

Public Document Pack



Cyngor Sir
CEREDIGION
County Council

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

13 July 2023

Dwynwen Jones

01545 572070

Dear Sir / Madam

I write to inform you that a Meeting of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be held HYBRID - NEUADD CYNGOR CEREDIGION, PENMORFA, ABERAERON / REMOTELY VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE on Wednesday, 19 July 2023 at 10.00 am for the transaction of the following business:

1. **Welcome and Apologies**
2. **Disclosures of personal interest (including whipping declarations)**
Members are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and prejudicial interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Members Code of Conduct. In addition, Members must declare any prohibited party whip which the Member has been given in relation to the meeting as per the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.
3. **Draft Menopause Policy (Pages 3 - 14)**
4. **Review of Hybrid Working arrangements (Pages 15 - 28)**
5. **Draft Workforce Plan 2023-2028 (Pages 29 - 76)**
6. **Update on Clic (Pages 77 - 82)**
7. **Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) (Pages 83 - 118)**
8. **To confirm minutes of the previous meeting and to consider any matters arising from those Minutes. (Pages 119 - 124)**
9. **Forward work Programme (Pages 125 - 128)**

Members are reminded to sign the Attendance Register

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

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L Edwards', written in a cursive style.

Miss Lowri Edwards
Corporate Lead Officer: Democratic Services

To: Chairman and Members of Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The remaining Members of the Council for information only.

Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council

REPORT TO: Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee

DATE: 19 July 2023

LOCATION: Hybrid

TITLE: Draft Menopause Policy

PURPOSE OF REPORT: To review and recommend the draft Menopause Policy

**REASON SCRUTINY
HAVE REQUESTED THE
INFORMATION:** Pre-decision scrutiny - to review new strategy

BACKGROUND

Ceredigion County Council is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive working environment, where everyone is treated fairly with dignity and respect in their working environment. It is also committed to the health, safety and wellbeing of the whole workforce.

Menopause is a natural part of ageing, commonly known as ‘the change’, and it refers to the point in time when periods have ceased for 12 months. It is not always an easy transition but with the right support it can be much better. Whilst not everyone going through the menopause suffer with symptoms, supporting those who do will improve their experience at work.

It is estimated that in the UK around 1 in 3 people are either currently going through or have reached the menopause. Ceredigion County Council data in October 2022 records the corporate workforce (excluding schools) as 66.1% (1,355) female, 34.1% (698) of whom were between 45 and 64 and could be at an age where they are likely to be experiencing the perimenopause or have reached menopause. It is therefore important that we consider the needs of this group and proactively manage an age diverse workforce.

MENOPAUSE POLICY

The draft Menopause Policy has been developed to help those experiencing troublesome menopausal symptoms, and to support them, their colleagues and managers in tackling the occupational aspects of menopausal symptoms.

The policy aims to:

- Foster an environment in which employees can openly and comfortably instigate conversations or engage in discussions about menopause and feel confident to ask for support.
- Ensure everyone understands what menopause is, can confidently have good conversations, and are clear on the Council’s policy and practices, supported by Human Resources (HR) and the Employee Health & Wellbeing Officer

- Educate and inform managers about the potential symptoms of menopause, and how they can support employees at work.
- Reduce absenteeism due to menopausal symptoms.
- Assure employees that we are a responsible employer, committed to supporting their needs during menopause.

The policy sets out the roles and responsibilities of those involved in supporting affected employees within the workplace. It gives an overview of menopausal symptoms, their effect and offers guidance to employees and line managers of the support and information available to help them deal with the issues arising from the menopause.

The policy, if agreed, will be supported with further information and guidance on both the employee areas of CeriNet and practical help for managers on the CeriNet managers' toolkit.

The People & Organisation Service will also provide further support for those experiencing menopausal symptoms by:

1. Providing a menopause café where employees can meet and gain mutual support and information. These sessions will be supported by the Employee Health & Wellbeing Officer.
2. Provide menopause awareness training for Managers

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

Summary:

Long term: A key aim of this policy is to support those with troublesome menopause symptoms and to reduce absenteeism due to these symptoms. This may include temporarily introducing reasonable adjustments to support employees to remain in work in the short, medium and long term.

WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS:

Integration: Support and training will be provided to the employee, their colleagues and line manager, raising awareness of the impact of the symptoms on the employee.

Collaboration: Our trade union partners have been heavily involved in the development of this policy.

Involvement: Key stakeholders have been involved in the development of this policy and throughout the consultation process

Prevention: Through raising awareness, training and support for employees and their line managers the aim is to reduce absenteeism due to troublesome menopause symptoms. Temporary reasonable adjustments may be introduced to support employees to remain in work.

RECOMMENDATION (S):

- To recommend the approval of the Menopause Policy by Cabinet

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION (S):

- To support employees experiencing menopausal symptoms, and their managers in tackling the occupational aspects of this natural process.

Contact Name: Geraint Edwards
Designation: Corporate Lead Officer – People & Organisation
Date of Report: 23/06/2023
Acronyms:



Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council
Pobl a Threfniadaeth | People and Organisation

DRAFT

Menopause Policy



www.ceri.ceredigion.gov.uk

Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Aims	3
3. Roles and responsibilities	4
4. Definitions	5
5. Overview	6
6. Access to support and key actions	5
7. General guidance for employees	8
8. Guidance for managers	8

DRAFT

1. Introduction

Ceredigion County Council is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive working environment, where everyone is treated fairly and with dignity and respect. It is also committed to the health, safety and wellbeing of the whole workforce.

This policy uses gender neutral language in order to ensure it is inclusive for everyone who could experience menopause symptoms.

Up to a third of those going through the menopause will experience severe menopausal symptoms that can impact on their quality of life. Menopausal symptoms are caused by oestrogen fluctuations, this means that these symptoms can also affect trans men and non-binary people.

Menopause, commonly known as 'the change', is a natural part of the ageing process due to the lowering of hormones which ultimately leads to a point when periods have ceased. It is not always an easy transition but with the right support, it can be much better. Whilst some people do not suffer with symptoms, supporting those who do will improve their experience at work.

Menopause is not a widely discussed subject and can be misunderstood. Our aim is for everyone to understand what menopause is, and to be able to talk about it openly and without embarrassment. This is an issue for everyone, not just those experiencing symptoms.

The Council is mindful that some symptoms of the menopause may meet the definition of 'impairment' under the Equality Act (2010). It is important therefore to consider reasonable steps to address any specific risks.

Experiences and perceptions of the menopause may also differ in relation to disability, age, race, religion, sexual orientation or marital/civil partnership status. It is important to recognise that for many reasons, a person's individual experience of the menopause may differ greatly.

This policy sets out the guidelines and assistance available for employees and managers on providing the right support to manage menopausal symptoms at work. It is not contractual and does not form part of the terms and conditions of employment. If, however, the Council wishes to amend the Menopause Policy, employees will be consulted on proposed changes via the recognised Trade Unions.

2. Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- Foster an environment in which employees can openly and comfortably instigate conversations or engage in discussions about menopause and feel confident to ask for support.
- Ensure everyone understands what menopause is, can confidently have good conversations, and are clear on the Council's policy and practices, supported by Human Resources (HR) and the Employee Health & Wellbeing Officer.

- Educate and inform managers about the potential symptoms of menopause, and how they can best support affected employees at work.
- Reduce absenteeism due to menopausal symptoms.
- Ensure that we are a responsible employer, committed to supporting people experiencing menopause symptoms.

3. Roles and responsibilities

Employees

- Personal responsibility to look after their health.
- Be open and honest in conversations with their manager.
- If a member of staff is unable to speak to their line manager for any reason they can speak to HR (humanresources@ceredigion.gov.uk), the Employee Health & Wellbeing Officer (healthandwellbeing@ceredigion.gov.uk) or their Trade Union representative.
- Employees affected by the menopause are encouraged to seek support through their GP, occupational health and other external organisations.
- Employees experiencing symptoms of the menopause can access the Council's Menopause café (support group).
- Contributing to a respectful and productive working environment.
- Be willing to help and support their colleagues.
- Understand any necessary adaptations their colleagues are receiving as a result of their menopausal symptoms.

Line Managers

- Familiarise themselves with the Menopause Policy and Managers Guidance on CeriNet; attend training and advice sessions as appropriate.
- Be ready and willing to have open discussions about menopause, appreciating the personal nature of the conversation, and treating the discussion sensitively and professionally.
- Use the guidance, signposting and reviewing together with the employee, before agreeing with the individual how best they can be supported, and any adaptations required.
- Record adaptations agreed, and actions to be implemented and ensure adherence to these.
- Ensure ongoing dialogue and plan review dates.
- Where adaptations are unsuccessful, or if symptoms are proving more problematic, the Line Manager may discuss with HR a referral to Occupational Health for further advice.

Employee Health & Wellbeing Officer

- Provide holistic and up to date advice and guidance on whether or not menopause may be contributing to symptoms/wellbeing.
- Signpost appropriate sources of help and advice to employees and managers.

- Provide support and advice to HR and Line Managers in determining and agreeing adaptations, if required.
- Monitor referrals due to menopause symptoms, and provide additional signposting, where required.
- Review and update the information and advice available on CeriNet and other internal sources.
- Deliver appropriate training and support sessions e.g., Menopause Awareness and Menopause Cafe

Human Resources (HR)

- Offer guidance to managers on the interpretation of this Policy and guidance information.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy in respect of related absence levels and performance.

4. Definitions

In this policy the word ‘menopause’ is used to cover symptoms experienced during perimenopause, menopause and post menopause.

Perimenopause:

The period of hormonal change leading up to the menopause. This is a time when symptoms may start to appear, and periods may become irregular or heavy. The perimenopause can often last for four to five years, although for some people it may continue for many more years and for others, last just a few months.

Menopause:

The biological stage when menstruation stops and natural reproductive life ends. In a ‘natural’ menopause the ovaries stop producing eggs and hormones fall below certain levels. The average age for a person to naturally reach menopause is 51.

Medical or Surgical Menopause

A medical or surgical menopause can occur suddenly at any age when the ovaries are damaged by a health condition or specific treatments such as chemotherapy, radiotherapy or surgery.

Post Menopause:

This is the time after menopause has occurred, starting when a person has not had a period for twelve consecutive months.

Trans Man

A person who was registered as female at birth but who lives and identifies as a man, known as a transgender man.

Non-binary

A gender identity that does not conform to traditional binary beliefs about gender, which indicate that all individuals are exclusively either male or female.

5. Overview

The menopause is a natural part of ageing. According to the NHS, symptoms often continue for 4 years post menopause, but around 10% will continue to experience symptoms for up to 12 years.

It is usually a natural process involving gradual change, however sometimes it can be sudden and acute.

Menopausal symptoms are varied and can include but are not limited to:

- Hot flushes, palpitations, night sweats, insomnia and sleep disturbances,
- fatigue, poor concentration.
- headaches, joint aches, skin irritation and dryness, increased perspiration during the day, dry eyes, hair loss.
- urinary problems, irregular and/or heavy, painful periods.
- depression, anxiety, panic attacks, poor concentration, changes to mood, problems with memory, loss of confidence.

Not everyone will experience all symptoms and they may not occur continuously, however around 30-60% will experience intermittent physical and/or psychological symptoms during the menopause.

These symptoms can adversely affect the quality of both personal and working life. At work, they can cause embarrassment, diminish confidence and can be stressful to deal with.

Hormonal changes associated with the menopause can also affect future health as well as experience of menopausal symptoms. Some people require medical advice and treatment such as Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT). Seeking medical advice about menopause related symptoms may mean time off work for medical appointments and/or treatment. HRT can benefit some people e.g., by helping to reduce risks of osteoporosis in high-risk groups. HRT is not suitable for everyone, and medical advice and supervision is essential.

People can be affected in different ways but workplace factors that can make working life difficult are:

- Lack of awareness of the menopause.
- Lack of management training on the menopause.
- Lack of suitable risk assessments.
- Poor ventilation and air quality.
- Inadequate access to drinking water.
- Inadequate toilet access and inflexible break times.
- Negative or unsympathetic attitudes from line management/ colleagues.

Wales TUC research (2017) showed that in Wales, around 1 in 3 females were either going through or had reached the menopause at that time. Ceredigion County Council data in October 2022 records the corporate workforce (excluding schools) as 66.1% (1355) female, 34.1% (698) of whom were between 45 and 64 and could be at an age where they are likely to be experiencing perimenopause or have reached the menopause. There is therefore a

good reason to consider the needs of this group and proactively manage an age diverse workforce.

These practical guidelines aim to help those experiencing troublesome menopausal symptoms, and to support them and their colleagues and managers in tackling the occupational aspects of menopausal symptoms.

6. Access to support and key actions

It is recognised that the menopause is a very personal experience and different levels of support may be needed. As with all longstanding health-related conditions, the Council is aware that a sympathetic approach and appropriate support is required from line management to help employees deal with the issues arising from the menopause.

We encourage employees to speak to their Line Manager but there are other options available such as approaching the HR Team or seeking advice from the Employee Health & Wellbeing Officer.

The Council is committed to ensuring that conditions in the workplace do not make symptoms worse. Temporary workplace adjustments may be necessary to support colleagues who are experiencing the menopause. The following points should be considered depending on the employee's symptoms:

1. A risk assessment should be undertaken in order to consider the particular requirements of menopausal colleagues and ensure that the working environment will not make their symptoms worse. The risk assessment will assist with the identification of any potential adjustments which may be required.
2. Where possible, working time arrangements should be flexible enough to ensure they meet the needs of menopausal colleagues, who may at times require access to more flexible working in order to deal with their symptoms, including starting later after difficulties sleeping, needing to leave work suddenly or taking more breaks during the day. These arrangements should be agreed with the employee's line manager.
3. Consideration should be given to environmental factors. Measures that have been highlighted as useful include temperature and ventilation controls, such as the use of fans. Office seating plans could also be reviewed to enable the employee to sit near the window, in order for them to adjust the temperature of the room accordingly.
4. Consideration should be given regarding access to chilled drinking water and access to adequate workplace sanitary facilities.
5. Uniform may exacerbate symptoms in terms of hot flushes and sweating therefore where possible, flexibility may be required to enable employees to cope with these symptoms.

6. Adjustments may be required to the employee's duties, as hot flushes can be more difficult to cope with when undertaking high visibility work such as formal presentations and formal meetings.

7. General guidance for employees

Current health promotion advice highlights the importance of lifestyle choices before, during and after the menopause, and the benefits of:

- Finding out more about the menopause from available sources of information (see suggestions on CeriNet [here](#)).
- Consulting with your GP on management of the menopause and to ensure that any symptoms are not due to any other causes.
- Discussing your practical needs with your line manager, or seeking advice from the Employee Health & Wellbeing Officer or HR.
- Using technology where this is helpful, e.g., for reminders or note taking.
- Talking about your symptoms and solutions with colleagues, particularly those who are also experiencing symptoms. This could include via the Council's Menopause Café and may assist in working through coping strategies.
- Eating healthily – research has shown that a balanced diet can help alleviate some symptoms.
- Eating regularly to avoid fluctuations in blood sugar levels.
- Wearing natural fibres to allow the body to control its temperature.
- Drinking plenty of water.
- Considering lifestyle changes such as weight reduction, smoking cessation and regular exercise.
- Ensuring alcohol intake is at, or below, recommended levels.
- Avoiding hot flush triggers (such as hot food and drinks) especially before presentations or meetings.
- Considering relaxation techniques such as mindfulness and other potentially helpful techniques such as cognitive behavioural therapy, as these can help reduce the impact of symptoms.

The above can help with some symptoms of menopause and may also help reduce the risks of osteoporosis (brittle bones), diabetes and heart disease in later life.

People experiencing menopause symptoms are encouraged to attend the Council's Menopause café for further information and support details are available on [here](#)

Further information sources and advice can be accessed via the links on CeriNet [here](#)

8. Guidance for managers

The Council expects all employees to be treated with dignity and respect at work.

Regular, informal wellbeing conversations and/or supervision between a manager and employee should enable discussion of any changes in health, including issues relating to the menopause. It may be valuable simply to acknowledge this is a normal stage of life and

that some adaptations can easily be made. Such conversations can identify support at work and encourage them to discuss any relevant health concerns with their GP.

Further information and support are available for Managers via CeriNet [Managers Toolkit/Menopause here](#). This includes information and practical help and guidance to assist your discussions with employees who are affected, and how adaptations may be made for specific symptoms.

It is possible that some employees may be reluctant to have discussions about their experience of the menopause with their line manager. If this is the case, line managers should signpost to HR Officers and/or the Employee Health & Wellbeing Officer.

Employees whose symptoms are significantly affecting their work or their attendance at work should be referred to Occupational Health (via HR) for medical advice on how we can best support them at work.

All managers are encouraged to attend Menopause Awareness training please check [here](#) for the dates available.

DRAFT

Cyngor Sir Ceredigion County Council - Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

An integrated tool to inform effective decision making



This **Integrated Impact Assessment tool** incorporates the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Sustainable Development Principles, the Equality Act 2010 and the Welsh Language Measure 2011 (Welsh Language Standards requirements) and Risk Management in order to inform effective decision making and ensuring compliance with respective legislation.

1. PROPOSAL DETAILS: (Policy/Change Objective/Budget saving)

Proposal Title	Menopause Policy				
Service Area	People & Organisation	Corporate Lead Officer	Geraint Edwards	Strategic Director	James Starbuck
Name of Officer completing the IIA	Geraint Edwards	E-mail	geraint.edwards2@ceredigion.gov.uk	Phone no	01545 572019

Please give a brief description of the purpose of the proposal

The draft Menopause Policy has been developed to help those experiencing troublesome menopausal symptoms, and to support them, their colleagues and managers in tackling the occupational aspects of menopausal symptoms.

The policy aims to:

- Foster an environment in which employees can openly and comfortably instigate conversations or engage in discussions about menopause and feel confident to ask for support.
- Ensure everyone understands what menopause is, can confidently have good conversations, and are clear on the Council's policy and practices
- Educate and inform managers about the potential symptoms of menopause, and how they can support employees at work.
- Reduce absenteeism due to menopausal symptoms.
- Assure employees that we are a responsible employer, committed to supporting their needs during menopause

Who will be directly affected by this proposal? (e.g. The general public, specific sections of the public such as youth groups, carers, road users, people using country parks, people on benefits, staff members or those who fall under the protected characteristics groups as defined by the Equality Act and for whom the authority must have due regard).

Members of staff who may experience menopause symptoms, their colleagues and line managers

VERSION CONTROL: The IIA should be used at the earliest stages of decision making, and then honed and refined throughout the decision making process. It is important to keep a record of this process so that we can demonstrate how we have considered and built in sustainable development, Welsh language and equality considerations wherever possible.

Cyngor Sir Ceredigion County Council - Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

An integrated tool to inform effective decision making



Author	Decision making stage	Version number	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration
	<i>e.g. Budget Process, LG, Scrutiny, Cabinet etc.</i>			<i>This will demonstrate how we have considered and built in sustainable development throughout the evolution of a proposal. Have you considered and applied the sustainable development principle and Well-being Goals?</i>
Geraint Edwards	Scrutiny	V1	22/06/2023	

COUNCIL STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES: Which of the Council's Strategic Objectives does the proposal address and how?

Boosting the economy, supporting businesses and enabling employment	A key aim of this policy is to support those with troublesome menopause symptoms and to reduce absenteeism due to these symptoms. This may include temporarily introducing reasonable adjustments to support employees to remain in work in the short medium and long term
Creating caring and healthy communities	A key aim of this policy is to support those with troublesome menopause symptoms and to reduce absenteeism due to these symptoms. This may include temporarily introducing reasonable adjustments to support employees to remain in work in the short, medium and long term.
Providing the best start in life and enabling learning at all ages	-
Creating sustainable, green and well-connected communities	-

NOTE: As you complete this tool you will be asked for **evidence to support your views**. These need to include your baseline position, measures and studies that have informed your thinking and the judgement you are making. It should allow you to identify whether any changes resulting from the implementation of the recommendation will have a positive or negative effect. Data sources include for example:

- *Quantitative data - data that provides numerical information, e.g. population figures, number of users/non-users*
- *Qualitative data – data that furnishes evidence of people's perception/views of the service/policy, e.g. analysis of complaints, outcomes of focus groups, surveys*
- *Local population data from the census figures (such as Ceredigion Welsh language Profile and Ceredigion Demographic Equality data)*
- *National Household survey data*
- *Service User data*
- *Feedback from consultation and engagement campaigns*
- *Recommendations from Scrutiny*
- *Comparisons with similar policies in other authorities*



- Academic publications, research reports, consultants' reports, and reports on any consultation with e.g. trade unions or the voluntary and community sectors, 'Is Wales Fairer' document.
- Welsh Language skills data for Council staff

2. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES: How has your proposal embedded and prioritised the five sustainable development principles, as outlined in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, in its development?

Sustainable Development Principle	Does the proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not, explain why.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action (s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to the principle?
Long Term Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future.	A key aim of this policy is to support those with troublesome menopause symptoms and to reduce absenteeism due to these symptoms. This may include temporarily introducing reasonable adjustments to support employees to remain in work in the short, medium and long term.	Absence reasons are often recorded as a separate issue even though the symptom may be menopause related, thereby masking the data on employees absent due to troublesome menopause symptoms. By introducing the policy, and increasing awareness amongst the whole workforce it is expected that this will allow greater discussion and support directed at those who need it.	Educate and inform managers about the potential symptoms of menopause, and how they can best support affected employees at work.
Collaboration Working together with other partners to deliver.	Our trade union partners have been heavily involved in the development of this policy.	Consultation documentation and feedback responses	
Involvement Involving those with an interest and seeking their views.	Key stakeholders have been involved. Our trade union partners have been heavily involved in the development of this policy.	Consultation documentation and feedback responses	

Cyngor Sir Ceredigion County Council - Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

An integrated tool to inform effective decision making



<p>Prevention Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse.</p>	<p>A key aim of this policy is to support those with troublesome menopause symptoms and to reduce absenteeism due to these symptoms. This may include temporarily introducing reasonable adjustments to support employees to remain in work in the short, medium and long term. Appropriate training and support sessions will be delivered.</p>	<p>Menopause Awareness courses have already been implemented and a Menopause Café established. Advice and information will be made available on CeriNet</p>	
<p>Integration Positively impacting on people, economy, environment and culture and trying to benefit all three.</p>	<p>A key aim of this policy is to support those with troublesome menopause symptoms and to reduce absenteeism due to these symptoms. The support and training will also be provided to their colleagues and line manager, raising awareness of the impact of the symptoms on the employee.</p>	<p>Evidence of involvement with senior managers and trade union partners in the formulation of the policy</p>	



3. WELL-BEING GOALS: Does your proposal deliver any of the seven National Well-being Goals for Wales as outlined on the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015? Please explain the impact (positive and negative) you expect, together with suggestions of how to mitigate negative impacts or better contribute to the goal. We need to ensure that the steps we take to meet one of the goals aren't detrimental to meeting another.			
Well-being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive or negative impacts-	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action (s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to the goal?
3.1. A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs.			
3.2. A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change).			
3.3. A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximised and health impacts are understood.	<p>The Policy has been developed to help those experiencing troublesome menopausal symptoms, and to support them, their colleagues and managers in tackling the occupational aspects of menopausal symptoms.</p> <p>The policy aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Foster an environment in which employees can openly and comfortably instigate conversations or engage in discussions about menopause and feel confident to ask for support. ▪ Ensure everyone understands what menopause is, can confidently have good conversations, and are clear on the Council's policy and practices ▪ Educate and inform managers about the potential symptoms of 	Absence reasons are often recorded as a separate issue even though the symptom may be menopause related, thereby masking the data on employees absent due to troublesome menopause symptoms. By introducing the policy, and increasing awareness amongst the whole workforce it is expected that this will allow greater discussion and support directed at those who need it.	Educate and inform managers about the potential symptoms of menopause, and how they can best support affected employees at work



	<p>menopause, and how they can support employees at work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduce absenteeism due to menopausal symptoms. ▪ Assure employees that we are a responsible employer, committed to supporting their needs during menopause 		
<p>3.4. A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected.</p>			
<p>3.5. A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental well-being.</p>			

Cyngor Sir Ceredigion County Council - Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

An integrated tool to inform effective decision making



Page 21

<p>3.6. A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances.</p> <p><i>In this section you need to consider the impact on equality groups, the evidence and any action you are taking for improvement.</i></p> <p><i>You need to consider how might the proposal impact on equality protected groups in accordance with the Equality Act 2010?</i></p> <p><i>These include the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or beliefs, gender, sexual orientation.</i></p> <p>Please also consider the following guide:: Equality Human Rights - Assessing Impact & Equality Duty</p>	<p>Describe why it will have a positive/negative or negligible impact.</p> <p><i>Using your evidence consider the impact for each of the protected groups. You will need to consider do these groups have equal access to the service, or do they need to receive the service in a different way from other people because of their protected characteristics. It is not acceptable to state simply that a proposal will universally benefit/disadvantage everyone. You should demonstrate that you have considered all the available evidence and address any gaps or disparities revealed.</i></p>	<p>What evidence do you have to support this view?</p> <p><i>Gathering Equality data and evidence is vital for an IIA. You should consider who uses or is likely to use the service. Failure to use <u>data</u> or <u>engage</u> where change is planned can leave decisions open to legal challenge. Please link to involvement box within this template. Please also consider the general guidance.</i></p>	<p>What action (s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</p> <p><i>These actions can include a range of positive actions which allows the organisation to treat individuals according to their needs, even when that might mean treating some more favourably than others, in order for them to have a good outcome. You may also have actions to identify any gaps in data or an action to engage with those who will/likely to be effected by the proposal. These actions need to link to Section 4 of this template.</i></p>																						
<p>Age Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on people because of their age? (Please tick ✓)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Positive</th> <th>Negative</th> <th>None/ Negligible</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Children and Young People up to 18</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="2">People 18-50</td> <td>Positive</td> <td>Negative</td> <td>None/ Negligible</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">✓</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="2">Older People 50+</td> <td>Positive</td> <td>Negative</td> <td>None/ Negligible</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">✓</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible	Children and Young People up to 18			✓	People 18-50	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible	✓			Older People 50+	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible	✓			<p>The Corporate workforce (i.e. excluding schools) is shown as being 66.1% (1,355) female and 34.1% (698) of whom were between 45 and 64 and could be at an age where they are likely to be experiencing the perimenopause or have reached menopause. A key aim of this policy is to support those with troublesome menopause symptoms and to reduce absenteeism due to these symptoms. This may include temporarily introducing reasonable adjustments to support employees to remain in work in the short, medium and</p>	<p>The Corporate workforce (i.e. excluding schools) is shown as being 66.1% (1,355) female and 34.1% (698) of whom were between 45 and 64</p>	<p>Educate and inform managers and colleagues about the potential symptoms of menopause, and how they can best support affected employees at work</p>
	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible																						
Children and Young People up to 18			✓																						
People 18-50	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible																						
	✓																								
Older People 50+	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible																						
	✓																								

Cyngor Sir Ceredigion County Council - Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

An integrated tool to inform effective decision making



				long term. Appropriate training and support sessions will be delivered.		
--	--	--	--	---	--	--

Disability Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on people because of their disability? (Please tick ✓)				While it is not considered that the menopause is a disability, menopausal symptoms can constitute a disability in terms of the Equality Act whereby the symptoms have a long-term and substantial adverse effect on normal day-to-day-activities. The policy provides advice on menopause symptoms and mentions the possible need of reasonable adjustments.		Educate and inform managers and colleagues about the potential symptoms of menopause, and how they can best support affected employees at work
Hearing Impairment	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					
Physical Impairment	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					
Visual Impairment	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					
Learning Disability	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					
Long Standing Illness	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					
Mental Health	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					
Other	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			

Page 22

Transgender Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on transgender people? (Please tick ✓)	A key aim of this policy is to support those with troublesome menopause symptoms and to reduce absenteeism due to	Trans people are likely to experience at least some menopausal symptoms. How a trans person experiences	Educate and inform managers and colleagues about the potential symptoms of menopause, and how they can
---	---	---	--

Cyngor Sir Ceredigion County Council - Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

An integrated tool to inform effective decision making



Transgender	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible	these symptoms. This may include temporarily introducing reasonable adjustments to support employees to remain in work in the short, medium and long term. Appropriate training and support sessions will be delivered.	symptoms in later life may vary depending on the age at which they transitioned and when in time that was, as treatments have changed and developed over time.	best support affected employees at work
	✓					

Marriage or Civil Partnership Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on marriage or Civil partnership? (Please tick ✓)				The policy's aim of helping those who experiencing troublesome menopausal symptoms, and to support them, their colleagues and managers in tackling the occupational aspects of menopausal symptoms does not impact on this protected characteristic		
Marriage	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Civil partnership	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			

Pregnancy or Maternity Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on pregnancy or maternity? (Please tick ✓)				The policy's aim of helping those who experiencing troublesome menopausal symptoms, and to support them, their colleagues and managers in tackling the occupational aspects of menopausal symptoms does not impact on this protected characteristic		
Pregnancy	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					
Maternity	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			

Race Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on race? (Please tick ✓)				The policy's aim of helping those who experiencing troublesome menopausal symptoms, and to support them, their colleagues		
White	Positive	Negative	None/			

Page 23

Cyngor Sir Ceredigion County Council - Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

An integrated tool to inform effective decision making



			Negligible	and managers in tackling the occupational aspects of menopausal symptoms does not impact on this protected characteristic		
			✓			
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Asian / Asian British	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Other Ethnic Groups	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			

Page 24

Religion or non-beliefs Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on people with different religions, beliefs or non-beliefs? (Please tick ✓)				The policy's aim of helping those who experiencing troublesome menopausal symptoms, and to support them, their colleagues and managers in tackling the occupational aspects of menopausal symptoms does not impact on this protected characteristic		
Christian	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Buddhist	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Hindu	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Humanist	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Jewish	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			

Cyngor Sir Ceredigion County Council - Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

An integrated tool to inform effective decision making



			✓			
Muslim	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Sikh	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Non-belief	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Other	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			

Page 25

Sex Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on men and/or women? (Please tick ✓)				A key aim of this policy is to support those with troublesome menopause symptoms and to reduce absenteeism due to these symptoms. This may include temporarily introducing reasonable adjustments to support employees to remain in work in the short, medium and long term. Appropriate training and support sessions will be delivered.	Educate and inform managers and colleagues about the potential symptoms of menopause, and how they can best support affected employees at work
Men	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible		
			✓		
Women	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible		
	✓				

Sexual Orientation Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on people with different sexual orientation? (Please tick ✓)				A key aim of this policy is to support those with troublesome menopause symptoms and to reduce absenteeism due to these symptoms. This may include temporarily introducing reasonable adjustments to support employees to remain in	Educate and inform managers and colleagues about the potential symptoms of menopause, and how they can best support affected employees at work
Bisexual	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible		
	✓				
Gay Men	Positive	Negative	None/		



			Negligible	work in the short, medium and long term. Appropriate training and support sessions will be delivered.		
			✓			
Gay Women / Lesbian	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					
Heterosexual / Straight	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			

Having due regards in relation to the three aims of the Equality Duty - determine whether the proposal will assist or inhibit your ability to eliminate discrimination; advance equality and foster good relations.

