Community Scrutiny Committee
Annual Report
2018-19
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### Community Scrutiny Committee

#### Annual Report 2016/17

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Chair’s Foreword

As the Chair of this Committee, I am pleased to present this Annual Report for the Community Scrutiny Committee for the 2018/19 municipal year. This report provides a comprehensive summary of the work undertaken by the Committee during this period and provides an opportunity to reflect on this work.

The past year has continued to be a challenging period for the Council and I feel that this Committee has continued to constructively play its part in terms of scrutinising performance and contributing to key council policies and decisions.

The Committee discussed and scrutinised a wide variety of topics during the past year. These included the standard and regular monitoring reports as well as new policies and strategies being introduced by the County Council.

The forthcoming year will no doubt be challenging, and I am confident we will continue to focus on how to improve services effectively and efficiently.

Although I have only been Chair for a short period I am looking forward to the challenge of chairing this Committee for 2019/20 and, with the assistance of my Vice Chair and the rest of the Committee, hope we will have a positive impact on the outcomes for the residents of Carmarthenshire.

I would also like to thank all members of the Committee for their contributions and dedication during 2018/19.

Cllr. Fozia Akhtar
Chair of Community Scrutiny Committee
1. Introduction

Article 6.2 of the Council’s Constitution requires all scrutiny committees to “prepare an annual report giving an account of the Committees activities over the previous year.”

The main aims of the report are to highlight the work that has been undertaken by the Community Scrutiny Committee during 2018/19. It outlines the potential future work of the Committee. The document may also facilitate discussions on other items that could be included within future work programmes.

The Committee is chaired by Cllr. Fozia Akhtar and is made up of 13 Elected Members. Support is provided to the Panel by the Democratic Services Team and other Council officers as and when required.

This report provides an overview of the work of the Community Scrutiny Committee during the 2018/19 municipal year. It gives Members the opportunity to reflect on the achievements during the year and to identify what worked well and where improvements could be made. This analysis is instrumental in developing scrutiny.

2. Overview of the work of the Committee 2018/19

2.1 Number of Meetings

The Scrutiny Committee held 9 meetings in the 2018/19 Civic Year.

2.2 The Forward Work Programme

The Scrutiny Committee develops its own Forward Work Programme (FWP) and in the main, meeting agendas were consistent with those outlined in the FWP, which was confirmed by the Committee at its meeting on 11th May 2018.

The Forward Work Programme was mainly based on key areas identified as objectives within the Integrated Community Strategy and Improvement Plan together with standard items such as performance and budget monitoring reports, action plan monitoring reports and specific requests from the scrutiny committee itself. Additional reports were also requested by the scrutiny committee during the year and the Forward Work Programme was amended accordingly.

The development of the concept of the Forward Work Programme and the process for its agreement, has allowed each scrutiny committee to determine its own work agendas. The benefits of such an approach has led to an improved level of debate and input during scrutiny committee meetings.
The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 put long term sustainability at the forefront of how public services are designed and delivered and it places emphasis on public bodies to work in partnership with each other and the public to prevent and tackle problems.

The Community Scrutiny Committee’s key responsibilities are for:
- Housing – Social and Private Sector
- Planning Policy
- Community Regeneration including physical and rural development
- Economic Development
- European and Externally Funded Programmes
- Libraries
- Arts and Theatres
- Museums and Archives
- Countryside facilities
- Sports, Leisure and Recreation

To compliment the work undertaken during formal meetings, the Committee also undertakes other scrutiny functions such as task and finish, visit to establishments falling within its remit together with member development sessions.

The following sections will provide a snapshot of the main areas of the Committee’s work.

2.3 Performance Monitoring Reports

One of the principal roles of scrutiny committees is to monitor the performance of services and functions within its remit. They undertake this work mainly through the consideration of performance monitoring reports and various action plan monitoring reports. The performance monitoring report provides a balanced picture of performance across the relevant service areas. The Community Scrutiny Committee received these reports at its meetings in October 2018 and March 2019. The reports mainly focussed on underperforming indicators.

