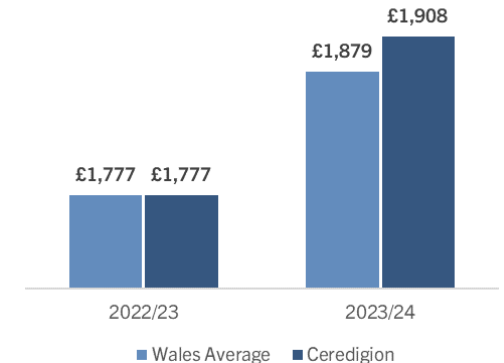
BUSNESS PLAN MEASURES COMPARED TO TARGET 2022/23
- 20
- 26
- 117

- 🟢 On target: **117** (72%)
- 🟡 Off target by less than 15%: **26** (16%)
- 🔴 Off target by more than 15%: **20** (12%)

BUSINESS PLAN OBJECTIVES PROGRESS 2022/23
- 9
- 75
- 206

- 🟢 On schedule / complete: **206** (71%)
- 🟡 In progress but behind schedule: **75** (26%)
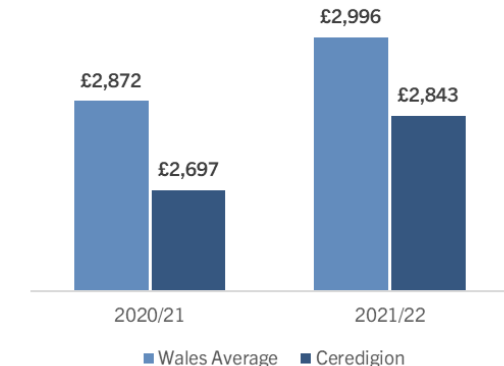- 🔴 Not started / not complete **9** (3%)

Council Tax Collection Rate

	2021/22	2022/23
Wales Average	96.3%	96.1%
Ceredigion	97.2%	96.7%

Non-Domestic Rates Collection

	2021/22	2022/23
Wales Average	95.9%	95.5%
Ceredigion	97.5%	97.6%

Band D Council Tax Rate

	2022/23	2023/24
Wales Average	£1,777	£1,879
Ceredigion	£1,777	£1,908

Revenue Outturn Expenditure Per Head

|	2020/21	2021/22
Wales Average	£2,872	£2,996
Ceredigion	£2,697	£2,843
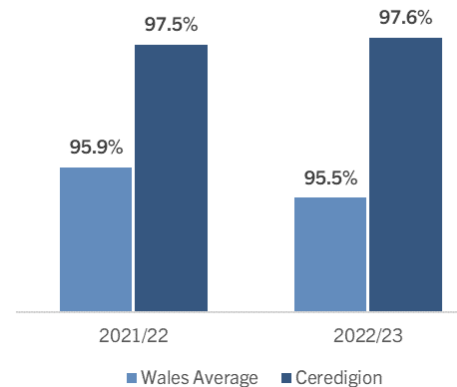
The average Band 'D' Council Tax, often used as a comparator between different counties, shows that current rates are slightly higher than the national average across Wales at £1,908, while our cumulative savings made over the last ten years total £60m through restructuring, service-redesign and transformation projects. Revenue outturn expenditure per head was £2,843 for the last full year and budgeted expenditure for the current 2023/24 year is £3,173.

Key Performance Measures

The Council uses a variety of performance indicators to monitor how well our services are performing in meeting the needs of service users and to measure their efficiency and value for money.

They measure performance across a wide range of Council services including: financial management, education, housing, leisure services, waste management and street cleansing. The following pages (49-50)
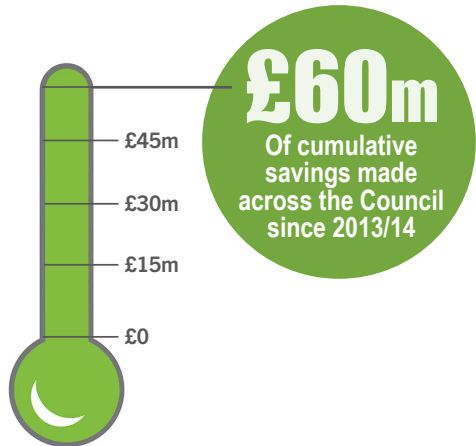
provide a selection of these measures, showing the Council's performance compared to its nearest neighbours in the mid and south west Wales regions. Data is provided for the latest full year results and the time period covered is noted on the individual chart.

Well-being of Wales National Indicators

The 46 national well-being indicators are designed to represent the outcomes for Wales and its people that will help demonstrate progress towards the 7 National Well-being Goals.

They are not performance indicators specifically for the Council, they are county-wide results, to which the Council, along with other public bodies, contribute. We, do however, periodically review Ceredigion's contribution to these indicators. The last of these exercises was conducted in 2022 as Appendix 9 to the Ceredigion Assessment of Local Well-being 2022.

The annual 'Wellbeing of Wales' report provides an update on progress made in Wales towards the achievement of the 7 National Well-being Goals which draws on the latest national indicators results.
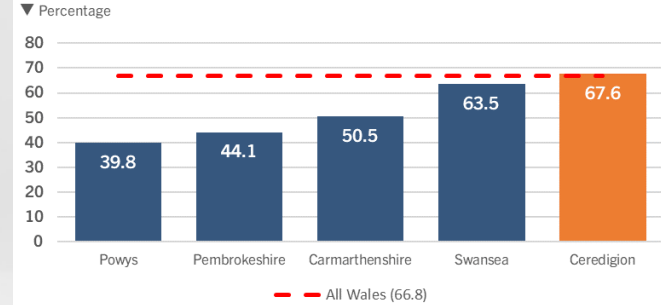
Future Plans

The Council is proactively working with Data Cymru and all 21 other councils nationwide to support the development of the new Self-Assessment Data Tool. The Tool, developed by Data Cymru, provides access to a wide range of performance data across local government services.

Further work will take place during 2023 and 2024 to strengthen the measures and fill gaps in data such as in assessing value for money, asset management and consultation.
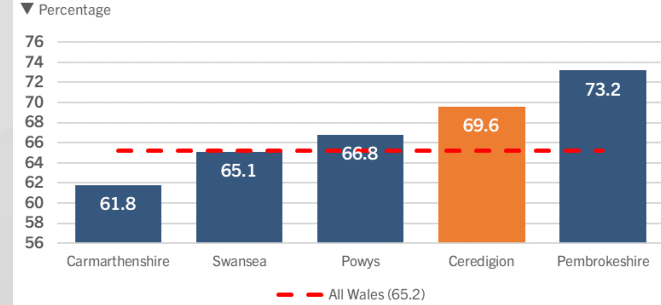
£60m
Of cumulative savings made across the Council since 2013/14

£45m
£30m
£15m
£0

KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Homelessness Prevention
% of households successfully prevented from becoming homeless (2021/22)
▼ Percentage

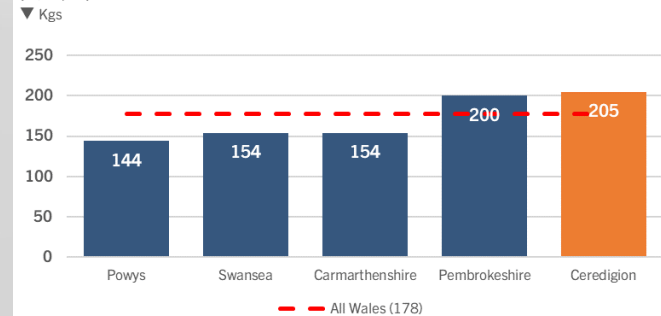| Powys | Pembrokeshire | Carmarthenshire | Swansea | Ceredigion |
| 39.8 | 44.1 | 50.5 | 63.5 | 67.6 |

— — All Wales (66.8)

Recycling
Percentage of municipal waste resused, recycled or composted (2021/22)
▼ Percentage

| Carmarthenshire | Swansea | Powys | Ceredigion | Pembrokeshire |
| 61.8 | 65.1 | 66.8 | 69.6 | 73.2 |

— — All Wales (65.2)

Waste Collection
Kilograms of household waste generated per person (2021/22)
▼ Kgs

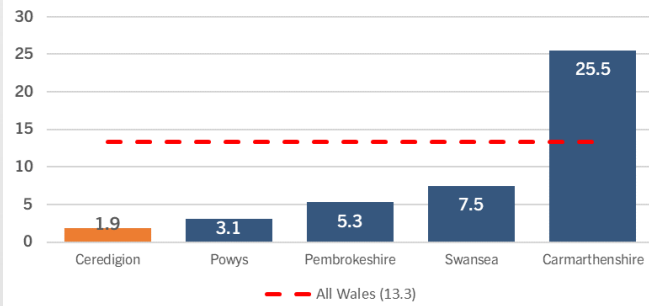| Powys | Swansea | Carmarthenshire | Pembrokeshire | Ceredigion |
| 144 | 154 | 154 | 200 | 205 |

— — All Wales (178)

KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Fly-tipping
Number of recorded fly-tipping incidents per 1,000 population (2021/22)
▼ Number

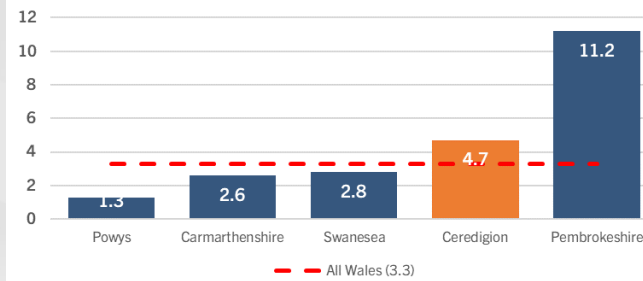| Ceredigion	Powys	Pembrokeshire	Swansea	Carmarthenshire
1.9	3.1	5.3	7.5	25.5

- - - All Wales (13.3)

Community Learning
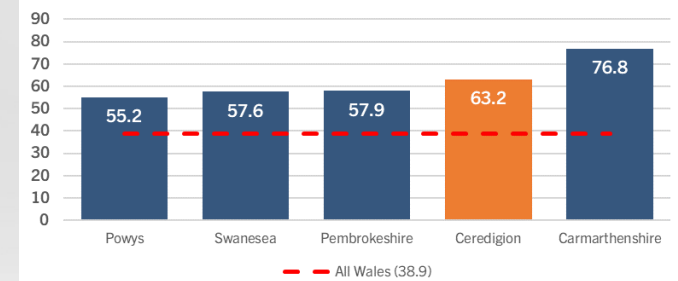**Number of learners enrolled in local authority community learning per 1,000 population (2021/22)**
▼ Number

Powys	Carmarthenshire	Swanesea	Ceredigion	Pembrokeshire
1.3	2.6	2.8	4.7	11.2

- - - All Wales (3.3)

School Counselling
Number of children and young people who received counselling in Wales per 1,000 population aged 10-18 (2021/22)
▼ Number

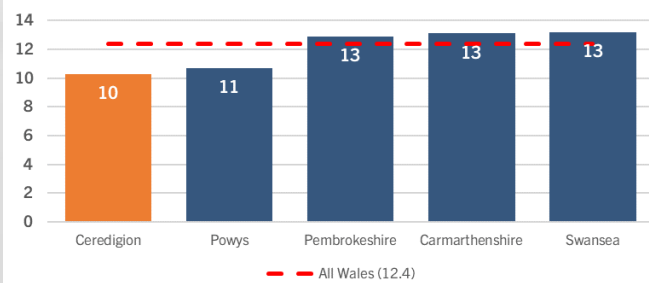| Powys	Swanesea	Pembrokeshire	Ceredigion	Carmarthenshire
55.2	57.6	57.9	63.2	76.8

- - - All Wales (38.9)

Apprenticeships
Number of learners enrolled on apprenticeship programmes per 1,000 population (2021/22)
▼ Number

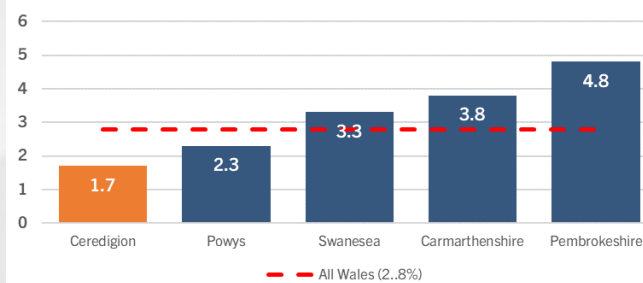| Ceredigion	Powys	Pembrokeshire	Carmarthenshire	Swansea
10	11	13	13	13

- - - All Wales (12.4)

Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET)
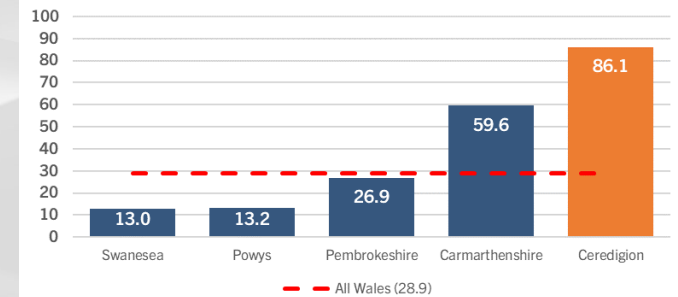**Year 13 school leavers known not to be in Education, Training or Employment (2022)**
▼ Percentage

Ceredigion	Powys	Swanesea	Carmarthenshire	Pembrokeshire
1.7	2.3	3.3	3.8	4.8

- - - All Wales (2..8%)

Welsh Medium Schools
Percentage of primary schools that are Welsh medium (2021-22)
▼ Percentage

Swanesea	Powys	Pembrokeshire	Carmarthenshire	Ceredigion
13.0	13.2	26.9	59.6	86.1

- - - All Wales (28.9)

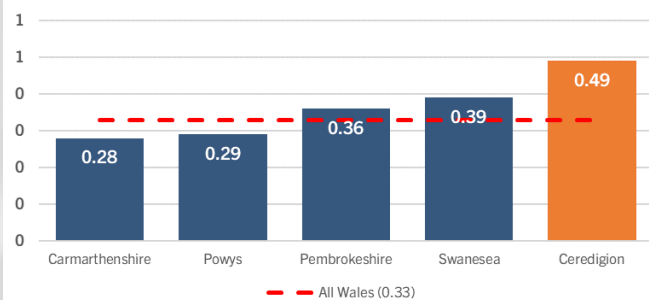## Complaints Received by the Local Authority
Number of complaints received per 1,000 residents (2022/23)
▼ Number

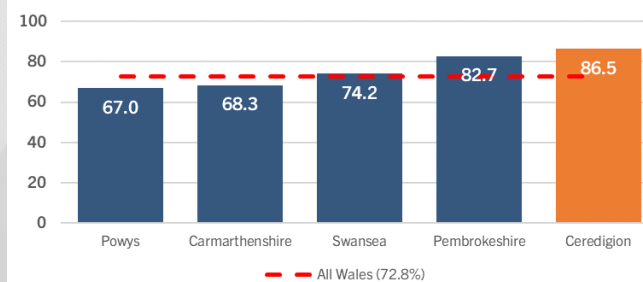| Carmarthenshire	Powys	Pembrokeshire	Swanesea	Ceredigion
0.28	0.29	0.36	0.39	0.49

- - - All Wales (0.33)

Free School Meals
Percentage of eligible pupils who took up the offer of a free school meal (2021/22)
▼ Percentage