3.6.2. How could/does the proposal help advance/promote equality of opportunity?

You should consider whether the proposal will help you to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantage
- To meet the needs of people with certain characteristics
- Encourage increased participation of people with particular characteristics

The provision of support for those going through the menopause will allow them to continue working when that may not have been possible without that support.

3.6.3. How could/does the proposal/decision help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, or victimisation?

You should consider whether there is evidence to indicate that:

- The proposal may result in less favourable treatment for people with certain characteristics
- The proposal may give rise to indirect discrimination
- The proposal is more likely to assist or impeded you in making reasonable adjustments

The policy is intended to support those going through the menopause but will also inform and educate their colleagues and managers in the impact of troublesome symptoms on operational role . An element of the support will be to consider whether reasonable adjustments need to be put in place.

3.6.4. How could/does the proposal impact on advancing/promoting good relations and wider community cohesion?

You should consider whether the proposal with help you to:

- Tackle prejudice
- Promote understanding

Having due regard of the Socio-Economic Duty of the Equality Act 2010.

Socio-Economic Disadvantage is living in less favourable social and economic circumstances than others in the same society.

As a listed public body, Ceredigion County Council is required to have due regard to the Socio-Economic Duty of the Equality Act 2010. Effectively this means carrying out a poverty impact assessment. The duty covers all people who suffer socio-economic disadvantage, including people with protected characteristics.

3.6.5 What evidence do you have about socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome in relation to the proposal?

Describe why it will have a positive/negative or negligible impact.



The provision of support for those going through the menopause will have a positive impact by allowing them to continue working when that may not have been possible without that support. Longer term sickness absence may have an impact on their income.

What evidence do you have to support this view?

Absence reasons are often recorded as a separate issue even though the symptom may be menopause related, thereby masking the data on employees absent due to troublesome menopause symptoms. By introducing the policy, and increasing awareness amongst the whole workforce it is expected that this will allow greater discussion and support directed at those who need it.

What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?

Educate and inform managers and colleagues about the potential symptoms of menopause, and how they can best support affected employees at work



3.7. A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language Culture, heritage and Welsh Language are promoted and protected. <i>In this section you need to consider the impact, the evidence and any action you are taking for improvement. This in order to ensure that the opportunities for people who choose to live their lives and access services through the medium of Welsh are not inferior to what is afforded to those choosing to do so in English, in accordance with the requirement of the Welsh Language Measure 2011.</i>				Describe why it will have a positive/negative or negligible impact.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action (s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Will the proposal be delivered bilingually (Welsh & English)?	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible	The policy is bilingual policy and any engagement, communication or training will be delivered in both Welsh and English		
	✓					
Will the proposal have an effect on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language?	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible	Employees will have the same opportunity to the Welsh language whether this is by virtual means or face to face interaction		
			✓			
Will the proposal increase or reduce the opportunity for persons to access services through the medium of Welsh?	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible	The strategy and policy are bilingual policy and any engagement, communication or training will be delivered in both Welsh and English		
			✓			
How will the proposal treat the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible	The policy is bilingual policy and any engagement, communication or training will be delivered in both Welsh and English		
	✓					
	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			

Cyngor Sir Ceredigion County Council - Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

An integrated tool to inform effective decision making



Will it preserve promote and enhance local culture and heritage?			✓			
--	--	--	---	--	--	--



4. STRENGTHENING THE PROPOSAL: If the proposal is likely to have a negative impact on any of the above (including any of the protected characteristics), what practical changes/actions could help reduce or remove any negative impacts as identified in sections 2 and 3?

4.1 Actions.

What are you going to do?	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible?	Progress
The policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure that it remains fit for purpose	Every 3 years	People & Organisaition	
Training for line managers will inform that changes to the health of an employee as a result of menopause symptoms will require human resources support	Training will be available annually for new managers and employees, and also as a refresher opportunity for those who have already completed the training	Learning & Development	

4.2. If no action is to be taken to remove or mitigate negative impacts please justify why.

(Please remember that if you have identified unlawful discrimination, immediate and potential, as a result of this proposal, the proposal must be changed or revised).

4.3. Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing.

How will you monitor the impact and effectiveness of the proposal?

Following implementation the policy implementation will be monitored during the first 12 months and reviewed after 3 years

5. RISK: What is the risk associated with this proposal?

Impact Criteria	1 - Very low	2 - Low	3 - Medium	4 - High	5 - Very High
Likelihood Criteria	1 - Unlikely to occur	2 - Lower than average chance of occurrence	3 - Even chance of occurrence	4 - Higher than average chance of occurrence	5 - Expected to occur

Cyngor Sir Ceredigion County Council - Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

An integrated tool to inform effective decision making



Risk Description	Impact (severity)	Probability (deliverability)	Risk Score
If policy is not implemented, there may be inconsistencies in the support offer to individuals suffering from menopause symptoms	2	2	4
Does your proposal have a potential impact on another Service area?			
The implementation of this policy will have a positive and cross-cutting impact for employees in all service areas			

6. SIGN OFF

Position	Name	Signature	Date
Service Manager			
Corporate Lead Officer	Geraint Edwards		23/06/2023
Strategic Director	James Starbuck		26/06/2023
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Bryan Davies		

This page is intentionally left blank

Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council

REPORT TO: Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee
DATE: 19 July 2023
LOCATION: Hybrid
TITLE: Review of Hybrid Working arrangements
PURPOSE OF REPORT: To review the Council's approach to Hybrid Working
REASON SCRUTINY HAVE REQUESTED THE INFORMATION: Pre-decision scrutiny

BACKGROUND:

Beginning in March 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic saw the abrupt enforcement of a national lockdown that included the requirement to remain at home and work from home wherever possible. Staff respond quickly and positively to this change which was attributed, in the main, to steps already taken towards a more agile and smarter way of working, including the investment in digital equipment and software, and the enhancement of the existing flexible working arrangements.

Way We Work project

To build on the lessons learned the Council established a 'Way We Work' project to review the remote working practices adopted during the pandemic. A large scale staff engagement exercise was undertaken at the outset to gather feedback, experiences, ideas and future workplace requirements in order to support strategic decision-making. A high level of employee engagement occurred and the themes emerging from this exercise together with national research, trends and highlights informed the development of a hybrid working strategy.

The staff engagement exercise indicated that there were many benefits from home-working but also recognised that there were challenges for some staff. The benefits reported included virtual meetings, increased productivity, improved collaboration, elimination of office distractions and interruptions. The identified challenges included poor broadband connectivity, training and inducting new staff, a lack of separation between work and home – "living in the office", feelings of isolation due to less social encounters, and inadequate workspace in their home.

HYBRID WORKING STRATEGY

In July 2022 Cabinet adopted the Hybrid Working Strategy. This was developed to set 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 needs of the service will always be the over-riding priority when considering any hybrid working possibilities. It was

recognised that this level of flexibility, due to the nature of some roles or other constraints, will not be achievable for all staff but that there will remain a commitment to explore how a level of flexibility can be built into roles across the organisation.

The Vision for the strategy is “to nurture an empowered, resilient and high performing workforce. A workforce that has the skills and equipment to work flexibly to deliver high quality services in an efficient, sustainable and environmentally friendly way, now and in the future. We will design workplaces with modern, flexible spaces that not only encourage collaborative, cross-functional activity but also strengthen our corporate culture, increase engagement with our partners and support a better customer experience.”

The strategy introduces a set of priorities including a) agile and mobile ways of working; b) environmental and financial sustainability; and c) providing a better customer experience. In addition, a set of parameters were identified within which the hybrid working model could be built, such as ‘where our staff can work as efficiently remotely or in the office they can choose where they work on any given day’; ‘hybrid working staff having no permanent personal space in the office, other than in exceptional circumstances’; and ‘our meetings with colleagues and external partners will be virtual wherever possible’.

All corporate workforce roles were categorised into the following four workstyles by the relevant Corporate Manager:

Fixed – a role which requires the post holder to attend the workplace due to the nature and requirements of the role and therefore not suitable to hybrid working.

The remaining three were all types of hybrid working - Flexible Hybrid, Limited Hybrid and Roaming.

INTERIM HYBRID WORKING POLICY

An Interim Hybrid Working Policy was adopted by Cabinet in July 2022 for a period of 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. The policy was developed to provide detailed information around what hybrid working means for the Council. Its aim was to support employees and their managers in implementing hybrid working by providing practical advice and information, enabling employees to work from the office or home effectively, productively and safely.

To support the implementation of the hybrid working model three workstreams were created, each chaired by a Corporate Lead Officer, and who report to a Ways of Working Project Board. The workstreams are:

- Workplace Design – Responsible for redesigning workspaces to increase inclusivity, flexibility and to support new ways of working for the workforce and customers.
- Digital Solutions – Responsible for reviewing and improving digital solutions to support collaboration, hybrid working and improved customer service.
- Policies, Procedures and Training – Responsible for developing new, and reviewing existing, policies and procedures to support new ways of working.

Policy Headlines

The main policy headlines were:

- Hybrid status is a benefit which the employee can apply for where their roles has been designated as hybrid suitable (Flexible Hybrid, Limited Hybrid & Roaming)
- Hybrid working employees may choose to attend workplace (or hub) on a daily basis but will only have to access to a hot desk booked via a desk booking system.
- To achieve hybrid status employees must demonstrate or agree to:
 - Sufficient broadband speed
 - Accommodate the necessary equipment for productive working
 - Ensure maintenance of information security
 - Safe working environment
 - Return to workplace if disruption to connectivity
 - Only work from recorded remote working locations
 - Attend the work location if required
- No contractual changes during period of Interim Policy. The contractual work location would stay the same and there would be no travelling expenses to attend work location or hot desk hub
- No working from home allowance payable as this was a voluntary arrangement
- Hybrid status may be withdrawn under certain circumstances
- Recruitment/interviews were virtual interviews by default unless there was a strong justification for face to face interviews.

REVIEW

Engagement with employees has taken place periodically throughout the period to gather information and feedback on how the policy was working in practice and to identify any areas of needing attention. No large-scale changes were made but employees were kept informed of any minor changes through updates via the weekly Team Ceredigion News email and Teams channel.

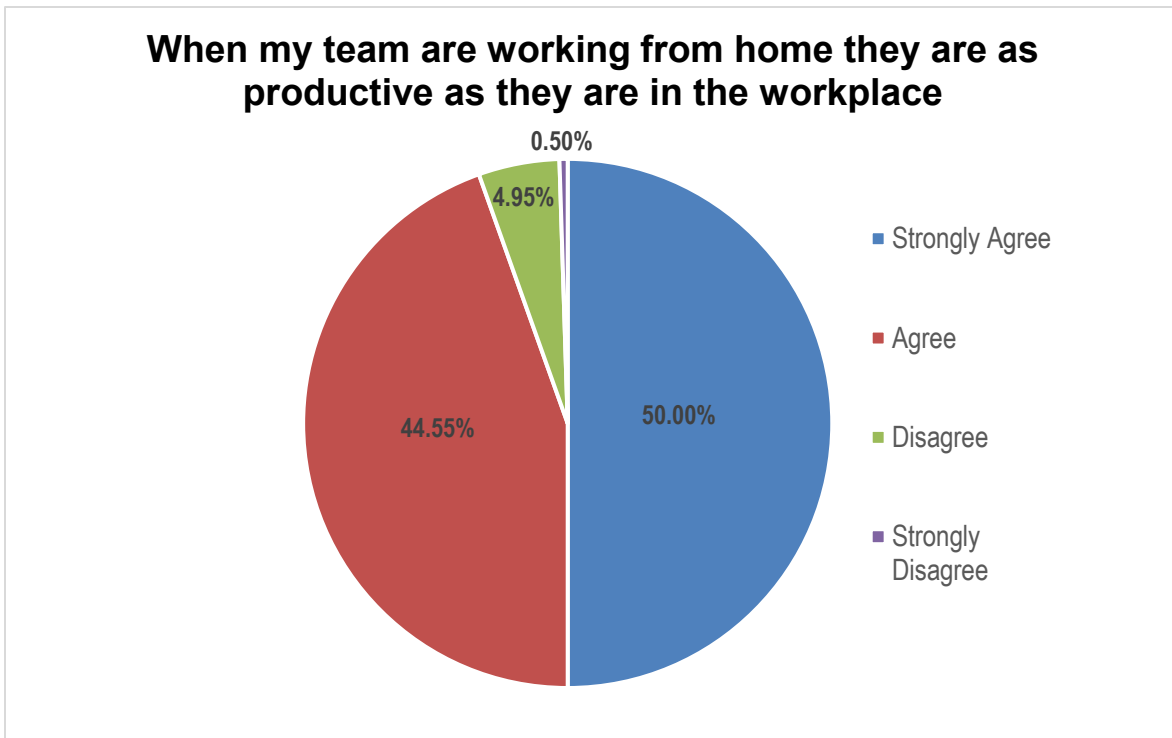
A review of the 12 month interim period was undertaken during June 2023 with employees and their line managers being asked to provide feedback on their experience over the period. All employees who occupy hybrid eligible roles were asked to complete an anonymous staff survey. The survey comprised of two parts, the first for all employees and the second for those with line management responsibility. A total of 870 responses were received resulting in a response rate of 75% and all Service areas were well represented. As the following results will show there is an overwhelming majority who have seen hybrid working as a positive experience and support the continuation of hybrid working as a permanent option.

In their survey responses employees and their line managers identified that they are as or more productive working from home than they are in the workplace. This view is supported by the outcome of assessment from our external regulators. Care Inspectorate Wales in their Performance Evaluation Inspection in May 2023 found that *“There is strong senior leadership within social services. We were told by staff, stakeholders and partners that senior leaders are visible, accessible, supportive and*

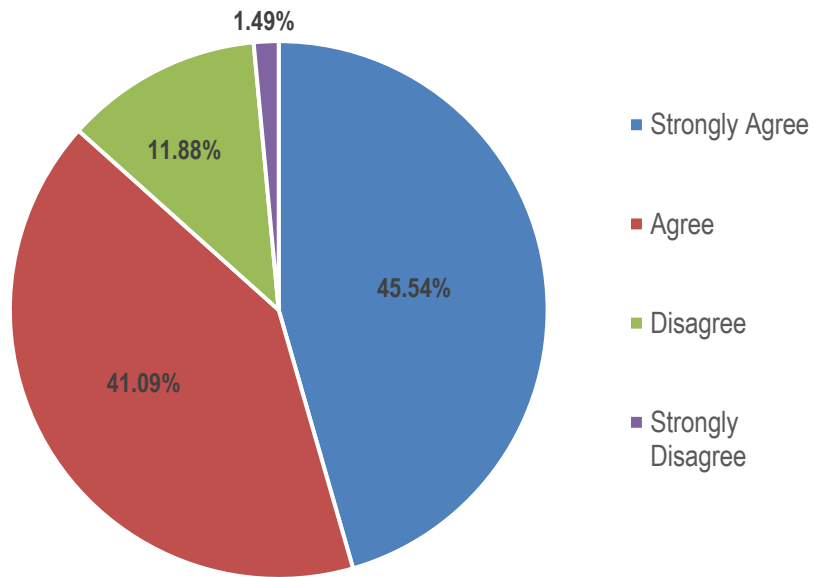
approachable. Feedback we gathered indicates a culture which is focused on well-being, building and maintaining relationships and achieving safe outcomes for people”, and also “Ceredigion has a committed workforce which is responding to an increasing workload both in terms of complexity and volume. Wales Audit in their Springing Forward – Strategic Workforce Management audit in May 2022 stated that “the pandemic has accelerated the move to new ways of working and promoted positive operational and cultural changes within the Council” and that “the Council has well developed plans, monitoring, review and improvement arrangements for its workforce.”

Line managers

In addition to the responses shown below, line managers also provided a range of data on related matters such as how their management skills have evolved to manage hybrid teams, a focus on inducting new starters face to face rather than virtually, regular check-ins when working remotely and suggestions for developing a sense of belonging to a team. A regular comment was the recommendation of periodic team meetings face to face, ranging from fortnightly to quarterly, primarily to support team identity and for wellbeing purposes.

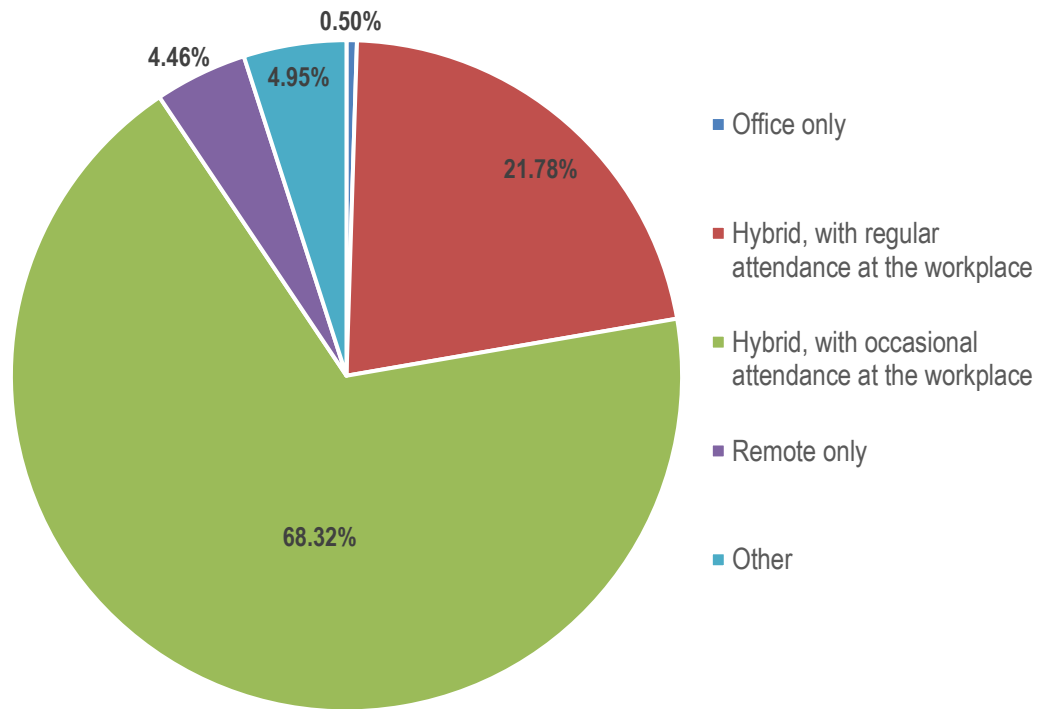


When my team are working from home I can manage them as effectively as I can in the workplace

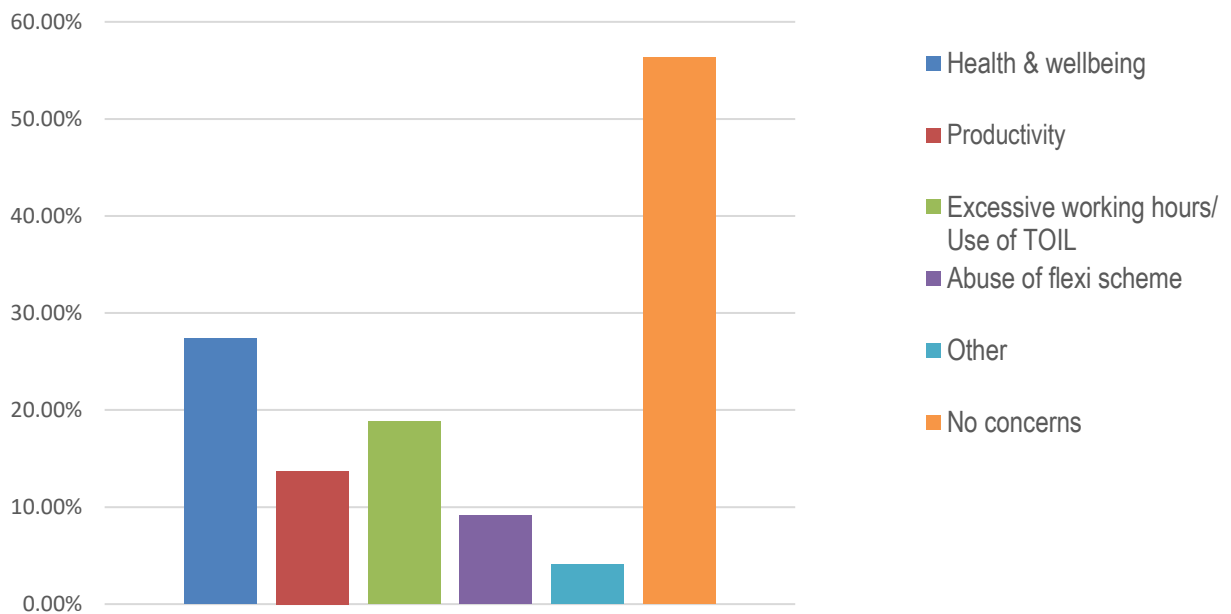


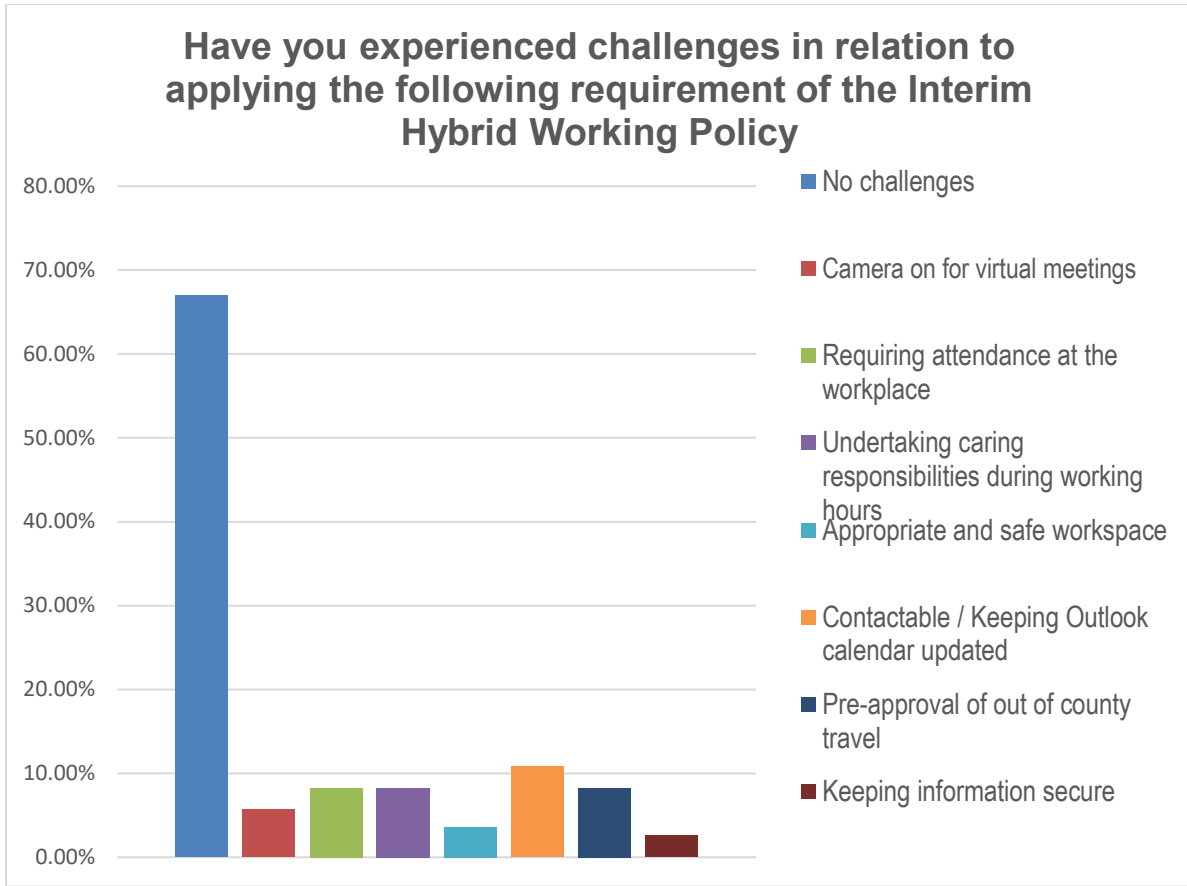
When my team are working from home...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
they have the skills to work effectively	56.44%	42.08%	0.99%	0.50%
they have the equipment/tools they need to effectively undertake their work	59.90%	36.63%	2.97%	0.50%
they are able to work effectively in a paperless way	53.47%	41.09%	4.46%	0.99%

If given the choice, what working practice would you prefer your hybrid eligible employees adopt?