As part of its performance management role, the Committee received relevant information from the Council’s key strategies and plans. One of the key areas relating to the Council’s performance management is the production of an annual report which presents a prime opportunity for review, monitoring and reflection and to enable it to capture on-going activity on meeting its general and specific duties. Bearing that in mind, the Committee in June, 2018 had the opportunity of
considering the Council’s draft Annual Report for 2017/18 in relation to those areas falling within its remit and which had been produced in accordance with the requirements of both the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The report provided:-

- An overview of the 2017/18 performance
- Two page progress reports for each of the 15 Well-being Objectives
- A link to track progress on every specific action and target set for each Well-being Objective
- Within the report appendicies, other performance information on out-turn data

**Outcome:**
The Council approved the 2017/18 Annual report

### 2.4 Revenue & Capital Budgets

The Committee received quarterly reports on the departmental and corporate revenue and capital budgets. These reports enabled members to monitor the level of spend in each area and the progress made in any capital works.

As well as monitoring the current budget, the Committee was also consulted on the Revenue Budget Strategy 2019/20 to 2021/22. The report provided the Committee with the current proposals for the Revenue Budget for 2019/20 together with the indicative figures for the 2020/21 and 2021/2022 financial years.

The consultation of the Five Year Capital Programme 2019/20 – 2023/24 was considered by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 11th January 2019. The feedback from this consultation process along with the final settlement informed the final budget report presented to Council in February 2019.

**Outcome:**
As part of the widespread consultation undertaken on the Revenue Budget Strategy 2019/20 to 2021/22, the Community Scrutiny Committee considered the budget proposals and requested the Executive Board to give consideration to funding the estimated £150k cost to primary schools of providing school swimming lessons. However, that was not progressed as part of the budget proposals adopted by the Council at its meeting in February 2019.

With regard to the Five Year Capital Programme 2019/20 – 2023/24, Council at its meeting in February 2019 noted that within the Communities Department new funding had been provided for the Amman Valley Leisure Centre for 2020/21 and
for the continued support for private sector housing in 2023/24 for Disabled Facilities Grant. The Council also noted the incorporation within the Regeneration and Chief Executive’s budgets for the provision of a new Leisure Centre in Llanelli as a key component of the Wellness Village Development proposals.

2.5 Draft Local Development Order – Llanelli Town Centre

In June 2018, the Committee considered an update report on the Council’s proposals to introduce a Draft Local Development Order for Llanelli Town Centre, together with the outcome of a consultation exercise undertaken from the 18th December 2017 to the 9th February, 2018.

As part of its considerations the committee raised the issue of the “Rainscape Project” being undertaken by Dwr Cymru on the Flood Risk Map for Llanelli Town and was assured that whilst it would have an impact, the position was being continually monitored and re-appraised as time progressed, in conjunction with Natural Resources Wales

**Outcome:**
The Executive Board and Council at their meetings held in July and September 2018 endorsed the report recommendations and for the LDO’s submission to the Welsh Government for approval

2.6 Carmarthenshire Arts Strategy

In June 2018, the Committee considered a report on the adoption of the Carmarthenshire Arts Strategy for the period 2018/2022 which provided a framework for service development to support the Council’s vision of being a place where exceptional arts experiences engaged and enthused communities, whilst also celebrating its unique and bilingual culture. This vision was underpinned by the following four key objectives:-

- Cultural well-being;
- Physical and mental well-being;
- Economic well-being through supporting creative and cultural organisations;
- Developing and sustaining an efficient and effective arts service (through improved income generation, innovative ways of working, collaboration and deepening public engagement

The Committee, in embracing the strategy raised a number of points on its implementation which included the redevelopment proposals for Oriel Myrddin,
the operation of the St Clears Craft Centre (set against increasing expenditure and reducing income) and the establishment of creative and social hubs. The possibility was also raised of creating a fifth objective to ‘identify ambition, talents and skills through the county’s schools to further sustain cultural strategic priorities” which would be discussed with the Education Department as the strategy progressed.