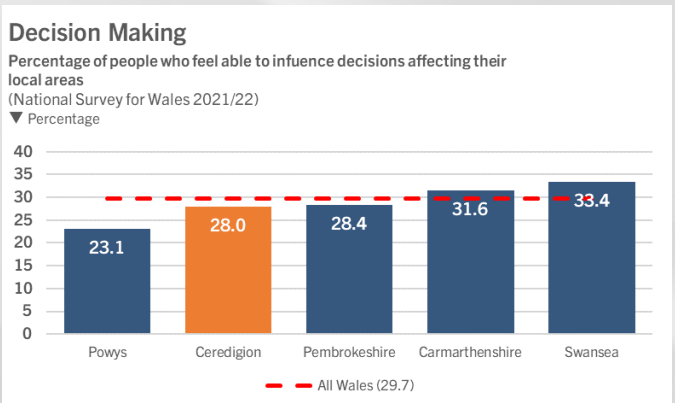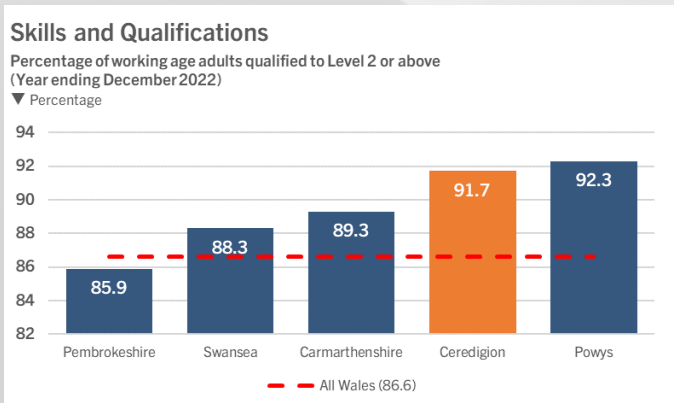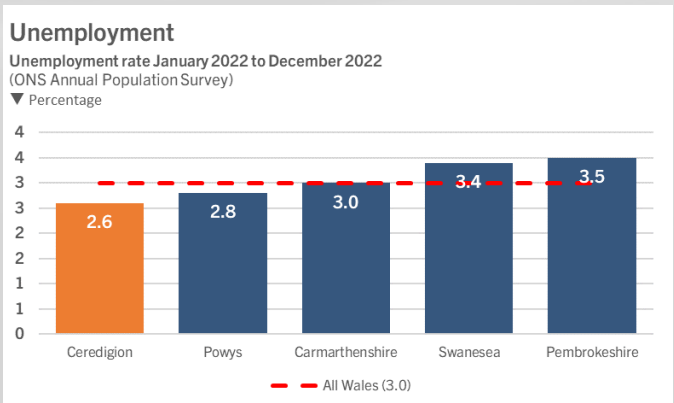| Powys	Carmarthenshire	Swansea	Pembrokeshire	Ceredigion
67.0	68.3	74.2	82.7	86.5

- - - All Wales (72.8%)

Council Tax Collection
Percentage of Council Tax collected (2022-2023)
▼ Percentage

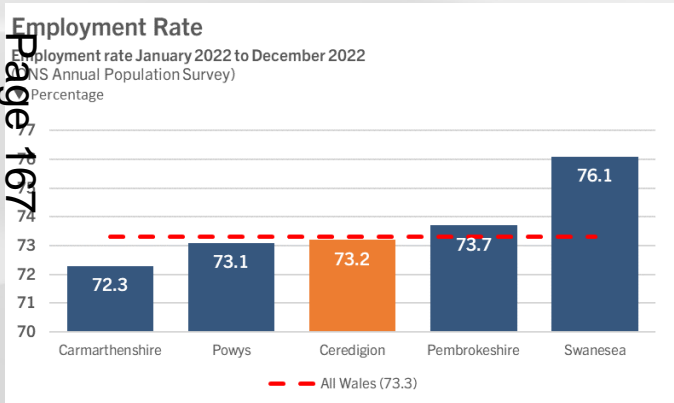| Swanesea	Ceredigion	Pembrokeshire	Powys	Carmarthenshire
94.4	96.7	97.1	97.2	97.3

- - - All Wales (96.1%)

WIDER COMMUNITY MEASURES

Business Survival

1 year survival percentage of new enterprises in 2020
(Business Demography 2021, ONS)
▼ Percentage

Swansea	Carmarthenshire	Pembrokeshire	Powys	Ceredigion
88.4	95.0	96.0	96.3	97.4

General Health

Percentage of population in good or very good health
(ONS Census 2021)
▼ Percentage

Carmarthenshire	Pembrokeshire	Swansea	Ceredigion	Powys
76.8	78.1	78.6	78.7	79.0

– – – All Wales (78.6)

Satisfaction with Local Area

Percentage of adults (16+) satisfied with their local area as a place to live
(National Survey for Wales 2021-2022)
▼ Percentage

Swansea	Carmarthenshire	Pembrokeshire	Ceredigion	Powys
90.1	90.3	92.3	92.7	94.9

– – – All Wales (88.6%)

Employment Rate

Employment rate January 2022 to December 2022
(ONS Annual Population Survey)
▼ Percentage

Carmarthenshire	Powys	Ceredigion	Pembrokeshire	Swansea
72.3	73.1	73.2	73.7	76.1

– – – All Wales (73.3)

Healthy Behaviours

Percentage of people who have two or more healthy behaviours
(National Survey for Wales 2021-22 & 2022/23)
▼ Percentage

Pembrokeshire	Carmarthenshire	Ceredigion	Swansea	Powys
91.9	92.5	94.3	94.4	94.8

– – – All Wales (92.6)

Community Cohesion

Percentage of people agreeing that they belong to the area; that people from different backgrounds get on well together; and that people treat each other with respect
(National Survey for Wales 2021/22)
▼ Percentage

Swansea	Carmarthenshire	Ceredigion	Powys	Pembrokeshire
59.3	68.0	69.2	70.6	77.6

– – – All Wales (64.5)

Unemployment

Unemployment rate January 2022 to December 2022
(ONS Annual Population Survey)
▼ Percentage

Ceredigion	Powys	Carmarthenshire	Swansea	Pembrokeshire
2.6	2.8	3.0	3.4	3.5

– – – All Wales (3.0)

Skills and Qualifications

Percentage of working age adults qualified to Level 2 or above
(Year ending December 2022)
▼ Percentage

Pembrokeshire	Swansea	Carmarthenshire	Ceredigion	Powys
85.9	88.3	89.3	91.7	92.3

– – – All Wales (86.6)

Decision Making

Percentage of people who feel able to infuence decisions affecting their local areas
(National Survey for Wales 2021/22)
▼ Percentage

Powys	Ceredigion	Pembrokeshire	Carmarthenshire	Swansea
23.1	28.0	28.4	31.6	33.4

– – – All Wales (29.7)

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Have your say

We welcome your views on this report and the Council's performance. Please get in touch at any time.

Contact Us

✉ **By Post:**

Ceredigion County Council

Canolfan Rheidol
Rhodfa Padarn
Llanbadarn Fawr
Aberystwyth
Ceredigion
SY23 3UE

☎ **By Telephone :**

01545 570881

A **Plain Text Version** or **Easy Read Version** of this document is available from Ceredigion County Council

www.ceredigion.gov.uk

CYNGOR SIR CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 7th November 2023

Title: Annual Report of Compliments, Complaints, and
                                      Freedom of Information (2022-2023)

Purpose of the report: To provide Cabinet with a comprehensive overview of
                                      the Compliments, Complaints and Freedom of
                                      Information (FOI) activity (including Environmental
                                      Information Regulations - EIR) received by the Local
                                      Authority between 1st April 2022 and 31st March 2023.
                                      This report also provides information about the
                                      complaints activity referred to the Public Services
                                      Ombudsman for Wales during this reporting period.

For: Information

Cabinet Portfolio and Cabinet Member:
**Councillor Bryan Davies, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for
Democratic Services, Policy, Performance and People and Organisation**

Introduction
This report provides information relating to the Council's Compliments, Complaints
and FOI activity between 1st April 2022 and 31st March 2023. The report itself is listed
as **Appendix 1** and includes specific information 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.

A report detailing the compliments and complaints activity in relation to Social Services
is included as **Appendix 2,** and information about the Lessons Learned as a
consequence of (corporate) complaints is provided within **Appendix 3**. The main
report consists of a section about the contact received from the Public Services
Ombudsman for Wales ("the Ombudsman") during the reporting period. The
Ombudsman's Annual Letter to the Council is included as **Appendix 4**, and this gives
further details about all Ombudsman activity for Ceredigion, as well as for other
Council's across Wales. For information, a formal response will be issued to the
Ombudsman, following discussions at the Cabinet Committee Meeting to confirm that
the actions contained in her letter have all been met.

Appendix 5 provides a summary of all Early Resolution / Voluntary Settlement cases
that were proposed by the Ombudsman during the reporting year, all of which were
agreed by the Council.

This report was presented to the Governance and Audit Committee Meeting on
27th September 2023, and subsequently, at the Corporate Resources Overview and
Scrutiny Committee Meeting on 19th October 2023. The contents of this report was
noted by both committees.

1

This is the fourth consecutive report where there have been no Ombudsman investigations commenced or formal reports issued in relation to complaints made against the Council. Whilst there were fewer Ombudsman referrals during this reporting year, the Council has a consistently high rate of Early Resolution/Voluntary Settlements.

It is therefore acknowledged that challenges remain in relation to the complexity and volume of the work processed by the Complaints and FOI Team, which inevitably has an impact on the team's ability to meet performance objectives in relation to statutorily prescribed timescales.

Brief Overview:
↑ **465**   Compliments were received
↑ **403**   Enquiries were processed by the Complaints & FOI Service
↑ **144**   Complaints were received: **Stage 1 = 96**   **Stage 2 = 48**
↓ **35**   'Contacts' received via the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
↑ **882**   FOI & EIR requests processed by the Complaints & FOI Service

Current Situation
- There were significantly more Compliments received during this reporting period. Improving the way that compliments are captured remains a piece of work that the Complaints and FOI Team needs to undertake, but this is being delayed due to capacity constraints.

- The service received a greater number of enquiries – many of which were either allocated back to the service areas to resolve pro-actively, or formal responses were required in order to explain why such matters could not be dealt with under the complaints procedures.

- It is worth noting that the number of complaints received by the Council was the third lowest in Wales.

- A great deal of work is needed to prevent Stage 1 complaints from escalating to Stage 2 unnecessarily on account that it has not been possible to respond within the prescribed timescale of ten-working-days.

- Compliance with timescales under Stage 2 also requires attention, as do the shortcomings in complaints handling that were referred to the Ombudsman. The Complaints and FOI Team continues to face challenges in meeting the demands of rises in the numbers of compliments, complaints, and FOI activity.

- As acknowledged above, there were fewer Ombudsman referrals than last year, but the number of Early Resolution / Voluntary Settlements is the highest in Wales.

- Complaints about Refuse Collection and Planning matters continue to be the main reasons for complaints; however, these services are predisposed to attracting complaints and these must be taken in context with the level of activity undertaken by these two service areas.

- Compliance with Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) timescales requires significant improvement.

Areas to focus on
- Improving adherence with timescales prescribed in complaints and FOI/EIR policies/legislation
- Increase the resilience within the Complaints and FOI Team
- Reinforce the principle that complaints are owned throughout the Council
- Deliver a comprehensive training programme on complaints handling
- Improving system for capturing compliments and data surrounding lessons learned
- Continuing with open, transparent, and citizen-centred approach to resolving concerns

Wellbeing of Future Generations:
Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If, not, please state why.

No IIA has been completed because there is no policy or service change proposed within this report.

Summary of Integrated Impact Assessment:
Long term: N/A
Collaboration: N/A
Involvement: N/A
Prevention: N/A
Integration: N/A

Recommendation(s):
1. **To note the contents of the Council's Annual Report for Compliments, Complaints and FOI Activity 2022-23 (Appendix 1)**
2. **To note the contents of the Ombudsman's Annual Letter (Appendix 4)**
3. **To agree to continue engaging with the Ombudsman's Complaints Standards Authority work – including accessing training and providing performance data**
4. **To inform the Ombudsman of the outcome of the Council's considerations and proposed actions**
5. **To note the feedback from the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee, whereby the Committee *'agreed to note the contents of this report in advance of its presentation at the Cabinet meeting on 7th November 2023.'***

Reasons for decision:
To ensure continuous improvement and ensure that elected members are aware of the Council's performance in relation to compliments, complaints, FOI/EIR and Ombudsman activity.

Overview and Scrutiny:
The appendices contained in this report were discussed at the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting on 19th October 2023.

Policy Framework:
Concerns and Complaints Policy
Social Services Complaints Policy and Procedures

Freedom of Information Policy
Environmental Information Regulations Policy

Corporate Well-being Objectives:
Ceredigion is an organisation that is fit-for-purpose to deliver improving services to meet the needs of our citizens.

Finance and Procurement implications:
N/A

Legal Implications:
N/A

Staffing implications:
N/A

Property / asset implications:
N/A

Risk(s):
There is a risk of reputational damage to the Local Authority in the event that the mechanisms for adhering to our statutory requirements in respect of complaints handling and information access rights (specifically FOI and EIR) are not robust.

Statutory Powers:
N/A

Background Papers:
N/A

Appendices:
Appendix 1 – Compliments, Complaints and FOI Report 2022-2023
Appendix 2 – Social Services Compliments and Complaints Report 2022-2023
Appendix 3 – Identifying Lessons from Complaints
Appendix 4 – Ombudsman's Annual Letter (dated 17th August 2023)
Appendix 5 – Summaries of Ombudsman Early Resolution/Voluntary Settlements

Corporate Lead Officer:
Alun Williams, Corporate Lead Officer: Policy, Performance and Public Protection

Reporting Officer:
Marie-Neige Hadfield, Complaints & Freedom of Information Manager

Date:
23rd October 2023

Compliments, Complaints and Freedom of Information Report

Cyngor Sir
CEREDIGION
County Council

2022 – 2023

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 This report will provide information regarding the number of **Compliments**, **Complaints** and information requests received under the **Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000**, and the **Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) 2004** during the period between 1st April 2022 and 31st March 2023.

1.2 Each section of the report will focus on the Council's management and performance of each of its statutory and procedural obligations in respect of complaints management and access to information rights that are within the responsibility of the Complaints and FOI Team. The various legislation/policies are outlined below:

* **Model Concerns and Complaints Policy (Corporate) 2020**

* **Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014**

* **Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)**

* **Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR)**

1.3 The Complaints and FOI Team is a small team, consisting of 3.8 staff members, and is responsible for the administrative function under the aforementioned legislation and policies, including any cases referred to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales ("the Ombudsman"). The Complaints and FOI Team provides advice, assistance, and support to Council officers on a corporate level, as well as to schools – under a partnership agreement.

1.4 Following the formation of the **Complaints Standards Authority (CSA)** under the **Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) 2019 Act**, all public authorities across Wales are required to submit their complaints activity to the CSA on a quarterly basis. This information is freely available on the Ombudsman's website.

1.5 The Council continues to work positively with the Ombudsman and Section 4 of this report will provide details of the **complaints that were referred to the Ombudsman** during this reporting year. It is worth noting that this is the fourth consecutive reporting period whereby there have been no formal investigations launched into a complaint against Ceredigion County Council. However, it is acknowledged that the Council has encountered the highest number of cases requiring Ombudsman intervention (compared with other Local Authorities). Such instances are referred to as Early Resolution/Voluntary Settlement decisions and will be addressed in greater detail below.

1.6 Pro-active resolution of any concerns received by citizens and service-users remains a high priority and every effort is made to achieve satisfactory outcomes when such instances are brought to our attention. Due to the continued efforts and positive collaboration between staff and managers across the Council, it is far more effective to resolve concerns when they are received as an 'enquiry', without needing to initiate the formal complaints procedure.

1.7   A total of **403 enquiries** were managed by the Complaints and FOI Team during this reporting period. However, the service does not yet have sufficient reporting capabilities that can identify how many of these enquiries subsequently required resolution via the (most appropriate) complaints procedure.

1.8   This report will provide some complaints information on a corporate level, i.e. data concerning complaints managed under the **corporate** <u>**and**</u> the **Social Services** policies. Both involve a **two-stage process**, but the requirements and timescales set out within each of these is different.

1.9   A report summarising the arrangements under the statutory Social Services complaints policy, which also provides analysis of all compliments and complaints that were received during 2022-2023, has been compiled for inclusion in the Statutory Director of Social Services' performance report. This document should be considered in conjunction with this report and is included as **Appendix 2**.

1.10 This report will therefore provide an overview of the corporate policy and additional detail surrounding the number, trends and outcomes of complaints registered for this reporting period (2022-2023).

1.11 The corporate Concerns and Complaints Policy consists of two stages;

   ➤ **Stage 1 is the informal stage and must be concluded within ten-working-days**

   ➤ **Stage 2 requires a formal investigation, at a level deemed reasonable and proportionate to the issues being raised.**

1.12 The underpinning ethos for ensuring the effective resolution of complaints recommends as follows: '*Investigate once, investigate well*'. Formal investigations under Stage 2 may occasionally take longer than the **20-working-days** outlined within the policy. However, every effort will be made to keep the complainant informed as to any delays and when they should expect to receive the Council's formal response.

1.13 Information concerning the Council's performance in this regard is provided within this report, but the priority remains to ensure a robust and meaningful investigation is undertaken – even if this takes longer than the prescribed timescales. It is acknowledged however that significant challenges associated with service-continuity within the Complaints and FOI Team has once again impacted on the Service's ability to maintain effective communication with complainants in some instances.

1.14 The Corporate Lead Officer (CLO) for Policy, Performance & Public Protection is responsible for all complaints and FOI activity within the Council and will escalate matters of concern to the relevant member(s) of the Leadership Group. In addition, the CLO is the Council's nominated Senior Officer for the Ombudsman and the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) in relation to complaints and FOI performance, respectively.

