

First Year Progress Report on the Corporate Strategy for 2015/16

Carmarthenshire County Council

Including our Summary Annual Report 2015/16
and Improvement Plan for 2016/17



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Introduction

When we signed up with our partners to the Integrated Community Strategy for Carmarthenshire, the Council aligned its internal plans to maximize its contribution to the agreement. The vision is for a Carmarthenshire that enables people to live healthy and fulfilled lives by working together to build strong, bilingual and sustainable communities.

In September 2015, we renewed our Corporate Strategy which set out the Council's strategic priorities and aspirations in support of the vision for Carmarthenshire. This Strategy identified key areas of focus and set out the key outcome measures by which the Council would judge its success. This document provides an annual report on progress made.



















For the last five years the Council has published a combined Annual Report and Improvement Plan (ARIP), that details our progress against all of the outcomes and goals set out in the Integrated Community Strategy. The full ARIP is a detailed and lengthy document, however this document provides a summary.



Carmarthenshire County Council's Corporate Strategy 2015 - 2020
Annual Report 2015/16 and Improvement Plan 2016/17

Progress at a Glance

When we published the Corporate Strategy 2015-20 we set out the following outcome measures to judge our progress:-

Outcome	Outcome Measures	Progress
<p>Making Better Use of Resources</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £ Improved public satisfaction levels with the services provided by the Council £ Reduction in organisational 'running costs' £ Increased on line activity to address public queries and transactions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">   
<p>Building a Better Council</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☺ Increasing public communication, consultation and engagement ☺ Improved staff satisfaction levels ☺ Reduced staff sickness absence levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">   
<p>Healthier</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♥ Reduction in referrals to adult and children's social services ♥ Increased availability of rented and affordable homes ♥ Increased use of leisure facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">   
<p>Learning</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 📖 Improved educational attainment 📖 Improved school attendance rates 📖 Reduced number of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training 📖 Improved condition of schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">   Year 11  Year 13  





Outcome

Outcome Measures

Progress

Safe







-  Appropriate support provided to children, young people and families as required
-  Reduction in road casualties
-  Reduction in total recorded crime
-  Reduction in anti-social behaviour



Environment






-  Increased rates of recycling
-  Improved digital access
-  Improved transport links
-  Increased use of renewable energy



Economy



-  Increased employment
-  Reduction in working age population in receipt of out of work benefits
-  Increased economic activity and productivity



Outcome A: Making Better Use of Resources...

The Council is facing a period of significant and continued budget cuts and it is more important than ever to ensure that we are making the best use of resources. We will ensure that the organisation is working as efficiently as possible in order to protect and maintain front line services where possible.

However, it may not be possible for us to continue doing some of the things we have done in the past and we will work with our communities and stakeholders to find new ways of addressing need where appropriate.

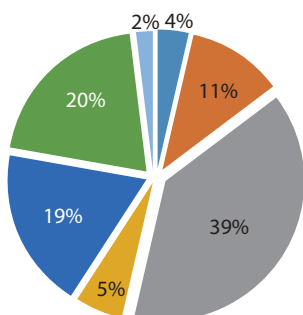
IT Technology has arrived at school kitchens.....

As part of the Transform, Innovate and Change (TIC) programme, electronic submissions make the ordering of food and kitchen supplies, timesheets, e-banking, staff newsletters, e-learning courses & on-line payments for school meals easier and accurate for kitchen staff, with significant time and efficiency savings and with better utilisation of resources for value added work.



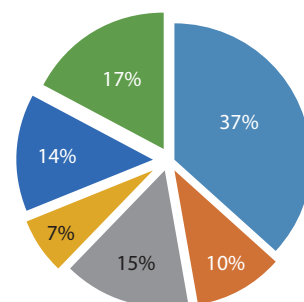
Services Provided

- Adult Social - £108m / 20%
- Levies - £9m / 2%
- Central - £20m / 4%
- Cultural, Environmental & Planning - £59m / 11%
- Education & Children - £207m / 39%
- Highways, Roads & Transport - £29m / 5%
- Housing - £99m / 19%



Sources of Funding

- Specific Grants - £91m / 17%
- Revenue Support Grant - £196m / 37%
- Non-Domestic Rates - £56m / 10%
- Council Tax - £79m / 15%
- Housing Rents - £36m / 7%
- Fees, Charges and Other Income - £73m / 14%