The Committee endorsed the strategy and recommended its adoption to the Executive Board

**Outcome:**
The Strategy was adopted by the Executive Board at its July 2018 meeting

### 2.7 Annual Monitoring Report 2017/18 Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan

In September 2018, the Committee received the above plan, being the third to be produced in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Local Development (LDP) Regulations 2016 which required local authorities to submit their Annual Monitoring Reports to the Welsh Government by the 31st October in each year

The Committee debated a wide range of issues relevant to the plan’s operation. Those included:-
- The practice of land banking by developers,
- The promotion of sustainable developments by creating communities and local economies with access to local services and facilities,
- How housing developments dovetailed into other public sector development plans,
- Utilising old railway tracks to rejuvenate rural economies by creating cycle tracks and infrastructure companies utilising those routes to lay fibre optic cables.

The Committee endorsed the report for submission to the Executive Board and Council for approval, prior to onward submission to the Welsh Government.

**Outcome:**
The Executive Board and Council at their meetings held in September and October 2018 approved the annual report for submission to the Welsh Government.
2.8 Complaints and Compliments Annual Report 2017/18

The Committee, in September 2018, received and endorsed the Council’s Annual Complaints and Compliments Report for 2017/18 paying specific attention to Sections 9.4 and 9.6 of the report relevant to its remit.

**Outcome:**
The Executive Board at its September meeting approved the Annual report.

2.9 Annual Performance Report (Planning)

In October 2018 the Committee considered the Authority’s third Annual Performance Report on Planning for the period April 2017-March 2018, produced in accordance with the requirements of the Planning Performance Framework Table for submission to the Welsh Government by the 31st October.

The Committee debated a wide range of issues relevant to the Division’s performance. Those included:
- The introduction of future Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan,
- Income levels failing to meet target budgets,
- Decline in planning applications attributable to the economic climate
- Staff movements and any potential impact that may have on the progression of the revised LDP.

**Outcome:**
The report was received and forwarded to the Welsh Government by the 31st October, 2018 deadline.

2.10 Revised Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan 2018-2033 – Draft Preferred Strategy

In November 2018 the Committee was consulted on the Council’s Draft Preferred Strategy for the Revised Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan 2018-2033, which had been approved by the Council for public consultation on the 14th November 2018 for a minimum statutory period of six weeks to commence the week of the 10th December 2018

The Committee discussed a wide range of issues relative to the Draft Strategy which included:-
• The need to protect and rejuvenate rural areas in relation to the granting of development proposals for example camping/tourism facilities whilst also providing for homes for retiring farmers and allowing the extension of farm houses to meet modern requirements.
• the inclusion of existing housing site allocations within the revised LDP
• the scale of large housing developments and the need for them to have regard to creating communities, not just homes, with access to local services.

The Committee endorsed the Draft Preferred Strategy for public consultation

**Outcome:**
The outcome of the consultations and the suggested responses/recommendations were reported to, and accepted by, the Committee in May 2019 and were subsequently approved by the Executive Board and Council in May 2019

### 2.11 Regional Homelessness Strategy

In November 2018 the Committee considered a report on proposal for the adoption of a Regional Homelessness Strategy outlining key themes and priorities on how homelessness could be prevented over the coming years in Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Powys

The Committee discussed a number of issues arising from the Strategy for example:-
- the average 3-4 month period of time taken to house persons presenting as emergency homeless and the limited use of bed and breakfast accommodation with most presenters being housed in quality temporary homes
- the potential impact of the U.K. Government’s introduction of Universal Credit on housing tenants
- the operation and promotion of the Council’s Housing Lettings Agency
- the use of technology to prevent homelessness by identifying individuals who may be at risk
- the concentration of single person accommodation in specific areas and the potential adverse impact of that on vulnerable persons
- the reduction in the number of private landlords within the county

**Outcome:**
The Committee endorsed the strategy for approval which was formally adopted by the Executive Board and Council in December 2018 and January 2019 respectively.
2.12 **Departmental Business Plans 2019/20 – 2022**

In December, 2018 the Committee considered the Departmental Business Plans 2019/20 – 2022 for those areas of the Communities, Chief Executive’s and Environment Departments falling within its remit.