2. Compliments

2.1 All compliments received from service-users are recorded and monitored on a regular basis. Such positive feedback is used to **share and promote good practice** wherever possible. Compliments are a source of encouragement that Council staff are delivering a valuable and high standard of service to those on the receiving end.

2.2 Opportunities may also exist to share good practice beyond the service area(s) receiving the positive feedback, as this can aid in adopting tried and tested methods of effective service delivery on a broader level.

2.3 The table below shows the number of compliments that were received for each service area during 2022-2023, along with the data for the two reporting periods preceding this:

Service	2020 – 2021	2021 – 2022	2022 – 2023
Customer Contact & ICT	37	29	44
Democratic Services	-	2	3
Economy & Regeneration	11	14	12
Finance & Procurement	24	5	6
Highways & Environmental Services	26	25	33
Legal & Governance	-	1	3
People & Organisation	-	-	-
Policy, Performance & Public Protection	3	5	16
Porth Cymorth Cynnar	344	29	57
Porth Cynnal	72	27	78
Porth Gofal	169	77	139
Schools & Lifelong Learning	11	4	5
*Corporate	117	6	69
Total	**814**	**224**	**465**

Positive feedback provided in general terms (towards the entire Council workforce) and towards the office of the Chief Executive and Corporate Directors

2.4 It is worth noting that the Council **only** records compliments that are received from **external sources**. As a consequence, services that have very little, or no, direct contact with the public will naturally be less likely to receive any positive feedback that would qualify for inclusion within this report. The absence of data recorded against certain services, therefore, is not indicative of a lack of appreciation for their working practices or any reflection on their general performance.

2.5 Data can be influenced by events during a specific reporting period, e.g. a significant number of compliments were received for Porth Cymorth Cynnar and on a 'Corporate' level, during 2020 – 2021. This is consistent with the extraordinary efforts made by officers during the height of the coronavirus pandemic (issuing food-boxes, support for carers etc.).

2.6 A similar trend occurred during this reporting period whereby a number of compliments were recorded on a 'corporate' level; this was mainly attributed to the success of the National Eisteddfod, that was held in Tregaron during August 2022.

2.7 Snapshot of compliments received during 2022 – 2023

"I'd just like to say how much I thoroughly enjoyed the recent events held through Porth Cymorth Cynnar in the Bandstand and Penparcau Family Centre. I learnt a lot and particularly enjoyed sewing my bucket hat. I hope there will be more events like these in the future." - Porth Cymorth Cynnar -

"On our recent short holiday based at Tregaron, we travelled by car to all points of the compass. We were impressed by the excellent condition of all the roads whether main A roads or narrow winding lanes, as we toured about. Thank you very much for contributing to an enjoyable first visit to your country." - Highways & Environmental Services -

"Amazing! Spent a lot of time here. Bird boxes, glitter, smoothies, hair, flower-arranging, climbing wall – great. Children loved it. Plenty of activities of all varieties. Thank you!" - Corporate -

"I'd like to thank the officers who have made it possible for the lower path of Pen Dinas to be widened and resurfaced, as I noticed today whilst walking on the hill. This will make a big difference to people in the area as well as tourists, increasing access for people with mobility issues and contributing to their wellbeing." - Economy & Regeneration -

"As ever, I am so very grateful for the excellent way in which you have helped us and continue to provide support. Your efficiency is outstanding and your advice on all matters is friendly, thorough, and very reassuring to me." - Porth Cynnal -

"A short message to thank you for supporting the sessions over the past few weeks and for sharing the information. What you are doing with the [Ukrainian Refugee] Welcome Centres is special – thank you very much." - Policy, Performance & Public Protection -

"Thank you / Diolch from the bottom of our hearts for all of the care and love you showed and gave to X. He was so happy and loved all of you, you gave him the best years of his life." - Porth Gofal -

"I just wanted to say a massive thank you for the ceremony yesterday: it was perfect! We wanted an intimate wedding with our little family unit and that's what we had. You've given us memories to treasure forever." - Customer Contact and ICT -

"Your support and advice have been incredibly valuable; I cannot thank you enough." - Corporate -

"Thank you to all the staff for arranging the Christmas Party in Hafan Deg. It was nice to see everyone today. Lovely food, music and presents for all." - Porth Cynnal-

"I would like to thank staff for all the work they do within Clic" - Customer Contact & ICT -

"I recently made a visit to mid-Wales visiting Rhayader, Devil's Bridge and then Aberystwyth via the mountain road. I had a wonderful time and wanted to express my satisfaction of the local services especially during these difficult times." - Corporate -

3. Complaints

3.1 The chart below shows the **total number of complaints** received by the Council each year. This does not include the number of service requests, enquiries or concerns that were able to be resolved by the relevant service(s) on a pro-active basis or those which did not fall within the remit of the complaints policies: e.g. instances whereby an alternative route of appeal was available, or if the issue being complained about was considered to be a *'properly made decision'*. This is when the Council takes a course of action that is entirely legitimate and is supported by legislation and/or policy.

Total Number of Complaints Received

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
	135	133	124	103	133	144
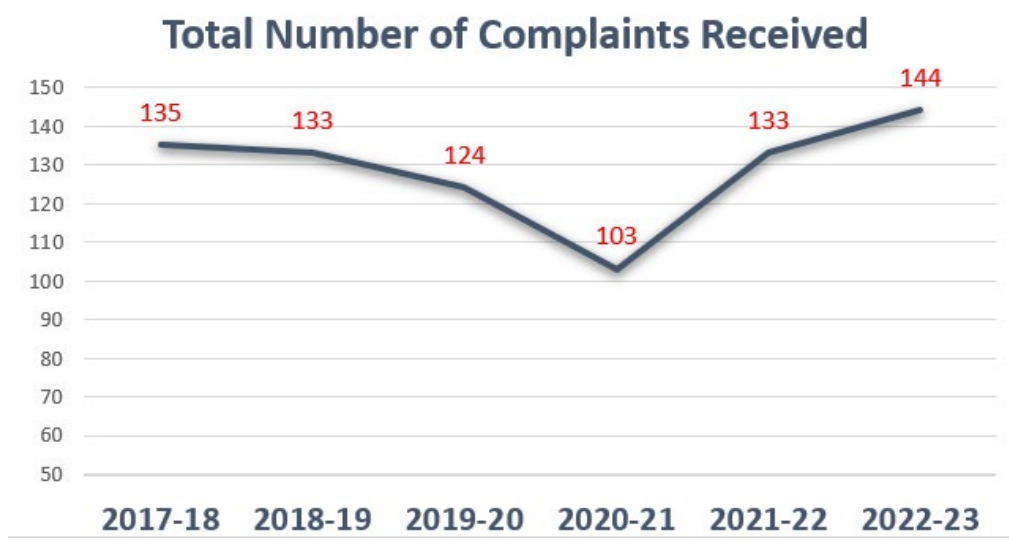
3.2 The table below separates **complaints by stage**, for each of the reporting years referred to above.

Year	Stage 1	Stage 2	Total
2017-18	96	39	135
2018-19	92	40	133
2019-20	85	39	124
2020-21	61	42	103
2021-22	73	60	133
2022-23	**96**	**48**	**144**

3.3 No complaints were received during 2022-2023 regarding the provision (or lack thereof) of **Welsh Language services** across the Council, and no referrals were received from the Welsh Language Commissioner.

3.4 To put the above in context, it is worth noting that the Council logged **95,421** enquiries during 2022-2023.

3.5 This chart shows the **breakdown of complaints by Service** and also provides an additional **'multi-Service'** category, which is used when complaints span more than one service area.
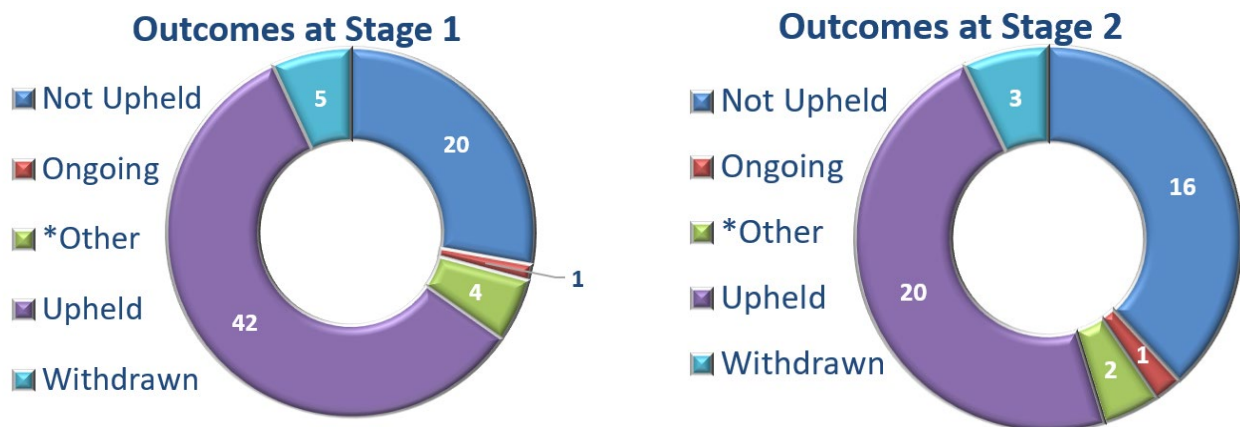
Complaints by Service

Service	Count
HIGHWAYS & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES	43
ECONOMY & REGENERATION	27
PORTH CYNNAL	25
PORTH GOFAL	13
FINANCE & PROCUREMENT	10
SCHOOLS & LIFELONG LEARNING	6
PORTH CYMORTH CYNNAR	5
POLICY, PERFORMANCE & PUBLIC PROTECTION	5
CUSTOMER CONTACT & ICT	5
MULTI-SERVICE	4
PEOPLE & ORGANISATION	1
LEGAL & GOVERNANCE	
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES	
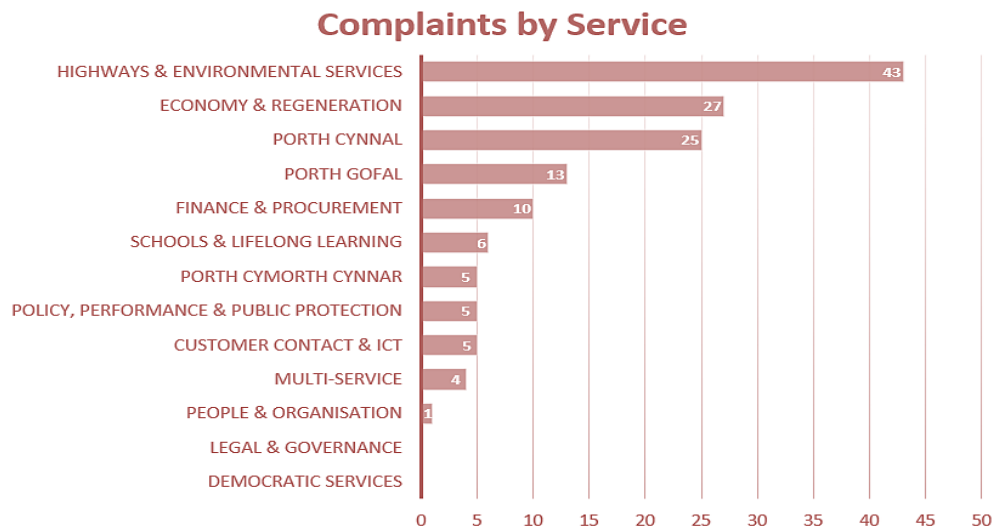
3.6 The following information refers to the number of complaints that were **closed** during this reporting year. Please note that there will be disparity between the number of complaints **received** and those that were **concluded** during 2022-2023, this is due to the time required to investigate and respond to complaints (e.g. a complaint received on 31st March 2022 will be recorded as having been received during 2021-2022, but unless the complaint is closed on the day of receipt, the **outcome** will be included within the annual report for 2022-2023).

3.7 Analysis of the **Stage 1** complaints that were concluded during 2022-2023 is provided below and shows the number of cases that were: **resolved successfully**, escalated to a **formal investigation** under Stage 2 (in the event the complainant was dissatisfied with the outcome), and the number of complaints that had to be escalated to Stage 2 due to the Council's **failure to respond** within the prescribed timescale for Stage 1 complaints (**ten-working-days**). The second chart shows the different **reasons** for why complaints were investigated at Stage 2. Of note, **15 complaints** were **immediately** considered at the formal stage, which is permitted under the policy and will usually occur when serious complaints are received, or those involving contact from the **Ombudsman**.

OUTCOMES FOLLOWING STAGE 1

- No Escalation - Successfully Resolved: 64
- Escalation - Dissatisfied with Outcome at Stage 1: 8
- Escalation - Failure to Respond Within Timescale (10w/d): 19

REASONS FOR ESCALATION TO STAGE 2

- Unhappy with Outcome at Stage 1: 8
- Severity of issues raised: 15
- Failure to complete Stage 1 within timescales: 19
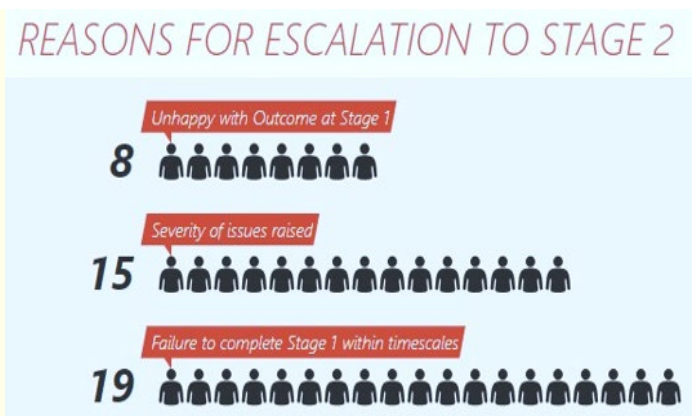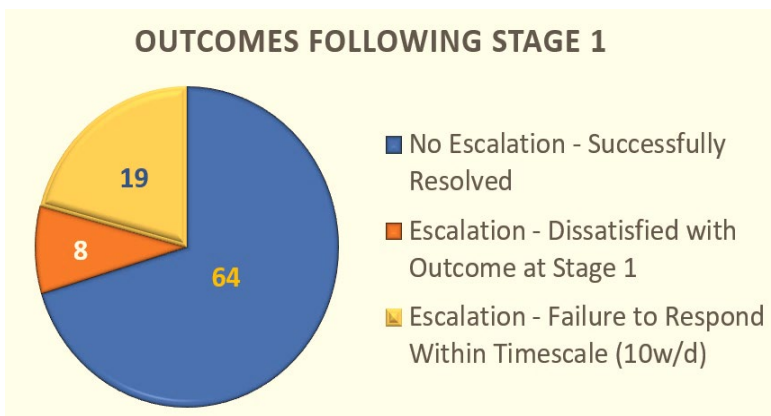
3.8   The outcomes of all **72 Stage 1 complaints** that were closed during 2022-2023 are shown below.   The category referred to as **'Other'** represents any complaints that were subsequently considered under a **different process** or were later deemed to be o**utside of the scope of the complaints policy** (e.g. where an alternative policy should be followed or if it became apparent that the specific issue should not be considered as a 'complaint').   The same applies to the **42 Stage 2 complaints** that were investigated under the corporate policy and were concluded during 2022-2023.

Outcomes at Stage 1

Not Upheld
Ongoing
*Other
Upheld
Withdrawn

5, 20, 1, 4, 42

Outcomes at Stage 2

Not Upheld
Ongoing
*Other
Upheld
Withdrawn

3, 16, 1, 2, 20

3.9   A total of **19 Stage 1** complaints were **escalated** to Stage 2 due to the **10-working-day timescale being exceeded**. This is consistent with the Model Complaints Policy issued by the Ombudsman in accordance with its Complaints Standards Authority (CSA) regulations. This represents **17%** of all Stage 1 complaints and demonstrates that improvements are needed to ensure compliance with the Stage 1 policy.

3.10 Of the **42 Stage 2** complaints that were investigated during this reporting period, **15** cases were closed **within the prescribed timescale of 20-working-days**. This represents only **36%** of all formal complaints having been closed within stipulated timescales. Again, **a great deal of improvement is needed** to ensure that complaints are investigated and responded to promptly.   Such improvements will likely minimise the number of referrals to the Ombudsman.

3.11 Identifying lessons from complaints

3.12 Every effort has been made throughout this reporting period to capture more information on the **lessons that are identified as a consequence of complaints** and highlighting the **improvements and opportunities** arising from them. Unfortunately, the current recording system for complaints is incompatible for in-depth analysis on a case-by-case basis; however, all upheld complaints have been reviewed for the purposes of presenting information about lessons identified within this report.