With regards individuals in your team, do you have concerns in relation to:

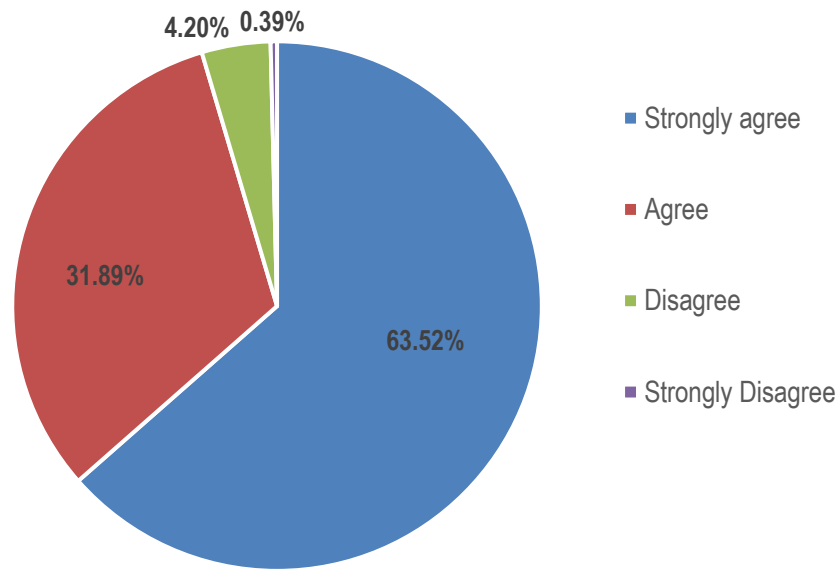




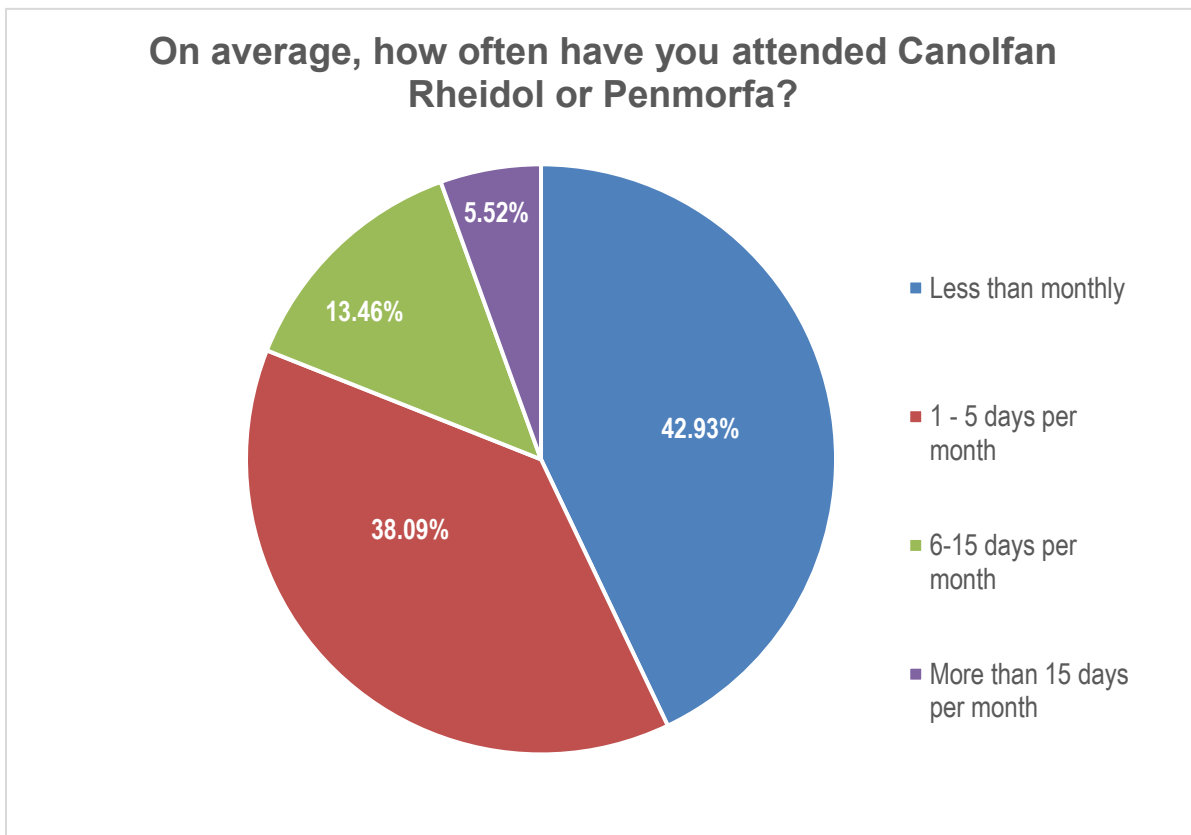
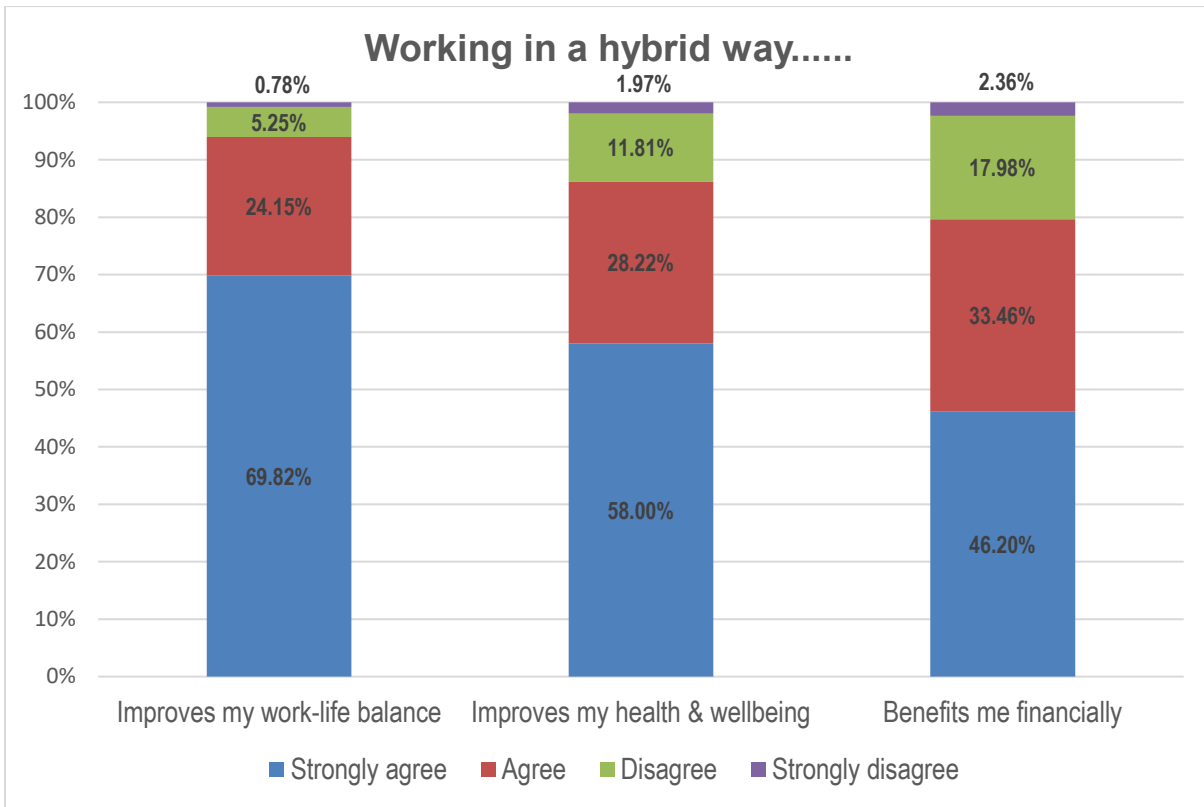
Employees

The result for employees is similar to that of line managers with over 95% of employees agreeing that their hybrid working experience has been positive. Employees have made their preference clear as the following results show. The financial benefit of hybrid working did not have as many employees choosing strongly agree but almost 80% of employees believe that it has benefitted them. When asked if they would consider alternative employment if their ability to work in a hybrid way was removed, 39% selected Yes; 24% selected No and the remaining 37% were Unsure.

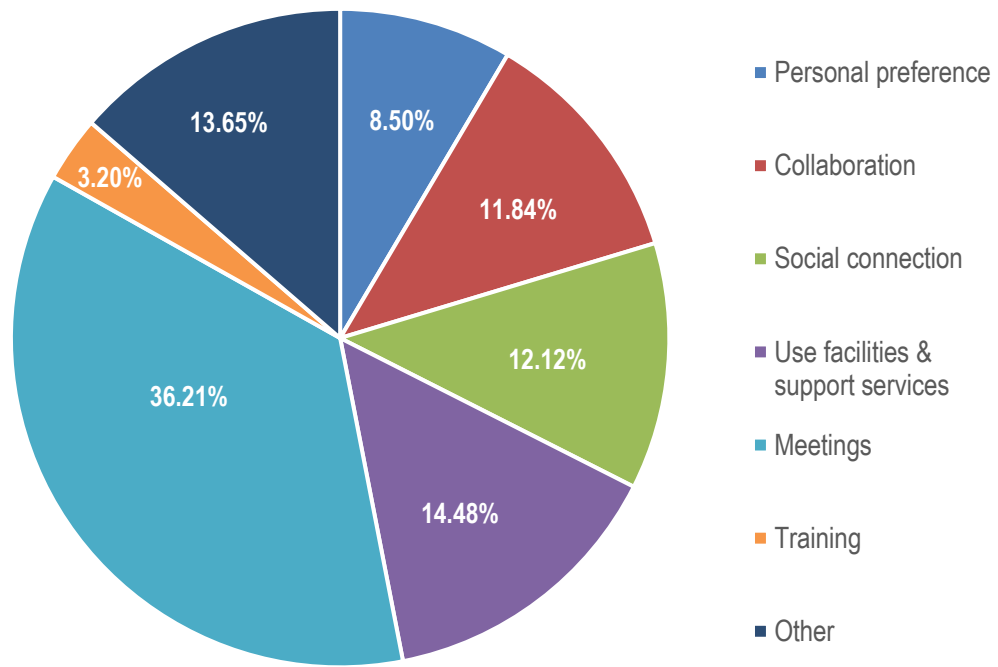
My hybrid working experience has been positive



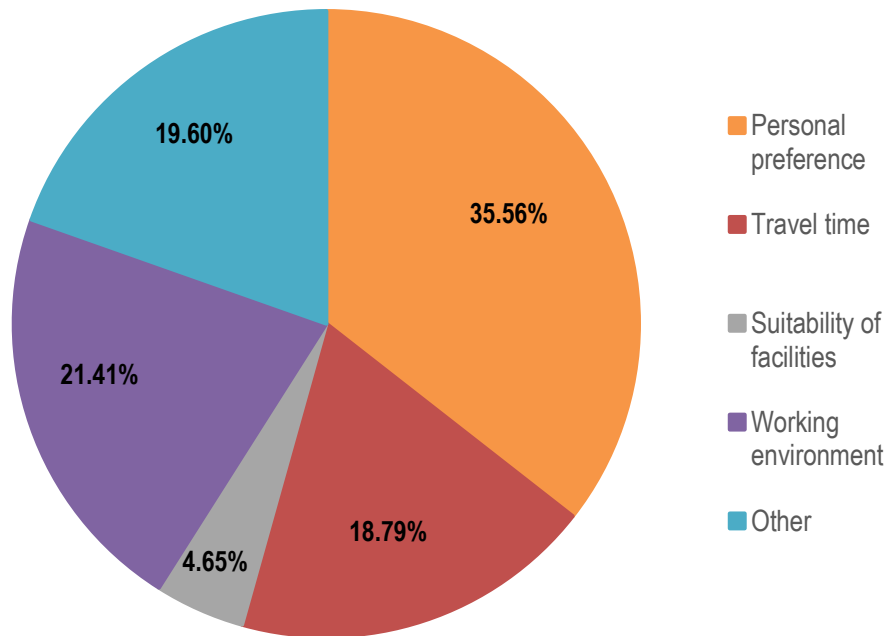
When working from home...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I'm equally or more productive than I am when working in the workplace	69.29%	25.33%	5.25%	0.13%
I'm managed as effectively as I am in the workplace	63.12%	29.92%	6.04%	0.92%
I have the skills I need to undertake my work effectively at home	72.31%	26.77%	0.79%	0.13%
I have the equipment I need to undertake my work effectively at home	66.40%	29.27%	3.54%	0.79%
I am able to work effectively in a paperless way	62.99%	30.31%	5.64%	1.05%



What is the main reason you attend the workplace?



If you do not regularly attend the workplace, please indicate the main reason for this

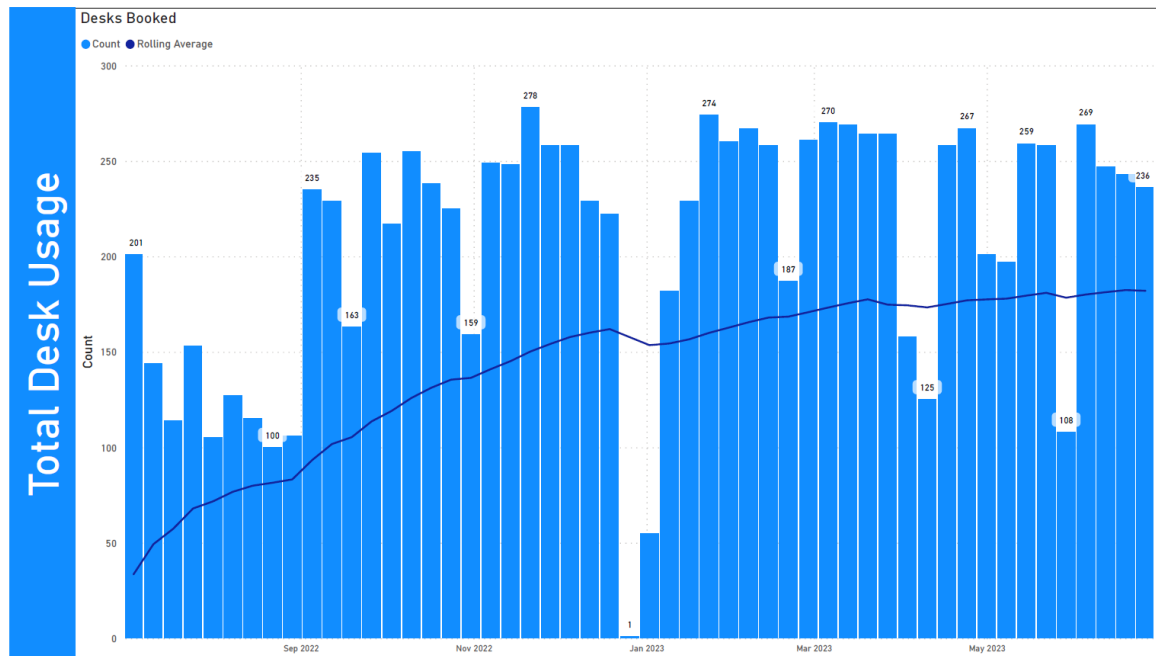


The survey results are clear that from a line manager and employee perspective hybrid working is seen as a key benefit and retention tool. It is therefore recommended that hybrid working is accepted as a long term flexible working option and that the Interim Hybrid Working Policy should be revised to reflect this.

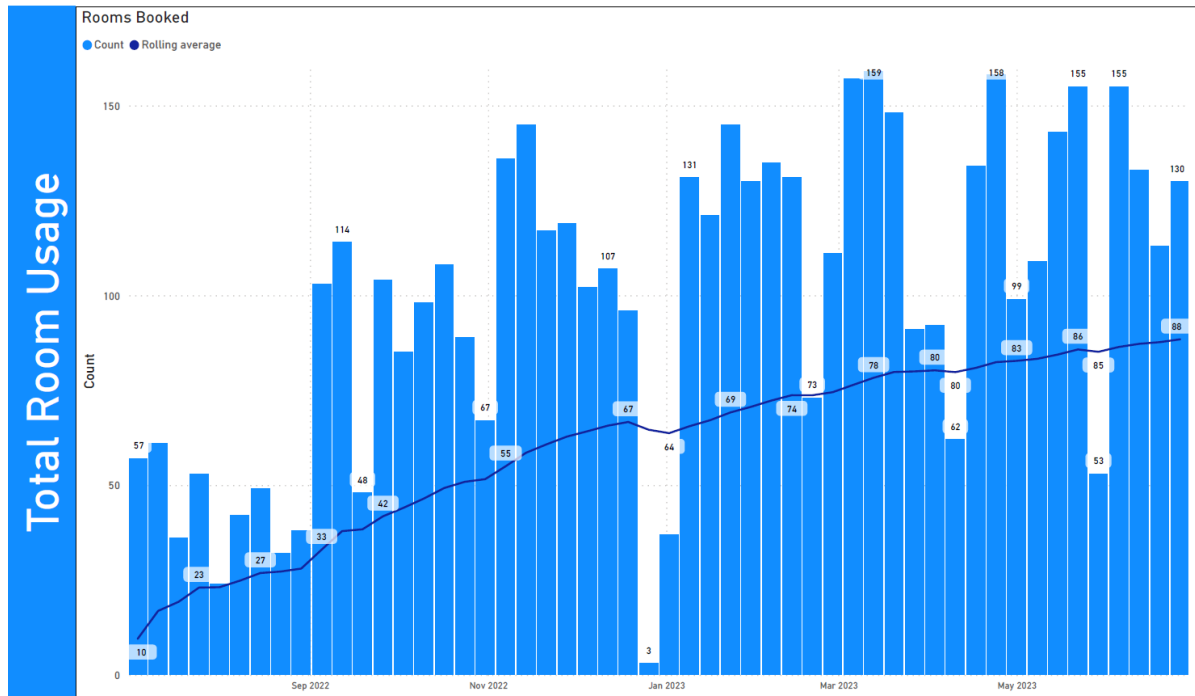
REPURPOSING OF COUNCIL BUILDINGS

If the proposal to permanently adopt hybrid working option for employees is approved this will allow the release of office space which has not been fully utilised during the period of the interim hybrid working trial. The previous 12 months has shown that the current hybrid working desk capacity in Canolfan Rheidol and Penmorfa is capable of accommodating demand in its current form, accepting however that more permanent arrangements will be put in place in both locations. Over the twelve month period of the trial desk usage peaked in early December and it March 2023 for rooms booked. It was observed that the average usage over the winter months was higher than during the warmer summer months but remained within maximum capacity limits.

Desks booked Jul 2022 – Jun 2023



Rooms booked Jul 2022 – Jun 2023



It is proposed that officers undertake a review of all Council office accommodation across its estate to identify potential for repurposing. The public engagement on future uses in Council offices resulted in several suggestions of possible usage including using building as facilities for the community, hospital or health care setting, spaces for businesses and residential accommodation.

Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If not, please state why No. IIA will be completed should new Hybrid Policy be required

WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS:

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

RECOMMENDATION (S):

- To recommend to Cabinet to adopt hybrid working as a permanent option for employees able to work as efficiently remotely as in the office.
- To develop a Hybrid Working Policy to replace the current Interim Hybrid Working Policy and bring back to Scrutiny following consultation

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION (S):

- To support the continuation of hybrid ways of working

Contact Name: Geraint Edwards
Designation: Corporate Lead Officer – People & Organisation
Date of Report: 28/06/2023
Acronyms:

This page is intentionally left blank

Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council

REPORT TO: Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee

DATE: 19 July 2023

LOCATION: Hybrid

TITLE: Draft Workforce Plan 2023-2028

PURPOSE OF REPORT: To review and recommend draft Workforce Plan 2023 – 2028

**REASON SCRUTINY
HAVE REQUESTED THE
INFORMATION:** Pre-decision scrutiny - to review new strategy

BACKGROUND:

A workforce plan is a strategic document 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.

Developing a workforce plan is essential for several reasons:

- *Strategic Alignment:* aligns human resources strategies with the Council's strategic goals. The plan allows the Council to identify critical roles, competencies, and skills required to achieve our corporate objective.
- *Recruitment and Retention:* provides an understanding of the skills and competencies needed to fill future roles. This will allow effective recruitment and retention strategies to be developed which will allow successful engagement with employees with a view to increasing motivation, reducing turnover rates and enhancing employee satisfaction.
- *Succession Planning:* enables the identification of critical posts and potential successors, allowing development, training and mentoring programmes or opportunities to mitigate risks associated with key employees leaving
- *Agility and Adaptability:* by anticipating future workforce needs and skills requirements, the Council can proactively address emerging challenges and capitalise on new opportunities.

As was the case for the 2017–2022 plan, a Strategic Workforce Planning toolkit was used to guide Corporate Lead Officer and their teams through the process. The toolkit assisted in analysing the current workforce before extending that analysis to identify future workforce requirements, skills and competencies which will be needed to deliver new or improved services.

WORKFORCE PLAN 2023–2028

At the start of the year the People and Organisation Service met with each Service area to introduce the toolkit and to provide a range of workforce data to assist each service area in completing toolkit. This information was then collated, analysed and assessed in line with the workforce objectives within the Corporate Strategy and the requirements of the Sustainability Principles' five ways of working to develop key themes for the Workforce Plan 2023-2028.

The 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.

	Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If not, please state why	Yes
	Summary:	
	Long term:	Whilst the plan responds to current challenges it also considers the longer term challenges with the aim of ensuring the workforces possesses the correct skills and capacity to meet these.
WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS:	Integration:	Through maintaining a motivated and stable workforce, the majority of whom live within the county boundary, the Plan will positively impact on people (our staff) and the local economy.
	Collaboration:	All Corporate Lead officers and their Senior team have contributed to the plan through the completion of the Service-specific Workforce Plan toolkit. The plan will be shared with our corporate trade union partners for comment.

Involvement: The Plan has been developed by involving all Corporate Manager and Corporate Lead Officer to capture their view on the current and longer term needs of their particular service areas.

Prevention: Focus is given to the current recruitment and retention difficulties and the impact this has on meeting future demands. The Plan introduces strategies to encourage wider employment entry paths and opportunities to meet a sustainable future workforce.

RECOMMENDATION (S):

- To recommend the approval of the Workforce Plan 2023-2028 by Cabinet

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION (S):

- To support the adoption of a new workforce plan to support the workforce meeting its current and future service delivery needs

Contact Name: Geraint Edwards
Designation: Corporate Lead Officer – People & Organisation
Date of Report: 28/06/2023
Acronyms:



Workforce Plan 2023-2028

Team Ceredigion: A team to be proud of



**GYRFA GWAITH DYSGU
CAREER WORK LEARN**

Contents

Introduction

<u>Corporate Strategy 2022-2027</u>	Page 2
<u>The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015</u>	Page 3
<u>Other Corporate Strategies</u>	Page 5

What we've achieved

<u>Workforce Plan 2017-2022</u>	Page 6
<u>Other Achievements</u>	Page 11

Current context

<u>Our Workforce</u>	Page 12
<u>What our workforce has told us</u>	Page 14
<u>Current Challenges</u>	Page 15

What we want to achieve

<u>2023-2028 Priorities</u>	Page 16
<u>Measuring Success</u>	Page 27



Introduction

Our Workforce Plan 2023-2028 sets out how we will attract, develop and retain our most valuable asset – our people. The effectiveness of our organisation hinges not just on attracting the best talent, but also in creating a strong workplace community that supports its people, and recognises the unique attributes of every Team Ceredigion member.

We are passionate about fostering a culture where our employees feel supported, valued and empowered. 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 our organisation and the communities we serve.

We strongly believe all team Ceredigion members deserve the opportunity to excel and thrive in an environment that allows them to reach their full potential, now and in the future. Through this strategy we aim to foster a skilled, outcome focussed, innovative and progressive workforce, dedicated to delivering high quality and efficient services for the people of Ceredigion.



Corporate Strategy 2022-2027

Our Workforce Plan 2023- 2028 outlines how we will develop the capacity and capability of our workforce to support the priorities identified in our Corporate Strategy 2022-2027.

The priorities outlined in the Corporate Strategy aim to enable the delivery of services that will enhance the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of the people of Ceredigion. Underpinning the success of our Corporate Strategy is a high performing workforce, operating in a way that is innovative, digitally mature and sustainable.

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.*

The Corporate Strategy sets out our priorities, called Corporate Well-Being Objectives, along with our ambitions and the steps to achieve these over the period 2022-27. The Strategy informs everything the Council does. It aims to ensure that our Council continues to be rated as one of the top performing authorities in Wales and continues to provide high quality, safe, efficient and effective services to the residents of Ceredigion. It is based on a wide-ranging review of evidence and needs-assessments.

The strategy outlines four well-being objectives, which include:

- **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 Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015

National Well-being Goals

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 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).

Our Corporate Well-being Objectives have been developed based on evidenced local needs and on the views of local people. The steps we plan to take to achieve our Corporate Well-being Objectives will help us improve outcomes for local people and also maximise our contribution to the national Well-being Goals.



Sustainable Development Principle










In working towards achieving the Well-being Goals it is necessary for us as a public body to consider how we apply the sustainable development principle. The sustainable development principle is defined as *'acting in a manner that seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'*. To meet the expectations of the sustainable development principle, it is necessary to consider the Five Ways of Working: long-term; prevention; integration; collaboration; and involvement.

The development of this strategy is underpinned by the sustainable development principle, and its five ways of working:



Other Corporate Strategies

Our strategy takes account of and aims to support the following corporate strategies:

-  Employee Health and Wellbeing Strategy
-  Hybrid Working Strategy
-  ICT & Digital Strategy (in progress)
-  Through Age Wellbeing Strategy
-  Tackling Hardship Strategy
-  Economic Strategy
-  Welsh Language Strategy
-  Medium Term Financial Strategy
-  Strategic Equality Plan



What we've achieved

Workforce Plan 2017-2022

The following 4 key themes of work were identified in our previous workforce plan.



Engagement and Opportunity

We will engage with our staff and communities to promote Ceredigion County Council as a great place to work.



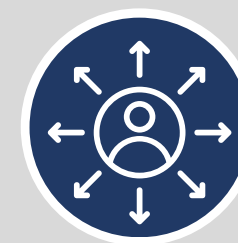
Flexible and Agile Workforce

We will develop and support our staff to work flexibly across the County working effectively with communities and the third sector.



Promote a Bilingual workforce that will serve the community

We will promote the use of the Welsh language across the workforce and our community.



Leadership & Management Development

We will develop the leadership and management skills of our workforce to face the challenges ahead.

Engagement and Opportunity

What we set out to do

- Adopt a pro-active and planned approach to promoting our opportunities at School and University Careers fayres and events.
- Employ an Apprenticeship & Work Experience Coordinator who will promote the Apprenticeship Scheme, support apprentices and coordinate work experience placements across all services for post 16 applicants.
- Develop an apprenticeship scheme that will offer a range of opportunities at different levels and across services.
- Promote benefits of structured work experience opportunities to Schools and Universities and encourage service areas to provide work experience placements.
- Maintain and strengthen arrangements for university student placements from Universities across the county.
- Establish a Social Work trainee scheme to replace the current arrangements
- Explore alternative and innovative ways of promoting and advertising employment opportunities
- Communicate the benefits of Ceredigion County Council as an employer. Sharing good news stories.
- Promote recruitment opportunities on social media and other platforms.

What we achieved

- Attendance at a range of virtual and face to face recruitment events and fairs
- Apprenticeship & Work Experience Coordinator appointed.
- Apprenticeship scheme created. Range of opportunities offered. 16 apprenticeships completed. 12 employed by Ceredigion County Council.
- Work undertaken to develop corporate processes to identify and support work experience opportunities.
- Aberystwyth University students hosted on employability modules. 60 students accommodated.
- Trainee Social Scheme established. 12 Trainee Social Workers recruited. 5 other employees sponsored on an independent route to qualify as Social Workers. 16 employed as Social Workers by Ceredigion County Council.
- 5 Swansea University Social Work students completed hosted placements and were employed as Ceredigion County Council Social Workers.
- 80 student Social Work placements provided.
- 22 employees have been supported to undertake a Certification in Higher Education, out of which 9 have continued onto the Social Work degree.
- Developed and launched new look careers website to showcase opportunities of working for Ceredigion County Council and living in Ceredigion.
- Implemented range of alternative marketing solutions including radio advertising, banners, virtual information sessions, promotional videos.
- Opportunities and good news stories promoted on new dedicated Facebook and LinkedIn pages. 3.3k Facebook followers in April 2023.

Flexible and Agile Workforce

What we set out to do

- Continue with the restructuring of support services centralising teams wherever possible
- Review the Council's staffing structure through a phased approach to ensure that there is officer capacity and capability to meet the priorities of the Corporate Plans and objectives
- Offer train the trainer opportunities to staff in order to utilise the expertise within the workforce
- Develop a workforce with wider organisational knowledge that will allow staff to be deployed across services
- Continue to provide innovative and cost effective learning and development opportunities
- Utilise the Ceri Learning & Development module across all Services to promote, book and record training and ensure 'one training record' across the Council
- Promote the upskilling of staff in technologies in order to promote and gain access to digital services
- Promote a customer service ethos with all staff and teams by offering Customer First training to all service areas
- Introduce an agile working policy that maximises and rationalises office space across the Council
- Introduce a Corporate induction programme

What we achieved

- Centralisation of support services including ICT, Creditors, Finance and Procurement, Business Support
- Restructure of senior leadership and service areas. 2 Corporate Director roles, 12 Corporate Lead Officer and 39 Corporate Manager roles established and appointed
- 'Train the Trainer' training provided. 91 workforce subject matter experts have delivered training.
- 2251 various training sessions have been delivered by our subject matter experts and our Corporate Trainers.
- Corporate development programmes established which have supported cross organisation career pathways and professional development.
- Annual training schedule for corporate and social care employees with a wide variety of training opportunities.
- Ceri Learning & Development module utilised and embedded across all Services to promote, book and record training and ensure 'one training record' across the Council
- Significant upskilling of workforce in use of technologies in response to the COVID pandemic and supported by training opportunities.
- Rolling programme of Customer First training to all service areas
- Corporate Induction event developed, embedded and scheduled on a monthly basis.