**Outcome:**
The Committee endorsed the Business Plans.

2.13 **Carmarthenshire Highways Design Guide**

In December 2018, the Committee considered a proposed new Highways Design Guide for Carmarthenshire to replace the existing guide adopted in 1997. The new guide incorporated numerous local and national policies changes and new design templates, as detailed within the Manual for Streets and Manual for Streets 2 publication. It was noted the Guide would be presented to Council for adoption and thereafter published for consultation as Supplementary Planning Guidance for subsequent inclusion within the Revised Local Development Plan 2018-2033

**Outcome:**
The Committee received the report which was subsequently re-submitted to the March 2019 meeting as a Draft SPG. The report was endorsed by the Executive Board/Council in April and June 2019 respectively with approval granted for a formal six week public consultation to be undertaken.

2.14 **Housing Revenue Account and Housing Rent Setting 2019/20**

In January 2019, the Committee considered the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget and Housing Rent Setting for 2019/20, presented as part of the budget consultation process. The report reflected the latest proposals contained in the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan, which was the primary financial planning tool for delivering the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard Plus (CHS+).

Subsequent to the January meeting, the Committee was apprised in its February meeting of a Welsh Government amendment to its Social Housing Policy. As that announcement impacted on the decision made at its previous meeting, the Committee considered, and endorsed, revised housing rent increases proposed by the Executive Board as part of the budget submission to the Council.
**Outcome:**
The budget, and revised Housing Rent setting proposals were adopted by Council in February 2019


In January 2019, the Committee considered the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard Plus (CHS+) Programme Plan for 2019-2022. Members were advised that the plan’s three key aims were:

- To explain its provision over the next three years and what it means for tenants
- To confirm the financial profile based on current assumptions for delivery over the plan period
- Produce a business plan for the annual application to the Welsh Government for Major Repairs Allowance for 2017/18 equating to £6.1m

**Outcome:**
The budget was adopted by Council in February 2018.

2.16 **Our approach to Tenant Involvement**

In January 2019, the Committee received a report outlining the development of a fresh approach to involve tenants to challenge the way the Authority Delivers services. That fundamental review had been undertaken by the Tenant Participation Advisory Service Cymru which examined the authority’s existing approach and challenged whether existing plans were in line with best practice and if participation activities had been successful in encouraging tenants to become involved.

**Outcome:**
The Tenant involvement plan was endorsed by the Committee and adopted by the Executive Board in March 2019.

2.17 **Llanelli Life Science and Well-Being Village – Update**

In January 2019, the Committee received an update presentation on the governance of the Village Project both during the procurement process and following the signing of the collaboration Agreement with Swansea University and Sterling Health Holdings.
2.18 Universal Credit Full Programme Rollout in Carmarthenshire

In February 2019 the Committee received an overview report on the support being provided by the Council, its partners and stakeholders to Carmarthenshire’s residents following the introduction of the U.K. Government’s Universal Credit.

**Outcome:**
The Committee received the report which was also endorsed by the Executive Board in March 2019 and also requested a follow up report in 6 months to which representatives of the Department for Work and Pensions and the Citizens Advise Bureau would be invited to attend.

2.19 Welsh Library Standards

In March 2019 the Committee received the Welsh Government’s assessment on the operation of Carmarthenshire’s Library Service for 2017/18. It was noted that the Service met all of its 18 core entitlements in full.

**Outcome:**
The report was received and subsequently adopted by the Executive Board in May 2019.

2.20 Fire Safety Management in Sheltered Housing and General Needs Blocks of Flats

In February 2019, the Committee in response to a request from a member received a report on the fire safety within the Council’s general needs and sheltered housing stock.