3.13 Whilst there should always be opportunities to share good practice, more often than not improvements are identified when a complaint is **upheld**. Information is provided in **Appendix 3** which lists the various strategies, improvements and training opportunities that have all arisen as a consequence of a complaint.

3.14 Following consideration by various democratic committees when the Annual Compliments, Complaints and FOI Report was presented in 2022, a request was made for more information about complaints whereby **'communication'** was considered to be a significant factor. Analysis has therefore been undertaken in respect of this and, whilst **poor communication is a feature of most complaints**, information has been collated to determine the cases where this is the primary factor, or at least a significant aspect of the issue culminating in a complaint.

3.15 Of the **106** corporate complaints received during this reporting period, there were **56 cases** that directly referred to a **lack of communication** on the Council's part. Of these, **39 complaints** arose simply as a consequence of service's **'failure to respond'** to people. It must also be mentioned that the **Complaints and FOI Team** has experienced significant challenges in **maintaining communication** with those who contact the service (either during the course of the complaints process or when seeking to resolve the vast number of enquiries received).

3.16 The main reasons given for the communication shortcomings predominantly refers to a **lack of available resources** and problems encountered with the **allocation** of **service requests** and/or **enquiries**. This must be viewed in the context of the **increasing demands** from the public and the **additional complexity** of the issues arising.

4. Complaints to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

4.1 Information regarding the number of complaints that were referred to the **Ombudsman** during the reporting year is detailed within the Ombudsman's **Annual Letter**, which is provided in **Appendix 4**. This document gives some detail surrounding the **service areas** that have been involved in referrals to the Ombudsman, as well as their **outcomes**.

4.2 Whilst the Council received **fewer referrals** to the Ombudsman during 2022-2023 – a total of **35**, compared with **52** contacts during 2021-2022, the number of cases resolved via **Early Resolution / Voluntary Settlement** is **consistent** with last year, totalling **13 cases**. Once again, the Ombudsman **did not conduct any investigations** into complaints referred to her office, though it is acknowledged that Ceredigion received the highest proportion of Ombudsman interventions compared with other Councils across Wales.

4.3 **Poor communication** remains a key theme in respect of complaints made to the Ombudsman. **Summaries** of the cases requiring Ombudsman intervention is provided in the **Appendix 5** (in relation to all Council services), and it is evident that the challenges that have faced the **Complaints and FOI Team** in particular, has had an **impact** on the ability to provide an **effective complaint handling service**. Again, this is as a consequence of the demands on the small team, that deals with complaints, FOI and EIR, and provides advice and assistance to schools under a designated Partnership Agreement.

4.4 The high volume of '**enquiries**' (which in themselves may not be straightforward - as these will include cases whereby the complaints policy may not apply, but which require a comprehensive response nonetheless) is a **key factor** in the deployment of critical resources to an aspect of work that cannot be measured. This was further compounded by **staff absence** and the **recruitment and training** of a new staff member.

4.5 It is encouraging to note that of the **44 complaints closed** by the Ombudsman during 2022-2023, **31** were either **premature (5)**, **out of jurisdiction (4)** or, in the **majority** of cases **(22)** the Ombudsman **closed the complaint following their initial assessment**. This suggests that the **action** taken by the Council was **reasonable and proportionate**, and that nothing further could be achieved by the Ombudsman undertaking a review of the case.

4.6 The graph provided below shows the outcomes of all complaints closed by the Ombudsman during the last three reporting years:

Ombudsman Outcomes

Legend: ■ 2019/20 ■ 2021/22 ■ 2022/23

Values by category:
- Out of Jurisdiction: 2, 4, 4
- Premature: 9, 13, 5
- Closed after initial consideration: 15, 16, 22
- Discontinued: 0, 0, 0
- Early Resolution / Voluntary Settlement: 4, 13, 13
- Reports Upheld: 0, 0, 0
- Reports Not Upheld: 0, 0, 0
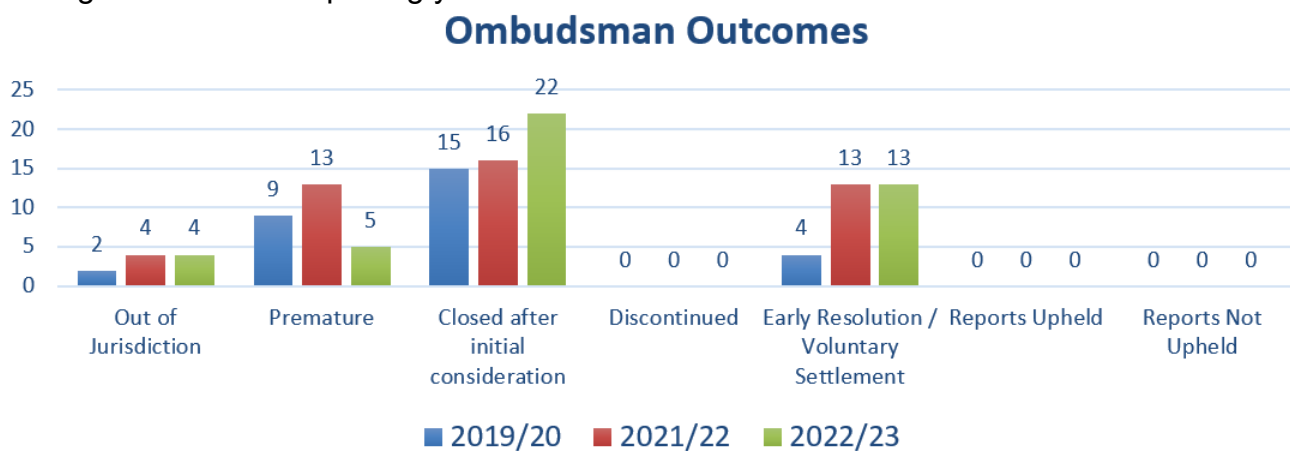
5. Requests Received under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act and the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR)

5.1 During this reporting period the Council received a total of **882** requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) or Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR). Of these, **13** cases were escalated to the Corporate Lead Officer (CLO) for Policy, Performance & Public Protection requiring Internal Review.

5.2 This demonstrates a slight increase compared with previous years, as shown below:

FOI / EIR Activity

- 2020-2021: 756
- 2021-2022: 780
- 2022-2023: 882
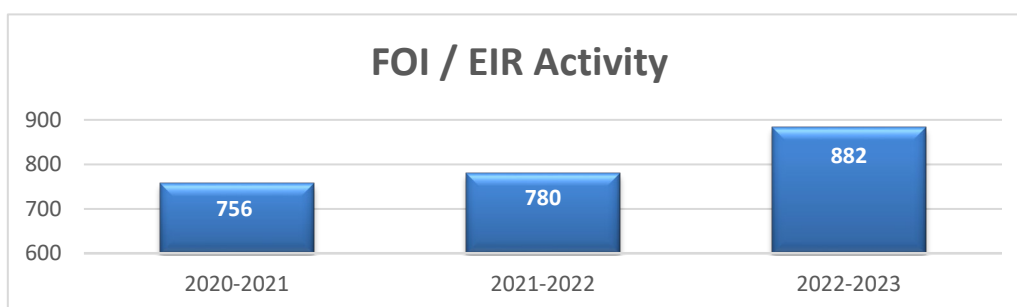
5.3 In addition, **9 complaints** were made to the **Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)**, all of which were resolved without further action. This remains consistent with the previous reporting year, which also recorded 9 referrals to the ICO.

5.4 The Council's **compliance** with meeting the timescales set out under FOI legislation and the EIR Regulations (**20-working-days**, with EIR's allowed to take up to **40-working-days** if the information requested is voluminous) was a cause for concern, which has prompted a significant amount of work to raise awareness of the Council's statutory obligations in this regard.

5.5 A **breakdown** of the number of FOI's and EIR's received according to **Service** is provided below.

Service	FOIs Received	EIRs Received
Customer Contact & ICT	68	-
Democratic Services	18	-
Economy & Regeneration	61	38
Finance & Procurement	172	-
Highways & Environmental Services	64	31
Legal & Governance Services	7	-
People & Organisation	58	-
Policy, Performance & Public Protection	123	10
Porth Cymorth Cynnar	12	1
Porth Cynnal	63	-
Porth Gofal	87	-
Schools & Lifelong Learning	60	-
Multi-Service	9	-
Total	**802**	**80**

Social Services Compliments & Complaints Report 2022-2023

Compliments

A total of **217 compliments** were received from service-users and/or their representatives during this reporting period. This is more than double the number of compliments that were recorded for Social Services during 2021-2022 (104 in total). Some examples of the compliments received are provided below.

Service	Compliments Received
Porth Cynnal	78
Porth Gofal	139
Total	217

"As ever, I am so very grateful for the excellent way in which you have helped us and continue to provide support. Your efficiency is outstanding and your advice on all matters is friendly, thorough, and very reassuring to me." – Mental Health / Wellbeing

"(Service user) was grateful for the afternoon and enjoyed meeting us all, knowing that the support was there should she need it." – Early Intervention

"Thank you / Diolch from the bottom of our hearts for all of the care and love you showed and gave to X. He was so happy and loved all of you, you gave him the best years of his life." – Porth Gofal

"Thank you for all your help and support during the last few months, my grandmother and the whole family appreciated it." – Direct Services

"The holistic manner that you work with, is outstanding and I so wish that others who are educating themselves in order to work in social care could have some of your insight in how things should be done and be allowed the time and resources to do so. Once again you are an absolutely fantastic social worker and there should be more like you." – Mental Wellbeing

"We are very pleased with the quick response from the OT Service. They were clear in their communication, kept us updated throughout, and have provided valuable support to enable my mum, who is 93, to be much safer and more confident in her own home. This has been hugely beneficial to myself and the rest of the family, as we have been very worried about her. We are very thankful for the help and support." – Occupational Therapy Service

"Thank you for putting forward various options and many thanks for your kind assistance." – Integrated Triage & Assessment Service

Complaints Report

Introduction

This report will refer specifically to all **Social Services compliments and complaints** received during 2022 – 2023. This data will also be included as part of the Council's Annual Compliments, Complaints and Freedom of Information (FOI) Report for 2022 – 2023, on a corporate level, which will be published later in the year.

The Council has fully implemented the requirements outlined in Welsh Government's statutory **Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014** and the **Representations Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014**. These regulations underpin the Council's own **Social Services Complaints Policy**, which is due to be reviewed during the forthcoming year. The current Policy was approved by the Council's Cabinet committee on 17th March 2020, and predominantly sets out the responsibilities placed upon staff within **Porth Cynnal** and **Porth Gofal** Services, as well as the corporate **Complaints and FOI Team**. This promotes accountability and ensures that effective arrangements are in place to resolve concerns at the earliest opportunity, and if this is not possible, to ensure complaints are managed in accordance with the Council's statutory obligations.

It is vital that the Social Services complaints process operates in accordance with the principles of the **Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014**, as well as ensuring that the process is accessible to all, and is fair and transparent.

Social Services Complaints Activity

Every effort is made to resolve complaints pro-actively and in many cases this is successful. In such instances the contact will be recorded as a concern. However, in some cases this is not possible, particularly when the issues being raised are of a serious or complex nature. These instances will be managed in accordance with the aforementioned complaints policy and procedures.

The Social Services complaints procedure consists of **two stages**, and Corporate Managers within Social Services (i.e. Porth Cynnal and Porth Gofal) are responsible for managing complaints against their respective service-areas, ensuring that the appropriate level of decision-making and accountability is in place. The Corporate Managers strive to achieve meaningful outcomes as a consequence of complaints and, where necessary, measures will be implemented to ensure lessons are learned and any service improvements are prioritised. The Complaints and FOI Team is independent from Social Services, managed within the Policy, Performance & Public Protection Service, and is responsible for overseeing the administration of the complaints process.

A total of **60 'concerns'** were received within the reporting period, with the majority having been resolved satisfactorily without requiring escalation under the formal complaints procedure. However, this report will focus on the **complaints** that were investigated under stages 1 and 2 during the course of the reporting year.

For information, Stage 1 is the only opportunity that is available for Corporate Managers to investigate and/or resolve a complaint. The statutory regulations stipulate that an Independent Investigating Officer (IIO) must be appointed to conduct investigations at Stage 2 and, in cases involving children, an Independent Person (IP) is also commissioned to oversee the investigation process. Once the Council's own complaints process has been exhausted, complainants have the right to refer their complaint to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) if they remain dissatisfied.

Total number of complaints received in 2022 – 2023

Service Area	Stage 1	Stage 2	Total
Porth Cynnal	19	6	**25**
Porth Gofal	12	1	**13**
	31	7	38

A total of **38 complaints** were received in relation to Social Services in 2022–2023, which demonstrates an increase when comparing these figures to the previous reporting period. During 2021–2022 there were **22** complaints in total which were addressed under the Social Services complaints policy.

Senior staff in Porth Gofal and Porth Cynnal continue to work closely with the Complaints and FOI Team by adopting an early-resolution approach when appropriate and this is proving to be an effective strategy. From the 60 concerns managed pro-actively, only eleven cases subsequently went on to be investigated at Stages 1 and/or 2; this equates to **82% of all concerns having been resolved satisfactorily** in the first instance.

Comparative data

Comparative data is provided below with regard to complaints received by Porth Cynnal and Porth Gofal, for the years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 and the current reporting period – 2022-2023.

SOCIAL SERVICES COMPLAINTS
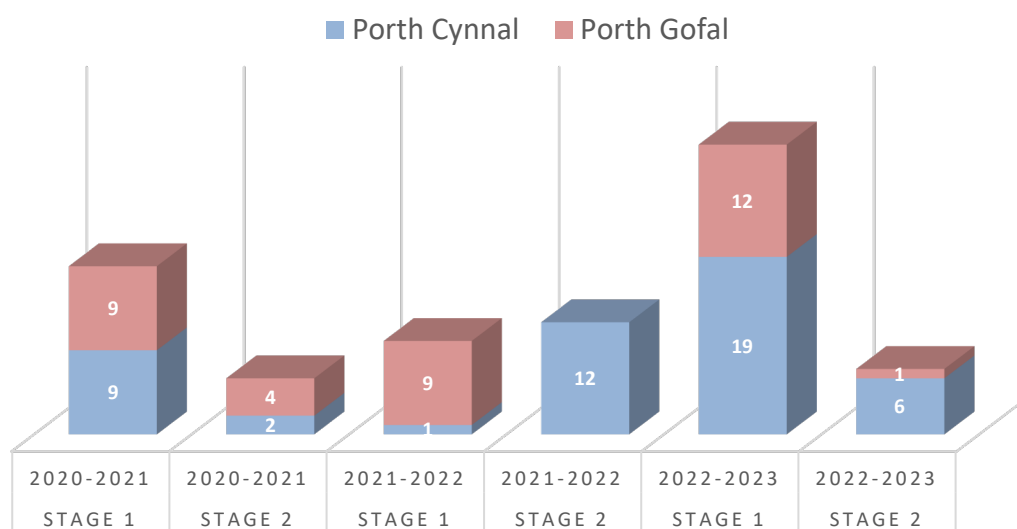
Complaint Outcomes by Service

A breakdown of the number of complaints and their outcomes is provided below, in accordance with the relevant service areas:

Porth Cynnal	Not Upheld	Upheld	Ongoing / Suspended / Discontinued
Planned Care (Adults) (3)		1	2
Planned Care (Children) (6)	2	2	2
Safeguarding (Adults) (4)	1		3
Safeguarding (Children) (4)	1		3
Extended Support (Adults) (6)	1		5
Mental Wellbeing (Adults) (2)	2		
Total	**7**	**3**	**15**

Porth Gofal	Not Upheld	Upheld	Ongoing / Suspended / Discontinued
Integrated Triage & Assessment (Adults) (6)	2	1	2
Integrated Triage & Assessment (Children) (3)	1	2	
Targeted Intervention Service (3)			3
Direct Services (1)		1	
Total	**3**	**5**	**5**

Stage 1 Timescales

Of the **31** complaints which were recorded at Stage 1, only **16** were concluded (i.e. not suspended, withdrawn or discontinued – this will be explained in more detail in the analysis). **7** of these complaints were closed within the prescribed timescales. The remaining **9** exceeded the timescales.
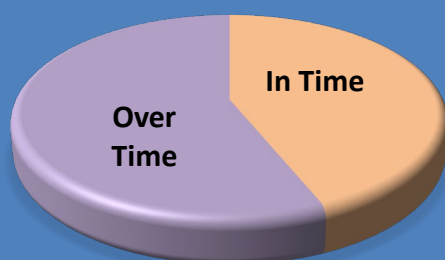
Stage 2 Timescales

Only **5** of the **7** complaints that were recorded at Stage 2, progressed to the independent investigation stage, because two complainants decided to withdraw their complaints. All five of the complaints that were investigated took longer than prescribed timescale of 25-working-days.