Promote a Bilingual workforce that will serve the community

What we set out to do

- Continue to develop the work of the Welsh in the Workplace Group
- Maximise the opportunities offered by the National Centre for Learning Welsh
- Provide a range of Welsh language training opportunities that address the range of abilities within the workforce
- Introduce a Welsh language 'ffrindiau iaith – Welsh friend' scheme to support Welsh learners
- Promote the 'More than just words' strategy and active offer campaign to all services
- Ensure that Welsh learners are supported to meet their linguistic goals
- Promote an understanding of Welsh language and cultural knowledge with all staff via an e-learning course

What we achieved

- Work Welsh Training Officer appointed.
- Welsh in the Workplace Group established
- Range of Welsh language classes offered including: - Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced as well as Welsh Language Written.
- 287 Work Welsh learners
- Welsh language 'ffrindiau iaith – Welsh friend' scheme introduced to support Welsh learners
- 'More than just words' strategy and active offer campaign promoted to all services via training and communication campaigns
- Welsh Language Awareness e-learning course developed and designated mandatory for all staff.



Leadership & Management Development

What we set out to do

- Devise and promote a 'Ceredigion Manager' Development Plan with a core framework of mandatory training
- Offer a range of additional management and development opportunities that will meet the training and development needs of a 'Ceredigion Manager'
- Introduce a 'New Manager's induction programme
- Develop Talent Management process through the strategic workforce planning toolkit
- Ensure that effective succession planning is in place in order to retain organisational knowledge
- Develop whole organisation knowledge for Leaders and Managers to effectively implement change and improve decision making
- Further promote the use of Ceri Net with managers as a source of information advice and assistance
- Expand the use of webinars for information sharing with managers
- Develop a Corporate managers network that will meet regularly with Senior Leadership

What we achieved

- 6 module Ceredigion Manager Programme developed, implemented and designated mandatory for all managers.
- Range of additional management development opportunities provided including: Difficult Conversations, Finance for Non-Finance, Procurement, Project Management , Support Health and Wellbeing of Employees, Managing Change and more.
- 'Aspiring Managers' and 'Managing for the First Time' modules introduced.
- Workforce and succession planning included in Ceredigion Manager Programme course.
- Comprehensive manager's toolkit published on Ceri Net as a source of information, advice and assistance for managers and headteachers
- Use of webinars, townhall sessions and newsletters to disseminate information to managers.
- Corporate managers and senior leadership workshop established and meeting regularly on a quarterly basis.

Other achievements

Qualification Panel Established	Implemented new Learning Management System, Ceredigion Learning Pool	22 Mental Health First Aiders appointed	ILM Level 5: 12 managers certified, with 4 managers nearing completion	Implemented Online DBS checks system	Transitioned to virtual delivery of learning events	Interim Hybrid Working Policy developed and implemented
Successful restructure of Through-Age Wellbeing services	Replaced Cardinet with new Ceri Net staff intranet site	Carer's Policy developed and implemented	Hybrid Working Strategy developed and being implemented	Increased collaborative working with Aberystwyth University on range of careers initiatives	Supported the national WeCare.wales social care campaign	Health and Wellbeing Strategy developed and being implemented
99% of eligible employees working in a hybrid way	Implemented new incident reporting system, Alcumus	ILM Level 4: 30 managers certified, with 24 managers nearing completion	Annual Appraisals process successfully established	Audit of workforce digital skills undertaken	3 Employee Health and Wellbeing Surveys conducted	New look weekly news format developed and implemented
New people processes e-forms platform (dodl) developed	8 Health and Wellbeing Champions recruited	Revised Ceredigion Manager Programme	Bespoke development programme for CLO, CMs and TMs to implement the TAW Strategy	University of Wales Trinity Saint David Youth Work student placements offered	Team Ceredigion staff Teams channel introduced	Social work placements provided to Swansea University and Open University students

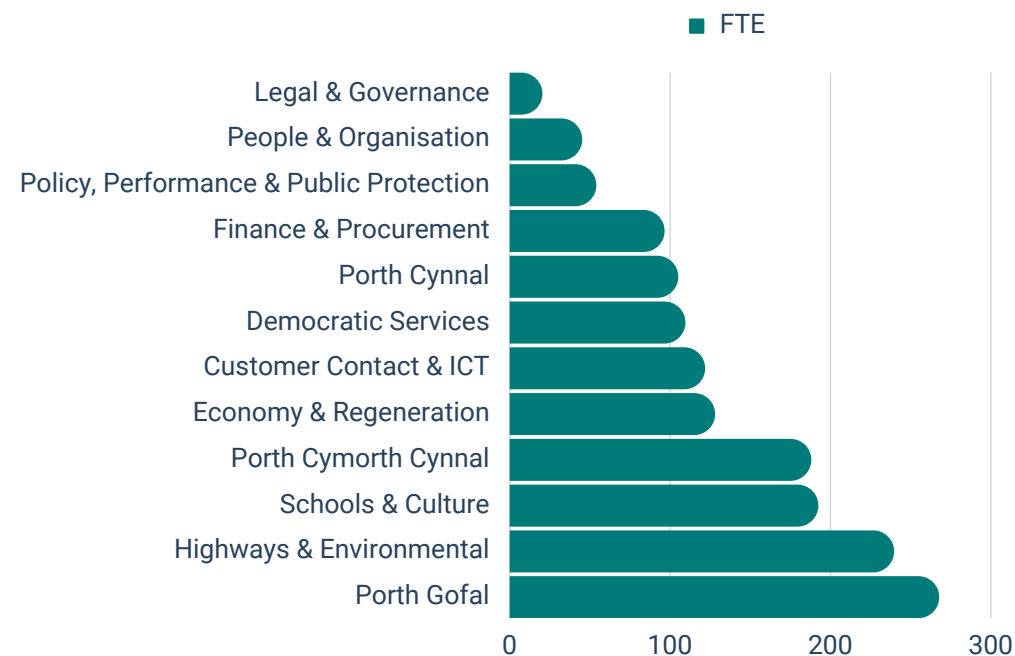
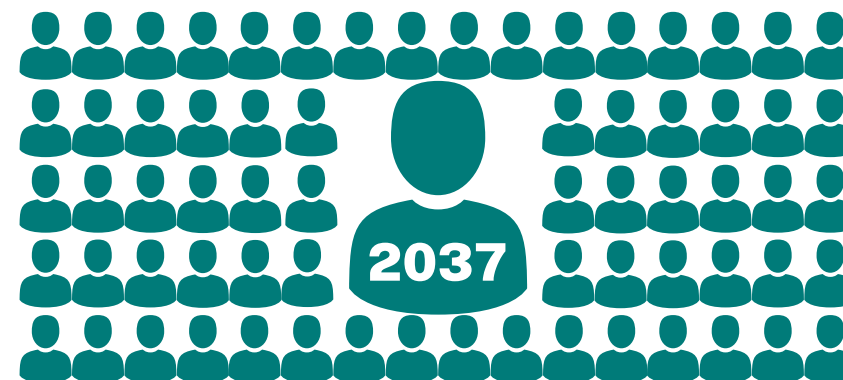
Current Context

Our workforce

Our ability to successfully deliver services and continuous improvement depends on having the right people with the right skills in the right place at the right time. Workforce planning is about having a thorough knowledge and understanding of the current workforce, analysing that information in order to identify the workforce skills, competencies and capacity which will be needed in future. This will ensure we have the capacity and capability to deliver new, different and/or improved services and priorities that will align to our goals and serve the residents of Ceredigion.

In May 2023 our corporate workforce is made up of 2037 employees (1,567 FTE). During the last decade a leaner senior management structure has been achieved, with a 30% reduction in senior leadership posts.

Employee costs account for 45.4% of the Council's gross expenditure. Some of our key frontline services operate 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and there is a drive to ensure all services are delivered when people wish to access them.

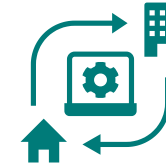


Told us they're Disabled



3%

Hybrid Working



43%

Working Pattern



56%
full-time

Managers



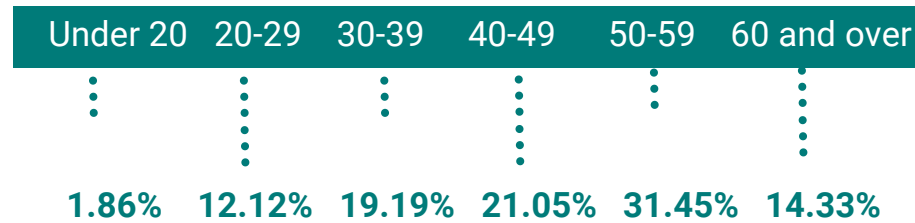
14.5%

Gender

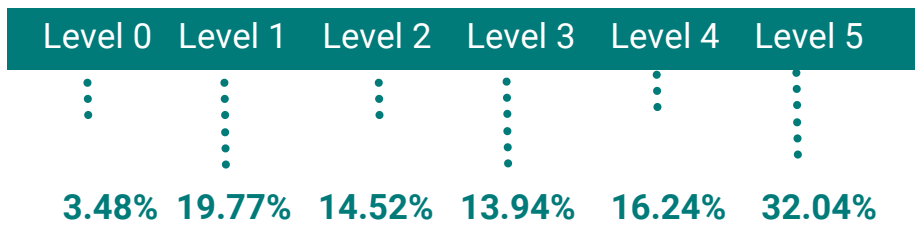


65% 35%
female male

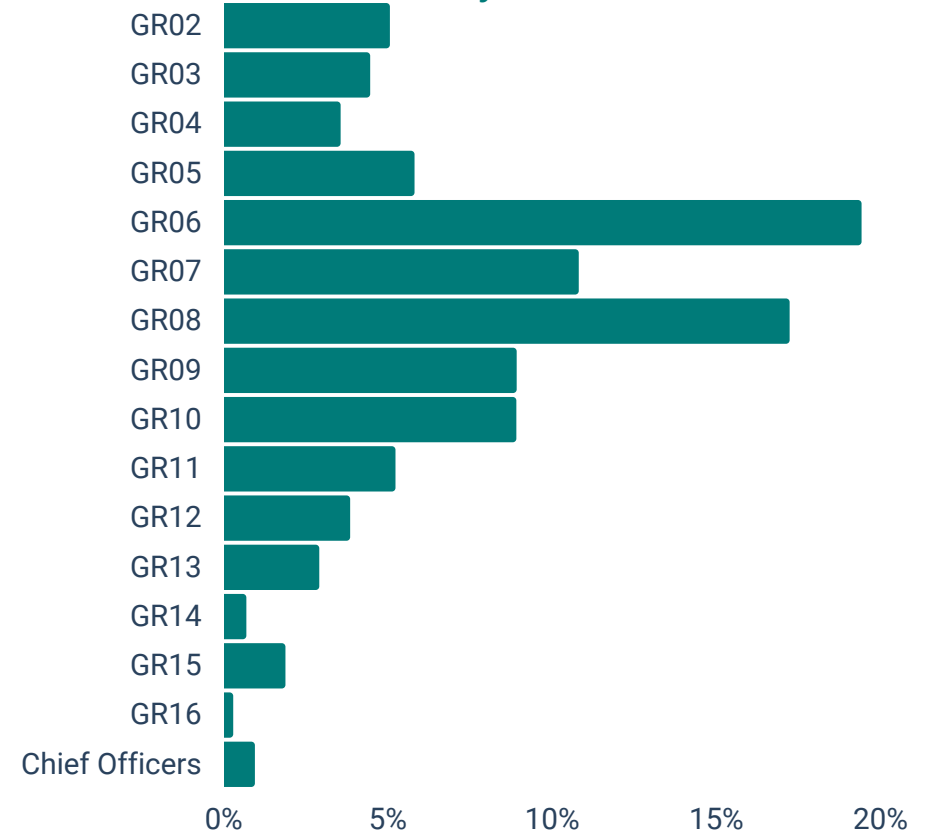
Age



Welsh Language Skills



Pay



What our workforce has told us

Over the duration of the previous workforce plan we have worked hard to gather employee sentiment in relation to their experiences so as to inform the work we do and prioritise our resources. Below are recent findings from various staff surveys.

Employee Health and Wellbeing Survey



Recruitment Selection & Appointment Survey



Current challenges

A comprehensive workforce planning exercise was undertaken by all service areas late 2022. The purpose of this exercise was to gain an in depth understanding of the workforce in terms of the skills, competencies and capacity which will be needed to deliver new, different and/or improved services and priorities in the future. As part of this exercise the following key challenges, faced by our services were identified.

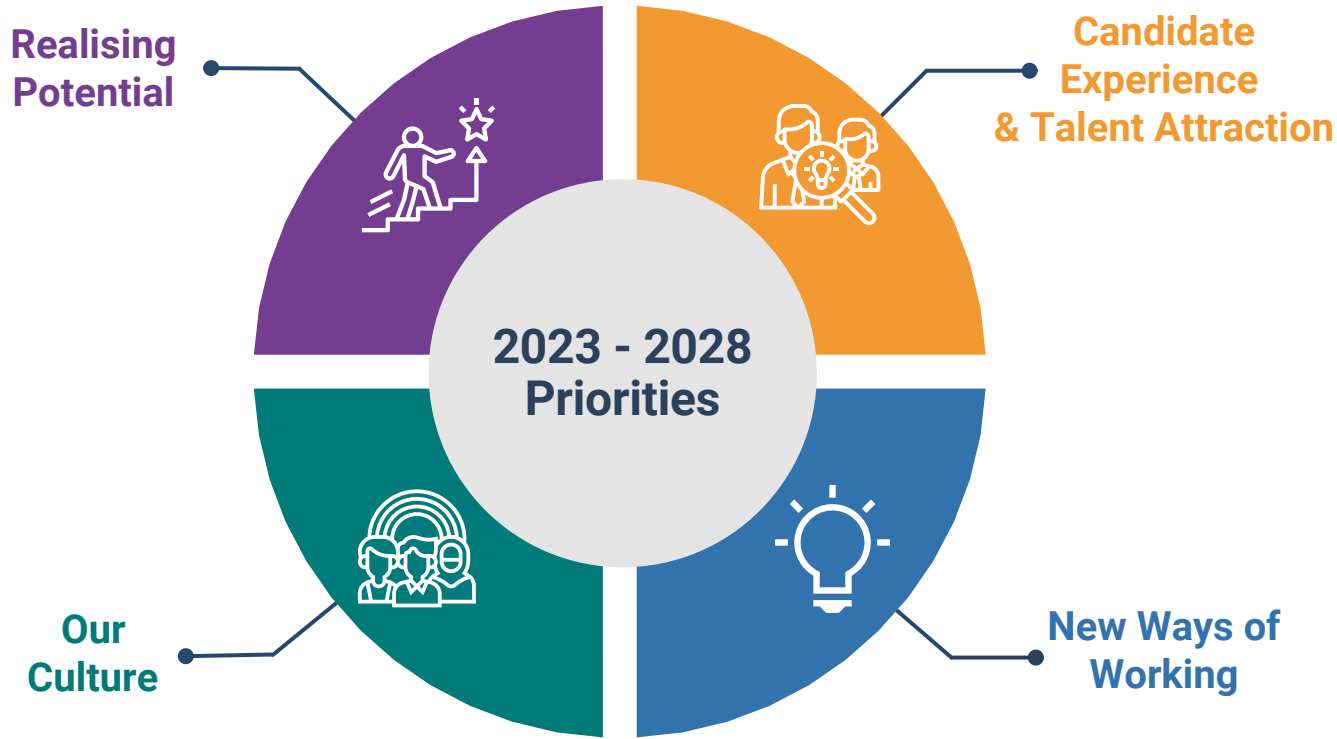


What we want to achieve

2023-2028 Priorities

Having analysed the findings of the workforce planning exercise conducted in 2022, as well as insights gained via various employee surveys, the following priority areas of work have been identified to enable our workforce to deliver new, different and/or improved services and priorities in the future.

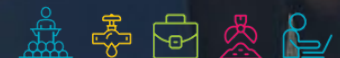
Page 49



Candidate Experience and Talent Attraction

2022 has seen a historic high in vacancies in the UK and the lowest rate of unemployment since 1974. Attracting the right people with the right skills has never been more challenging. 2022 saw our average number of applications per recruitment campaign fall to 3.81. In addition, during this time we experienced a number of persistently difficult to fill positions including, but not limited to, qualified social workers, occupational therapists, developers, engineers, planners, fleet technicians and occupational training advisors. The recruitment of Social Workers has recently been designated a corporate risk.

Skills scarcity has resulted in unprecedented pressures on some service areas and necessitated the adoption of alternative measures to maintain statutory services and other business critical roles, including the recruitment of agency workers. In response to these challenges and the consequential impact experienced across our service areas it is critical we simplify and streamline the way our applicants submit job applications while also maintaining and enhancing the positive candidate experience our candidates tell us we provide. It will also be critical that we are able to easily monitor and analyse our recruitment data so as to identify hard to fill positions and prioritise our resources accordingly.



GYRFA GWAITH DYSGU
CAREER WORK LEARN




GYRFA GWAITH DYSGU
CAREER WORK LEARN

In a highly competitive labour market, against a backdrop of increased demand on services and less resource, it is vital that we actively showcase the unique benefits of working for us and establish ourselves as an employer of choice.

We will continue to use various marketing methods such as our careers site, social media, marketing boards, candidate open days, and community outreach work to promote our brand and increase talent attraction. We will also look to reward our brand ambassadors by introducing an employee referral scheme. We will keep our marketing and recruitment methods under review to ensure vacancies are reaching talented people with the right skills.

In line with cultural goals we will look to include a values-based approach to recruitment to ensure candidates are assessed on their behavioural values, as well as knowledge, skills and aptitude.

Candidate Experience and Talent Attraction

We will:

Marketing:

- Conduct an employer brand positioning analysis and develop an **employer branding strategy** to establish and showcase our brand
- Develop and introduce a '**Job Alerts**' solution which informs candidates of opportunities of interest
- Develop marketing campaigns to promote our **apprenticeship** opportunities
- Develop marketing campaigns to promote the new **graduate scheme** and the opportunities offered
- Work in partnership with **Job Centres** and other organisations to promote our brand and increase talent attraction
- Introduce an **Employee Referral Scheme** which will reward employees who's referral has led to the successful permanent appointment of a new employee to the organisation
- Develop a coordinated approach to **work experience placements** and promote opportunities

Processes:

- Ensure we can use data to easily identify **hard to fill vacancies**
- Remove the 'essential criteria' requirement for short-listing and adopt an '**interview on potential**' approach where essential criteria is tested at interview stage
- **Reduce our standard application form** and allow for the uploading of CVs
- We will create an '**express an interest**' form for certain positions that are difficult to fill. Based on the level of interest shown, managers may either conduct a second stage of screening or directly invite the candidates to interview
- Ensure our **Job Descriptions** are candidate friendly. The Job Evaluation process will be supported with a supplementary form
- We will adopt a continuum approach to the **attainment of linguistic standards**. Successful candidates will be expected to demonstrate a steady, continuous improvement in their linguistic skills
- Conduct benchmarking **review of salary pay grading** of local authorities in Wales



Page 53

Our Culture

We are passionate about fostering a culture where our employees have a shared sense of purpose, are supported and well led, feel valued and empowered, and experience a safe and inclusive environment. We want working life to be a positive experience for everyone. We strongly believe all team Ceredigion members deserve the opportunity to excel and thrive in an environment that allows them to be true to themselves and reach their full potential.

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 our organisation.

Employee engagement is central to our culture and we want to ensure all our people feel they have a voice and that voice is heard. We will continue to provide easily accessible engagement channels that prioritize employee well-being and foster a culture of transparency, trust, and collaboration. Consistent employee engagement, recognition, and comprehensive well-being support will remain crucial to our success in becoming the employer of choice.

We want to explore and identify our organisational values and bring these to life. This will help us provide a consistent approach to how we work and make decisions. It will also create a set of standards that we can uphold when collaborating with colleagues and serving our customers. Recognising and celebrating when our values are being demonstrated will help our employees to feel valued and motivated. This is an important factor in recruiting and retaining the right people.

We acknowledge the importance of recognising and celebrating when things are going well. It's also important that we provide a safe environment to have constructive conversations when things aren't working as we would like. Our goal is to foster a collaborative culture where we can work together, reflect and learn to find solutions.



Our Culture

We will:

- Identify our **Team Ceredigion values** and embed our values into the way we work
- Develop and introduce a **recognition framework** to ensure success, loyalty and commitment is celebrated
- Build on our employee engagement activities and continue to ensure all **our people's voices inform decision-making**
- Conduct periodic surveys to determine how we can best support the **health and wellbeing of our workforce**, ensuring the support we provide is responsive, targeted and well received
- Continue to actively promote our **bilingual culture** and our **work welsh development** opportunities
- Identify and implement a solution to enable us to analyse the efficacy of our **internal communication** channels to ensure reach is maximised amongst the workforce
- Hold **quarterly meetings with service area senior managers** to provide support in relation to people and culture matters



New Ways of Working

Our organisation is made up of exceptionally talented individuals. Their resourcefulness and adaptability was highlighted during the Covid-19 crisis. They succeeded to support our residents and maintain services, whilst in many cases introducing and adopting new ways of working. To ensure continued success, it is crucial we capitalise on this talent and unlock its full potential.

We are operating in a challenging environment with escalating budgetary pressures. To meet our corporate 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.

With the increasing digitisation of workplaces, across all settings, digital competency is essential. To better support our workforce with regards digital skills we will introduce a digital competency framework. The framework will provide clear digital skill expectations in terms of recruitment and selection criteria, performance management, as well as identifying development needs across the workforce.

Our workforce tells us that hybrid working has realised many benefits including increased productivity, reduced travelling and improved work life balance. It is also widely recognised that the flexibility of hybrid working improves retention and recruitment. We will review our existing hybrid working model to capture these benefits as part of a permanent hybrid working policy.

Our aim is to enhance the efficiency of our internal processes and systems, enabling us to measure our performance effectively. This will align with our moral and corporate responsibility towards sustainability and environmentally friendly practices.



New Ways of Working

We will:

- Review of our **hybrid working** model and propose permanent approach for adoption
- Appoint **HR Systems Development & Integration Officer** to progress our digital working ambitions
- **Develop dodl**, our e-forms system, so all People & Organisation processes are paperless
- Develop **new digital records and document creation** system
- Introduce a **digital competency framework** and conduct a role and employee skills analysis
- Roll out organisation wide programme of **digital upskilling**
- Review of all **People and Organisation policies** to ensure they are fit for purpose, compliant, accessible and reflect our culture
- Support the delivery of **transformation programmes** with employee engagement and development opportunities



Realising potential

We are passionate about employee development and ensuring every Team Ceredigion member is supported and has the opportunity to fulfil their potential and career aspirations. We already provide a wide range of training to support the learning and development needs of our workforce. We also frequently offer a range of professional qualifications to support our employees in progressing their careers. We would like to build on this work by developing clear career and skills development pathways to ensure our workforce development is fully aligned to business planning and organisation needs.

As part of this work, and to address critical skills gaps within the workforce, we intend to attract new talent via our apprenticeships scheme as well as introduce a new graduate scheme.



We recognise the importance and value of workforce planning and the need to use the insight and data available to forecast future organisational capacity and capability. In line with this, we will review our workforce planning process and develop a robust and streamlined succession planning model.

Our managers are key to ensuring our ability as an organisation to embrace and embed new ways of working, and achieve excellence in the future. Our managers have significant impact on our culture and the day to day employment experience of our workforce. They play a pivotal role in building teams that embody a collaborative outlook, and are motivated and able to turn challenges into opportunities for innovation and excellence.

Alongside the existing management development programmes we will deliver an annual update session in order that our managers stay up-to-date on the latest trends and best practices to ensure they are equipped to navigate the ever-changing landscape and drive our organisation forward.

Realising potential

We will:

Workforce development:

- Develop a **succession planning model** that reduces risk and disruption to business continuity
- Review our **annual appraisal** process to capture employee development aspirations, identify future potential and audit skills and competencies
- Review our **corporate and team induction programs** to ensure our new recruits are receiving the best introduction to their new role
- Maximise the use of our **learning management system** 'Ceredigion Learning Pool' to make full use of its potential
- To overcome recruitment challenges we will adopt a targeted approach to our **apprenticeship opportunities**
- Develop and introduce a **graduate scheme** to attract and retain talent in the county of Ceredigion
- Continue to offer a range of **Welsh language development** opportunities to meet service delivery needs and support our bilingual culture
- Further develop and expand our **blended learning** to offer greater access and improve outcomes.

Manager and leader development:

- Utilising our internal talent and experience, develop and introduce a **Manager Mentoring / Coaching Scheme**
- Develop and deliver an **annual update session** to ensure our managers are up-to-date with the latest developments and best practices
- Continue to offer **ILM opportunities** to grow our pool of future leaders

Measuring Success

This strategy is designed to evolve with the needs of our organisation and our employees. The People and Organisation Service will work with senior management to review and drive the evolution of the strategy with improvements being made as needed along our journey.

We will continually measure progress using a variety of means, including employee and stakeholder surveys, appraisals and a range of key performance indicators. The four priorities contained within this strategy will be reported annually using the following measures:

Candidate Experience & Talent Attraction

Increase in average number of applicants per campaign

No of work experience opportunities offered

Number of corporate vacancies

Our Culture

Percentage of employees feel the Council cares about their health and wellbeing

Number of employees who have improved their Welsh language skills (continuum)

Employee turnover

Sickness Absence

New Ways of Working

Number of roles with digital competency levels identified

Number of employee digital competency levels recorded

Number of forms on dodl

Number of people who have attended digital skills training

Realising Potential

Number of apprentices recruited

Number of graduates recruited under graduate scheme

Number of managers with recognised leadership and/or management qualification





General enquiries:

www.ceredigion.gov.uk

01545 570881

clic@ceredigion.gov.uk

People & Organisation Service

01970 633949

humanresources@ceredigion.gov.uk



Cyngor Sir Ceredigion County Council - Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

An integrated tool to inform effective decision making



This **Integrated Impact Assessment tool** incorporates the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Sustainable Development Principles, the Equality Act 2010 and the Welsh Language Measure 2011 (Welsh Language Standards requirements) and Risk Management in order to inform effective decision making and ensuring compliance with respective legislation.

1. PROPOSAL DETAILS: (Policy/Change Objective/Budget saving)

Proposal Title	Workforce Plan 2023-2028
----------------	--------------------------

Service Area	People & Organisation	Corporate Lead Officer	Geraint Edwards	Strategic Director	James Starbuck
--------------	-----------------------	------------------------	-----------------	--------------------	----------------

Name of Officer completing the IIA	Geraint Edwards	E-mail	geraint.edwards2@ceredigion.gov.uk	Phone no	01545 572019
------------------------------------	-----------------	--------	------------------------------------	----------	--------------

Please give a brief description of the purpose of the proposal

The Workforce Plan 2023-2028 sets out how we will attract, develop and retain our most valuable asset – our people. The effectiveness of our organisation hinges not just on attracting the best talent, but also in creating a strong workplace community that supports its people, and recognises the unique attributes of every Team Ceredigion member. The Workforce Plan 2023- 2028 outlines how we will develop the capacity and capability of our workforce to support the priorities identified in our Corporate Strategy 2022-2027.

Who will be directly affected by this proposal? (e.g. The general public, specific sections of the public such as youth groups, carers, road users, people using country parks, people on benefits, staff members or those who fall under the protected characteristics groups as defined by the Equality Act and for whom the authority must have due regard).

The Workforce Plan will affect Council employees, excluding those directly employed by school Governing Bodies.

VERSION CONTROL: The IIA should be used at the earliest stages of decision making, and then honed and refined throughout the decision making process. It is important to keep a record of this process so that we can demonstrate how we have considered and built in sustainable development, Welsh language and equality considerations wherever possible.