Progress During 2015/16

We set ourselves a Key Improvement Priority for 2015/16 to 'deliver value for money in providing council services and directing our resources to the top priority front line services on which many local people depend'. In its March 2016, **Annual Improvement Report** on the Council, the Wales Audit Office found:

'Despite increasing pressure on budgets, performance is continuing to improve across the Council's priority areas and public satisfaction with Council Services is growing'.....frontline services have been protected, as a result of budget decisions and more efficient ways of working'



- £ We have a programme of office rationalisation facilitated by adapting the way we use the buildings to suit the needs of those providing services and to engender a new more agile way of working. This has further reduced the number of buildings and costs of accommodation required to deliver the Council's services.

Expected Outcomes (as identified in Corporate Strategy)



- 60%** of our national measure results are in the top half of results for all Councils in Wales.
- 59%** of our National measures improved last year
- 58%** of citizens agree we provide high quality services



We have continued to reduce the organisational 'running costs'

2013/14 £16.7M | 2014/15 £11.9M | 2015/16 £12.6M

i-Local aims to keep residents better informed of changes to refuse collection arrangements, bad weather and other emergencies, news updates and information on events.



882,669
visitors to our website

13.5%
increase of on-line payments

165,730
visitors to iLocal

The Key Improvement Objective Priority for 2016/17



Deliver value for money in providing council services and directing our resources to the top priority front-line services on which many local people depend - taking account of central government budget cuts and their impact.



Annual Report 2015/16 and Improvement Plan 2016/17

Outcome B: Building a Better Council...

The Council has always worked towards building a better Carmarthenshire and has a proven track record of delivery.

However, the way that public services are provided is changing and as a Council we need to respond and adapt to these changes in order to ensure we can support the needs of our residents in the future.

Shwmae!



Llanelli Market traders Wendy Lewis & Liz Thomas of AJ Meats supporting *Shwmae Sumae* Day

More than 100 people started their conversation with 'Shwmae' during their visit to Llanelli Market

As part of the national *Shwmae Sumae* Day on October 15, shoppers were urged to start their conversation with 'Shwmae' to be entered into a free raffle to win a grand hamper donated by traders.

We have made further improvements in Building a Better Council and this progress has been independently verified by the Auditor General for Wales in his **Corporate Assessment** of January 2016.

"Carmarthenshire County Council is demonstrating ambition in its vision, with collective leadership and more robust and transparent governance, it is delivering improved outcomes for its citizens..."

Progress during 2015/16

- ☺ We continue to promote local democracy and transparency with increased use of social media. For example the budget Consultation with the citizen's of Carmarthenshire involved an online survey, road show events and the use of 'question of the week' through social media.
- ☺ It is the duty of the Council to facilitate and increase the use of the Welsh language. This is a new opportunity for us to look at the Language in our workplace and in the services that we provide.
- ☺ We received 1000+ responses to our survey on rural poverty and this was brought together in a report for Grwp Cefn Gwlad. In response the LEADER programme is supporting pilot projects that aim to increase digital exploitation, access to information and advice services, as well as affordable childcare.

Expected Outcomes (as identified in Corporate Strategy)

Increased public communication, consultation and engagement

4000+

respondents to consultation on rural poverty, affordable homes, budget, tourism. Citizens Panel and 50+ Forum members



i-Local has an area dedicated to Consultation with the heading "We want to hear what you have to say on any and all matters of interest."

Staff Sickness Up

Unfortunately our staff sickness absence levels have increased to **10.1 days** from 9.6 days the previous year.



Improved Staff Satisfaction Levels



BUDDSODDWRYR | INVESTORS
MEWN POBL | IN PEOPLE



The Council has been an Investor in People since 2009, and this financial year the Council has been reviewed and its accreditation maintained.

During the review, staff interviews showed **higher levels of satisfaction** than the previously.

We were the first local authority to achieve the Welsh Government's Platinum health standard; we have now held the accreditation for 6 years.

The Key Improvement Objective Priority for 2016/17



We will continue to improve governance, decision making, openness & transparency and keep under review by the Constitutional Review Working Group



Annual Report 2015/16 and Improvement Plan 2016/17

Outcome C: People in Carmarthenshire are healthier

Our way of life is changing. People are living longer with a higher quality of life but our care needs are becoming more complex. The challenge now facing us is to prevent ill-health in the first place.