However, the statutory requirements to obtain written approval from the Director of Social Services was fully complied with, and responses were issued at the earliest opportunity following completion of the investigation.

Analysis and Conclusions

Firstly, closer analysis of the **60 cases** that were initially recorded as **'concerns'** revealed that **only 11** of these **subsequently escalated to the formal complaints stage**. This predominantly supports the benefits associated with taking a '**pro-active resolution**' approach, where possible. The remaining 49 concerns (82%) were resolved successfully without further action required.

There has clearly been an **increase** in the number of complaints received in relation to Social Services during 2022-2023. Having received **31 Stage 1** complaints in the last year, this is the highest level since 2015-2016, when 32 Stage 1 complaints were received in a single year. There were **fewer Stage 2 investigations** conducted during this reporting period and in terms of outcomes, the ratio of upheld to not upheld complaints was fairly balanced.

However, the most striking factor within this year's report is that a total of **20 complaints** were not concluded. There are a variety of reasons behind these, which will be explained below.

A 'complaint' is usually recorded at the point of receipt when it is deemed to meet the criteria for instigating the policy immediately: i.e. it is not a 'first time request for a service' or the issues being raised are felt to be sufficiently serious that intervention at Corporate Manager level is necessary.

There are, however, other factors that need to be considered once a complaint is formally recorded, but before the process can actively commence:

- ensuring appropriate consent is obtained from the service-user (when others raise concerns on their behalf).
- consideration as to whether there are any 'concurrent investigations' underway (i.e. if there are any court proceedings or safeguarding investigations that could be compromised by a complaint investigation)
- ascertaining whether the complaints process can be followed at all (e.g. instances whereby the complainant is seeking to overturn a decision made by a Court)

In these instances, the complaint may not be able to progress until the necessary checks are completed and this can occasionally take some time, whilst engagement between the Service and the complainant ensues.

Analysis of the **20 complaints** that were not concluded during the reporting period showed that:

- **3 complaints** were **resolved immediately** following the intervention of the Corporate Manager for the relevant Service.
- Failure to supply the service-user's **consent** accounted for the discontinuation of **4 complaints**.
- In **5 cases**, the complainant **failed to engage** with the complaints process and the cases were subsequently closed.
- **4 complaints** were **ongoing** or **escalated to Stage 2** before completion of the Stage 1 complaint.
- **3 cases** were actively **withdrawn** by the complainant's.
- **1 complaint** was unable to be progressed due to **other investigations** taking priority.

Whilst this is an unprecedented number of complaints that were not concluded within the reporting year, the cases were managed in accordance with the statutory policies and procedures and, in the interests of openness and transparency these complaints were not removed from the system. Furthermore, all complaints were shared with the relevant service areas and the Corporate Managers responsible in each case sought to ensure that there were no underlying issues that required further intervention or investigation.

Response times at both stages of the complaints process requires improvement, though only one case exceeded the six-month timeframe. Complaints that take longer than the prescribed timescale to resolve is occasionally unavoidable, and the overarching priority is to ensure that complaints are investigated thoroughly, and careful consideration is given to the findings and recommendations which emerge from such investigations.

Porth Cynnal received a higher number of complaints which is largely due to the nature of the services they deliver, and their complexity.

Of the **18 complaints** that were fully investigated, **8** were upheld. Although this is an increase compared with the figures analysed during 2021-2022 (4 complaints upheld), this represents 44% of all complaints investigated, which is still an improvement on the statistics for 2020-2021, whereby 58% were upheld. Further, whilst almost half of all complaints investigated were upheld, acknowledgement must also be given to the number of concerns that were successfully resolved, and the complaints that were withdrawn earlier in the process because of the work undertaken by services to remedy the issues.

Themes and Trends
Poor communication remains a consistent factor in most complaints, and, in many cases, these are addressed promptly at service-level to prevent unnecessary escalation. This was evidently the case in respect of the 49 concerns resolved pro-actively, which far exceeds the number of cases that were subsequently investigated under the formal complaints process.

Timescales
As identified in previous reporting periods, improvements need to be made with regard to response times, particularly at Stage 1 of the complaints process. There is a requirement at Stage 1 to offer a 'discussion' between the complainant and the relevant Corporate Manager. Therefore, securing the availability of managers remains a challenge, as well as attempting to then co-ordinate their availability with that of the complainant. This will continue to be monitored in future reporting periods.

It has also become increasingly evident during the course of the reporting period that poor complaints handling has become a prominent feature in the failure to process cases expediently. Extensive efforts are being made to ensure better communication between Social Services and the Complaints and FOI Team, but some challenges have arisen as a consequence of increased complaints and FOI activity on a corporate level, as well as in the case of Social Services. This remains an ongoing concern which has been escalated as necessary.

Learning Lessons

In all cases whereby a complaint is deemed to be upheld (either in its entirety or specific elements) it is crucial that recommendations are put in place to learn lessons and prevent any recurrence in the future. Examples of some lessons learned from complaints received during 2022–2023 are summarised below:

- *It was agreed that the Service would commence a weekly log of all communication, which will be shared with the complainant and minutes of meetings will be shared promptly with the relevant parties. This should limit anxiety levels due to lack of communication and delays in receiving documentation from the service.*

- *Relevant staff will ensure that discussions are held with interested parties in advance of formal meetings, so that everybody is aware of the format of the meeting and how they are expected to contribute to this. These discussions will be recorded, and a formal record will be given to all attendees as part of the process. In addition, staff were reminded about the importance of making a brief log of any telephone conversations, in accordance with relevant Council policies.*

- *Completion of assessments / reviews and carer's assessments to be considered upon receipt of complaints, to ensure that level of care provision adequately meets the needs of the individual.*

Complaints referred to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW)

During 2022–2023 the Council received **eleven** new contacts from the office of the PSOW relating to Social Services complaints. These related to cases within the following services:

- ➢ Porth Cynnal (7)
- ➢ Porth Gofal (4)

There were a greater number of referrals received from the Ombudsman during 2022-2023, with only 9 having been received in 2021-2022.

Whilst no complaints referred to the PSOW resulted in a formal investigation, there were **eight complaints** that required intervention by the Ombudsman. These complaints were resolved by way of *'Early Resolution / Voluntary Settlement agreements'* reached with the Ombudsman's office, the details of which are provided in the table overleaf.

Cases requiring Ombudsman intervention by way of Early Resolution Agreements

Service(s) & Reference	Summary of Complaint	Agreed Actions
Porth Cynnal; Extended Support and Complaint Handling Case ref: 202200812	Complaint had previously been investigated independently under Stage 2; however, the complainant remained dissatisfied with the outcome. The complainant's main concerns were that the Service failed to undertake appropriate and necessary assessments to determine her relative's degree of learning disabilities, and that it failed to consider vital information provided during a telephone consultation.	The Ombudsman advised that the Council should respond to the additional queries raised by the complainant, following the independent investigation at Stage 2.
Porth Cynnal; Safeguarding and Complaint Handling Case Ref: 202201388	Complaint had previously been investigated independently under Stage 2. This process was unnecessarily protracted, and clarification was sought by the complainant regarding information that was included within the independent investigation report. In particular, the complainant wished to receive further information regarding the case law that was referred to, which the Social Worker had based their decision upon when providing care to the complainant's relative.	The Council agreed to provide additional information surrounding the case law that had been considered by the Social Worker at the time that decisions were made surrounding care provision. In addition, an earlier agreement to award a 'Time and Trouble' payment due to the lengthy complaints process, had been overlooked at the point that the formal response was issued. Therefore the Council honoured its earlier decision in this regard, and acknowledged the additional inconvenience caused by having to approach the Ombudsman to obtain the information requested.
Porth Cynnal; Extended Support Case Ref: 202200853	Complaint that the Council had failed to properly implement the terms of an Early Resolution agreement undertaken in September 2020. This included the Council's failure to fully complete a Carer's Assessment, and for the continuing uncertainty surrounding the terms and arrangements of Respite Care. The Complainant was also aggrieved that the Council appeared to take an inconsistent approach to Direct Payment uplift.	The Council agreed to follow up on the arrangements previously agreed in relation to conducting a Carer's Assessment. An Independent Social Worker was commissioned to complete this task. The Council also agreed to write to the complainant within six weeks to provide a full explanation regarding the Council's approach in respect of providing respite care.

Porth Gofal; Integrated Triage & Assessment and Complaint Handling Case Ref: 202205115	Complaint regarding the Council's failure to take seriously the concerns raised by the service-user about the care provider that was commissioned to assist her. The Complainant made a complaint directly to the care provider, but their response was incomplete and inaccurate. The Council declined to investigate the complaint because it was satisfied with the care provider's response and that no further action was needed. However, the Ombudsman disagreed – ruling that the Council did not fulfil its duty to accept the complaint in line with the Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations.	The Council agreed to contact the complainant to obtain her complaint and issue a response which was consistent with the statutory complaints procedure.
Porth Cynnal; Extended Support and Complaint Handling Case Ref: 202206613	Complainant contacted the Ombudsman because the Council had failed to investigate the complaints she had submitted in February 2022.	The Council accepted it had failed to investigate the complaints raised and agreed to commence Stage 1 of the complaints process immediately. An apology was also given for this failure in complaints handling and a redress payment was agreed in acknowledgement of the Time and Trouble the complaint went to in order to have her complaint considered.
Porth Gofal; Integrated Triage & Assessment Service & Complaint Handling Case Ref: 202202005	Complaint that the Council had failed to provide regular and meaningful updates regarding her complaint.	The Council agreed to issue a formal apology and an explanation for the delays she experienced during her complaint. It was also agreed that the formal response would be issued within four weeks of the Ombudsman's decision, and a payment of £100 would be given in recognition of the time and trouble the complainant went to in making her complaint to the Ombudsman.

Porth Cynnal; Extended Support and Complaint Handling Case Ref: 202107463	Following an independent investigation at Stage 2 of the Social Services Complaint Procedure, the complainant contacted the Ombudsman because the Council had failed to implement the recommendations made by the Independent Investigating Officer. In addition, the Council had failed to inform him that a full safeguarding investigation would not be taking place; though the issues identified during the complaint were considered during a Professional Concerns Meeting, under the All Wales Safeguarding Procedures.	By way of a Voluntary Settlement Agreement, the Ombudsman proposed that the Council and the Support Service that was involved in the original complaint, should meet with the complainant and his son (the service-user) formally to explain the safeguarding decision and to discuss any additional measures that would facilitate future learning. It was also agreed that a direct apology was warranted for the lack of communication following the conclusion of the Stage 2 investigation. The Council agreed with this proposal and the necessary actions were undertaken.
Porth Cynnal: Safeguarding Service and Complaint Handling Case Ref: 202107158	Complaint about the Council's failure to close down a safeguarding case promptly, which had repercussions on the complainant's ability to resume specific working responsibilities. The Complainant also stated that her complaint was not appropriately addressed once she had brought these matters to the Council's attention.	The Council accepted full responsibility for the delays the complainant experienced in respect of the safeguarding case, and that this was further compounded by the failure to manage her complaint effectively. Further, the Council accepted it had not fully appreciated the impact that these matters had on the complainant. The Council agreed to provide a corporate apology for the maladministration identified by the Ombudsman and provide financial redress in the sum of £725 in recognition of the injustice that prevented her from returning to her duties within a youth organisation, and for the poor complaints handling – including the time and trouble invested by her, having to pursue her complaint.

Identifying Lessons from Complaints

Summary of Complaint	Lessons Learned
Complaints regarding delayed disclosures under UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR) i.e. in respect of Subject Access Requests. NB: Whilst such complaints are recorded against the Customer Contact & ICT Service, as the lead service for Data Protection, delays mainly arose due to wider services failing to provide the information within the timescale allotted under SAR.	Delays in obtaining information from services – Data Protection Officer to remind Service of their statutory duties re SAR.
Complaint regarding delays in processing cases within the Planning Service.	Extensive efforts are being made to address capacity constraints within the service, including the appointment of external consultants to assist and provide a level of resilience moving forward.
Complaints re. missed waste collections.	Every effort is being made to avoid or minimise service disruption, though this may not be possible - depending on the cause of the disruption (i.e. staff absence or problems with the fleet). Moving forward, the team will review the way that assisted waste collections are provided and communicated within the team. A review of handover arrangements for supervisors will also be undertaken. Review carried out to find an alternative approach to waste collections scheduled for Bank Holiday Mondays being adopted during 2023. Elected Members are provided with twice daily updates on any disruptions.

Complaint regarding improvement work that was due to take place on a Council-adopted Road.	Apologies issued for failing to complete the work that had been agreed and the Corporate Lead Officer will act as the single point of contact for the complainant until the work is complete.
Complaint about delay in sending information to complainant.	Apologies given for delays, which were due to lack of capacity within the service(s) involved – every effort will be made to identify and implement improvements.
Multi-service complaint which included aspects about transport, though the primary failure arose as a consequence of poor complaints handling.	Transport arrangements will be reviewed as soon as possible; however it is acknowledged that the complaint should have been expedited due to the issues being raised. Further training will be provided to the relevant officers.
Complaint about the Council's failure to assess information provided by the service-user, which led to additional problems arising for them.	Apology provided and identified that more timely intervention would have assisted the complainant.
Error made by service, which was rectified once complaint was received, and the service became aware of the issue.	Class C exemption should have been applied - records amended (inc. Bill) to reflect the error. Apologies given.
Complaint about the advice provided by the Housing Service and the delay in resolving the complainant's case.	Apology given for delays and explanation for this - resource problems at the time, which have since been resolved.
Delay in responding to enquiry and subsequent failure to ensure the issue was managed in accordance with the most appropriate protocol.	Training provided re Customer Charter and Complaints Policy

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Ask for: Communications

☎ 01656 641150

Date: 17 August 2023

✉ Communications
@ombudsman.wales

Cllr. Bryan Davies
Ceredigion County Council
By Email only: bryan.davies@ceredigion.go.uk

Annual Letter 2022/23

Dear Councillor Davies

I am pleased to provide you with the Annual letter (2022/23) for Ceredigion County Council which deals with complaints relating to maladministration and service failure, complaints relating to alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct for Councillors and the actions being taken to improve public services.

This letter coincides with my Annual Report – "A year of change – a year of challenge" – a sentiment which will no doubt resonate with public bodies across Wales. My office has seen another increase in the number of people asking for our help – up 3% overall compared to the previous year, and my office now receives double the number of cases we received a decade ago.

In the last year, I have met with public bodies across Wales – speaking about our casework, our recommendations, and our proactive powers. The current climate will continue to provide challenges for public services, but I am grateful for the positive and productive way in which local authorities continue to engage with my office.

1,020 complaints were referred to us regarding local authorities last year - a reduction of 11% compared to the previous year. During this period, we intervened in (upheld, settled or resolved at an early stage) 13% of local authority complaints.

We received fewer Code of Conduct complaints in 22/23 compared to the previous year, relating to both Principal Councils and Town and Community Councils. My role is such that I do not make final findings about breaches of the Code of Conduct. Instead, where investigations find the most serious concerns, these are referred to the Standards Committee of the relevant local authority, or the

Adjudication Panel for Wales. In 2022/23, the Ombudsman made 12 such referrals – a welcome reduction from 20 last year.

Supporting improvement of public services

Despite the challenges of last year, we have pushed forward with our proactive improvement work and launched a new Service Quality process to ensure we deliver the standards we expect.

Last year, we began work on our second wider Own Initiative investigation – this time looking into carers assessments within local authorities. This investigation will take place throughout the coming year, and we look forward to sharing our findings with all local authorities – not just those involved in the investigation.

The Complaints Standards Authority (CSA) continued its work with public bodies in Wales last year, with more than 50 public bodies now operating our model policy. We've also now provided more than 400 training sessions since we started, with local authorities, in September 2020.

We continued our work to publish complaints statistics into a second year, with data now published twice a year. This data allows us to see information with greater context – for example, last year 25% of Ceredigion County Council's complaints were referred to PSOW.

I would encourage Ceredigion County Council, and specifically your Audit and Governance Committee, to use this data to better understand your performance on complaints and consider how well good complaints handling is embedded throughout the Authority.

Further to this letter can I ask that your Council takes the following actions:

- Present my Annual Letter to the Cabinet and to the Governance and Audit Committee at the next available opportunity and notify me of when these meetings will take place.
- Continue to engage with our Complaints Standards work, accessing training for your staff, fully implementing the model policy, and providing accurate and timely complaints data.
- Inform me of the outcome of the Council's considerations and proposed actions on the above matters at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely,

MM. Morris.