Author	Decision making stage	Version number	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration
	<i>e.g. Budget Process, LG, Scrutiny, Cabinet etc.</i>			<i>This will demonstrate how we have considered and built in sustainable development throughout the evolution of a proposal. Have you considered and applied the sustainable development principle and Well-being Goals?</i>
Geraint Edwards	Scrutiny	V1	25/06/2023	

Cyngor Sir Ceredigion County Council - Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

An integrated tool to inform effective decision making



--	--	--	--	--

COUNCIL STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES: Which of the Council's Strategic Objectives does the proposal address and how?

Boosting the economy, supporting businesses and enabling employment	The Workforce Plan 2023-2028 will develop the capacity and capability of the workforce to support delivery of high quality services
Creating caring and healthy communities	The Workforce Plan 2023-2028 will develop the capacity and capability of the workforce to support delivery of high quality services
Providing the best start in life and enabling learning at all ages	The Workforce Plan 2023-2028 will develop the capacity and capability of the workforce to support delivery of high quality services
Creating sustainable, green and well-connected communities	The Workforce Plan 2023-2028 will develop the capacity and capability of the workforce to support delivery of high quality services

NOTE: As you complete this tool you will be asked for **evidence to support your views**. These need to include your baseline position, measures and studies that have informed your thinking and the judgement you are making. It should allow you to identify whether any changes resulting from the implementation of the recommendation will have a positive or negative effect. Data sources include for example:

- *Quantitative data - data that provides numerical information, e.g. population figures, number of users/non-users*
- *Qualitative data – data that furnishes evidence of people's perception/views of the service/policy, e.g. analysis of complaints, outcomes of focus groups, surveys*
- *Local population data from the census figures (such as Ceredigion Welsh language Profile and Ceredigion Demographic Equality data)*
- *National Household survey data*
- *Service User data*
- *Feedback from consultation and engagement campaigns*
- *Recommendations from Scrutiny*
- *Comparisons with similar policies in other authorities*
- *Academic publications, research reports, consultants' reports, and reports on any consultation with e.g. trade unions or the voluntary and community sectors, 'Is Wales Fairer' document.*
- *Welsh Language skills data for Council staff*

2. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES: How has your proposal embedded and prioritised the five sustainable development principles, as outlined in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, in its development?

Sustainable Development Principle	Does the proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not, explain why.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action (s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to the principle?
Long Term	Whilst the plan responds to current challenges it also considers the longer	Each service has completed a workforce	

Cyngor Sir Ceredigion County Council - Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

An integrated tool to inform effective decision making



Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future.	term challenges with the aim of ensuring the workforces possesses the correct skills and capacity to meet these.	planning toolkit to identify the challenges in their areas. These were all considered as part of this plan's development.	
Collaboration Working together with other partners to deliver.	All Corporate Lead officers and thier Senior team have contributed to the plan through the completion of the Service-specific Workforce Plan toolkit. The plan will be shared with our corporate trade union partners for comment.		
Involvement Involving those with an interest and seeking their views.	The Plan has been developed by involving all Corporate Manager and Corporate Lead Officer to capture their view on the current and longer term needs of their particular service areas.		
Prevention Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse.	Focus is given to the current recruitment and retention difficulties and the impact this has on meeting future demands. The Plan introduces strategies to encourage wider employment entry paths and opportunities to meet a sustainable future workforce.	We will monitor and gather evidence on staff recruitment and turn over	
Integration Positively impacting on people, economy, environment and culture and trying to benefit all three.	Through maintaining a motivated and stable workforce, the majority of whom live within the county boundary, the Plan will positively impact on people (our staff) and the local economy.		



3. WELL-BEING GOALS: Does your proposal deliver any of the seven National Well-being Goals for Wales as outlined on the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015? Please explain the impact (positive and negative) you expect, together with suggestions of how to mitigate negative impacts or better contribute to the goal. We need to ensure that the steps we take to meet one of the goals aren't detrimental to meeting another.			
Well-being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive or negative impacts-	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action (s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to the goal?
3.1. A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs.	The Plan's aim is to foster a skilled, outcome focussed, innovative and progressive workforce, dedicated to delivery high quality and efficient service to the people of Ceredigion.	The Council is the largest employer in the county and ensuring job security in well paid roles is key.	Develop range of employment entry opportunities and career pathways which allow staff to meet their potential
3.2. A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change).			
3.3. A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximised and health impacts are understood.	The Plan recognises the importance of employee health and wellbeing and through periodic surveys will identify how best this can be supported with targeted strategies if necessary	Annual staff surveys to monitor employees view of their health	Continual review of health and wellbeing guidance and strategies in response to local and nationwide issues
3.4. A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected.			
3.5. A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental well-being.			

Cyngor Sir Ceredigion County Council - Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

An integrated tool to inform effective decision making



Page 66

<p>3.6. A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances.</p> <p><i>In this section you need to consider the impact on equality groups, the evidence and any action you are taking for improvement.</i></p> <p><i>You need to consider how might the proposal impact on equality protected groups in accordance with the Equality Act 2010?</i></p> <p><i>These include the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or beliefs, gender, sexual orientation.</i></p> <p>Please also consider the following guide:: Equality Human Rights - Assessing Impact & Equality Duty</p>	<p>Describe why it will have a positive/negative or negligible impact.</p> <p><i>Using your evidence consider the impact for each of the protected groups. You will need to consider do these groups have equal access to the service, or do they need to receive the service in a different way from other people because of their protected characteristics. It is not acceptable to state simply that a proposal will universally benefit/disadvantage everyone. You should demonstrate that you have considered all the available evidence and address any gaps or disparities revealed.</i></p>	<p>What evidence do you have to support this view?</p> <p><i>Gathering Equality data and evidence is vital for an IIA. You should consider who uses or is likely to use the service. Failure to use <u>data</u> or <u>engage</u> where change is planned can leave decisions open to legal challenge. Please link to involvement box within this template. Please also consider the general guidance.</i></p>	<p>What action (s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</p> <p><i>These actions can include a range of positive actions which allows the organisation to treat individuals according to their needs, even when that might mean treating some more favourably than others, in order for them to have a good outcome. You may also have actions to identify any gaps in data or an action to engage with those who will/likely to be effected by the proposal. These actions need to link to Section 4 of this template.</i></p>																
<p>Age Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on people because of their age? (Please tick ✓)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Positive</th> <th>Negative</th> <th>None/ Negligible</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Children and Young People up to 18</td> <td style="text-align: center;">✓</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>People 18-50</td> <td style="text-align: center;">✓</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Older People 50+</td> <td style="text-align: center;">✓</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible	Children and Young People up to 18	✓			People 18-50	✓			Older People 50+	✓			<p>The Council's Equality Report 2022 has been used to inform the Plan. The age profile of the current workforce is included in the document and the ageing workforce is evident with 45.78% being 50 years old or over. The Plan sets out how the aging workforce can be supported in their roles whilst also introducing strategies to attract young people to a career in the Council</p>	<p>The Equality Report 2022 provides data on the Council workforce by protected characteristics. The Equality Report is published annual and will be monitored</p>	
	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible																
Children and Young People up to 18	✓																		
People 18-50	✓																		
Older People 50+	✓																		
<p>Disability</p>																			

Cyngor Sir Ceredigion County Council - Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

An integrated tool to inform effective decision making



Page 67

Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on people because of their disability? (Please tick ✓)				The Council's Equality Report 2022 has been used to inform the Plan. 3% of the current workforce has told use they are disabled. The Plan is expected to encourage applications from those who have a disability whilst also supporting those employees who become disabled to remain in employment.	The Equality Report 2022 provides data on the Council workforce by protected characteristics. 20% of people living in Ceredigion identified as disabled with 8.5% disabled and limited a lot, and 11.5% disabled and limited a little (2021 Census).	
Hearing Impairment	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					
Physical Impairment	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					
Visual Impairment	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					
Learning Disability	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					
Long Standing Illness	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					
Mental Health	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					
Other	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			

Transgender Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on transgender people? (Please tick ✓)				The Workforce Plan has a focus on the culture of the organisation and seeks to foster a culture where employees are supported, feel valued , and experience a safe and inclusive environment.	The Equality Report 2022 provides data on the Council workforce by protected characteristics.	
Transgender	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			

Cyngor Sir Ceredigion County Council - Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

An integrated tool to inform effective decision making



Marriage or Civil Partnership Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on marriage or Civil partnership? (Please tick ✓)				The Workforce Plan has a focus on the culture of the organisation and seeks to foster a culture where employees are supported, feel valued , and experience a safe and inclusive environment.		
Marriage	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Civil partnership	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Pregnancy or Maternity Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on pregnancy or maternity? (Please tick ✓)				The Workforce Plan has a focus on the culture of the organisation and seeks to foster a culture where employees are supported, feel valued , and experience a safe and inclusive environment.		
Pregnancy	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Maternity	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Race Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on race? (Please tick ✓)				The Workforce Plan has a focus on the culture of the organisation and seeks to foster a culture where employees are supported, feel valued , and experience a safe and inclusive environment.	The Equality Report 2022 provides data on the Council workforce by protected characteristics.	Race includes nationality, ethnicity and culture. 3.8% of people living in Ceredigion are from a non-white background, compared
White	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Asian / Asian British	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			

Page 68

Cyngor Sir Ceredigion County Council - Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

An integrated tool to inform effective decision making



			✓		to 6.2% across Wales (2021 Census).	
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Other Ethnic Groups	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			

Religion or non-beliefs				The Workforce Plan has a focus on the culture of the organisation and seeks to foster a culture where employees are supported, feel valued , and experience a safe and inclusive environment.		
Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on people with different religions, beliefs or non-beliefs? (Please tick ✓)						
Christian	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Buddhist	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Hindu	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Humanist	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Jewish	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Muslim	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Sikh	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Non-belief	Positive	Negative	None/			

Page 69

Cyngor Sir Ceredigion County Council - Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

An integrated tool to inform effective decision making



			Negligible			
			✓			
Other	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			

Sex Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on men and/or women? (Please tick ✓)				The Workforce Plan has a focus on the culture of the organisation and seeks to foster a culture where employees are supported, feel valued , and experience a safe and inclusive environment.		
Men	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Women	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			

Sexual Orientation Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on people with different sexual orientation? (Please tick ✓)				The Workforce Plan has a focus on the culture of the organisation and seeks to foster a culture where employees are supported, feel valued , and experience a safe and inclusive environment.	The Equality Report 2022 provides data on the Council workforce by protected characteristics.	
Bisexual	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					
Gay Men	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					
Gay Women / Lesbian	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					
Heterosexual / Straight	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					



Having due regards in relation to the three aims of the Equality Duty - determine whether the proposal will assist or inhibit your ability to eliminate discrimination; advance equality and foster good relations.

3.6.2. How could/does the proposal help advance/promote equality of opportunity?

You should consider whether the proposal will help you to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantage
- To meet the needs of people with certain characteristics
- Encourage increased participation of people with particular characteristics

The Workforce Plan has a focus on the culture of the organisation and seeks to foster a culture where employees are supported, feel valued, and experience a safe and inclusive environment. The Council is committed to promoting equality and valuing diversity in all its roles as community leader, service provider and employer.

3.6.3. How could/does the proposal/decision help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, or victimisation?

You should consider whether there is evidence to indicate that:

- The proposal may result in less favourable treatment for people with certain characteristics
- The proposal may give rise to indirect discrimination
- The proposal is more likely to assist or impede you in making reasonable adjustments

3.6.4. How could/does the proposal impact on advancing/promoting good relations and wider community cohesion?

You should consider whether the proposal will help you to:

- Tackle prejudice
- Promote understanding

Having due regard of the Socio-Economic Duty of the Equality Act 2010.

Socio-Economic Disadvantage is living in less favourable social and economic circumstances than others in the same society.

As a listed public body, Ceredigion County Council is required to have due regard to the Socio-Economic Duty of the Equality Act 2010. Effectively this means carrying out a poverty impact assessment. The duty covers all people who suffer socio-economic disadvantage, including people with protected characteristics.

3.6.5 What evidence do you have about socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome in relation to the proposal?

Describe why it will have a positive/negative or negligible impact.

The Plan is expected to have a positive impact on the socio-economic situation of current and future employees of the Council through providing stable employment, skill development and career pathway opportunities.

What evidence do you have to support this view?

There are areas of high and moderate deprivation in the County.

What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?

Planned strategies are widely promoted to ensure awareness across the County

Cyngor Sir Ceredigion County Council - Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

An integrated tool to inform effective decision making



3.7. A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language Culture, heritage and Welsh Language are promoted and protected. <i>In this section you need to consider the impact, the evidence and any action you are taking for improvement. This in order to ensure that the opportunities for people who choose to live their lives and access services through the medium of Welsh are not inferior to what is afforded to those choosing to do so in English, in accordance with the requirement of the Welsh Language Measure 2011.</i>				Describe why it will have a positive/negative or negligible impact.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action (s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Will the proposal be delivered bilingually (Welsh & English)?	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible	The Workforce Plan is bilingual document and any engagement or communication will be delivered in both Welsh and English		
	✓					
Will the proposal have an effect on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language?	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible	The Workforce Plan will actively promote the Council's bilingual culture and committed to increasing the Welsh language skills across the organisation.		
	✓					
Will the proposal increase or reduce the opportunity for persons to access services through the medium of Welsh?	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible	The Workforce Plan is directed towards Council employees but by increasing their Welsh language skills there is expected to be a greater availability of services through the medium of Welsh.		
	✓					
How will the proposal treat the Welsh language	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible	The Workforce Plan is bilingual document and any engagement or		
	✓					

Cyngor Sir Ceredigion County Council - Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

An integrated tool to inform effective decision making



no less favourably than the English language?				communication will be delivered in both Welsh and English		
Will it preserve promote and enhance local culture and heritage?	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible	The Workforce Plan is directed towards Council employees but as a high number of these live within the County, increasing Welsh languages skills and understanding of the county's heritage will have a positive benefit.		
	✓					



4. STRENGTHENING THE PROPOSAL: If the proposal is likely to have a negative impact on any of the above (including any of the protected characteristics), what practical changes/actions could help reduce or remove any negative impacts as identified in sections 2 and 3?

4.1 Actions.

What are you going to do?	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible?	Progress
The Workforce Plan will be reviewed annually and progress will be reported through the Council's governance structure.	Annually	People & Organisaition	

4.2. If no action is to be taken to remove or mitigate negative impacts please justify why.
(Please remember that if you have identified unlawful discrimination, immediate and potential, as a result of this proposal, the proposal must be changed or revised).

4.3. Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing.

How will you monitor the impact and effectiveness of the proposal?

The Workforce Plan will be reviewed annually and progress will be reported through the Council's governance structure.

5. RISK: What is the risk associated with this proposal?

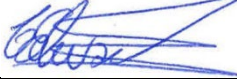

Impact Criteria	1 - Very low	2 - Low	3 - Medium	4 - High	5 - Very High
Likelihood Criteria	1 - Unlikely to occur	2 - Lower than average chance of occurrence	3 - Even chance of occurrence	4 - Higher than average chance of occurrence	5 - Expected to occur
Risk Description	Impact (severity)		Probability (deliverability)		Risk Score
If Plan is not implemented, there is likely to be significant challenges	4		2		8

Cyngor Sir Ceredigion County Council - Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

An integrated tool to inform effective decision making



in the workforce's ability to meet the future needs of of the organisation.			
Does your proposal have a potential impact on another Service area?			
The implementation of the workforce plan will have a positive and cross-cutting impact for employees across all service areas			

6. SIGN OFF			
Position	Name	Signature	Date
Service Manager			
Corporate Lead Officer	Geraint Edwards		25/06/2023
Strategic Director	James Starbuck		26/06/2023
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Bryan Davies		

Page 75

This page is intentionally left blank

Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council

REPORT TO: Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee

DATE: 19th July 2023

LOCATION: Hybrid/Council Chamber

TITLE: Clic update

PURPOSE OF REPORT: Report has been requested by Committee Members

REASON SCRUTINY HAVE REQUESTED THE INFORMATION: To receive updated information

BACKGROUND:

Update on current work within the Clic Team

CURRENT SITUATION:

[Customer Services](#)

The CLIC contact centre staff continue to work in line with the Hybrid Working Strategy. We have introduced 'Team Day's which have proven extremely beneficial where we encourage staff to attend an office, this provides an opportunity for the management team to assess wellbeing and address any issues that may have arisen.

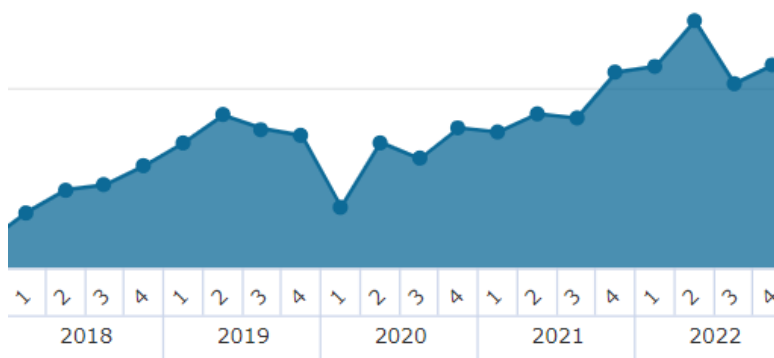
Since June 2022, the contact centre now manages all initial Social Care calls, adopting the call handling role of the team formerly known as Porth Gofal. The Clic team have worked closely with colleagues in Learning and Development and the former Porth Gofal team to develop a training programme and a suite of information resources to assist the call handlers.

The telephony system we have allows us to record 'live' calls and to 'listen in' during a live interaction. This has proved hugely beneficial during this implementation

period. We have been able to use recorded calls as part of the training resource and by capturing these calls, has allowed us not only to Quality Assure but also demonstrate to call handlers examples of good practice. This collaborative working has now resulted in 95% of the training required to action calls on this line being delivered in team.

Our improved training ability allows our service to schedule training for new starters quickly and it has now formed part of the induction/training pack we offer to all new staff. The quicker turn around means we have more skilled staff able to take a wider variety of calls and provide better customer service.

As we have taken on more services across the council, we have been able to handle a more enquiries and we can see this growing steadily.



The Face-to-Face provision reopened in October 2022, initially on a three day a week basis increasing to five days a week in January 2022. Initially customers were slow to access this provision, but recent months has shown an increase in visits and enquiries logged on the CRM. The F2F service is offered from all four of our major libraires – Aberystwyth - Canolfan Alun R Edwards, Aberaeron, Lampeter and Cardigan. Staff work alongside colleagues from the Library Staff at all sites.

Total No of Enquiries logged via F2F provision	1911
---	------

All data reported on is for the period 1/4/22 to 31/3/23

Total no of Calls	Welsh Calls	English Calls	Emails Clic@	Enquiries logged on CRM
130908	20970	109938	35852	95421

The post room continues deal with all incoming and outgoing post. Post received is scanned and shared to the relevant departments via an email for processing. All items are indexed with blue badge applications, financial assessments and any

application for service forwarded to teams along with any supporting documents. Original documents are returned to customers within two working days. The retention period for paper copies is 6 months.

Financial Year 22/23	Incoming Mail	Outgoing Mail
Total	34141	178497

The Post room continues to print out any cheques/BACS notifications for the Authority and mails out all outgoing post on behalf of services

The post room staff also deal with any monies received through the post

NO of Cheques processed	Value of Cheques processed
5167	£3.414.357.42

The Clic team are also responsible for the assessing and issuing of Blue Badges. The service sits under the Direct Contact team. The Blue Badge Assessor works from home with assistance from the Direct Contact team during busy periods to assist with correspondence – i.e. further information letters, confirmation of issue of badge etc.

IT DEVELOPMENTS

Disruption to bin routes is now automated for update via the website, Clic team and MyAccount ensuring any change or disruption to a route is immediately visible to all My Account users (when affected) and customer services staff through Clic.

My Account has been launched for councillor and council staff use. Access is in the process of being rolled out to all community council clerks and if successful will be made available to the public later in the year.

Rollout is dependent on testing new functions have been added to allow users to submit specialist enquiries for:

- Potholes
- Streetlights
- Trees
- Drains
- Public footpaths and bridal ways
- Or the general enquiries.

Improved mapping allows road details to be detected and ward boundaries are correctly matching councillor details.

Integration with the Highways system Symology and the Coast and Countryside system CAMMS have been developed and enquires are kept in sync between the two.

A staff email reminder system has been developed and is in testing. Staff will be sent a reminder email if an enquiry has been left open for 2 weeks and then sent every fortnight until the enquiry is closed. Further development is planned to give staff and managers better oversight of enquires and progress.

Closure Message – Clic will now send closure messages automatically when configured. Enquires closed in Symology using technical codes will translate these and inform the customer immediately, with updates available via MyAccount.

More services and integration into MyAccount and Clic are being developed continuously with at least monthly updates to both systems.

Work will be undertaken over the summer to migrate the Clic Call centre to a newer cloud managed solution and allow access to some new features for consideration the new year.

[Corporatisation benefits and Strategy](#)

We continue to derive benefits from the corporatisation of the customer services team with a much clearer picture of all enquiries available in a single system. This has allowed analysis of all the services we offer, their performance and their usage.

Similarly centralising all post into one location and one team is allowing us to investigate improvements and modernise services.

A full review of all council services and their digital maturity is also underway to allow planned development work and to support the development of a new Digital Strategy and where possible will feed improvements to support the Clic Team and MyAccount options to improve services to the public.

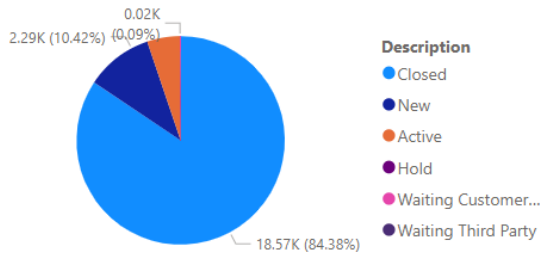
This investigation work, data analysis and digital review is being considered and will feed into a new Customer Services Plan 2024-27 which will be presented to scrutiny in due course.

Dashboard for April, May, June 2023

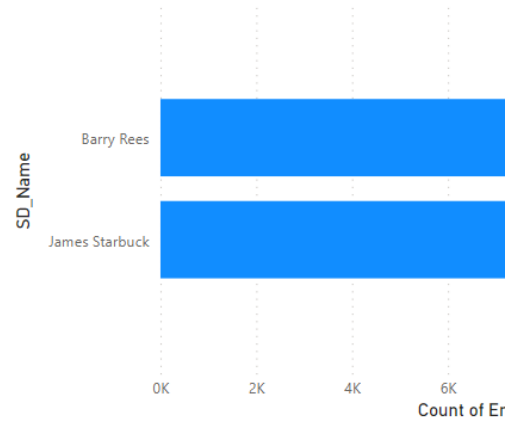
Year, Month
Multiple selections

22.00K

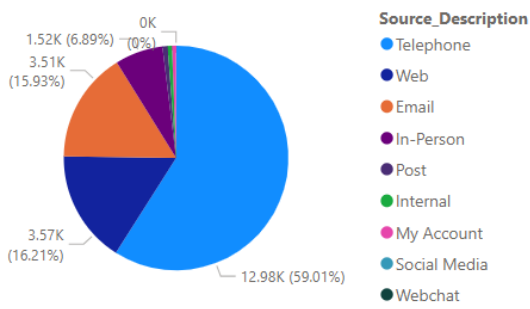
Enquiries by Status



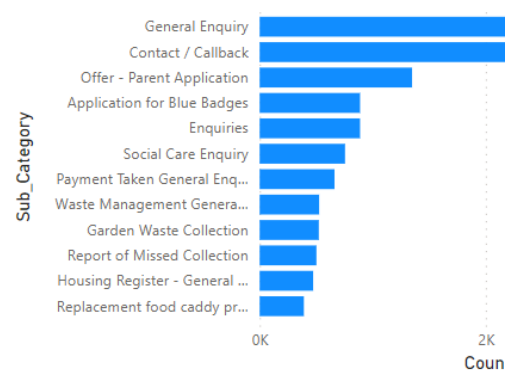
Service Breakdown



Source



Category Breakdown



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

Summary: *No IIA as report covers business as usual. An IIA will be needed for the wider My Account release.*

WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS:

Long term:

Integration:

Collaboration:

Involvement:

Prevention:

RECOMMENDATION (S):

For information only

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION (S):

Contact Name: Alan Morris

**Designation: CLO Customer
Contact and ICT**

Date of Report: 29/06/2023

Acronyms:

CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to: Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny

Date of meeting: 19/07/23

Title: Medium Term Financial Strategy

Purpose of the report: To consider an updated Medium Term Financial Strategy, prior to formal consideration by Cabinet and Full Council.

Cabinet Portfolio and Cabinet Member for Finance & Procurement
Cabinet Member: Cllr Gareth Davies

The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is generally updated on an annual basis. Due to the unprecedented challenge of the 2023/24 Budget setting process, it was not possible to update the MTFS during the Budget process, as all energies were diverted into setting a balanced budget for 2023/24.

The MTFS should not be seen as a formal detailed budget or a tablet of stone, it instead provides an overarching approach that the Council will need to adopt in aiming to achieve its priorities, including taking account of the external legislative, economic environment and indicative projected spending pressures and funding over the period.

The MTFS has therefore been refreshed and now covers 2023/24 to 2026/27. It includes an Executive Summary that covers the key matters contained within the detailed MTFS.

Members attention is particularly drawn to:

Executive Summary	Pages 2-3
The Council's Budget Priorities and the link between the MTFS and the Corporate Strategy 2022 – 2027 and its associated Corporate Wellbeing Objectives	Pages 5-9
Indicative Budget Cost Pressures	Pages 16-17
Budget Gap scenarios looking at different levels of indicative Council Tax and WG funding	Page 27
Sensitivity Analysis of different Budget Variables	Page 31
Appendix 1 - Doing things Differently: A Corporate Approach	Page 32

Following consideration and feedback from Corporate Resources Scrutiny, the aim is to table the MTFS at Cabinet on 05/09/23 and then Full Council on 14/09/23.

Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? No

If, not, please state why

	Summary:	
	Long term:	Not Applicable
	Integration:	Not Applicable
	Collaboration:	Not Applicable
	Involvement:	Not Applicable
	Prevention:	Not Applicable
Wellbeing of Future Generations:		
Recommendations(s):	1. To consider and provide feedback on the latest update of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.	
Overview and Scrutiny:	Corporate Resources – 19/07/23	
Corporate Priorities:	All	
Financial & Procurement implications:	As outlined in the MTFS	
Statutory Powers:		
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Medium Term Financial Strategy	
Corporate Lead Officer(s):	Duncan Hall - Corporate Lead Officer - Finance and Procurement	
Reporting Officers:	Duncan Hall Justin Davies Mark Bridges	
Date:	10/07/23	

Cyngor Sir Ceredigion County Council



Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023/24 – 2026/27

July 2023

CONTENTS

	Page
1. Executive Summary	2
2. Introduction	4
2.1 - Purpose	4
2.2 - Objective of the Strategy	4
3. Budget Priorities	5
3.1 - Corporate Strategy 2022-27	5
3.2 - The Economy	7
3.3 – Education	7
3.4 – Through Age Wellbeing	8
3.5 – Net Zero Carbon Status by 2030	8
3.6 – Highways / Infrastructure	9
3.7 – Digital Strategy	9
3.8 – Recruitment	9
3.9 - Housing	9
4. External Economic, Financial & Legislative context	10
4.1 – Economic Environment	10
4.2 - Inflation	10
4.3 – Interest Rates	11
4.4 – Real Living Wage for Care Workers	11
4.5 – The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015	11
5. National & Local Budget Factors	13
5.1 – UK Government General Election	13
5.2 – Funding	13
5.2.1 – Welsh Government	13
5.2.2 – Council Tax	14
5.2.3 – Fees & Charges	15
5.2.4 – Discretionary Visitor Levy	15
5.2.5 – Council Tax Reform	16
5.3 – Cost Pressures	16
5.4 – Demographics and Other Trends	18
6. The Budget Gap & Medium-Term Financial Forecast for 2023/24 to 2025/26	22
7. Budget Strategy	25
7.1 – Managing Resources Effectively	25
7.2 – Partnership Working, External Funding and Collaboration	25
7.3. – Managing the Budget Gap	26
7.3.1 - Key Elements to Managing Budget Gap	28
7.4 – Earmarked Reserves and Balances	29
8. Risk Assessment & Sensitivity	31
Appendices	32

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Council's Corporate Strategy 2022-2027 sets out 4 clear Corporate Wellbeing Objectives, with each of these being underpinned by various priorities and expected outcomes. The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) aims to provide resources and a financial framework to ensure that these outcomes can be achieved as far as possible, as well as ensuring a balanced budget is set on an annual basis and that Members are aware of the associated financial challenges and risks.
- 1.2 Post COVID, with the Council being in a financially resilient position with a strong balance sheet, several key priorities are now already being met in 2023/24. Recent examples including the new Ysgol Dyffryn Aeron scheme proceeding with construction starting on site, the approval of a new Community Housing Scheme to help support local residents purchase their own property in Ceredigion, the opening of the first Wellbeing Centre in Lampeter, the Aberaeron Coastal Defence Scheme being on the verge of approval to be able to let the construction contract and work progressing on site on a new Childrens' in county facility in the middle of the county.
- 1.3 Ceredigion has a track record of setting and achieving a balanced budget as well as achieving a clean bill of health from Audit Wales. The latest 2021/22 accounts have been audited and an unqualified audit opinion was issued. In addition, no issues were reported in the 2021/22 specific Grants Audit work and all grants were fully certified.
- 1.4 Ceredigion's 2023/24 Net Budget was £180.1m - 72% funded by WG and 28% by Council Taxpayers. The resulting Band D Council Tax (including Police and Town & Community Council precepts) was £1,908 - being marginally above the Welsh average of £1,879.
- 1.5 The Medium term financial challenge (based on assumed 3.1% WG increases and 5.0% Council Tax increases - as a central case, albeit possibly conservative) can be summarised as:

	2023/24 Actual £m	2024/25 Indicative £m	2025/26 Indicative £m	2026/27 Indicative £m
Budget Pressures	23.1	15.1	11.1	10.2
Assumed Council Tax Income	-4.7	-2.6	-2.7	-2.8
Assumed WG AEF Settlement Funding	-9.6	-4.0	-4.1	-4.3
Budget Gap	8.8	8.5	4.3	3.1
Savings Identified:				
Doing Things Differently	-3.0	-2.1	-1.9	-
2023/24 - Savings plan agreed	-5.8	-	-	-
Total Savings Identified	-8.8	-2.1	-1.9	-
Budget Shortfall Remaining	-	6.4	2.4	3.1

- Cost pressures starting to recede over the medium term, but still potentially £15.1m for 24/25, before starting to come down closer to £10m in future years.
- An indicative Budget Gap of £8.5m for 24/25 and in total £15.9m over the coming 3 year period (based on WG increases of 3.1% & Council Tax increases of 5.0%).
- 'Doing Things Differently: A Corporate Approach' programme delivering a further £4m, on top of the £3m factored into the 2023/24 Budget.

- A current indicative Budget Shortfall of £6.4m for 2024/25 and in total £11.9m over the coming 3 year period.

1.6 For 2024/25 (assuming Cost pressures are unchanged at £15.1m), if an upside view is taken (but being careful not to assume too much optimism bias) then:

- If a **5%** WG Settlement and a **5%** Council Tax increase were assumed **the resulting Budget Shortfall would reduce to £4.0m.**
- If a **6%** WG Settlement and a **6%** Council Tax increase were assumed **the resulting Budget Shortfall would reduce to £2.2m.**

These figures are after needing to deliver the Year 2 assumption of £2.1m from the Doing Things Differently: A Corporate Approach programme for 2024/25.

1.7 In order to address the remaining Budget Shortfall, proposed approaches to be explored will include:

- Continued delivery and incorporation of new approaches into the 'Doing things Differently: A Corporate Approach' programme.
- Continued rationalisation of Assets including Buildings and Fleet as the Council cannot afford to maintain the status quo and needs to prioritise is limited resources. Rationalisation could range from outright sale to repurposing for alternative means (e.g. Income generation) to co-location of a wider range of Council Services and/or collaboration with other Public Services.
- Continued targeting of Treasury Management Savings.
- Identification of any remaining lower priority Services / Budget headings including scope for savings from reductions in 3rd Party expenditure.
- Consideration of a review and a new approach to Council Tax Premiums, given the change in WG legislation and the continued challenges that Long Term Empty Properties and 2nd Homes present in Ceredigion.
- Exploration of whether other local Ceredigion based organisations (e.g. 3rd Sector and/or Town & Community Councils) could be willing to provide certain non-statutory services.
- Utilising WG Capitalisation Directions where feasible.
- As a last resort if all other options have been exhausted – Consideration of targeted Budget cuts, which would mean a reduction in Council services being delivered rather than continuing to try to deliver the same but with less resources.

1.8 There are a number of key sensitivities and variables that affect the Budget including (but not limited to) WG Settlement funding levels, Council Tax increase limitations, Demographics, nationally set staff Pay awards as well as general inflation and interest rates. A 1% variance in the various factors is shown in Section 8.

1.9 There is also the spectre and uncertainty of Welsh Government's Council Tax Reform due to come in from April 2025 and the dynamic of a UK General Election due before January 2025.

2 Introduction

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is to forecast the future potential financial position and in doing so provide a financial governance framework to operate within, by setting out the key issues that need to be understood and considered in order to prepare for the challenge of setting a balanced budget over the medium term.

The MTFS should not be seen as a formal detailed budget or a tablet of stone, it instead provides an overarching approach that the Council will need to adopt in order to achieve its priorities including taking account of the external legislative, economic environment and indicative projected spending pressures and funding over the period.

2.2 Objective of the Strategy

The Council's financial objective is a careful and responsible use of resources and a balanced budget, and to ensure that the financial resilience of the Council is maintained. The overall objective of this strategy is:

“to provide a framework and overall direction and parameters in order for the Council to structure and manage its finances, to ensure that financial resources are used in a responsible and careful manner”.

This strategy achieves this by:

- Outlining principles for developing and setting the annual budget.
- Integrating and acknowledging external forces into the budget process.
- Integrating financial and business planning, reflecting priorities of the Corporate Strategy 2022-2027 and anticipating pressures facing the Authority.
- Identifying the main links with other processes, core considerations and financial themes to be considered.
- Indicating projected levels of income, expenditure and capital investment over a rolling three-year period.
- Providing a single document to communicate the financial context, aims and objectives to stakeholders.
- Allowing decision makers to consider affordability when allocating resources to deliver priorities.

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 Local Government is likely to be limited, despite this being an area of priority for WG.

3 **Budget Priorities**

3.1 Corporate Strategy 2022-2027

The Council's Corporate Strategy 2022-2027 sets out 4 Council's Corporate Well-being Objectives which are designed to improve and enhance the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of the citizens of Ceredigion. The four **Well-Being Strategic Objectives** which the MTFs needs to support the delivery of are:



These overarching objectives are where the Council will direct its resources to re-invigorate the local economy and provide a prosperous, healthy, safe and affordable environment in which the citizens and communities of Ceredigion can thrive. Each Corporate Wellbeing Objective has its own earmarked reserve, so that where possible key priorities have funding identified for them. In total as at 31/03/23, there is £19.8m earmarked in the 4 reserves.

The Corporate Wellbeing Objectives have been identified through extensive analysis of evidence and engagement with residents of the county, including the ambitions of the current Political administration, wider Member engagement, the Ceredigion Assessment of Local Well-being and a public consultation on the Corporate Strategy during September/October 2022.

The Wellbeing Objectives have been identified through the lens of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. This involved identifying how the Council could maximise its contribution to the national well-being goals and also ensure that the Council uses the sustainable development principle to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The core purpose of the Council's Corporate Strategy is to illustrate how the authority will support and promote sustainability and the wellbeing of the citizens of Ceredigion, through its long-term Vision and Strategic Objectives. The following sections outline the risks to the delivery of these Corporate Well-Being Objectives whilst also setting out how the Council's resources will be utilised to manage and mitigate these risks over the short to medium term.

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

Specific priorities are set out by the Corporate Strategy 2022-2027:

BOOSTING THE ECONOMY, SUPPORTING BUSINESSES AND ENABLING EMPLOYMENT

- Progress the £110m Mid Wales Growth Deal
- Support local businesses in the recovery from COVID-19
- Support new and growing businesses in the County
- Create new job opportunities for skilled young people
- Promote equal opportunities in employment
- Achieve sustainable economic growth
- Pursue the Local Development Plan
- Prioritise locally sourced produce and supply chains
- Improve 4G Broadband
- Equitable funding within the Arfor programme
- Improve digital, transport and energy connectivity
- Tackle poverty in Ceredigion
- Support working parents in Ceredigion
- Enhance the provision of skills and learning opportunities for people aged 16+
- Further develop apprenticeships in the County

PROVIDING THE BEST START IN LIFE AND ENABLING LEARNING AT ALL AGES

- Deliver schools investment across the County, including the net carbon zero 3-storey extension at Cardigan Secondary School
- Deliver the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2022 to 2032
- Ensure that pupils are confident communicators in both Welsh and English by the end of Key Stage 2 (year 6)
- Support the Ceredigion Youth Council as a forum for children and young people
- Developing Children and Young People's skills, knowledge and confidence to be physically active
- Develop Leadership skills within our Children and Young People at the earliest opportunity
- Support the provision of Free School Meals for primary school pupils
- Support the provision of funded childcare for all two-year-olds
- Work with partners to deliver the Maternity and Early Years Strategy for West Wales
- Support the development of Theatr Felinfach's facilities
- Ensure that all learners' identified Additional Learning Needs are supported appropriately to become independent and fulfilled individuals
- Provide support for schools to successfully implement the new curriculum for Wales
- Develop a Culture Strategy and Equity Strategy to support school and community wellbeing

CREATING CARING AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

- Provide for the care needs of our population
- Deliver the Through Age Well-being Programme
- Promote the Welsh Language in Ceredigion
- Launch Well-being Centres across the County
- Pursue initiatives to train and recruit childcare and social care staff
- Progress Cylch Caron extra care facility at Tregaron
- Welcome and support the resettlement of refugees
- Develop carers' breaks/ respite and support the aspiration of creation of a National Care Service for Wales
- Support community mental health facilities
- Encourage and enable people to get physically active so they can benefit from positive health and wellbeing
- Develop an improvement plan for the strategic provision of facilities to increase physical activity levels in the county
- Enhance the role of Community Connectors to support the development of resilient communities*
- Further develop participation events to ensure communities have a voice
- Develop and increase the number of focussed and universal extra-curricular and holiday activity programmes
- Develop and increase the number of support groups and programmes

CREATING SUSTAINABLE, GREENER AND WELL-CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

- Prioritising the reduction of carbon emissions and pursue our goal of becoming a Net Carbon Zero Council by 2030
- Build on Ceredigion's excellent performance in waste management and recycling
- Transition towards an Ultra Low Emission Vehicle corporate fleet
- Work with local Housing Associations to increase our stock of social housing
- We will continue to address the issues of second homes, holiday homes ownership or the conversion of residential properties to holiday let by seeking the support of the Welsh Government to bring forward legislation under the Planning Act and Taxation Service
- Enable more young people to build their lifetime home
- Encourage the retention of Welsh-language place names
- We have recognised the seriousness of the issue associated with phosphate levels along the Teifi Valley within the Corporate Risk Register. Every effort will be made through the Nutrient Management Board to find early solutions to the problem
- Find solutions to flooding in the Teifi Valley
- Pursue funding for coastal defences at Aberaeron and Aberystwyth and develop proposals for the next phase of the Borth coastal defence scheme and for the frontage at Llangrannog
- Halt and reverse the decline in biodiversity including in our marine environment
- Support increased provision for walking and cycling
- Advocate strongly for a rail link between Aberystwyth and Carmarthen

3.2 The Economy

The Council's 'Boosting Ceredigion's Economy – A Strategy for Action 2020-35' strategy outlines four priority areas where our actions will be targeted to make a difference which will also support the National Wellbeing Goals:



This Strategy aligns closely to the emerging priorities developing from our partnership with Powys County Council and wider partners as part of Growing Mid Wales – and will help inform the emerging Regional Economic Framework to support its delivery locally.

The Mid-Wales 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 WG, 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 WG 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 Portfolio Business Case currently has a set of programmes and projects which cover a range of investment proposals across a number of themes – digital, tourism, agriculture food & drink, research & innovation and supporting enterprise.

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. Whilst it succeeds European Funding, it is not a strict replacement for any particular fund. The UKSPF has been designed to build pride in place and empower local communities.

The Council has been successful in applying for £10.9m of Levelling Up funding for Aberystwyth - the funding needs to be spent by March 2025. This will help transform 'The Old College' in Aberystwyth, revitalise the promenade and create a 'Living harbour'. Boosting Ceredigion's Economy will also require investment from the Council and the earmarked reserve available to support this now stands at £8m as at 31/03/23.

3.3 Education

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 total Band B funding from WG is anticipated to total in excess of £16m. The Council was awarded in 2022 funding of £5.7m towards a Language Immersion Centre which will be based at Ysgol Cymraeg and new classroom buildings at the school.

The Council's PFI contract on Penweddig School expires in December 2030. Early stage project planning has commenced, including attending the first WG Expiry Health Check review. Further resources will need to be allocated to this project during the next 7 years.

3.4 Through Age Wellbeing (TAW)

The Council now operates a Through Age Wellbeing model (TAW) for the delivery of what would traditionally be considered Social Care services. The traditional delineation of Adults and Children's services therefore no longer exists.

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. The Strategy covers the 2021 to 2027 period and was agreed by Cabinet in October 2021 which set out how the Council will:

- Put in place a new Through Age Wellbeing Model of delivery
- Reduce demand on managed care and support and focus resources on those who most need them
- Support our Workforce to develop a new approach to supporting individuals within Ceredigion
- Focus on Preventative services which help people to remain independent or regain the independence they want and value
- Work with Partners to provide a more joined up Health, Wellbeing and Social care system

The Council's Budget saw a significant realignment during 2020/21 into the new Pyrth structure. Revenue investment has already been made into the TAW Staffing Structure over 2 financial years and 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.

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.

3.5 Net Zero Carbon Status by 2030

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 the goal of achieving net zero carbon emissions status by 2030. This is a key priority for the Council and is consistent with WG's stated goal of decarbonisation of the Welsh public sector by 2030 and Full Council's formal motion.

As the roadmap develops, specific schemes with the right supporting business cases will have high priority within the capital programme funding envelope and significant grant funding will be sought from WG. This is already being seen in the form of ULEV funding, but this is not enough and further external funding will be needed e.g. to support the transition of the Vehicle Fleet. Invest to Save opportunities will be explored wherever possible and £1m of capital

funding has been earmarked across 2023/24 and 2024/25 to deliver Energy Efficiency type schemes.

3.6 Highways & Infrastructure

It is anticipated that circa £30m will be spent on the coastal defence scheme at Aberaeron and this scheme is expected to achieve FBC and funding approval from WG and contract letting during the summer of 2023. The scheme will be financed in the main by WG at 85% via the Local Government Borrowing Initiative (LGBI) with a match funding requirement from the Council of 15%. The Council's matched funding requirement of up to £4.5m has been identified in an Earmarked Reserve.

Whilst the Aberystwyth defence scheme is currently at the Outline Business Case stage meaning the funding requirement for this scheme is yet to be established.

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. A new Waste Management Strategy will be forthcoming which will be an opportunity to review various aspects of the service and prioritise where best to allocate resources.

The Highways Asset Management Plan will always show a backlog of works. In recent years there has been significant funding for Highways refurbishment/resurfacing, however with a change in WG policy approach in relation to Road schemes less funding is coming through which is to the detriment of a rural county. Investment will need to continue if the condition of Ceredigion's roads is to remain above the target set for B roads and close to the targets set for A and C roads. Funding bids will continue to be put in for Active travel related schemes which are being supported by WG, although Ceredigion's rurality is not being fully considered during the approvals process. The Public Bus network remains challenging to maintain and WG funding is required to do this.

3.7 Digital Strategy

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. As at 31st March 2023 there is currently £1m set aside in an 'ICT & Digital Investment' earmarked reserve to help support the delivery of this strategy.

3.8 Recruitment

Ceredigion is no different to many other public and private sector organisations, in that parts of the workforce have chosen to retire and/or move on and a higher than normal level of vacant posts is being seen across many Services, not just the Porth services in TAW. It's a key Budget priority to overcome this Recruitment challenge including reducing the use of Agency staff through employing a variety of different and innovative approaches. Ceredigion is an ambitious Council and has an attractive set of employment Terms and Conditions and is a fantastic location to live and work. It's quite clear now though that this is a medium term challenge and many of the solutions will take several years to bear fruit.

3.9 Housing

A range of measures are used by the Housing service to maximise the availability of Housing in the county. This now includes a newly launched Community Housing Scheme (approved in June 2023) using the existing Council Tax Premium monies as well as the Council being

part of the National Empty Homes Scheme. Further measures are needed to assist with the Long Term Empty properties and 2nd Homes challenge.

4 External Economic, Financial & Legislative context

4.1 Economic Environment

The Council’s medium term financial forecast is set within the context of the national economy, WG & UK Government public expenditure plans and national legislation and regulations. It is being formulated within a context of a challenging period for the national economy as it emerges from the heights of the Covid-19 pandemic, Brexit, the cost of living crisis, restricted material supply chains, the war in Ukraine and at a time when significant austerity measures have been in place for the previous decade.

Both the Treasury and external forecasters are expecting a bumpy ride for economic growth due to the factors already described and this provides a challenging background for the Council’s budget. Demand led services such as Through Age Wellbeing, Education and the Homeless service are seeing increased pressures as a result of the ongoing Cost of Living crisis.

4.2 Inflation

The Bank of England’s Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) Report for June 2023 contains the following commentary and projections for inflation:

“Twelve-month CPI inflation fell from 10.1% in March to 8.7% in April and remained at that rate in May. This is 0.3% higher than expected in the May Report. Services CPI inflation rose to 7.4% in May, 0.5% stronger than expected at the time of the May Report, while core goods price inflation has also been much stronger than projected. In general, news in the latter component is less likely to imply persistent inflationary pressures.

CPI inflation is expected to fall significantly further during the course of the year, in the main reflecting developments in energy prices. Services CPI inflation is projected to remain broadly unchanged in the near term. Core goods CPI inflation is expected to decline later this year, supported by developments in cost and price indicators earlier in the supply chain. In particular, annual producer output price inflation has fallen very sharply in recent months. Food price inflation is projected to fall further in coming months....

... The MPC recognises that the second-round effects in domestic price and wage developments generated by external cost shocks are likely to take longer to unwind than they did to emerge. There has been significant upside news in recent data that indicates more persistence in the inflation process, against the background of a tight labour market and continued resilience in demand.”

Table 1: Bank of England MPC Annual CPI Forecast

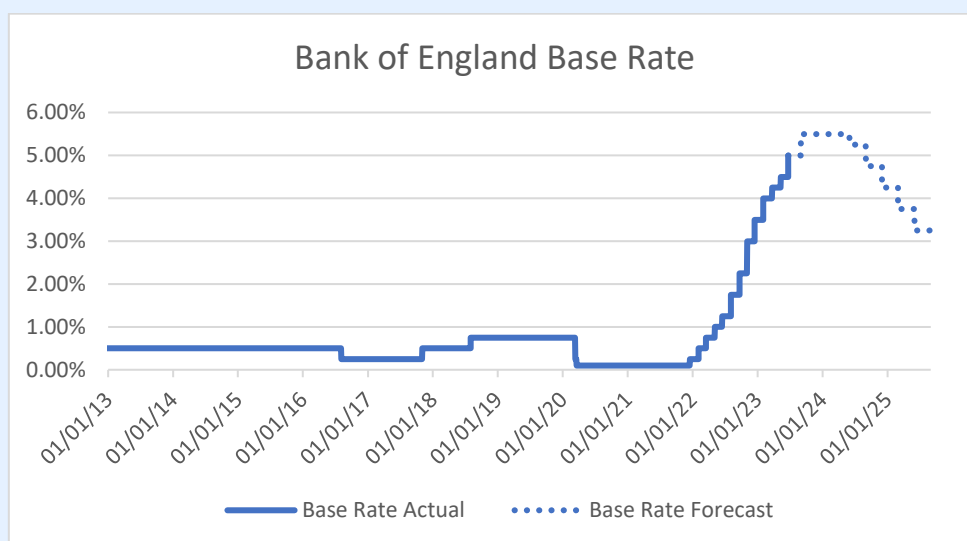
	June 2023 Actual	June 2024 Forecast	June 2025 Forecast	June 2026 Forecast
Annual CPI Inflation Forecast	8.7%	3.4%	1.1%	1.2%

The persistent high levels of inflation seen within the economy erodes the Council’s spending power, even more so when funding settlements from WG do not meet the inflation experienced. This is most prominently felt through higher levels of pay awards for staff as the

Unions lobby for higher wages to help staff meet the increased cost of living, significantly higher energy costs and contract price inflation as anniversary dates for larger contracts that specify annual uplifts in line with CPI/RPI etc. Significant price inflation is also being seen in contract tender quotes received as contractors pass on their own increased costs.

4.3 Interest Rates

In response to persistent high levels of inflation the Bank of England has increased the interest base rate consecutively at each of its last thirteen Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meetings. As at June 2023 the base rate stands at 5%, up from its historically low rate of 0.1% as recently as December 2021. The Council’s Treasury advisors forecast that the base rate will peak at 5.5% and will gradually recede back to 3.25% by June 2025. Interest rate forecasts are reported to Council regularly via the Treasury Management Reports.



4.4 Real Living Wage for Care Workers

WG have introduced a national policy that Social Care workers in Wales will be paid at least the Real Living Wage (RLW). The RLW is independently calculated by the Resolution Foundation and overseen by the Living Wage Commission and currently stands at £10.90 per hour. It applies to registered workers in Care homes and Domiciliary care and also includes Personal assistants who provide care and support which is funded through a Direct Payment. Annual Fee uplift considerations for Social Care Providers will need to take account of any RLW changes, provided that sufficient WG funding is received.

Although WG announced recurrent annual funding of around £70m to deliver this commitment, there is a significant risk that the funding received (via RSG) will not be maintained at a sufficient level as further RLW wage increases are seen in future years.

4.5 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is in place to make public bodies think more about the long term, work better with people, communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined up approach. The well-being duty under the Act means that we must apply the Sustainable Development Principle five ways of working to all that we do and align our work to the seven National Well-being Goals. All services are required to apply the Act, thus ensuring that the transformation and efficiency savings plans comply with the well-being duty.

The Five Ways of Working are detailed overleaf;



Thinking for the long-term

Avoid short-termism and consider how decisions will impact on the well-being of future generations as well as current generations.



Prevention

Act early – tackle the root cause of problems before they arise or get worse. This will bring about better outcomes for individuals, public bodies and society as a whole.



Integration

Ensure that the full range of consequences of an action are considered so that an activity in one area of work can be shaped to compliment, rather than undermine the activities in others.



Collaboration

Work with others, both from within or outside your team or organisation, so that as many objectives as possible can be met with the resources and expertise available.



Involvement

Understand the benefits of involving as wide a range of people as possible in helping shape the decisions and services that will affect their lives.

5 National & Local Factors

5.1 UK Government General Election

The next UK general election is to be held no later than 28th January 2025, although it was reported in the Telegraph newspaper during April 2023 that autumn 2024 was the preferred date of the Prime Minister for the election to be held, therefore October 2024 is a potential timeline.

The outcome of the election could significantly change the funding available to WG (for better or worse) through the Barnett formula, depending on the spending priorities of the new administration after the election.

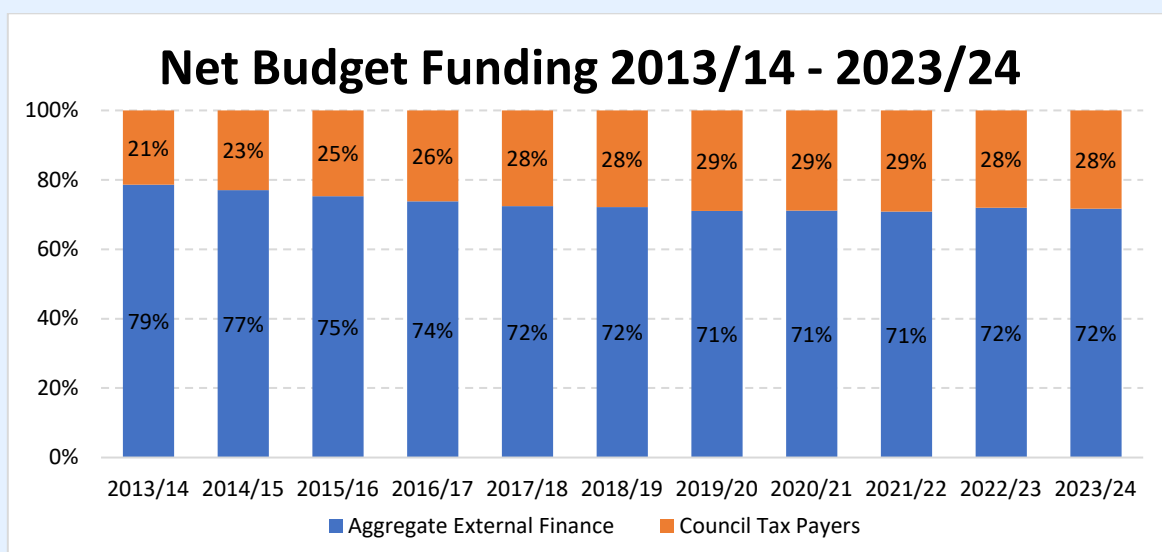
5.2 Funding

The Council has a number of key funding streams as described in sections 5.2.1 to 5.2.4 below:

5.2.1 WG

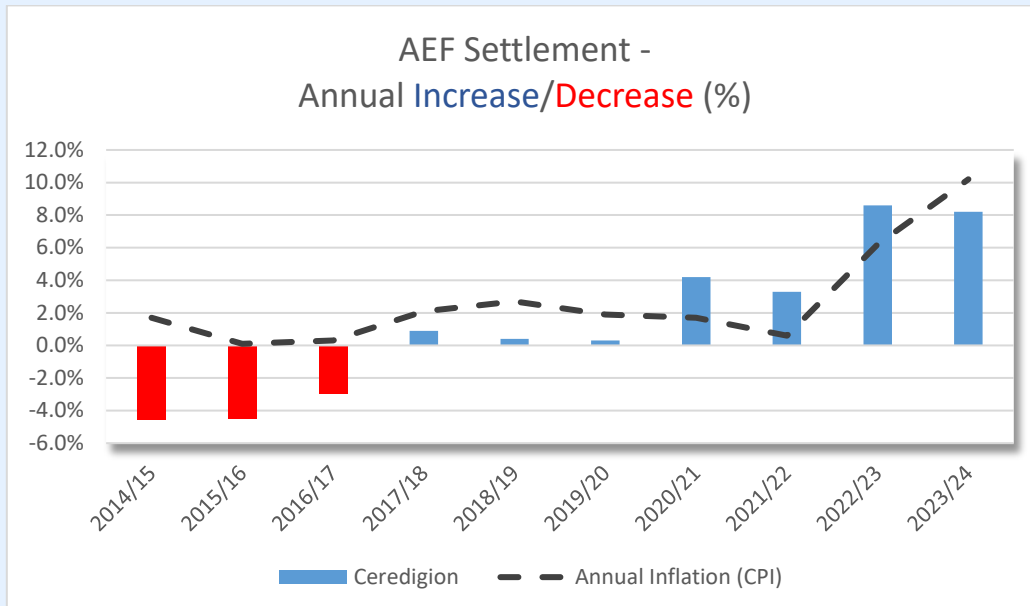
Standard Spending Assessments (SSAs) is the mechanism used by WG for the distribution of resources to local authorities based on a calculation of what each Local Authority needs to spend to deliver a standard level of services at a common rate of council tax. The SSA formulae are kept under review through the Distribution Sub-Group. The SSA allocation uses around fifty formulae reflecting demographic, physical, economic, and social characteristics. It also reflects the relative costs of providing comparable services between authorities. Consequently, the formulae take account of factors such as population, numbers of children and older adults, road lengths, rurality and sparsity. The Green Book is a statistical companion to the Local Government Finance Report. It provides background information for the calculation of Standard Spending Assessments for the annual local government revenue settlement.

Approximately 72% of the net budget is funded by the WG via a combination of Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and re-distribution of National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) which is collectively referred to as Aggregate External Finance (AEF). Local Authorities are able to apply for additional specific funding through the WG's grant programme. A further circa £44m of specific service grant funding, is typically received each year to deliver and support many of the Council's revenue services and capital schemes/projects.