A Helping Hand



Yvonne lives with her husband who has chronic heart failure and hearing problems and she is her husband's main carer. Yvonne fell on a shop escalator and was taken to A & E but after assessment was discharged into the care of a Rapid Response Team by the Out of Hours Domiciliary Care Manager, thus avoiding hospital admission.

Yvonne wanted to regain her independence as soon as possible. The Rapid Response Team provided the necessary support until Re enablement Team support was arranged. Within three to four weeks visits were decreased and then stopped as they were no longer necessary.

Progress during 2015/16

- ♥ The Council has worked in close partnership with the Health Board to address **health inequality** issues such as obesity, diabetes, smoking and alcohol use, dementia and other chronic conditions. The Council also works closely with the 3rd Sector to develop more resilient communities, thereby improving the health and well-being of the residents of these communities.
- ♥ The expanded Flying Start programme covering 17 areas enabled 1,832 children to benefit from this **early intervention service**; Team Around the Family (TAF) training and support programme is being implemented across Carmarthenshire. All Families First (FF) commissioned projects are using the Joint Assessment Families Framework (JAFF) to measure whether involvement has been effective. The resource panel is helping ensure **preventative services** are being fully utilised.
- ♥ There is also a strong relationship between the quality of housing and ill health. We have invested over £200m in improving and modernising our tenants homes through the Carmarthenshire Homes Standard.
- ♥ We have also focused on **improving the numbers of affordable homes** for rent and to buy across the county as well as increasing the number of empty properties that have been brought back into use. We have developed an Affordable Housing Delivery Plan 2015-20 after extensive consultation with the public.

Expected Outcomes (as identified in Corporate Strategy)

Reduction in referrals to adults and children's social services



Down

26% & 14%

Increased availability of rented and affordable homes

+185

Additional Affordable homes during 2015/16



Use of leisure facilities



Down 1.6%

attendances were down by 20,000, although there are still over 1¼ Million

The Key Improvement Objective Priorities for 2016/17



1. Promoting Independence and Well Being for Older People
2. Increasing the availability of rented and affordable homes to support the needs of local people by implementing our affordable homes delivery plan



Annual Report 2015/16 and Improvement Plan 2016/17

Outcome D: People in Carmarthenshire fulfil their learning potential...

We all want our children and young people to have the best possible start in life by supporting them to gain the skills and knowledge they need to lead happy, healthy, fulfilling lives. We want to improve outcomes for all ages through lifelong learning.

Best Ever Results for Carmarthenshire schools



Ysgol Glan-y-Mor School Achieves the Highest Possible Standards

Results of the Key Level 2 inclusive Indicator the most important performance measure has doubled over three years, from 30% (2012) to 60% (2015) at the Ysgol Glan-y-Mor School.




"I am so pleased with my results. Thanks to all the staff in the school for their support. They were fantastic"
Robbie Williams

"I am extremely happy with my achievements. Thanks to Glan-y-Môr I can now continue with my chosen career path!"
Tane Davies

"The school was brilliant. I am really happy. Thanks to everyone at the school I achieved everything I wanted."
Rebecca Roberts

For the second year in succession our school pupils in Carmarthenshire achieved their best ever examination results at GCSE, achieving 61.1% against the key Level 2 Inclusive indicator (at least 5 number GCSE passes at grade A* to C including mathematics and language) with teacher assessments at all other key stages of education improving and comparing favorably with other authorities.

Progress During 2015/16

-  We have established a Carmarthenshire **Youth Support Service** bringing together the Youth Service and Youth Offending Services.
-  Within our **Modernising Education Programme** major school development projects were completed at Ysgol Bro Dinefwr, Ysgol Dyffryn Aman, Burry Port Primary School and Ysgol Carreg Hirfaen, with thousands of children benefiting.
-  The number of 7 year old pupils receiving **Welsh medium education** has increased. The % of learners achieving expected levels at Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 have improved.