Michelle Morris
Public Services Ombudsman
cc. Eifion Evans, Chief Executive, Ceredigion County Council.
By Email only: Eifion.evans@ceredigion.gov.uk

Factsheet

Appendix A - Complaints Received

Local Authority	Complaints Received	Received per 1000 residents
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	16	0.24
Bridgend County Borough Council	55	0.38
Caerphilly County Borough Council	49	0.28
Cardiff Council*	142	0.39
Carmarthenshire County Council	53	0.28
Ceredigion County Council	35	0.49
Conwy County Borough Council	31	0.27
Denbighshire County Council	32	0.33
Flintshire County Council	65	0.42
Cyngor Gwynedd	36	0.31
Isle of Anglesey County Council	25	0.36
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	17	0.29
Monmouthshire County Council	23	0.25
Neath Port Talbot Council	39	0.27
Newport City Council	42	0.26
Pembrokeshire County Council	44	0.36
Powys County Council	38	0.29
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council**	54	0.23
Swansea Council	94	0.39
Torfaen County Borough Council	16	0.17
Vale of Glamorgan Council	49	0.37
Wrexham County Borough Council	65	0.48
Total	**1020**	**0.33**
* inc 9 Rent Smart Wales		
** inc 2 South Wales Parking Group		

Appendix B - Received by Subject

Ceredigion County Council	Complaints Received	% share
Adult Social Services	5	14%
Benefits Administration	0	0%
Children's Social Services	1	3%
Community Facilities, Recreation and Leisure	1	3%
Complaints Handling	14	40%
Covid19	0	0%
Education	1	3%
Environment and Environmental Health	2	6%
Finance and Taxation	0	0%
Housing	3	9%
Licensing	1	3%
Planning and Building Control	2	6%
Roads and Transport	1	3%
Various Other	4	11%
Total	**35**	

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Appendix C - Complaint Outcomes
(* denotes intervention)

Ceredigion County Council		% Share
Out of Jurisdiction	4	9%
Premature	5	11%
Other cases closed after initial consideration	22	50%
Early Resolution/ voluntary settlement*	13	30%
Discontinued	0	0%
Other Reports - Not Upheld	0	0%
Other Reports Upheld*	0	0%
Public Interest Reports*	0	0%
Special Interest Reports*	0	0%
Total	**44**	

Appendix D - Cases with PSOW Intervention

	No. of interventions	No. of closures	% of interventions
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	0	16	0%
Bridgend County Borough Council	5	57	9%
Caerphilly County Borough Council	6	52	12%
Cardiff Council	25	145	17%
Cardiff Council - Rent Smart Wales	1	9	11%
Carmarthenshire County Council	7	60	12%
Ceredigion County Council	13	44	30%
Conwy County Borough Council	5	35	14%
Denbighshire County Council	2	33	6%
Flintshire County Council	5	70	7%
Cyngor Gwynedd	5	33	15%
Isle of Anglesey County Council	5	25	20%
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	1	18	6%
Monmouthshire County Council	1	22	5%
Neath Port Talbot Council	7	38	18%
Newport City Council	8	48	17%
Pembrokeshire County Council	3	45	7%
Powys County Council	8	44	18%
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	2	54	4%
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council - South Wales Parking Group	0	2	0%
Swansea Council	10	99	10%
Torfaen County Borough Council	1	17	6%
Vale of Glamorgan Council	15	53	28%
Wrexham County Borough Council	6	67	9%
Total	**141**	**1086**	**13%**

Investigations

Appendix E - Code of Conduct Complaints

	Ceredigion County Council
Decision not to investigate	1
Discontinued	1
No evidence of breach	0
No action necessary	0
Refer to Adjudication Panel	0
Refer to Standards Committee	0
Total	**2**

ombwdsmon.cymru
holwch@ombwdsmon.cymru
0300 790 0203
1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae, CF 35 5LJ
Rydym yn hapus i dderbyn ac
ymateb i ohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg.

ombudsman.wales
ask@ombudsman.wales
0300 790 0203
1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae, CF 35 5LJ
We are happy to accept and respond
to correspondence in Welsh.

Appendix F - Town/Community Council Code of Complaints

Town/Community Council	Decision not to investigate	Investigations					Total
		Discontinued	No evidence of breach	No action necessary	Refer to Adjudication Panel	Refer to Standards Committee	
Llandysul Community Council	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Llanfair Clydogau Community Council	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Llangoedmor Community Council	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Llansantffraed Community Council	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Quay Town Council	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Trefeurig Community Council	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Information Sheet

Appendix A shows the number of complaints received by PSOW for all Local Authorities in 2022/23. These complaints are contextualised by the population of each authority.

Appendix B shows the categorisation of each complaint received, and what proportion of received complaints represents for the Local Authority.

Appendix C shows outcomes of the complaints which PSOW closed for the Local Authority in 2022/23. This table shows both the volume, and the proportion that each outcome represents for the Local Authority.

Appendix D shows Intervention Rates for all Local Authorities in 2022/23. An intervention is categorised by either an upheld complaint (either public interest or non-public interest), an early resolution, or a voluntary settlement.

Appendix E shows the outcomes of Code Of Conduct complaints closed by PSOW related to Local Authority in 2022/23.This table shows both the volume, and the proportion that each outcome represents for the Local Authority.

Appendix F shows the outcomes of Code of Conduct complaints closed by PSOW related to Town and Community Councils in the Local Authority's area in 2022/23. This table shows both the volume, and the proportion that each outcome represents for each Town or Community Council.

Summary of Ombudsman cases requiring Early Resolution / Voluntary Settlement

Service(s) & Reference	Summary of Complaint	Agreed Actions
Porth Cynnal; Extended Support and Complaint Handling Case ref: 202200812	Complaint had previously been investigated independently under Stage 2; however, the complainant remained dissatisfied with the outcome. The complainant's main concerns were that the Service failed to undertake appropriate and necessary assessments to determine her relative's degree of learning disabilities, and that it failed to consider vital information provided during a telephone consultation.	The Ombudsman advised that the Council should respond to the additional queries raised by the complainant, following the independent investigation at Stage 2.
Porth Cynnal; Safeguarding and Complaint Handling Case Ref: 202201388	Complaint had previously been investigated independently under Stage 2. This process was unnecessarily protracted, and clarification was sought by the complainant regarding information that was included within the independent investigation report. In particular, the complainant wished to receive further information regarding the case law that was referred to, which the Social Worker had based their decision upon when providing care to the complainant's relative.	The Council agreed to provide additional information surrounding the case law that had been considered by the Social Worker at the time that decisions were made surrounding care provision. In addition, an earlier agreement to award a 'Time and Trouble' payment due to the lengthy complaints process, had been overlooked at the point that the formal response was issued. Therefore the Council honoured its earlier decision in this regard, and acknowledged the additional inconvenience caused by having to approach the Ombudsman to obtain the information requested.
Porth Cynnal; Extended Support Case Ref: 202200853	Complaint that the Council had failed to properly implement the terms of an Early Resolution agreement undertaken in September 2020. This included the Council's failure to fully complete a Carer's Assessment, and for the continuing uncertainty surrounding the terms and arrangements of Respite Care. The Complainant was also aggrieved that the Council appeared to take an inconsistent approach to Direct Payment uplift.	The Council agreed to follow up on the arrangements previously agreed in relation to conducting a Carer's Assessment. An Independent Social Worker was commissioned to complete this task. The Council also agreed to write to the complainant within six weeks to provide a full explanation regarding the Council's approach in respect of providing respite care.

Service(s) & Reference	Summary of Complaint	Agreed Actions
Porth Gofal; Integrated Triage & Assessment and Complaint Handling Case Ref: 202205115	Complaint regarding the Council's failure to take seriously the concerns raised by the service-user about the care provider that was commissioned to assist her. The Complainant made a complaint directly to the care provider, but their response was incomplete and inaccurate. The Council declined to investigate the complaint because it was satisfied with the care provider's response and that no further action was needed. However, the Ombudsman disagreed – ruling that the Council did not fulfil its duty to accept the complaint in line with the Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations.	The Council agreed to contact the complainant to obtain her complaint and issue a response which was consistent with the statutory complaints procedure.
Porth Cynnal; Extended Support and Complaint Handling Case Ref: 202206613	Complainant contacted the Ombudsman because the Council had failed to investigate the complaints she had submitted in February 2022.	The Council accepted it had failed to investigate the complaints raised and agreed to commence Stage 1 of the complaints process immediately. An apology was also given for this failure in complaints handling and a redress payment was agreed in acknowledgement of the Time and Trouble the complaint went to in order to have her complaint considered.
Porth Gofal; Integrated Triage & Assessment Service & Complaint Handling Case Ref: 202202005	Complaint that the Council had failed to provide regular and meaningful updates regarding her complaint.	The Council agreed to issue a formal apology and an explanation for the delays she experienced during her complaint. It was also agreed that the formal response would be issued within four weeks of the Ombudsman's decision, and a payment of £100 would be given in recognition of the time and trouble the complainant went to in making her complaint to the Ombudsman.

Service(s) & Reference	Summary of Complaint	Agreed Actions
Porth Cynnal; Extended Support and Complaint Handling Case Ref: 202107463	Following an independent investigation at Stage 2 of the Social Services Complaint Procedure, the complainant contacted the Ombudsman because the Council had failed to implement the recommendations made by the Independent Investigating Officer. In addition, the Council had failed to inform him that a full safeguarding investigation would not be taking place; though the issues identified during the complaint were considered during a Professional Concerns Meeting, under the All Wales Safeguarding Procedures.	By way of a Voluntary Settlement Agreement, the Ombudsman proposed that the Council and the Support Service that was involved in the original complaint, should meet with the complainant and his son (the service-user) formally to explain the safeguarding decision and to discuss any additional measures that would facilitate future learning. It was also agreed that a direct apology was warranted for the lack of communication following the conclusion of the Stage 2 investigation. The Council agreed with this proposal and the necessary actions were undertaken.
Policy, Performance & Public Protection: Complaint Handling Case Ref: 202201302	Complaint regarding the handling of a Freedom of Information request and a lack of response on the part of the Complaints and FOI Service.	Shortcomings in communication were as a consequence of capacity constraints within the Complaints and FOI Service. An apology and a full response was issued to the complainant as agreed by the Ombudsman.
Economy & Regeneration and Complaint Handling Case Ref: 202201085	Complaint regarding the Council's failure to respond to a complaint regarding noise nuisance.	The Council agreed to provide the complainant with an apology and an explanation for the delay in responding to her complaint and to open a new Planning Enforcement investigation file. The Council also agreed to commence an investigation by August 2022 and provide a response to the complainant outlining its findings.
Economy & Regeneration and Complaint Handling Case Ref: 202201596	Complaint regarding a lack of communication and Council's failure to update the complainant regarding her complaint about a retrospective planning application.	The Council acknowledged that it had not provided the complainant with updates on the progression of her complaint. The Council therefore agreed to the Ombudsman's Early Resolution proposal which outlined that it should apologise to the complainant for failing to provide regular and meaningful updates, provide an explanation for why this had happened and to provide the Stage 2 complaint response.

Service(s) & Reference	Summary of Complaint	Agreed Actions
Multi Service – including Complaints Handling Case Ref: 202108019	Complaint that the Council had failed to fully address all the issues referred to in her original complaint. Matters concerning Council Tax had been suitably addressed but her concerns about planning matters remained unanswered.	The Council agreed to provide a formal written response regarding the planning issues within a specific timeframe.
Porth Cynnal: Safeguarding Service and Complaint Handling Case Ref: 202107158	Complaint about the Council's failure to close down a safeguarding case promptly, which had repercussions on the complainant's ability to resume specific working responsibilities. The Complainant also stated that her complaint was not appropriately addressed once she had brought these matters to the Council's attention.	The Council accepted full responsibility for the delays the complainant experienced in respect of the safeguarding case, and that this was further compounded by the failure to manage her complaint effectively. Further, the Council accepted it had not fully appreciated the impact that these matters had on the complainant. The Council agreed to provide a corporate apology for the maladministration identified by the Ombudsman and provide financial redress in the sum of £725 in recognition of the injustice that prevented her from returning to her duties within a youth organisation, and for the poor complaints handling – including the time and trouble invested by her, having to pursue her complaint.
Multi Service – including Complaints Handling Case Ref: 202108379	Complaint regarding the Council's failure to adequately deal with a noise nuisance issue he had raised about a business operating from his neighbour's home.	The Council accepted it had encountered delays in dealing with the complaint and agreed to the proposal outlined by the Ombudsman. This included issuing a formal apology and explanation for the complaint handling failures. Assurances were also given that processes were being reviewed to prevent such shortcomings in the future. It was also agreed that a formal Stage 2 response would be issued to the complainant within a specific timeframe.

CYNGOR SIR CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to: **Cabinet**

Date of meeting: **07/11/2023**

Title: **Annual Report of Compliments, Complaints, and Freedom of Information (2022-2023)**

Purpose of the report: **To provide feedback from the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to the Annual Report of Compliments, Complaints, and Freedom of Information (2022-2023)**

Background:

Members of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the Compliments, Complaints, and Freedom of Information Annual Report (2022-2023).

Members were pleased that an additional appendix had been included in the report as previously requested regarding the Lessons Learned as a consequence of (corporate) complaints.

Members were also pleased that this was the fourth consecutive report where there had been no Ombudsman investigations commenced or formal reports issued in relation to complaints made against the Council. Whilst there were fewer Ombudsman referrals during this reporting year, the Council had a consistently high rate of Early Resolution/Voluntary Settlements.

It was suggested that a further half yearly report will be presented to the Committee at its 22nd January 2024 meeting which will include a breakdown of complaints per service.

Recommendation(s):

Following discussion, Committee Members recommend that Cabinet:

1. receive and endorse the Annual Report.

Reasons for decision:

To ensure Members are aware of the performance of the Authority in respect of Compliments, Complaints and Freedom of Information.

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Councillor Rhodri Evans
Chairman of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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CYNGOR SIR CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 07/11/2023

Title: Tackling Hardship Strategy Annual Report 2022-23

Purpose of the report: To present an update on the progress of Ceredigion
                              Public Services Board's Tackling Hardship Strategy
                              2020-23

For: Information

Cabinet Portfolio and Cabinet Member:
Councillor Catrin M S. Davies, Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Customer Services

Introduction
This report sets out the steps taken by Ceredigion Public Services Board (PSB) to provide a coordinated response to the increased risk of hardship in Ceredigion.

This is the last report of our stand alone 'Tackling Poverty Strategy'. Going forward, it has been agreed that the PSB Poverty sub-group will ensure that combating poverty is maintained as a cross-cutting issue across all areas of work undertaken to deliver Ceredigion PSB's Local Well-being Plan 2023-28. A workplan is currently being developed to helps us achieve this.

The three key objectives of Ceredigion Tackling Hardship Strategy 2020- 2023 were:

1. To develop a shared understanding with partner agencies of the evolving impact of COVID-19 on hardship in Ceredigion through the collation and analysis of data.

2. To co-ordinate and consolidate collaborative efforts with partner agencies in order to promote and take advantage of all available help and assistance

3. To identify gaps in support and evolving hardship needs in order to develop early effective intervention that will strengthen individual and community resilience as we adjust to the impact of COVID-19.

We have achieved the objectives of the strategy. The Poverty sub-group has met regularly and discussed a wide range of issues to help us understand the impact of hardship on Ceredigion citizens. The data dashboards that were developed to support this work are widely used by partners and have been recognised across Wales as an example of good practice.

The Tackling Hardship action plan and regular reporting has helped us to coordinate our actions. The Cost-of-Living webpage on the Council website and the Cost-of-Living

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leaflet, which was posted to all Ceredigion postcodes in winter 2022, has helped to promote the available help and assistance.

Gaps in support have been identified and, while we were unable to address all these gaps, we have been able to respond to some, for example the network of 54 Warm Welcome Spaces that offered a warm and friendly place for communities to come together during winter 2022.

The full report for the period March 2022 – April 2023 is attached.

Wellbeing of Future Generations:
Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If, not, please state why.

No, this is a progress report and does not involve a change in policy or service.

Summary of Integrated Impact Assessment:
Long term: Not applicable
Collaboration: Not applicable
Involvement: Not applicable
Prevention: Not applicable
Integration: Not applicable

Recommendation(s):
To receive the Tackling Hardship Strategy annual report 2022-23.

Reasons for decision:
The report is an accurate description of progress made by the Public Services Board to tackle the effect of poverty on residents of Ceredigion.

Overview and Scrutiny:
The report was considered by Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 19/10/23.

Policy Framework:
Ceredigion Tackling Hardship Strategy 2020-2023.

Corporate Well-being Objectives:
Boosting the Economy, Supporting Businesses and Enabling Employment
Creating Caring and Healthy Communities
Providing the Best Start in Life and Enabling Learning at All Ages
Creating Sustainable, Green and Well-connected Communities

Finance and Procurement implications:
Within existing budget

Legal Implications:
None

Staffing implications:
None

2

Property / asset implications:
None

Risk(s):
Risk of non-compliance if this Strategy is not developed and approved.