The AEF settlement for 2023/24 has increased by 8.1% which resulted in a budget shortfall of £12m to be found from a combination of Budget Savings and Council Tax increases.

The graph below illustrates the Councils AEF settlement for the previous 10 years and shows that Ceredigion's settlement has been below inflation (CPI) for majority of that period.



5.2.2 Council Tax

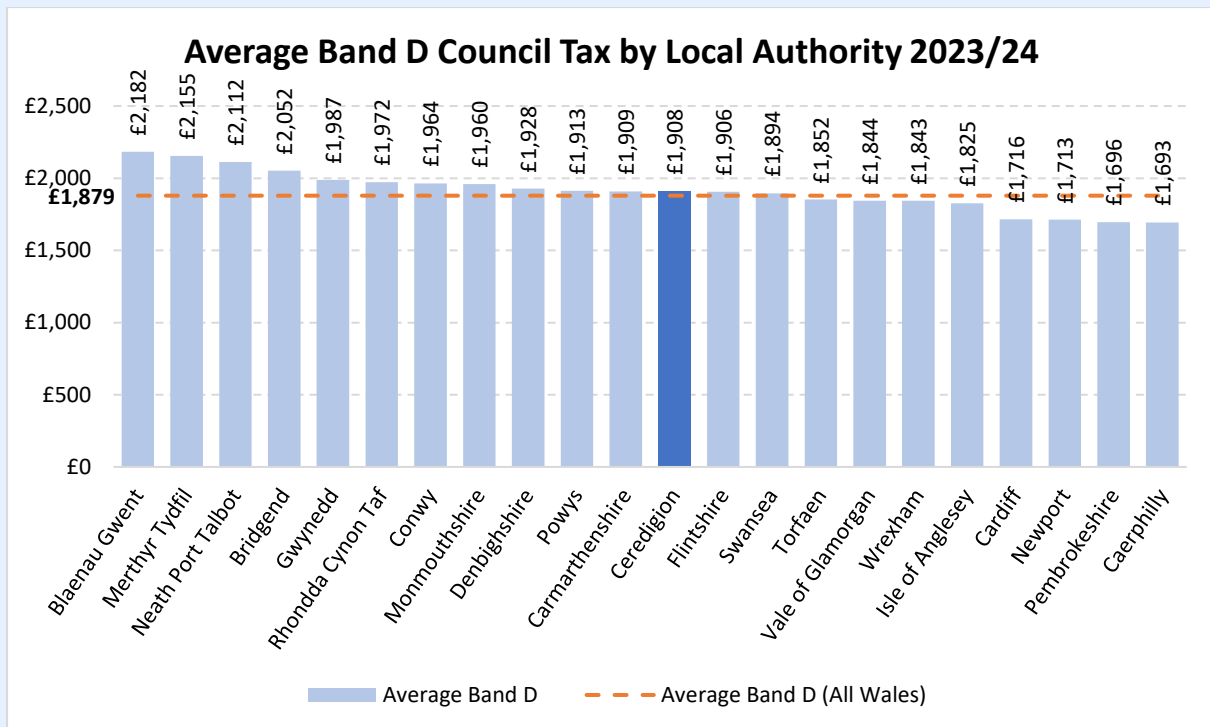
Comparative data on Welsh Authorities' Council Tax levels is available on the Statistics for Wales website using the following links:-

<https://gov.wales/council-tax-levels> / <https://llyw.cymru/lefelaur-dreth-gyngor>

Band D has historically been used as the standard for comparing council tax levels between and across local authorities. This measure is not affected by the varying distribution of properties in bands that can be found across authorities.

For 2023/24 the annual Council Tax bill for a Band D property in Ceredigion as a result of a 7.3% uplift is £1,908, which also includes community council and the police authority precept. The average Council Tax for Band D property for Wales is £1,879.

The chart overleaf shows the average Band D for all Councils in Wales.



The Council currently charges a Council Tax premium of 25% on Long Term Empty Properties and Second Homes. Funds raised from this premium at this 25% level are currently ringfenced to fund a Community Housing scheme, which was approved in June 2023 to assist local residents purchase homes in the County by providing interest free shared equity loans. The decision to ringfence the funding from both 25% Premiums for the Community Housing Scheme was revised by Full Council during 2022. It is timely for Members to consider reviewing the position on Council Tax Premiums, following WG introducing further legislation increasing the maximum %age up to 300%.

5.2.3 Fees and Charges

A significant amount of income (£32m) is received annually through Fees and Charges which is used to assist funding services. These fees are reviewed annually in the context of the Council's financial position and with reference to the Council's Income Management and Service Cost Recovery Policy. It should be noted some of the fees are set on a statutory basis by other bodies, so the Council has no control on the level on these fees.

5.2.4 Discretionary Visitor Levy

The Discretionary Visitor Levy is a commitment from WG's as part of their Programme for Government. As at May 2023 WG have confirmed that plans are progressing and that the plan remains to introduce the legislation within the current government term (2021-2026).

The visitor levy would be a self-assessed levy on overnight stays in commercially let visitor accommodation. The decision whether to charge the visitor levy within a local authority area will remain a matter for the local authority once the enabling legislation has passed. The Council will seek to establish its position as to whether or not to charge the levy, once further details are available. WG have indicated that the Welsh Revenue Authority will collect and administer the levy on behalf of local authorities so the administrative burden upon the Council is expected to be minimal.

5.2.4 Council Tax Reform

Welsh Government are committed to reforming both Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates within their current term. Proposals may lead to more progressive bands reflecting the latest data, regular revaluations and a review of all discounts and reductions. Whilst WG have stated this is not about raising more revenue, there is a risk that individual Council's will lose out and for example Ceredigion has a higher average Banding of its properties than several South Wales authorities. The current timeline for Council Tax reform is April 2025, this timeline may though be ambitious given this is a complex and technical area of work.

5.3 Cost Pressures

The Council is facing increased costs to maintain the same levels of service, in addition to cost pressures arising from additional demands that are demographic driven and statutory in nature and therefore unavoidable. The following are considered the indicative high-level pressures facing the Council in the short to medium term together with detail around assumptions used in financial planning.

Table 2: Estimated Cost Pressures Over Medium Term

	<i>Note</i>	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m
APT&C Pay Award	1	7.7	4.5	3.1	2.3
Teachers Pay Award including Soulbury	2	1.8	2.0	1.8	1.5
National Insurance		(0.7)	-	-	-
Council Tax Reduction Scheme		0.5	0.3	0.4	0.4
Capital Financing		0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Fire Levy	3	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.1
Energy	4	1.8	0.3	-	-
Through Age Wellbeing related	5	8.3	5.8	4.0	4.2
Education related		0.8	0.1	0.2	0.2
Highways & Environmental related	6	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.0
Other		0.4	0.5	0.3	0.3
Total		22.4	15.1	11.1	10.2

Note 1 - APT&C Pay Award (each April)

Assumptions around pay awards are particularly uncertain in a high inflation environment. Taking into account the prevailing economic conditions and with reference to the National Living Wage and Real Living Wage the following assumptions have been used.

2023/24	+ £1,925 all Scale Points
2024/25	+ £1,600 all Scale Points
2025/26	+ 3.5% all Scale Points
2026/27	+ 2.5% all Scale Points

Note 2 - Teachers Pay Award (each September) / Teachers Pension

Predicting future pay awards is difficult. Taking into account the prevailing economic conditions the following assumptions have been used for Teachers Pay.

2023/24	+ 5% all Scale Points
2024/25	+ 4% all Scale Points
2025/26	+ 3.5% all Scale Points
2026/27	+ 2.5% all Scale Points

Employers' Teachers' Pension contribution rates are highly likely to increase significantly in either April 2024 or September 2024. It is currently expected that any increase will be fully funded by UK Government and in turn WG, although there is a risk that there will be a shortfall. This was the case last time the Teachers' Pension rate increased.

It is assumed Soulbury officers will receive a pay award in line with the APT&C pay award.

Note 3 Fire Levy

Annual increases are expected. Assumptions used are in line with forecast annual CPI inflation with a floor of 2% where inflation is forecast lower than 2%. There is a risk the 2024/25 levy is still at an elevated level.

Note 4 Energy

Due to the fact the Council purchases its energy in advance it is expected that electricity prices will still be elevated for 2024/25. Thereafter it is expected that both electricity and gas prices will remain at that level or fall.

Note 5 Through Age Wellbeing

Social Care continues to be an area where there are significant budget pressures. Over the medium term this will most significantly be seen in Commissioned Services, driven in a large part by the implementation of the Real Living Wage for all care workers (see section 4.4). Additional pressures include the onboarding of Hafan y Waun residential home, increases to the Welsh Homecare Association rate for Domiciliary Care and the retendering of Supported Living contracts.

Note 6 Highways & Environmental Services

There are a number of WG waste management initiatives over the medium term, such as the Extended Producer Responsibility proposal and the Deposit Return scheme, these may incur budget pressures for the Council if not fully funded. There are a number of waste management and school transport contracts due for renewal which may also lead to increased costs.

Note 7 Other

Other cost pressures include items such as ICT infrastructure and software inflation costs and corporate insurance budget pressures due to inflation linked premiums and expected increases to the value of insured sums (property).

5.4 Demographics and Other Trends

Many services provided by the Council are demand led that are driven by wider demographic changes and trends. These can be difficult to predict and their effect on the budgets difficult to quantify over the longer term. The main demographic challenges and trends are noted below.

Demographics

The 2021 Census estimated Ceredigion's population to be 71,500 on the 21st March 2021. According to the Mid-Year-Estimates (MYEs), Ceredigion's population three months later was slightly smaller (70,700), which is approximately 800 residents less/-1.1% than in March. The population change for the period between Census Day 2021 and Mid-Year 2021 can be attributed to the unique pandemic circumstances and seasonal migration flows (e.g., many students may have returned to their home address by the end of June).

Ceredigion's population has a high proportion of students, and this brings challenges when estimating the population at a given time. The Census estimated that there were 6,500 students in the County in 2021. It is likely that the number of students within Ceredigion is much higher than the Census figure, as Covid-19 restrictions were still in place which had an impact on where students were living at the time of Census.

Wales' population is projected to increase by 2.2% up to 2042, rising from 3.18 million in 2022 to 3.25 million in 2042. Over this twenty year period the percentage of over-65s in Wales is set to increase from around 22% to 26% of the population, and the proportion aged 75 and over is projected to increase by 44%. It is anticipated that during the next twenty years life expectancy will continue to increase but at a slower pace.

Conversely over this period, the number of children 15 and under is projected to decrease from approximately 18% to 16% of the population. The number of households in Wales is also projected to grow faster than the overall population, leading to smaller household sizes and the need for a greater number of homes.

Ceredigion is one of four counties whose population is expected to decrease over this period from 71,150 in 2022 to 68,800 in 2042. The number of children in Ceredigion are projected to decline by about 13%, a reduction of 1,400 by 2042. This decline can be attributed to the expected stalling of fertility rates in Ceredigion, which is a trend also seen nationally.

Additionally, the working age population of Ceredigion is set to decrease by 10% up to 2042, reducing from 41,300 to 37,000. This reduction can be attributed to the outward migration of people to different parts of the UK. This includes a high proportion of students in Ceredigion aged 21-24 who tend to leave the area after graduation to seek employment and education opportunities elsewhere.

On the other hand, growth is expected in the over-65s in Ceredigion, the proportion is set to increase from around 27% to 33% of the population, an additional 3,400 people over the twenty-year period. In addition to a longer life expectancy, the increase in the 65+ age group is attributed to the ageing of the significant baby boom cohort of the 1950s and 1960s, who in 2030 be at least aged 65 and older.

The trend of declining population in the County will have a negative impact on the Council's AEF funding from WG as this is a key factor in the Standard Spending Assessments (SSA) formula as described in section 5.2.1. An ageing population also inevitably and ultimately will place additional demands on Social Care services creating additional cost pressures, no matter how successful early intervention measures are.

Various schemes and activities are underway to help reverse this declining population trend, such as, the Community Housing Scheme (aimed at providing affordable housing opportunities for younger people and first time buyers), Ceredigion County Council's Economic Strategy (which aims to promote the range of rewarding career pathways and to set Ceredigion on the map as a great place to start and grow a business and increase average wages), Growing Mid Wales and the Mid Wales Regional Skills Partnership (working to drive investment in skills according to the local need) and the Childcare offer (which will financially support families with children between the ages of 3 and 4 in Ceredigion).

Employment / Unemployment

The economic activity rate and the employment rate in Ceredigion have both seen significant increases since the end of 2019. The Economic activity rate at June 2022 was 75.2% (much higher than the 67.0% in December 2019) and equates to an extra 3,700 people in the workforce. Similarly, the employment rate in the county reached 73.0% by June 2022 (increasing from 65.1% in December 2019).

These are both positive signs, and the drivers for the increases are likely to be a combination of factors. These include the need for households to increase their financial resilience due to the pandemic and currently the cost of living crisis, but also the current labour shortage being experienced across Wales and the wider UK. For example, as at March 2022 the number of vacancies in the UK surpassed the number unemployed for the first time.

Self-employment has traditionally been not only an important part of the local workforce, but also a significant one performing roles in sectors like construction and agriculture. At the start of the pandemic in March 2020, self-employed accounted for 19.0% of the workforce, which was the highest across Wales. However, over the next 2½ years the proportion who were self-employed decreased noticeably to 13.7% by June 2022, a reduction of 2,400 people. At the same time there was a corresponding increase in the number of employees, suggesting that the pandemic has resulted in some seeking 'safer' employment as employees. There was also an increase in the number of self-employed workers reclassifying their labour market status to "employee" during April to September 2020 at the same time as the Furlough Scheme.

The Council continues to take a proactive approach to monitoring and supporting the growth of the local economy. In its Corporate Strategy for 2022-27, one of the four Corporate Well-being Objectives is "Boosting the economy, supporting businesses and enabling employment".

The unemployment rate in Ceredigion for the twelve months ending June 2022 was 3.0%. In recent years unemployment in the county had shown a positive trend - decreasing from a peak of 4.2% at March 2018, to a low of 2.6% at March 2020, just before COVID-19 sent the county, and the nation, into lockdown. At that time, Ceredigion's unemployment rate was noticeably lower than the 3.7% across Wales as a whole.

Council Tax collection rates and the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) are directly affected by employment trends effecting resident's ability to pay Council Tax bills.

Income and Earnings

Earnings refers to money earned from employment, whereas income is total money received, including from earnings, benefits and pensions. Both earnings and incomes in Ceredigion are lower than across Wales and noticeably lower than the UK as a whole. This is a common trend amongst predominantly rural counties.

The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2021 shows that average annual earnings continue to be lower in Ceredigion than across Wales and with the exception of Powys, also lower than the rest of Mid and South West Wales. The average (median) annual earnings for those who live in Ceredigion was £23,576, lower than the £23,996 across Wales.

The trend is similar with household incomes. The median household income in 2021 in Ceredigion was £31,162 compared to £31,348 across Wales and £36,440 throughout the UK. Over a third of Ceredigion's households (39%) have a household income of £25,000 or less, and over a quarter (29%) have an income of £20,000 or less.

Social Care

Thanks to ground-breaking developments in technology and healthcare, the global population of over 60s is growing faster than any other age group. By 2033, one in four of the population of Wales will be over 65.

In Ceredigion, the number of people aged 65 and over is already higher than one in four and is estimated to increase to one in three by 2039. The proportion of Ceredigion's population aged 75 and over is estimated at 11.8% in 2021, and this is estimated to grow to 15.2% by 2031 and to 18.0% by 2041, representing a 47% increase in this age group.

The proportion of the Ceredigion population aged 85 and over is estimated at 3.3% in 2021, and this is expected to grow to 4.7% by 2031 and 6.0% by 2041, representing a 76% increase in the number in this age group.

Ceredigion's Old Age Dependency Ratio is projected to see a rise from 415 dependants per 1,000 in 2021 to 529 dependants per 1,000 in 2041. (The ratio is the number of State Pension age people per 1,000 people of working age). Despite the increase in the state pension age to 67 in 2028, the Old Age Dependency Ratio is continuing to increase. This is significant, because the increase in the ageing population is a major challenge for all Local Authorities as it will inevitably lead to a greater demand for council services.

Education

In the 2023 Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) there were 4,631 pupils in Ceredigion of primary school age in years Reception to Year 6, with 3,624 pupils of secondary school age (Years 7-11) and a further 712 in Year 12 and 13. The Census (PLASC) takes place in January each year. The small size of some Ceredigion schools means that it is more difficult for them to deal with reductions in revenues than it is for larger schools elsewhere in Wales.

The apportionment of RSG also depends on the relative movement in numbers of pupils across the Welsh Authorities. The total amount of funding to be apportioned through the RSG also changes from year to year. The effect of these two factors on the share of the RSG is difficult to quantify, although it is reasonable to assume that both factors are likely to reduce Ceredigion's funding.

A number of Ceredigion's schools are sited close to borders with other counties and the number of pupils in those schools can be influenced by local factors affecting the popularity of schools either side of the border.

An analysis of post-16 provision across the County is currently being undertaken to ensure that:

- Educational opportunities for 14-19 year olds in the County are expanded.

- A rich vocational curriculum is provided, which will be appropriate for all learners to achieve their full potential and which will meet the needs of all stakeholders and the local economy in Ceredigion.
- There is equal and fair access to a wide range of efficient learning pathways at different levels with the aim that Ceredigion continues to have the lowest number of NEET school leavers in Wales.

Following changes to legislation the Council introduced a School Reorganisation Handbook which was adopted by Cabinet on the 15th June 2021, this document provides a summary of the procedures that need to be followed when undertaking a school review. On 02/05/23, the Cabinet approved the Principles for Ensuring Sustainable Education Infrastructure policy, which will form the basis for any decision on future school re-organisation proposals.

Ceredigion's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) was adopted in February 2022. The 10-year strategy (2022–2032) seeks to reinforce and strengthen the Welsh language provision and meet the targets set by the WG for a million Welsh speakers Wales-wide by 2050. One over-riding aim is to ensure that pupils in Ceredigion are confident communicators in both Welsh and English by the end of Year 6 when they progress from primary to secondary education.

Highways Network

Ceredigion has one of the largest accumulative road lengths in Wales at 2,265km in total. Around 51.5% of roads in Ceredigion are B and C roads (1,167km), which are classed as 'minor roads'.

The percentage of A, B and C roads in Ceredigion in poor condition have decreased slightly over the last two years, although the condition for A and C roads remains above the target. A roads in poor condition decreased from 3.2% in 2021/22 to 3.1% in 2022/23, but remain above the target of 3%, B roads in poor condition remain at 2.0% in 2022/23 having also been at that level in 2021/22 which is within the target of 6%, and C roads decreased from 14.7% to 13.2% which is still above the target of 12%.

Cyber Crime

Cyber Crime continues to be a real risk for Public Bodies and poses potential financial risks attached to being affected by a Cyber Attack.

The Tourism and Visitor Economy in Ceredigion

Like most coastal areas, the tourism industry plays a significant role in Ceredigion's economy, accounting for 13% of jobs and is the second largest industry in the county behind education.

The total economic impact of the tourism industry in Ceredigion was estimated to be £295m in 2021, a 58.7% increase on the previous year. This significant increase is due to the reopening of tourism related businesses following the COVID-19 pandemic which resulted in national lockdown and closure of the tourism industry across Wales during 2020. During 2021 the economic impact and visitor numbers to Ceredigion had not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels, however, it should be noted that the latest figures for 2021 include travel and business opening restrictions well into the summer of that year. The tourism industry supports 4,121 jobs county-wide, which is 1,700 lower than prior to the pandemic in 2019. As at July 2023 data for 2022 has not yet been published, it is therefore not yet known whether the industry has fully recovered to pre-pandemic levels.

The tourism industry will continue to be a key aspect of the Council's key objective of 'Boosting the Economy' as laid out the Corporate Strategy.

6 **The Budget Gap & Medium-Term Financial Forecast for 2023/24 to 2025/26**

WG's Local Government Settlement for 2023/24 has provided indicative Wales-level core revenue funding allocations for 2024/25 of £5.7 billion – equating to an uplift of £170 million (3.1%), no indication has been provided for 2025/26. Recent settlements have seen the Council receive very close to the all-Wales average, so the 3.1% has been used for planning purposes for 2024/25, and without any other indicator the same figure has been assumed for 2025/26 and 2026/27.

Table 3 below uses a Council Tax increase of 5% for modelling and planning purposes. The actual WG settlement will differ to the projection and could be better or worse, likewise Council Tax increases will vary and ultimately are a formal consideration for Full Council as part of each year's Budget Setting process.

The table below sets out estimated income and expenditure projections and therefore the estimated Budget Gap over the next three years. Detailed cost pressures have already been shown in section 5.3 above.

Table 3 – Budget Gap Projections

	Actual Budget		Indicative		Indicative		Indicative	
	2023/24		2024/25		2025/26		2026/27	
	Increase	£m	Increase	£m	Increase	£m	Increase	£m
Council Tax	7.3%	50.9	5.0%	53.5	5.0%	56.1	5.0%	58.9
WG Funding (AEF)	8.2%	129.2	3.1%	133.2	3.1%	137.3	3.1%	141.6
Total Income		180.1		186.7		193.5		200.5
Budget Pressures		23.1		15.1		11.1		10.2
Expected Expenditure		188.9		195.2		197.8		203.6
Budget Gap		8.8		8.5		4.3		3.1

Based on these projections, the Council would be required to close a Budget Gap of at least £15.9m by March 2027. This is on top of the savings already achieved between April 2012 and March 2023 of £52m and then a further £8.8m required in the 2023/24 Budget process - meaning over £60m of savings will have been found since 2012.

The Council has a number of measures and plans in place to manage the expected Budget gap, these are detailed in Section 7.

Declining population figures in Ceredigion as described in 5.4 above have the potential to further negatively affect the Council's AEF Budget Settlement.

The potential range of Budget Gaps in the medium term as a consequence of the uncertainty around the annual AEF Budget Settlements is illustrated in the tables below showing the impact for different levels of Council Tax and WG funding.

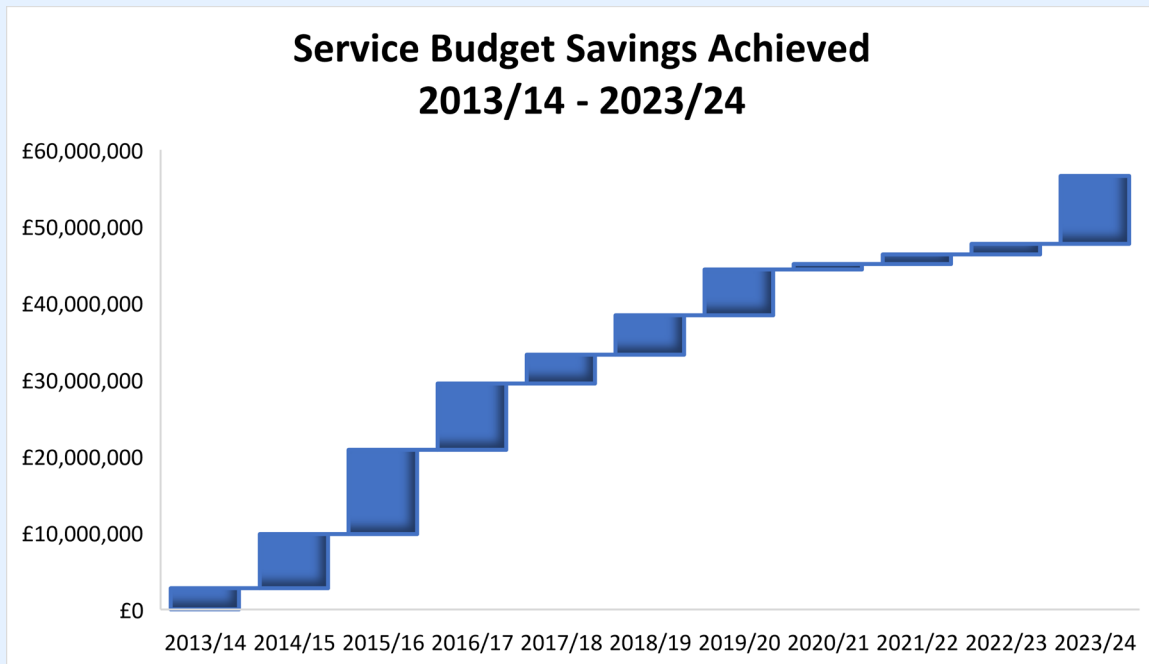
Table 4: Budget Funding Gap Scenario Analysis - 2024/25 (£15.1m Cost Pressures)

		Council Tax Increase							
		0.0%	1.0%	2.0%	3.0%	4.0%	5.0%	6.0%	7.0%
Aggregate External Finance Settlement (AEF)	0.0%	£13.0m	£12.5m	£11.9m	£11.4m	£10.9m	£10.4m	£9.9m	£9.4m
	1.0%	£11.7m	£11.2m	£10.7m	£10.1m	£9.6m	£9.1m	£8.6m	£8.1m
	2.0%	£10.4m	£9.9m	£9.4m	£8.8m	£8.3m	£7.8m	£7.3m	£6.8m
	3.0%	£9.1m	£8.6m	£8.1m	£7.6m	£7.0m	£6.5m	£6.0m	£5.5m
	4.0%	£7.8m	£7.3m	£6.8m	£6.3m	£5.8m	£5.2m	£4.7m	£4.2m
	5.0%	£6.5m	£6.0m	£5.5m	£5.0m	£4.5m	£4.0m	£3.4m	£2.9m
	6.0%	£5.2m	£4.7m	£4.2m	£3.7m	£3.2m	£2.7m	£2.2m	£1.6m
	7.0%	£3.9m	£3.4m	£2.9m	£2.4m	£1.9m	£1.4m	£0.9m	£0.4m

Table 5: Budget Funding Gap Scenario Analysis - 2025/26 (£11.1m Cost Pressures)

		Council Tax Increase							
		0.0%	1.0%	2.0%	3.0%	4.0%	5.0%	6.0%	7.0%
Aggregate External Finance Settlement (AEF)	0.0%	£9.3m	£8.7m	£8.2m	£7.7m	£7.1m	£6.6m	£6.1m	£5.5m
	1.0%	£7.9m	£7.4m	£6.9m	£6.3m	£5.8m	£5.3m	£4.7m	£4.2m
	2.0%	£6.6m	£6.1m	£5.5m	£5.0m	£4.5m	£3.9m	£3.4m	£2.9m
	3.0%	£5.3m	£4.7m	£4.2m	£3.7m	£3.1m	£2.6m	£2.1m	£1.5m
	4.0%	£3.9m	£3.4m	£2.9m	£2.3m	£1.8m	£1.3m	£0.7m	£0.2m
	5.0%	£2.6m	£2.1m	£1.5m	£1.0m	£0.5m	-£0.1m	-£0.6m	-£1.1m
	6.0%	£1.3m	£0.7m	£0.2m	-£0.3m	-£0.9m	-£1.4m	-£1.9m	-£2.5m
	7.0%	-£0.1m	-£0.6m	-£1.1m	-£1.7m	-£2.2m	-£2.7m	-£3.3m	-£3.8m

The unfavourable Medium-Term Financial forecast modelled is set against the backdrop of over a decade of austerity which has resulted in a considerable period of real term decreases in funding. Cumulative savings of over £60m achieved during this period to achieve balanced budgets is illustrated in the chart below.



7 Budget Strategy

7.1 Managing Resources Effectively

The Council's Financial Management approach includes;

- Compliance with formal Financial Regulations to ensure that budgets are managed effectively in-year;
- Financial management roles and responsibilities are transparent and embedded across the Council's services.
- Financial literacy is actively promoted throughout the organisation.
- Effective financial controls are in place and cover all areas of financial management, risk management and asset control.
- Ensuring that value for money is achieved in the delivery of services.

Overarching principals that provide the framework for the effective use of the Council's resources include:

- Requests to carry forward revenue underspend are considered at year-end and are generally only supported where they meet Corporate Wellbeing Objectives.
- Reserves will be maintained in accordance with the Council's approved policy. Any windfall income received will be treated corporately.
- Reserves will be held for specified purposes only and reviewed on a regular basis.
- Grant funding for revenue and capital will be maximised by Services wherever possible and within the constraints of the grant terms & conditions.
- Where grant bids are required, these need to be linked to the Council's Wellbeing Objectives.
- Exit strategies need to be considered for grant bids and relevant grant funding.
- Resources are targeted to achieve the greatest positive impact e.g. utilising ICT to support lean processes and improved workflow.
- Pursue efficiency to make best use of the Council's assets, i.e. funds, land, buildings, fleet, staff and information technology. For example, further rationalisation of assets to reduce revenue costs, generate income streams or co-locate Council / Public Services.
- Consideration given to the longer term to plan for sustainable services and budgets and maintaining appropriate service standards for core front-line services.