Expected Outcomes (as identified in Corporate Strategy)



61.1%

of pupils achieving

5 GCSE at grade A* to C

including English or Welsh first language and Mathematics

Now ranked 7th in Wales



95.2%

Attendance at **Primary Schools**

94.2%

Attendance at **Secondary Schools**

Ranked 5th and 9th in Wales

3.5%

(previously 3.4%) year 11 pupils &

2.8%

(previously 6.1%) year 13 pupils
Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)



55%

of schools condition is
graded **'good'** or
'satisfactory'

The Key Improvement Objective Priorities for 2016/17



1. Improving learner attainment
2. To further reduce young people NOT in Education, Employment or Training



Annual Report 2015/16 and Improvement Plan 2016/17

Outcome E: People who live, work and visit Carmarthenshire are safe and feel safer...

Carmarthenshire remains one of the safest areas in the UK. However, we must not become complacent and we need to continue to work together with partners to address problems identified by local communities.

Bang to Rights!









Speeding motorists had red faces having to explain their behaviour to the pupils outside their school.

One driver was so embarrassed he dodged the ordeal by accepting a fixed penalty notice. The Speeding Initiative outside schools throughout the county is being promoted as part of Carmarthenshire's Community Safety Partnership.

Carmarthenshire continues to be one of the safest areas in the UK

Crime rates continue to be significantly lower in Carmarthenshire compared to the average for England and Wales

Progress during 2015/16

-  **Safeguarding** children and adults remains our first priority as a Council and this year a Corporate Policy has been developed to ensure all our services have a raised awareness and better understanding of procedures in relation to safeguarding.
-  Our Team Around the Family (TAF) approach enables us to **work together with families and other agencies** to deliver a plan of support at times when a family is facing challenging circumstances. This support also helps to build the families resilience and to cope in the future. 
-  We continue to work with the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to **reduce anti-social behaviour**. Some development improvements have included:-
 - sharing of information between systems used by Gwalia and the Police
 - links between all the partners of the CSP
-  There has been a focus on **road safety** in the `Carmarthenshire News` and on the CSP website. We have continued with various initiatives such as `Dragon Rider Cymru` training for motorcyclists and encouraging young drivers to take part in `Pass Plus Cymru` training.
-  Work to **reduce drug and alcohol misuse** continues and we undertook a pilot with the Integrated Family Support Team looking at cases where parents had substance misuse problems.

Expected Outcomes (as identified in Corporate Strategy)

The Family Information Service (FIS) offers free impartial advice and guidance, enabling children, young people and their families, to have access to a broad range of information about what services and support is available.



Road casualties per annum
(killed and seriously injured)

8.5% increase (from 94 to 102)

Performance against our 2020 Target

12% Reduction

(from 116 to 102)



While there has been an increase of 10.1% in recorded crime during the year, it is difficult to compare figures with 14/15. Changes made in recording data by the police have resulted in an increase in the accuracy of recording crime.



2014/15	2015/16
=7,381	= 8,128



Incidents
down
15.5%

Our Priorities for 2016/17

1. We will continue to work in partnership and engage with local communities to reduce crime and disorder.
2. We will continue to target speeding including use of Community Speed Watch Schemes.
3. We will continue to make the Safeguarding of children and adults one of our main priorities.
4. By providing targeted prevention, early interventions and effective treatment to minimise the harm caused by drugs and alcohol.



Outcome F: Carmarthenshire's communities and environment are sustainable...

Carmarthenshire is known for its diverse communities and wonderful natural environment and we want to ensure that we develop sustainably, so that everyone in the county is able to enjoy a better quality of life now and for generations to come.

Home Composting








Green-fingered tenants at Nant-Y-Glo in Pontyberem have been discovering the benefits of home composting.

Grass cuttings along with kitchen scraps such as vegetable peelings and teabags are now being composted instead of just being thrown away.

The rich soil conditioner it makes is being used in their flower pots to brighten up the council-run sheltered housing complex.