Statutory Powers:
Section 2 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 puts a statutory duty on Welsh authorities to prepare and publish a strategy that will contribute to the eradication of child poverty in Wales.

Background Papers:
None

Appendices:
Appendix 1- Ceredigion PSB Tackling Hardship Strategy annual report 2022-23

Corporate Lead Officer:
Alun Williams, Corporate Lead Officer: Policy, Performance and Public Protection

Reporting Officer:
Cathryn Morgan, Equalities and Inclusion Manager, Policy & Performance

Date:
16/10/2022

CEREDIGION TACKLING HARDSHIP STRATEGY 2020 - 2023

PROGRESS REPORT MARCH 2023

Contents

Introduction

This report sets out the steps taken by Ceredigion Public Services Board (PSB) to tackle hardship in Ceredigion due to the impact of Covid-19 and, more recently, the increased cost of living. It outlines the work that Ceredigion PSB Poverty sub-group has delivered in 2022-23 to maximise support for those who are experiencing hardship.

This is the last annual report on the Tackling Hardship Strategy 2020-23. From April 2023, tackling hardship in Ceredigion is a cross-cutting theme of Ceredigion PSB's Local Well-being Plan 2023-28. This new approach will enable a focus on poverty to be embedded in all aspects of the PSB's work programme for the next five years.

Three key objectives of Ceredigion Tackling Hardship Strategy are:

- To develop a **shared understanding** with partner agencies of the evolving impact of COVID-19 on hardship in Ceredigion through the collation and analysis of data.

- To co-ordinate and **consolidate collaborative efforts** with partner agencies in order to promote and take advantage of all available help and assistance.

- To **identify gaps** in support and evolving hardship needs in order to develop early effective intervention that will strengthen individual and community resilience as we adjust to the impact of COVID-19.

An action plan is being delivered by a range of partners and public sector teams, listed at Appendix B. The Action Plan is divided into 3 separate pillars for implementation:

1 ESSENTIAL LIVING COSTS
(Help for those experiencing financial hardship)

2 PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING
(Help for those experiencing exhaustion, stress and anxiety)

3 COMMUNITY RESILIENCE
(Making sure that people can access services)

We wish to acknowledge the commitment and support that colleagues and partners have demonstrated and thank them for their continued recognition of the importance of working collectively to tackle hardship in Ceredigion.

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The Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010

Section 2 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 puts a statutory duty on Welsh authorities to prepare and publish a strategy that will contribute to the eradication of child poverty in Wales. The broad aims for contributing to the eradication of poverty are:

- to increase income for households with children.

- to ensure that children are not materially deprived.

- to promote and facilitate paid employment for parents of children.

- to provide parents of children with the skills necessary for paid employment.

- to reduce inequalities in educational attainment between children.

- to support parenting of children.

- to reduce inequalities in health between children and between parents of children.

- to ensure that all children grow up in decent housing.

- to ensure that all children grow up in safe and cohesive communities.

- to reduce inequalities in participation in cultural, sporting and leisure activities between children and between parents of children.

- to help young people participate effectively in education and training.

- to help young people take advantage of opportunities for employment.

- to help young people participate effectively and responsibly in the life of their communities.

The Tackling Hardship Strategy aims to address these aims. Progress is monitored by the Ceredigion PSB Poverty Sub-group which meets four times per year.

Matters relating to Child Poverty are scrutinised by the Children & Young People Services Provider Forum that meets one week before the PSB Poverty Sub-group in order that issues can be escalated to the Poverty Sub-group immediately.

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Pillar 1: Essential Living Costs

Financial support was offered directly to families and individuals who were struggling. This included some support with training and employment, but the main focus was to make sure that people received the help that they are entitled to, in face of the rising cost of living. The section below provides examples of some of this work.

Porth Cymorth Cynnar: Early Intervention service

The Carers and Community support team worked with 3,171 people in 2022-23. Extra Community Connector 'drop ins' were offered in more places across the County so that more people were able to access advice and support.

300 door draught excluders, 1,500 metres of heat reflective radiator foil, 60 energy saving long life bulbs, 50 blankets and 900 packs of seeds were distributed by the Community Connectors.

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction Scheme

19 days was the average speed of processing new claims for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction scheme. 5,482 people are currently in receipt of these benefits.

7,547 Winter Fuel Scheme payments and 21,367 Cost of Living scheme payments were made to households, totalling £4.7 million. £322,971 worth of Discretionary Housing Payments were made to top up rents and help safeguard tenancies during 2022-23.

Porth Gofal: Housing Services

12% of those approaching the Homelessness team cited 'Financial Concerns' as one of their reasons for requiring assistance. 67% of households supported by the team were successfully prevented from becoming homeless.

The ECO4 scheme, aimed at low income, vulnerable and fuel poor households living in energy inefficient properties, was launched in October 2022.

A substantial increase in the budget to deliver affordable social housing is coupled with difficulties in acquiring contractors to undertake the work. There are also concerns that the impact of phosphates in the river Teifi will put new planning applications on hold.

Care Society

Inflation and energy prices are creating new worries for vulnerable tenants needing support. People's lack of awareness of cost-of-living support schemes is a major issue. An acute lack of affordable accommodation in Ceredigion is creating problems for service users looking for options when leaving temporary or emergency accommodation. The new Renting Homes Act legislation has further complicated these issues.

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Area 43

Area 43's Youth Café – Depot - is now open in Cardigan where young people can access subsidised food and refreshments. Paid employment placements are available as well as free training for 14–25-year-olds in food preparation, nutrition, food hygiene courses and personal and social education in a live work environment.

Young People can access virtual and face-to-face support with budgeting, help to maximise their income, signposting to specialised services, support with applications for hardship grants, independent living skills and securing employment. 399 young people facing financial hardship were supported in 2022-23.

Ceredigion Family Centre Network

860 families were supported by Ceredigion's network of Family Centres. 188 families were referred for further help with free Baby Bundles, clothing, food and book parcels, NEST warm home scheme, Women's Aid, Home Start, Citizens Advice, Dŵr Cymru, CREDU Carers, Team around the Family, Health Visitor support and Mind.

Warm Welcome Spaces were held in all six centres with hot food/snacks provided. 177 families benefitted from this as well as others from the wider community.

Schools

An Equity and Deprivation Strategy was approved by Cabinet in February 2023. This offers guidance for schools supporting disadvantaged young people and sits alongside a body of wider work to better support our more disadvantaged learners. There is a key message at its core – disadvantaged learners need more support, more often, to have the same opportunities as their peers.

Childcare

The current situation continues to impact on the sector. Energy costs are high and there is still no after school club provision in Penparcau and Cardigan due to recruitment issues; this is crucial for parents wishing to access employment and training. The number of registered childcare places reduced by 158 over the last 12 months.

However, free childcare is available for 2-4-year-olds in Flying Start areas and these will now be extended to more areas. 90 additional children benefitted from Flying Start Outreach provision and 354 children benefitted from the Childcare Offer.

Training and Employment

Lifelong Learning and Skills, the Youth Service, Careers Wales and Job Centre Plus are all members of the NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) panel. Taster sessions were offered in placements such as carpentry, mechanics, hairdressing, beauty, plumbing. 64% of learners supported by Porth Cymorth Cynnar gained qualifications in traineeships and 70% of learners gained qualifications in apprenticeships.

Jobcentre services are now fully operational with Work Coaches offering face-to-face support in all sites.

Citizens Advice

One-to-one appointments for clients seeking detailed advice via phone and video calls continue. In-person appointments are available in Borth, Aberystwyth, Penparcau, Lampeter and Cardigan.

Following a successful bid to the National Lottery, Citizens Advice increased their face-to-face delivery at venues across the county including, where facilities allow, regular drop-in sessions as well as bespoke events for community groups and a cost-of-living zoom drop-in via their website. They would like to be able to offer support via video conferencing to vulnerable housebound clients but have not yet been able to do this since the clients need help at their end and this is not available.

Age Cymru Dyfed

Two part time Information and Advice officers, based in Aberystwyth, offer support and advice on eligibility and accessing welfare benefits. They also offer a specific Dementia Support Service which can be accessed via the Council's Housing Support Service. Appointments are offered in the office, virtually and by telephone. In exceptional circumstances, home visits are arranged. Staff find that the generation they support do not speak up or complain but urgently need their help to live comfortable and fulfilling lives.

Since April 2022 the team have dealt with over 690 referrals and assisted Ceredigion residents to access nearly £760, 000 of unclaimed Welfare Support.

Pillar 2: Physical and Emotional Wellbeing

Physical and emotional wellbeing support was offered to families and individuals who may be experiencing stress, exhaustion, and anxiety. This included preventative actions, like exercise classes, community get-togethers, respite for unpaid Carers and counselling, as well as long-term planning for future provision.

Ceredigion Family Centre Network

860 families enjoyed a range of activities aimed at improving physical and emotional wellbeing. These included messy play, sensory play, zumbini, cooking sessions, gardening, intergenerational gatherings, community art, theatre school, outdoor play, arts and crafts and barbecues. Staff are trained in Safeguarding, Suicide Awareness and Mental Health 1st Aid.

DASH Ceredigion

DASH offer childcare and play opportunities for disabled children/young people and respite for families. The lack of out of school childcare provision led to a big decline in use of their support during the pandemic. School holiday playschemes and

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weekends away are now up and running but requests from out of school clubs for 'helping hand' support via the Ymuno scheme remain low.

Porth Cymorth Cynnar: Support and Prevention

Young people aged 16+ were offered 88 workshops, for example volunteering in the community, indoor bowling, gardening and Welsh culture and heritage discovery.

125 young people that worked with a youth worker demonstrated an improvement to their wellbeing and confidence, for example, a young person unwilling to leave the house who went on a wellbeing walk with a youth worker.

The mobile youth provision engaged with 10 communities and 176 young people. Free weekly football sessions were delivered with Dyfed-Powys Police and Swansea Football Foundation, one young person has been nominated as a young ambassador due to his commitment.

Area 43

North and South Ceredigion GP Clusters commissioned Area 43 to provide a counselling service to young people aged 13-30. 193 Young People (N. Ceredigion) and 6 Young People (S. Ceredigion) accessed the service during 2022-23. This service is no longer funded and has stopped.

Area 43 also provided an emotional support service to 57 young people from their Cardigan Centre.

Porth Cymorth Cynnar, Well-being Centres

The National Exercise Referral Service (NERS) is now very busy - 1,011 referrals were received in 2022-23. All referrals are followed up, although not all residents decide to start the intervention. 343 clients completed the 16-week programme during the year.

The NERS is one of a range of health intervention classes and activities, including Fit4Life and Wellbeing Walks. 424 classes and activities were offered each month in North, Mid and South of the county. All programmes are popular and well received by clients across Ceredigion.

Porth Gofal

The Occupational Therapy team hoped to be able to carry out more assessments to provide appropriate equipment and therapy support for people. This reduces pressure on the unpaid Carer as the Cared for becomes more independent. However, the service is experiencing significant staffing challenges which has resulted in a waiting list.

Hywel Dda University Health Board and Porth Cymorth Cynnar: Carer support

The Carers and Community Support team responded to 3,538 enquiries. These included requests for support, applications for Welsh Government unpaid carers low-

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income payment and Ceredigion Carers cards enabling unpaid carers to have access to free membership of leisure centres and discounts across Ceredigion.

The team also dealt with 621 applications for the Carers fund. 1,970 unpaid Carers were registered with the Carers Information Service in March 2023.

Porth Cynnal – Mental Health & Substance Misuse Services

Approved Mental Health Practitioner capacity has increased but the social work team is not yet at full capacity. School counselling capacity has increased but demand is high. The Substance Misuse team has also grown with 2 new workers now targeting homelessness and co-recurring issues. Substance misuse and mental health teams will be integrated from 1st April 2023.

Policy and Performance

Ceredigion's Assessment of Local Wellbeing was published in August 2022. The Assessment has told us a lot about the social, economic, cultural, and environmental well-being of people and communities in Ceredigion. It will be used to inform the next Local Well-being Plan 2023-28 and can be referenced by organisations when preparing bids for funding or demonstrating a need to focus on specific areas.

Penparcau Community Forum

The Hub is working on recruiting more volunteers to help with distribution of food parcels and for wider activities like gardening and litter picking. During the pandemic, food parcels were being delivered daily, now down to weekly deliveries. They also offer a Meals on Wheels service. The continued contact helps the coordinator really get to know people.

Some people continue to feel isolated, and some are not eating properly or don't have the facility to cook. A consultation was run in January/February to help review the services offered; this will feed into a new funding application which will probably focus on mental wellbeing and combatting isolation.

Coleg Ceredigion

Learners can access a range of personal support services, including mentoring, counselling, and access to 24/7 support. The on-line systems for personal support are now embedded into the evolving college programme to promote learner well-being.

Age Cymru Dyfed

The Befriending Life Links and Veteran Support services offer support to those who are experiencing loneliness and isolation. Befriending Life Links helps people to build confidence and re-join their communities, they also initiate local Social Groups and then step back once they are established. Veteran support officers offer one to one support for elderly veterans across the county.

Pillar 3: Community Resilience

2022-23 saw more of a 'return to normality' after Covid as services returned to mainly face-to-face support. However, there is now increased reliance on digital connectivity and not everyone can access this. The section below highlights some of the work undertaken to ensure that people can access the services that they need.

Porth Cymorth Cynnar, Early Intervention and CAVO

Lists of community support covering the whole county were developed during the pandemic to help identify areas that lacked support. The range of support offered changes quickly and people are now encouraged to use Dewis Cymru and Infoengine to promote the support available. In March 2023 there were 543 registered Dewis users in Ceredigion and 607 resources that covered the County.

There are 6 food banks and 2 food surplus groups in Ceredigion covering 98.9% of residential properties. Community Council wards not covered by food banks are Llandyfriog, Llanddewi Brefi, Tregaron and Ystrad Fflur. The food banks were able to cope with increasing demand during the year but are struggling to recruit volunteers.

Ceredigion Council Customer Contact

Ceredigion libraries are now fully re-opened, and the mobile library is back on the road. There are plans to provide access to I-pads on all mobile library vans, but these are not yet available. Face to face customer service sites re-opened in January 2023 for 5 days a week, at a slightly later opening time. At the end of March 2023 there was no facility to receive cash payments face to face in Council offices, however, residents were able to continue to make cash payments at all Post Offices and in Payzone shops.

Ceredigion Family Centre Network

Although some rural areas are still in need of better internet speeds and reliable phone coverage, none have been identified as being without internet at all. Services have now moved to face to face delivery, but social media continues to be an important aspect of communication. Families are engaging well with this and keep in touch with each other via groups chats, providing good peer support and also accessing staff support through individual messages.

All staff are continually developing new digital skills, and some have accessed formal training to increase their knowledge in this area.

Hywel Dda Health Board: Partnerships, Diversity and Inclusion

The Community Outreach team engaged with 5,259 people. Over 50% of conversations were about prevention and wellbeing and referrals to smoking cessation, nutrition advice and accessing screening services. The team engaged with 538 Ukrainian refugees, 229 Gypsies, Roma or Travellers and 370 people who were homeless or in a vulnerable situation at home.

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They also worked with community groups to set up local wellbeing walks for our diverse communities to encourage exercise, create friendships and engage with the health board in an informal way – 164 people have taken part throughout the year

Porth Cymorth Cynnar: Community Well-being & Learning

Dysgu Bro is delivering courses in more community venues, including Bronant, Rhydypennau, Cwmystwyth and Devil's Bridge. Many of the sessions are free. IT equipment is offered to all new learners.

Care Society

Care Society are working with Digital Communities Wales/CWMPAS with the aim of addressing local digital exclusion and improving digital confidence through essential skills training and online safety sessions. Connectivity is still a problem but the development of hubs, like Lampeter's Canolfan Dulais Enterprise Centre, where people can utilise computers and get online is helping.

Penparcau Community Forum

A few people go into the Hub in Penparcau to use the free Wi-Fi or to ask for help with phones and tablets. The Forum work with Age Cymru Dyfed who loan tablets to those who need them and offer 'getting online advice'; the Forum provides the venue and promotes the service for them.

Age Cymru Dyfed

Through funding from CAVO, and more recently the Santander Foundation, the team works with partners like Penparcau Hub to get people online, learn digital skills and, through Santander, access online banking/shopping and price comparison services. The support is offered by staff and a team of dedicated volunteers via telephone, virtually, through home visits and group activities.

Mid Wales Growth - Digital Development

Levels of broadband connectivity in Mid Wales have improved over the past 12 months, but the overall level of connectivity is still lower than some parts of Wales and the UK. Approximately 90% of premises in Mid Wales have the capability to connect to Superfast Broadband (30Mbps+), lower than that for Wales (97.1%) and the UK (97.6%) on average.