7.2 Partnership Working, External Funding and Collaboration

The Council works proactively and collaboratively with a variety of partners to secure best outcomes for the benefit of its citizens and is investigating opportunities for joint work with other agencies / local authorities. The financial strategy takes a realistic but prudent approach to possible partnership funding that is not yet certain or confirmed. Specific partner funding or grant income is generally not assumed in the forward forecasts unless its allocation has been confirmed.

As part of the Boosting Ceredigion's Economy strategy the Council will work with various partners including:

• WG	• Skills and training providers
• UK Government	• Business representative bodies
• Growing Mid Wales Partnership	• Private and public funders
• Further and Higher Education establishments	• Third sector organisations

The Council works in partnership with the WG on many significant revenue and capital projects such as the Aberaeron and Aberystwyth Coastal Defence schemes.

The Council has significant grant funding for delivering its gross revenue budget. There have been transfers of specific grants into the revenue support grant and this current trend should continue. This means that the Council will be able to decide how best to spend the funding as part of its own Corporate strategy as opposed to being part of a national one. WG are committed to reduce the administrative burden of grants and have instigated a programme of work to review this. How many grants end up unhypothecated through RSG rather than individual specific WG grant awards remains to be seen.

Budgets must clearly reflect the substance of any collaborative working that the Council is party to. The gross expenditure principle of budgeting requires that budgets show separately the expenditure and income of all transactions. Where Joint Committees and Corporate Joint Committees exist these need to agree a budget for the Joint Committees' work early enough for the Council's share to be reflected in the budget. As any Joint Committees become more established, this is likely to mean partner contributions will need to form part of the base budget.

Ceredigion is a partner with Powys County Council (and the Brecon Beacons National Park for Strategic Planning only) and has formed the Mid Wales Corporate Joint Committee (MWCJC). The MWCJC is responsible for producing a Strategic Development Plan for the region and a Regional Transport Plan. In addition, the CJC is responsible for Economic Well Being.

7.3 Managing the Budget Gap

Based on the funding assumptions described in section 6 above and the cost pressures detailed in section 5.3, the financial modelling indicates the Council will have a Budget gap of £15.9m over the 3-year period 2024/25 – 2026/27.

Year 2 and 3 potential opportunities totalling c£4m have already been identified through the 'Doing Things Differently: A Corporate Approach' programme. This is on top of the £3m identified and assumed in the 2023/24 Budget Setting process. **This would then leave a Budget Shortfall of £6.4m in 2024/25 and in total £11.9m over the next 3 years.**

Table 6: Estimated Medium-Term Budget Gap

	2023/24 Actual £m	2024/25 Indicative £m	2025/26 Indicative £m	2026/27 Indicative £m
Estimated Budget Gap	8.8	8.5	4.3	3.1
Savings Identified:				
Doing Things Differently: A Corporate Approach	3.0	2.1	1.9	-
2023/24 - Savings plan	5.8	-	-	-
Total Savings Identified	8.8	2.1	1.9	-
Budget Shortfall Remaining	-	6.4	2.4	3.1

Detailed plans for 'Doing Things Differently: A Corporate Approach' and the 2023/24 Savings plan can be seen in Appendix 1 and 2 respectively.

After factoring in the 'Doing Things Differently: A Corporate Approach' assumptions for 2024/25 and 2025/26, the resulting range of Budget Shortfalls is illustrated in the tables overleaf, showing the impact for different levels of Council Tax and WG funding.

Table 7: Budget Funding Gap Scenario Analysis - 2024/25 (£14.7m Cost Pressures)

		Council Tax Increase							
		0.0%	1.0%	2.0%	3.0%	4.0%	5.0%	6.0%	7.0%
Aggregate External Finance Settlement (AEF)	0.0%	£13.0m	£12.5m	£11.9m	£11.4m	£10.9m	£10.4m	£9.9m	£9.4m
	1.0%	£11.7m	£11.2m	£10.7m	£10.1m	£9.6m	£9.1m	£8.6m	£8.1m
	2.0%	£10.4m	£9.9m	£9.4m	£8.8m	£8.3m	£7.8m	£7.3m	£6.8m
	3.0%	£9.1m	£8.6m	£8.1m	£7.6m	£7.0m	£6.5m	£6.0m	£5.5m
	4.0%	£7.8m	£7.3m	£6.8m	£6.3m	£5.8m	£5.2m	£4.7m	£4.2m
	5.0%	£6.5m	£6.0m	£5.5m	£5.0m	£4.5m	£4.0m	£3.4m	£2.9m
	6.0%	£5.2m	£4.7m	£4.2m	£3.7m	£3.2m	£2.7m	£2.2m	£1.6m
	7.0%	£3.9m	£3.4m	£2.9m	£2.4m	£1.9m	£1.4m	£0.9m	£0.4m

Table 8: Budget Funding Gap Scenario Analysis - 2025/26 (£10.8m Cost Pressures)

		Council Tax Increase							
		0.0%	1.0%	2.0%	3.0%	4.0%	5.0%	6.0%	7.0%
Aggregate External Finance Settlement (AEF)	0.0%	£9.3m	£8.7m	£8.2m	£7.7m	£7.1m	£6.6m	£6.1m	£5.5m
	1.0%	£7.9m	£7.4m	£6.9m	£6.3m	£5.8m	£5.3m	£4.7m	£4.2m
	2.0%	£6.6m	£6.1m	£5.5m	£5.0m	£4.5m	£3.9m	£3.4m	£2.9m
	3.0%	£5.3m	£4.7m	£4.2m	£3.7m	£3.1m	£2.6m	£2.1m	£1.5m
	4.0%	£3.9m	£3.4m	£2.9m	£2.3m	£1.8m	£1.3m	£0.7m	£0.2m
	5.0%	£2.6m	£2.1m	£1.5m	£1.0m	£0.5m	-£0.1m	-£0.6m	-£1.1m
	6.0%	£1.3m	£0.7m	£0.2m	-£0.3m	-£0.9m	-£1.4m	-£1.9m	-£2.5m
	7.0%	-£0.1m	-£0.6m	-£1.1m	-£1.7m	-£2.2m	-£2.7m	-£3.3m	-£3.8m

7.3.1 Key Elements to Managing Budget Gap

Whilst the Council's underlying budget position is that inflationary and other growth in demand for its services is likely to rise and exceed forecasted income, the main objectives of the annual budget setting continue to be:

- Ensure that a balanced budget is set each year and that value for money services are delivered.
- Look to the longer term to help plan sustainable services and budgets and help ensure that the Council's financial resources are sufficient to support delivery of Council priorities, whilst at the same time maintaining core Service operations.

The key elements of the Budget Strategy that will help contribute to a balanced budget are:

- Taking a Team Ceredigion approach to the budget challenge at Leadership Group, through looking at savings and income opportunities corporately and cross-cutting so that key transformational change continues to be achieved and delivered.
- Planning generally to provide flat budget allocations to Services, unless corporate recognition is made for Cost Pressures. Services therefore need to meet any unfunded increased costs from further service efficiency, income and cost recovery, and change within the service area as a whole. In some cases this will mean needing to 'cut the cloth' accordingly and prioritising activity and focus.
- To target reductions in Supplies & Services and 3rd Party Payments wherever possible including any areas where Services or Budget Headings are deemed a lower priority.
- Council Tax increases will take into account the need to ensure that there is sufficient funding to protect key services and core operations.
- The budget will generally be set so that no demand is made from General Fund Balances to support the base budget, other than for funding exceptional and agreed priority one off items.
- Income will be maximised through application of the Income Management and Cost Recovery Policy.
- Efficiency savings (including invest to save schemes and procurement savings) will continue to be sought as a natural part of improved service delivery. Investment will continue to be considered to facilitate and pump prime initiatives, provided that business cases stack up.
- Savings will continue to be sought from Service delivery, where possible but generally in a targeted way not via salami slicing. In undertaking reviews relating to the future delivery of services the Council will engage with the public and arrange for consultation to take place with staff, unions, stakeholders and the public as appropriate.
- Any savings achieved in advance of the annual budget requirement will be applied to earmarked reserves, in particular to support the Corporate Wellbeing Objectives or to pump prime other initiatives, as well as then applying the ongoing savings to the base budget in an appropriate later year of need.
- Where specific grant funding is transferred into RSG then these resources will be allocated directly to the relevant service's budget, providing there is a clear correlation to ongoing service delivery.
- Where specific grant funding comes to an end (either naturally or otherwise), the normal expectation is that the associated service activity will need to be reviewed and ceased even if that creates a redundancy position(s).
- Certain items will be recognised as Corporate Items requiring annual allocations in the budget model. This includes the Council Tax Support Scheme, funding of the Capital Programme, any ringfencing regarding Council Tax Premiums, External Audit Fees,

Democratic costs (Members Allowances) and the Mid & West Wales Fire Authority Levy.

- Doing Things Differently – A Corporate Approach. The Council has adopted an approach which includes reviewing the existing assets and resources to generate additional income and reduce costs to meet budget pressures. The overarching aim is to broadly maintain the same standards of service delivery as far as possible within the resources available.
- The Cost & Inflationary pressures earmarked reserve will be used to provide temporary mitigation where necessary whilst inflation remains at elevated levels.
- The Contingency & Budget Management earmarked reserve will be used to assist in managing emerging in year Budget pressures where they appear outside of the normal Budget process.
- As a last resort if all other options have been exhausted – Consideration of targeted Budget cuts, which would mean a reduction in Council services being delivered rather than continuing to try to deliver the same but with less resources.

The following are key strategic Capital budget setting aims:

- Asset Management Planning along with the Carbon Management Programme will inform the setting and prioritisation of the Multi-year Capital programme and necessary expenditure on existing, and new, Council assets.
- Identification of expenditure that can attract external grant funding, providing the ongoing revenue impact is sustainable.
- Invest to save schemes demonstrating a return on investment and/or a reasonable payback period are regarded as high priority as they provide a positive contribution to the medium term budget position.
- The Capital programme budget will normally be set so that no demand is made of prudential borrowing other than to fund specific capital projects. Consideration will also be given to use prudential borrowing when revenue savings are identified which can be used to fund the capital financing costs.
- Use of funding set aside in earmarked reserves will support the Capital programme, in particular the Corporate Capital reserve as well the 4 Corporate Wellbeing Objectives reserve e.g. for 21st Century Schools and Coast Protection Schemes.
- Capital receipts are regarded as a positive contribution to the overall capital programme and will be allocated in accordance with the balance available at the start of the year. Appropriate responses to major disposals will take place as and when they arise.
- Expenditure and investment on any assets are to make a positive contribution to, and support, Corporate Wellbeing Objectives.
- Develop a funding strategy to support planned future major projects as the need arises.

7.4 Earmarked Reserves and Balances

A statement of the Council's Earmarked Reserves and General Balances is updated at least twice each year and presented to Members during the budget setting and the final accounts preparation. A summary of the reserves position is shown overleaf:

Table 9: Reserves & Balances Projections

	31.03.23 Actual	31.03.24 Planned	31.03.25 Planned	31.03.26 Planned
General Balances - Amount	£6.7m	£6.7m	£6.7m	£6.7m
General Balances - Percentage	3.7%	3.5%	3.4%	3.3%
Earmarked Reserves (Inc. Schools)	£48.8m	£41.3m	£34.8m	£34.2m

The Council's approved target is for General Balances to be maintained at between 3% and 5% of net expenditure, which is currently being achieved.

There is a risk with an increasing Net Budget total, that the %age becomes diluted over time. Therefore there may come a point where an additional contribution would need to be budgeted / made at year end in order to not fall below 3%.

The Council has maintained a level of circa £20m of 'internal borrowing' by utilising funds held in earmarked reserves which has reduced the need to borrow. It is estimated this approach has saved the taxpayer annually £800k which equates to a saving in Council Tax charges of nearly 2% annually.

8 Risk Assessment & Sensitivity

The assumptions set out in the MTFs are based on information available at the time. There is significant risk that these will change, particularly in the view of recent uncertain and volatile times – we are still in an elevated inflationary environment, interest rates are much higher than at any time since 2008 and staff pay awards at levels previously unheard of.

The table below summarises the estimated impact of a 1% change (+/-) of some of the key factors affecting the Council. In current times, it is quite possible to be more than 1% out on any of these variables as forecasting with any degree of certainty is challenging.

Table 10: Sensitivity Analysis

Assumption		Effects of 1% variation to assumed rates (+/-) £'000
Income	Welsh Government AEF Settlement	1,290
	Council Tax (Gross of Council Tax Reduction Scheme)	500
	Council Tax (Net of Council Tax Reduction Scheme)	430
	Interest Rates (Investment Income)	500
	External Grants	440
	Fees & Charges (noting that not all are set by the Council)	320
Expenditure	Pay Award – General	850
	Pay Award – Teachers	450
	Employers National Insurance	440
	Local Government Pension Scheme Contribution Rate	690
	Teacher's Pension Contribution Rate	300
	Social Care Provider Contracts	450

Risk register

The following risk description is included in the Council's Corporate Risk Register, which is scrutinised by the Governance and Audit Committee:

- The reduction of core and external funding will lead to the reduction in service provision in some areas. Failure to adapt, implement identified savings and consider alternative models of service provision in line with the Medium-Term Financial Plan will affect future service delivery and the financial responsibilities of the Council.

The potential consequences of this risk are:

- Risk of failing to meet statutory budget setting deadlines.
- Risk of service delivery impacted due to decreasing resources, short lead in times to service changes or failure to effectively prioritise spend in line with corporate priorities.
- Risk that savings plans identified are not achieved as planned.
- Risk that annual budget setting frustrates longer term planning.

The Council continues to monitor and review its Medium Term Financial Strategy. The Council monitors the budgets set, the savings planned and has been going through an extensive iterative process of considering future options to identify future savings.

Appendix 1: Doing Things Differently: A Corporate Approach

Ref	Workstream	Description	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000
1	Treasury Management	Investment Income Returns	1,000	-	-	-
2	Digital solutions	Dom Care Digital solutions	-	Tbc	Tbc	-
3	Assets	Operational Office Buildings	150	150	-	-
		Operational Commercial Buildings	-	50	-	-
		Other Corporate Estate Buildings	50	100	150	-
		Use of Space & Wider Income Maximisation	-	100	200	-
		Review of other Operational Asset premises	50	Tbc	Tbc	-
4	Energy	Energy Schemes Investment	125	250	250	-
5	Placement Facilities	Development of in county provision for Children	-	500	475	-
6	Cost of Living	Fostering opportunities	50	100	150	-
7	Transport	Review of all Learner related Transport	400	300	-	-
8	Primary Schools	Strategic review of Primary schools	100	200	400	-
9	Post 16 learning	Strategic review of Post 16 learning provision	-	-	tbc	-
10	Car Parking	Generate additional income from Car parking facilities	360	100	-	-
11	Fees & Charges	Review of all Fees & Charges	250	250	250	-
12	Third Party Spend	Review of opportunities for Spend reductions	-	tbc	tbc	-
13	Revenue v Capital	Maximise use of Capital Programme	500	-	-	-
TOTAL - Doing Things Differently Savings			3,035	2,100	1,875	-

Appendix 2: 2023/24 Savings Plans (in addition to Doing things Differently: A Corporate Approach)

Description	2023/24 £'000
Limit the increase to be applied to Delegated Schools to 5.8%	2,065
Delete Contribution to Boosting the Economy reserve	2,440
Delete Corporate COVID base budget	500
Reduction in Dyfed Pension Fund Employers Contribution rate (from 15.8% to 14.6%)	782
TOTAL	5,787

This page is intentionally left blank

Minutes of the Meeting of CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

held Hybrid - Neuadd Cyngor Ceredigion, Penmorfa, Aberaeron / remotely via video conference on Monday, 12 June 2023

PRESENT; Councillor Rhodri Evans (Chair) Councillors Euros Davies, Ifan Davies, Endaf Edwards, Elaine Evans, Eryl Evans, Paul Hinge, Hugh R M Hughes, Ann Bowen Morgan, Ceris Jones

Also in attendance: Councillor Clive Davies and Matthew Vaux (Cabinet Members) together with Councillor Amanda Edwards and Elizabeth Evans

Officers in attendance: Mr Arwyn Davies, Corporate Manager – Growth and Enterprise, Mr Alun Williams- Corporate Lead Officer, Policy & Performance, Mrs Diana Davies, Corporate Manger- Partnerships & Performance, Ms Cathryn Morgan, Equalities and Inclusion Manager, Mrs Dwywen Jones- Scrutiny Support Officer, Mrs Nia Jones, Corporate Manager- Democratic Services and Mrs Dana Jones, Democratic and Services Officer

(10:00am-12:30pm)

1 **Apologies**

Councillor Caryl Roberts and Carl Worrall apologised for their inability to attend the meeting.

The Chairman and all Members thanked former Councillor Geraint Hughes for all his work during his time on the committee and wished him well in the future.

2 **Disclosures of personal interest (including whipping declarations)**

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

None.

3 **Elect a temporary vice-Chair (until the end of July 2023)**

It was AGREED that Councillor Elaine Evans be elected as vice-chair until end of July 2023.

4 **Engagement and Participation Policy Annual Report 2022-2023**

The Ceredigion Engagement and Participation Policy 'Talking, Listening and Working Together' was approved by Cabinet on 04/10/2022 and published on 18/10/2022. This was the first Annual Report that outlines our progress in delivering the Policy.

The report provides an update on the progress of the Action Plan contained within the Policy, along with the Engagement Methods utilised by the Council, some examples of Continuous Engagement and a summary of the Engagement, Consultation and 'Inform' exercises undertaken during 2022-23.

At the end of the report a conclusion section has been included to assess the improvements made over the past year and to identify where further progress is required in moving forward.

Following question from the floor, it was AGREED to the content of the Engagement and Participation Policy Annual Report 2022-2023 subject:-
(i) in relation to Aim 2: To ensure that we engage with the people of Ceredigion in the best way, Action: To improve the way that we feedback to those who have participated in our engagement exercises, Progress: A consistent method was currently being developed and would be rolled out across all Council services during 2023-2024, Responsibility: All Corporate Managers - RAG status was Red no progress made,
(ii) that all engagement exercises participants should receive the outcome results, and
(iii) that a 6-month monitoring update report was presented to the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its December meeting

5 Digital Connectivity Update

Consideration was given to the Digital Connectivity Update. The report had been presented in order to provide an overview of the initiatives and projects that Ceredigion County Council were currently undertaking to support the levels of digital connectivity across the County.

An update was provided on Broadband to include Fibre Projects, Project Gigabit, Welsh Government Prior Information Notice (PIN) and Mobile Coverage to include Shared Rural Network, Mid Wales Growth Deal Projects.

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

While Ceredigion had seen improvements in digital infrastructure over the past 12 months and some areas experience some of the quickest broadband speeds in the UK, there were areas of the County that still fall below the levels of other areas of Wales and the UK for superfast broadband and mobile 10 connectivity. As previously stated, the past 2 - 3 years had seen significant efforts being put into demand stimulation exercises and awareness raising exercises to demonstrate the commercial opportunities

that were available to suppliers, with this work now coming to fruition through suppliers

starting to deploy the infrastructure and making connections, which would see an increase in connectivity and access to fibre broadband.

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

Following discussion, Members agreed it would be beneficial to invite representatives from the Service Providers to a Full Council meeting/workshop in the future and recommend that this was considered by Cabinet.

6 Update on SMART Towns

A Smart Town, as defined by the Welsh Government as an urban area that uses different types of electronic methods and sensors to collect data. Insights gained from that data were used to manage assets, resources, and services efficiently; in return, that data was used to improve operations and future prosperity across the town. It was reported that seven Towns in Ceredigion were taking steps to increase the use of technology to support the development and growth of the towns. The increased use of technology would enable Town Councils and the County Council to access data and analytics which would support future planning and more efficient business operating and growth, as well as the possibility of providing a greater visitor experience. The need to exploit technology had been raised as a key need through the Place Making plan development work that has been undertaken across six of Ceredigion's towns over the past year (Aberystwyth, Aberaeron, Tregaron, Lampeter, Llandysul and Cardigan).

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

It was reported that Ceredigion Wi-Fi Towns support programme was currently that in collaboration with Powys County Council, Ceredigion County Council were successful in receiving funding to progress a project to enable 'SMART Towns' in Ceredigion. The project had involved 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 would provide the ability to collect anonymised data upon footfall, space usage and dwell time, and would enable Town Councils and the County

Council to conduct before and after analysis, helping towns identify which approaches were best during the post Covid recovery.

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

- Digital resources upon how to effectively make use of the equipment for Town Councils and businesses and would be made available online.
- The identification of a 'SMART Town Champion' would ensure the data from the system was collated and shared regularly with relevant businesses in each town.
- The provision of a digital marketing toolkit.
- Businesses and Towns would be assisted through the Welsh Government initiative with Town Councils currently engaging with the project.
- Individual support to businesses to aid in the effective use of data and digital technologies which would act as case studies to motivate others.
- To date the equipment had been installed and was operational in Tregaron, Llandysul and NewQuay, with Aberaeron and Lampeter systems nearing completion and expected to be 'live' by the end of June 2023.
-

Town Wi-Fi equipment was already installed in Cardigan and Aberystwyth, and further enhancements to the service have been made in those towns using Cynnal y Cardi funding recently. This means that 7 towns in Ceredigion would have access to Town Wi-Fi equipment.

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

The use of LoRaWAN could have applications in transportation, agriculture, tourism, environmental management, social care and housing. Ceredigion County Council now had one of the most extensive networks across any other Local Authority in Wales and the first Local Authority to have coverage across much of the County. As well as the Council having access, the network would also be available and accessible to all businesses, organisations and residents, with the freedom for the network to be used in the manner in which they feel most effective.

Allowing public usage of gateways ensures that the platform would grow more readily and as a popular growing platform, it means more people would develop sensors for LoRaWAN, creating more hardware and more software in the marketplace. As the network of gateways increases, it also adds

capacity and resilience where areas may be covered by multiple gateways. This means that if a gateway fails, connectivity would be maintained via another gateway in range. Through the provision of free access to the Ceredigion LoRaWAN network and collaboration between internal Council departments, business owners and other local organisations such as Aberystwyth University and Farming Connect, they were offering developers, adopters, and endusers the opportunity to trial and deploy solutions to address a wide range of challenges that were facing local people, businesses and institutions.

As part of the Welsh Governments ambitions to exploit the use of LoRaWAN technologies across Wales, Ceredigion County Council had been successful in receiving a significant amount of equipment, including LoRaWAN gateways and relevant sensors, to further extend the coverage and build resilience of the existing network as well enabling the development of use cases by the Council. These use cases would be shared and highlighted with the aim to inspire businesses and other organisation to make use of the LoRaWAN network to bring about cost savings and improved efficiencies. The possible uses of sensors provided by Welsh Government was currently being explored by various Council services to decide upon their effective use and how they can be deployed. Collaborations with public sector bodies were currently being established to enable access to gateways which these organisations can make use of to develop their own projects and use cases. By doing so it would be possible to diversify the use of the network that the Council had put in place and drive innovation.

As the Wi-Fi and LoRaWAN networks were in place across the County, this placed Ceredigion in a positive place to enable businesses and public services to be able to exploit its full potential. Further work needs to be done, and was planned, to enable the exploitation of the Wi-Fi and LoRaWAN networks by all stakeholders. The Cynnal y Cardi programme had supported the development of promotional material to raise awareness of the availability of Town Wi-Fi across all 7 towns, including the production of Banners, Posters / window sticker, Lampost banners, Table tents, Bags and pens. A logo / graphic had been produced for use on all promotional materials.

Details on the Cardigan Pilot and Demonstrating use cases at the National Eisteddfod was also provided.

Future work in the development of SMART towns in Ceredigion would be focused on achieving further exploitation of the opportunities provided, and the achievement of real benefits for businesses and other stakeholders through:

- Raising awareness of the opportunity provided by, and availability of, the County-wide Wi-Fi and LoRaWAN network. Stakeholders were increasingly aware through the Placemaking development work, and local stakeholders were actively involved in understanding the opportunities provided and sharing these more widely.
- Sharing good practice and use-cases – build on the pilot project and report

produced for Cardigan town, to ensure that the lessons and opportunities were shared across all towns in Ceredigion.

• Further revenue resource – we are aware that the exploitation work can be accelerated where there was dedicated resource to enable and promote the work. A new digital officer for Ceredigion would be appointed, whose role would include supporting stakeholders to do this. The work would be supported by UKSPF-funded activity, linked to the emerging placemaking plans for the towns.

Following question from the floor it was AGREED:

(i) to note the current position;

(ii) that Clerks of Town and Community Councils were informed of the potential benefits of Wi~Fi and LoRaWAN networks and its app;

(iii) that further discussion be held with the Chair and Officers in relation to the request of the Committee that two/three businesses in the Cardigan area be invited to the meeting to inform Members of the benefits of the app/statistics provided to their business via the Wi-fi/LoRaWAN networks, or alternatively Members visit several businesses in Cardigan to seek this information; and

(iv) that Mr Peter Williams, Digital Infrastructure team at Welsh Government be invited to the December meeting to provide an update on their current work in Ceredigion

7 Forward Work Programme

It was AGREED to note the Forward Work Programme subject to the request previously agreed by Members at the Committee in relation to:-

(i) Two to three businesses users the Wifi/ and LoRaWAN networks in Cardigan be invited to the December meeting or alternatively Members visit Cardigan businesses to seek the benefits of scheme/app;

(ii) that Mr Peter Williams, Digital Infrastructure team at Welsh Government be invited to the December meeting to provide an update on their current work in Ceredigion;

(iii) that a six-month monitoring report on the Engagement and Participation Policy Annual Report 2022-2023 be presented at the December meeting; and

(iv) that work was ongoing on presenting a report on the County Farms following recent visits by Members

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

It was agreed to confirm the minutes of the meeting of the previous meeting as a true record.

Confirmed at the Meeting of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 19 July 2023

Chairman: _____

Date: _____

Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council

REPORT TO: Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee

DATE: 19 July 2023

LOCATION: Hybrid

TITLE: Draft Forward Work Programme 2023/24

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

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

BACKGROUND:

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

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

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

The main roles of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees:

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

Effective Overview and Scrutiny can lead to:

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

CURRENT SITUATION:

Questions to consider when choosing topics

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

Choosing topics

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

RECOMMENDATION (S):

To review and update the current Forward Work Programme.

Contact Name:	Dwynwen Jones
Designation:	Overview and Scrutiny Officer
Date of Report:	12 July 2023
Acronyms:	FWP – Forward Work Programme

Committee	Item (description/title)	Invited Speakers	Purpose i.e. monitoring, policy, recommendation
Corporate Resources			
12 June 2023	SMART Towns Digital Connectivity update Engagement and Participation Plan Annual Report 2022-23	Arwyn Davies David Owen Cathryn Morgan	Chair's request Chair's request
19 July 2023	Menopause Policy Workforce Plan Update on Hybrid Working Update on Clic (requested) Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)	Geraint Edwards Geraint Edwards Geraint Edwards/Russell Hughes-Pickering Joy Lake/Anna Gawthorpe Duncan Hall	Pre-Cabinet Pre-Cabinet Pre-Cabinet Pre-Cabinet
19 October 2023	Tackling Hardship Compliments, Complaints and Freedom of Information Reports Stress Management Policy Work Life/Balance Policy & Revised Annual Leave Policy	Cathryn Morgan Marie Neige- Hadfield/Alun Williams Geraint Edwards Geraint Edwards	Pre-Cabinet For info Pre-Cabinet Pre-Cabinet

	ICT and Digital Strategy	Alan Morris	Pre-Cabinet
	Procurement and Commissioning Strategy	Duncan Hall/George Ryley	Pre-Cabinet
7 December 2023	Engagement and Participation Strategy update monitoring report Possible invite to Openreach and Peter Williams, WG to update Committee on works planned/undertaken in County	Cathryn Morgan	Agreed at June's meeting to monitor progress 6 monthly
23 February 2024	Budget Preparation		
16 May 2024			
Future meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report on the Corporate Estate 		
Task and Finish County Farms	Ongoing – County Farms		