2.21 Draft Supplementary Guidance Wind and Solar Energy

In March 2018 the Committee received a report on the outcome of a formal public consultation exercise undertaken on the Council’s proposals to adopt draft Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) for Wind and Solar Energy for inclusion within the Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan.

**Outcome:**
The Committee endorsed the proposal which was subsequently adopted by the Executive Board and Council in April and June 2019 respectively for inclusion within the Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan.
2.22 Corporate strategy 2018-2023 – Draft Update June 2019

In May 2019, the Committee considered the update report on the Corporate Strategy 2018-2023.

The Committee in endorsing the report requested the Executive Board to give consideration to funding the estimated £150k cost to primary schools of providing swimming lessons as part of the Key Stage 2 curriculum.

3. Other Scrutiny Activity

3.1 Task and Finish

The Committee at its meeting in June 2019 agreed to undertake a task and finish review on the provision of Affordable Bungalows within Carmarthenshire. The Group’s first meeting was held in October 2018 with four meetings having been held up to April 2019 considering a wide range of issues and information on the provision of Council social housing. At the time of writing the Group’s investigations were on-going with an anticipated final report detailing conclusions and recommendations to be presented to the Committee for consideration and submission to the Council’s Executive Board in the 2019/20 municipal year.

3.2 Site Visits

The Committee, as part of its 2018/19 Forward Work Programme undertook site visits to the following.

**Abergwili Museum** - located approximately 1 1/2 miles east of Carmarthen, on the A40 (towards Llandeilo) the museum is housed in the former palace of the Bishops of St. David’s (1542 – 1974), an old building which has been in continuous use since about 1290. The Museum exhibits many aspects of Carmarthenshire’s rich and varied past with displays including include local archaeology, pottery, portraits, landscape paintings, Welsh furniture, a Victorian schoolroom, life on the farm and the homefront in World War 2. It was also the place where the New Testament was first translated into Welsh in 1567.

**Carmarthen Library** – is situated in St. Peters Street, Carmarthen, adjacent to the main Town Centre car park. Built in 1761 by the Manger Family as a Family Home, it was converted into a library in 1974 by the Former Dyfed County Council.
Located over three floors it provides a range of library and other services with over 90,000 stock items and footfall of 246,000 per annum.

In addition to viewing the library, the Committee also received a presentation on the construction of the Council’s new Archives building to the rear of the library detailing the design and internal features and facilities required for a modern archive service.

**RNLI Life Saving Centre Burry Port** – At the RNLI’s invitation, the Committee visited the new lifeboat Station at Burry Port Harbour. The Committee had the opportunity of visiting both the existing lifeboat accommodation and the new centre where it was able to compare the facilities it would be able to provide to both the community of Burry Port and along its operational range from Rhossili to Pendine. It was noted the new centre was anticipated to become operational in June 2019 with an official opening to be held in September, 2019.

As part of the visit, the Committee received a presentation on the preparatory works being undertaken for the renovation/repair of the Historic Grade 2 listed harbour walls, due to commence in October 2019 with completion anticipated to take some 9 months.

The Committee also received a presentation from the Marine Group on its long term proposals for the development of Burry Port Harbour commencing with dredging works to remove approximately 130,000m³ of material. Other works included:-

- Refurbishment of the harbour gates and repair to the ram (completed)
- One of the two sluice gates had been repaired allowing for more efficient flushing of the harbour
- The provision of temporary toilets and showers in the next six weeks
- New Marina building with coffee shop and lounge bar
- Boat Repair and servicing facilities

**Pembrey Country Park**

The Committee undertook a tour of the facilities at the Country Park and received a presentation on the existing and future improvements to be undertaken at the park. Those included:-

- The renovation of the former ambulance building incorporating a new visitor centre and café
- The caravan site and new toilet shower block
Community Scrutiny Committee

- Introduction of a New Automatic Number Plate Recognition System for charging entry to the park
- The closed road cycling circuit
- The Ski Slope

3.3 Development Sessions

The following all-member development sessions/seminars were held during 2018/19, to which Committee members were invited:

- Member workshop with Hywel Dda University Health Board – 13th June 2018;
- Rural Affairs Conference - 7th September 2018
- Homelessness Seminar – 12th September, 2018
- Digital Transformation Seminar – 1st October, 2018
- Eiriol Independent Mental Health and Carers Advocacy Seminar – 10th October, 2018
- Transform, Innovate and Change Programme Seminar – 23rd October, 2018
- Choice Based lettings Seminar – 14th November, 2018
- Improve you decision making skills seminar – 28th November, 2018
- Seminar with Welsh Water – 12th December, 2018
- Drop-in Session – Flagship websites and revised LDP (including candidate sites) – 9th January, 2019
- Economic Development Seminar – 30th January 2019
- Scrutiny Training / Centre for Public Scrutiny – 29th March 2019
- Members drop in digital skills sessions (various dates)
- Mod.gov training sessions for committees (various dates)

In addition, there were several departmental budget seminars held.

3.4 Referrals

The committee did not make any referrals to other committees during 2018/19

4. Challenges

The Community Scrutiny Committee faced a challenging year addressing a wide range of topics, both corporate and service specific to its remit, contributing to, and commenting on their performance and delivery to achieve improved service delivery and the introduction of new services. The Committee, also experienced a change of one third of its membership towards the latter part of the year with the new members having to familiarise themselves with the Committees remit.
5. **Future Work**

The Committee has made significant progress and will continue to concentrate on topics where Member’s input will result in positive outcomes to drive forward service improvement. The future work of the Committee will be considered as part of the 2019/20 Forward Work Programme planning session. In addition, the FWP will continue to be monitored during the course of the year.

6. **Support for the Scrutiny Function**

Support for Carmarthenshire County Council’s Scrutiny function is provided by the Democratic Services Unit, based in the Administration & Law Division of the Chief Executive’s Department.

Support for the Scrutiny function includes:

- Providing support and constitutional advice to the Council’s Scrutiny Committees and to members of those Committees as well as producing minutes of their meetings and ensuring items arising from those meetings are actioned
- Giving support and advice in relation to the functions of the Council’s Scrutiny Committees to executive and non-executive members of the Council and its officers;
- Managing the strategic development of Scrutiny in Carmarthenshire through engaging in national and regional Scrutiny networks and initiatives, supporting the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Scrutiny Forum, and the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Executive Board Forum;
- Advising and supporting the implementation of the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 as guidance is published;
- Managing the co-ordination and development of the Scrutiny forward work programmes in conjunction with Scrutiny members;
- Managing and co-ordinating Scrutiny review work, including the operation of scrutiny task and finish groups, authoring reports in conjunction with the groups, and assisting in the implementation and monitoring of completed reviews;
- Managing the Scrutiny member development programme;
- Despatching agendas for Scrutiny Committee meetings a minimum of 4 working days prior to the meeting.

For more information on scrutiny in Carmarthenshire including work programmes, task and finish reports and annual reports, visit the County Council’s website at: [www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/scrutiny](http://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/scrutiny)
To contact the Democratic Services Unit, please call 01267 224028 or e-mail scrutiny@carmarthenshire.gov.uk
7. **Attendance**

Attendance by members of the Community Scrutiny Committee during the 2018/19 year is shown in the table below. A total of 9 meetings were held between May 2018 and May 2019.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scrutiny Committee Member</th>
<th>No. of meetings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cllr F. Akhtar (From April 2019)</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cllr. D. Cundy (up to 28/03/19)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cllr. Ann. Davies</td>
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<td>78%</td>
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<td>Cllr. Anthony Davies</td>
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<td>Cllr. H. Davies</td>
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<td>Cllr. S. Davies (up to February 2019)</td>
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<td>Cllr C. Evans (from April 2019)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cllr R. Evans (from April 2019)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cllr. J. Gilasbey</td>
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<td>Cllr. S. Matthews</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cllr. L. Roberts – (up to February 2019)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cllr. A. Vaughan Owen</td>
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