The Mid Wales region has seen an increase in those able to receive higher speeds with approximately 40% of the region now having access to Ultrafast Broadband (100mbps+), though this still falls behind both the Wales and UK average at 63.2% and 76.25% respectively.

7% of premises in Mid Wales cannot access a connection of more than 10Mbps compared to 2% for Wales and 1.8% for the UK. This is largely because Openreach was the main provider of broadband infrastructure services and they have

concentrated on fibre services. Other areas have seen various providers offering alternative technologies such as fixed wireless access (FWA), that can overcome the challenges of providing greater speeds. Providers are now engaging with Council teams around the deployment of FWA connections which could have a significant positive impact on broadband connectivity.

Despite this, Mid Wales currently has 40% coverage of Fibre to the Premises (FTTP), allowing download speeds of up to 1gbps (1000mbps), which again is lower than the Wales average of 47%, but greater than several of the more rural Local Authority, with the more densely populated Local Authorities receiving greater speeds (i.e Cardiff has 68% coverage).

Mobile coverage also lags behind the Wales and UK average coverage with topography and the lower density of population posing particular challenges. Approximately 9% of premises within the region have no 4G services while only 51% of premises have 4G coverage from all four operators, this in comparison to on average 73% in Wales and 80% across the UK.

## What the Data tells us - did we make a difference?

A lot of support has been provided over the past 12 months. We must however rely on hard data to tell us if we are making a difference. Our data dashboards help the PSB Poverty sub-group to monitor the efficacy of the support provided. These capture live data from websites such as DWP and Office for National Statistics and were developed further during 2022-23.

Universal Credit
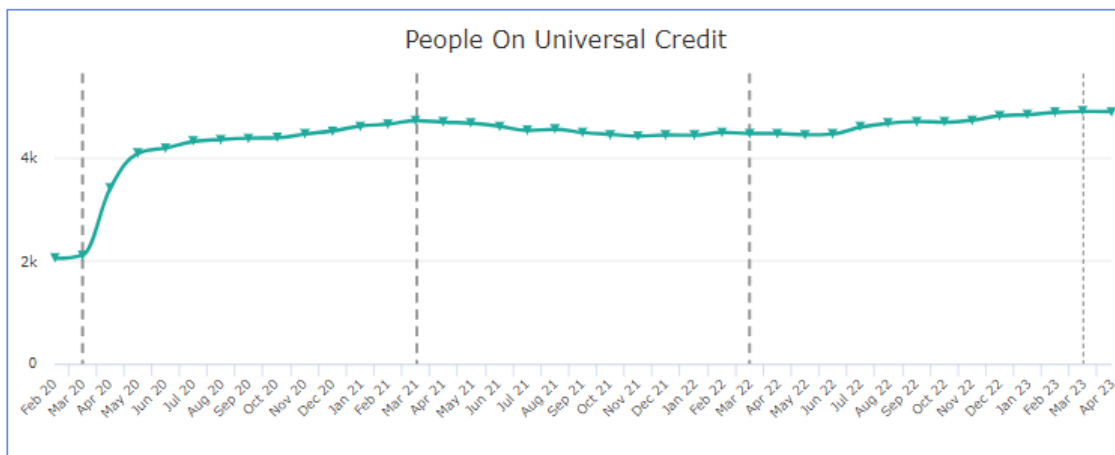
The number of people on Universal Credit in Ceredigion saw a sharp increase in March/April 2020, at the beginning of the pandemic. They started to level around the 4,500 mark between July 2021 and July 2022 but then started to increase. The figure at March 2023 was 132% higher than at March 2020.

Claimant Count
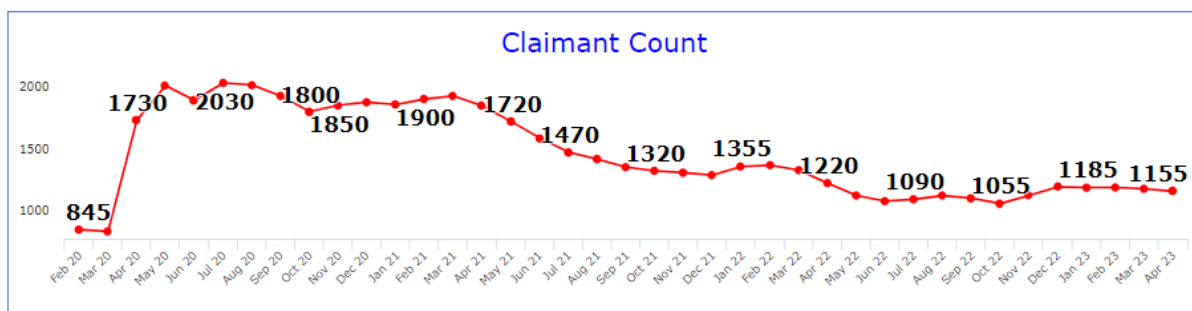
The Claimant Count is a measure of the number of people claiming benefits principally for the reason of being unemployed. This figure also increased from March/April 2020. Although it hadn't returned to pre-pandemic levels by March 2023, it was just 42% higher than in March 2020. This implies that although people are now working, they are still eligible for Universal Credit. It's likely that this is due to in-work poverty.

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Youth Employment

Claimant Count 18 to 24
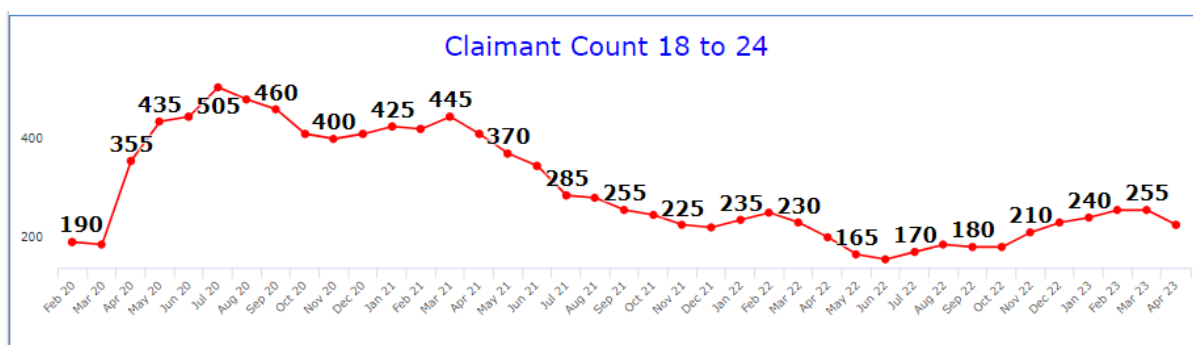
The impact of Covid on young people has been of particular concern and we monitor the number of 18–24-year-old claimants. This cohort was following the same trend as the overall claimant count and started to show a faster recovery rate in June 2022. However, figures started to increase and in March 2023 there were 255 claimants aged 18-24, 38% higher than pre-pandemic rates.

Median Annual Earnings by Residence and by Workplace

The average earnings gap between people who live in Ceredigion and people who live in the rest of Wales appears to be narrowing. However, the average earnings gap between Ceredigion and the rest of Wales by workplace has not. This trend will be explored further.

Median Annual Earnings by Residence
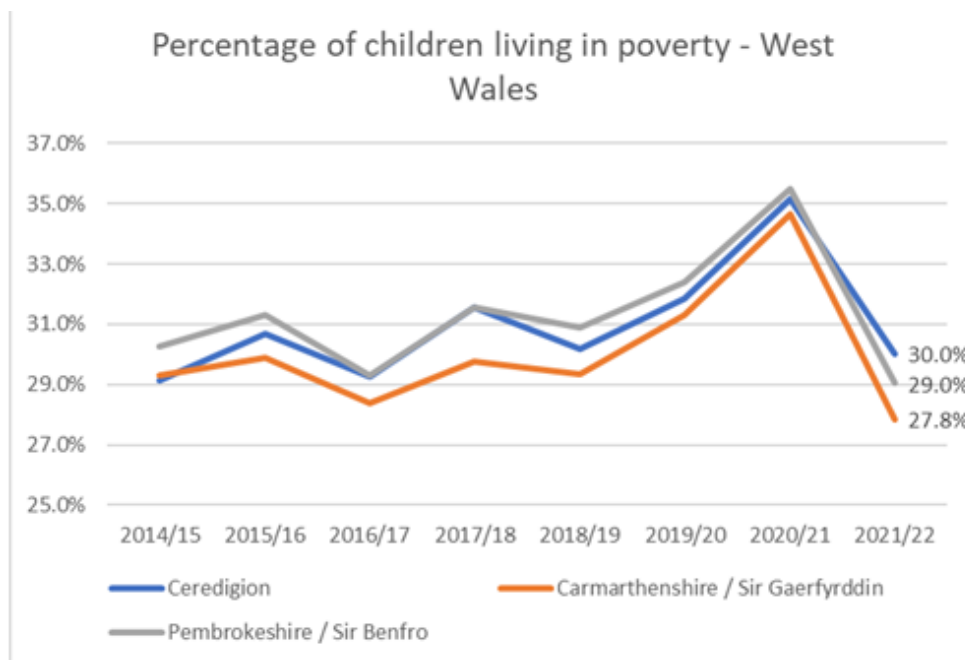

Median Annual Earnings by Workplace
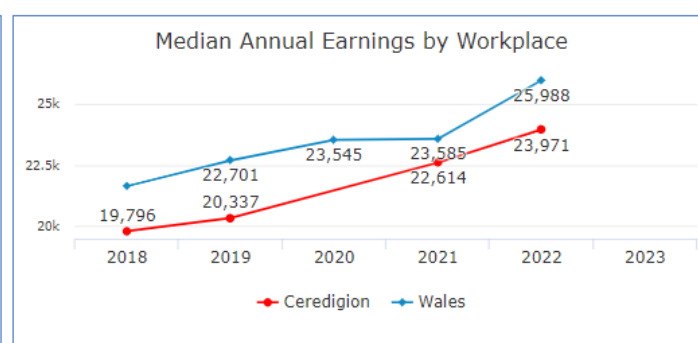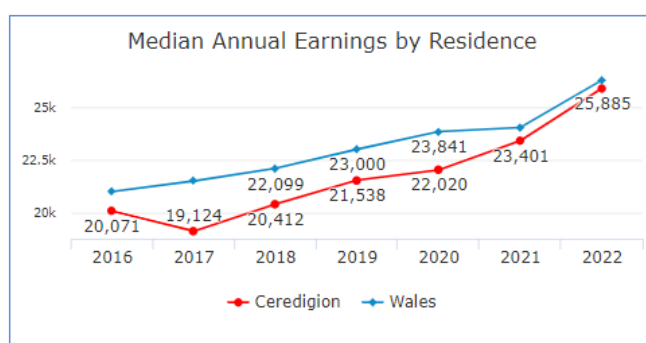
Physical and Emotional Wellbeing

The average healthy life expectancy for Males in Ceredigion is 68 years, and for Females it is 70 years. The gap in life expectancy between the most and least deprived areas in Ceredigion is 10.2 years for Males and 11.8 years for Females. Cardigan Teifi and Rhyd y Fuwch areas are the most deprived in Ceredigion.

It is more difficult to measure impact on well-being locally. Since March 2020, the Welsh Government funded a survey of public views on the coronavirus (Covid 19). One of the questions asked was how concerned people were about being able to pay their bills one month from now. This survey ended in May 2022, and it would be useful to identify another method of measuring how happy people are in Ceredigion.

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Child Poverty

Finally, 2021-22 child poverty figures for Ceredigion showed a big decrease from their high in 2020-21. Nevertheless, 30% of children in Ceredigion were living in poverty in 2021-22. 2022-23 figures are not yet available, and these will show the impact of the cost-of-living crisis. It is very likely that we will see an increase.

Percentage of children living in poverty - West Wales

Ceredigion · Carmarthenshire / Sir Gaerfyrddin · Pembrokeshire / Sir Benfro

Using data in this way is an ongoing journey. As we research more into the causes and impacts of poverty, our level of understanding of the issues affecting Ceredigion continue to increase.

This can be seen in the work around digital exclusion which has also been highlighted on a national level by Audit Wales, Digital Communities Wales and others.

This means that we can target our activities to where they are most needed and where they will have the biggest impact.

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Conclusion and Ongoing Challenges

Inflation and energy prices are creating new worries for vulnerable tenants. People's lack of awareness of cost-of-living support schemes is a big issue.

An acute lack of affordable accommodation in Ceredigion is creating problems. The new Renting Homes Act legislation has further complicated these issues.

A substantial increase in the budget to deliver affordable social housing is coupled with difficulties in acquiring contractors to undertake the work. There are concerns that the impact of phosphates in the river Teifi could put new planning applications on hold.

The childcare sector continues to struggle with the cost of heating and with recruitment. The number of childcare places has dropped again. This impacts on people's ability to access work and training.

Food banks cover 98.9% of residential properties in Ceredigion. They coped with increasing demand during the year but are struggling to recruit volunteers.

It's likely that in-work poverty remains an issue because the number of people in receipt of Universal Credit remains high, but the number of people claiming benefits for the reason of being unemployed has reduced.

The average earnings gap between people who live in Ceredigion and people who live in the rest of Wales has narrowed. However, the average earnings gap between people who work in Ceredigion and people who work in the rest of Wales has not.

Child Poverty rates have decreased but remain very high, at 30% in 2021-22. The 2022-23 figures have not yet been published and these will show the true impact of the increased cost of living.

Levels of broadband connectivity in Mid Wales are improving but little has changed in terms of mobile phone coverage. The Mid-Wales area lags behind the rest of Wales and the UK in terms of both these methods of communication.

Next Steps

1. Continue to develop the data dashboards to ensure we have a shared understanding of the evolving impact of hardship in Ceredigion through the collation and analysis of data.

2. The PSB Poverty sub-group will develop a workplan which ensures that combating poverty is maintained as a cross-cutting issue across all areas of work undertaken to deliver Ceredigion PSB's Local Well-being Plan 2023-28

Appendix A: Contributing Partners

- Hywel Dda University Health Board, Partnerships, Diversity & Inclusion

- Ceredigion County Council, Porth Cymorth Cynnar, Community Wellbeing & Learning

- Ceredigion County Council, Finance & Procurement

- Area 43

- Ceredigion County Council, Porth Cynnal

- Plant Dewi, Family Centre Network (Borth, Llandysul, Aberaeron, Cardigan, Lampeter and Tregaron)

- Ceredigion County Council, Porth Gofal

- Cymdeithas Gofal The Care Society

- Ceredigion County Council, Policy, Performance & Public Protection

- Ceredigion County Council, Economy & Regeneration

- Ceredigion County Council, Schools & Lifelong Learning

- Ceredigion County Council, Customer Contact

- Ceredigion County Council, Highways & Environmental Services

- DASH (Disability and Self-Help)

- Department of Work & Pensions (DWP)

- Coleg Ceredigion

- Ceredigion Citizens Advice

- Penparcau Community Forum

- Ceredigion Association of Voluntary Organisations (CAVO)

- Age Cymru Dyfed

- Aberystwyth University

CYNGOR SIR CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 07/11/2023

Title: Tackling Hardship Strategy Annual Report 2022-23

Purpose of the report: **To provide feedback from the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to a progress update received of the Ceredigion Public Services Board's Tackling Hardship Strategy 2022-2023 and its Annual Report.**

Background:
Members of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered an update on the progress of the Ceredigion Public Board's Tackling Hardship Strategy 2022-2023 and its Annual Report.

Members were pleased to hear that the Authority had achieved the objectives of the strategy. It was reported that the Poverty sub-group had met regularly and discussed a wide range of issues to help them understand the impact of hardship on Ceredigion citizens, and that, the data dashboards that were developed to support this work are widely used by partners and have been recognised across Wales as an example of good practice.

The Tackling Hardship action plan and regular reporting had helped Officers to coordinate the actions. The Cost-of-Living webpage on the Council website and the Cost-of-Living leaflet, which was posted to all Ceredigion postcodes in winter 2022, had helped to promote the available help and assistance. Gaps in support have been identified and, while unable to address all these gaps, Officers stated that they had been able to respond to some, for example, the network of 54 Warm Welcome Spaces that offered a warm and friendly place for communities to come together during winter 2022.

Recommendation(s):
Following discussion, Committee Members recommend that Cabinet:

1. receive and endorse the Tackling Hardship Annual Report 2022-2023.

It was also agreed that an email be sent to the Clerk of the Community Council wards not covered by food banks namely Llandyfriog, Llanddewi Brefi, Tregaron and Ystrad Fflur on the process of setting up these banks in their Ward.

Reasons for decision:
The report is an accurate description of progress made by the Public Services Board to tackle the effect of poverty on residents of Ceredigion.

Councillor Rhodri Evans
Chairman of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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