Progress during 2015/16

-  We have continued to receive and determine applications for renewable energy projects, largely in the form of single wind turbines but also that of Brechfa West wind farm. The majority of such applications are granted. Those that have not been granted have been refused primarily on landscape implications particularly where cumulative impacts on the landscape are apparent.
-  Our positive approach to determining planning applications ensures that further opportunities have been provided through the granting of planning applications to meet the housing needs, economic needs and indeed community needs (schools etc) of the County.
-  We have supported 250 residents by giving them digital inclusion skills through key events across Communities First areas, allowing them to return to, or enter employment or training. We won a two year £90,000 rural grant for the exploitation of digital technology in rural Carmarthenshire.
-  We have improved digital access in Carmarthenshire during 2015/16 by completing WiFi access for all schools and beginning public access to WiFi in the markets at Llanelli and Carmarthen. To date 46 out of the 54 BT Exchanges have been enabled for superfast broadband.
-  We have continued to improve transport links that support economic development and sustainability:
 - During 2015/16, construction of the Carmarthen west link road commenced and Phase 1B of the Cross Hands Economic Link Road, which will improve access at the Strategic Employment site, was completed.
 - We resurfaced 27.97 kilometres of highway during 2015/16.
 - Overall, the percentage of roads in poor condition has reduced from 11.9% to 10.7%.
 - ! However, there is a decline in the condition of A&B class roads.
 - 3,166 metres of new cycleway was completed in 2015/16.

Expected Outcomes (as identified in Corporate Strategy)



Increased rates of recycling

63%

Well above the **national statutory target** of 58% for 2015-16

Improved digital access

supported residents with digital skills
+ 250



Improved transport links

Resurfaced
28 kilometres
of highway

2.5%+
Increased use of
renewable energy



The Key Improvement Objective Priority for 2016/17



Improving the highway infrastructure network to support further economic development and connectivity



Annual Report 2015/16 and Improvement Plan 2016/17

Outcome G: Carmarthenshire has a stronger and more prosperous economy..

Providing secure well paid jobs and training opportunities for local people is central to everything we are seeking to achieve. In the past, too many young people have been forced to leave Carmarthenshire to get jobs. Working across all sectors – public, voluntary and private – we want to increase prosperity for everyone in the county.

Vibrant & Viable Places – Tackling Poverty: Opportunity Street, Llanelli



Three properties have been bought as part of a £1.5m Opportunity Street project to further regenerate Llanelli town centre. The vacant premises were acquired with assistance from the Welsh Government **Vibrant and Viable Places** funding. Llanelli was allocated £1 million under the programme over three years 2014-17.

The main aim of the fund is to tackle poverty by creating jobs, encouraging skills development, improving housing, providing facilities to attract new retail interests and helping people into work. This is a Key Improvement Objective Priority for us.

A number of strategic regeneration projects have delivered positive outcomes and improved employment opportunities
(WAO Annual Improvement Report March 2016)

Progress during 2015/16

- Our regeneration activity is shaped by effective collaborative working with neighbouring councils to form the **Swansea Bay City Region (SBCR)**. To support this, **the Strategic Regeneration Plan for Carmarthenshire 2015-2030 – Transformations** was launched. The regeneration of Carmarthenshire for current and future developments is both ambitious and challenging, and the Strategic Regeneration Plan for the next 15 years, promotes new opportunities for business growth, skills development and job creation, whilst developing our knowledge, economy and tourism.
- Our **Learner Programmes** are intrinsically involved with curriculum reform and development and are working with schools and local Further Education, to provide meaningful and relevant high quality learning opportunities for children and the young people of Carmarthenshire.
- The SBCR has submitted a ground-breaking '**Internet Coast**' City Deal bid, in excess of £500m over 20 years. By harnessing the transformational power of digital networks, it provides a real opportunity to push forward growth in the region and importantly the rural economy of West Wales.
- The emerging Wellness and Life Science Village, Delta Lakes, will potentially create 1,000 jobs and see an investment of £100M in Llanelli.

Expected Outcomes (as identified in Corporate Strategy)

180 Jobs created
109 Jobs safeguarded
149 people into Jobs



1,220 Jobs accommodated
2,648 people into training

11.8% of Working age population in Carmarthenshire are in receipt on



out of work benefits

(down from 12.5% in 2014)



69% Employment

in Carmarthenshire

(an increase on 68.6% for the previous year)

Nearly **£29M** Private Sector investment / External funding secured
12 enterprises created



£13.13ha land developed/ improved
+162,000 sq ft floor space developed

The Key Improvement Objective Priorities for 2016/17



1. Creating jobs and growth throughout the County
2. Tackling Poverty



Annual Report 2015/16 and Improvement Plan 2016/17

You Said, We Did...

We have provided some examples of the positive changes we have made after hearing from citizen feedback in our 'You Said.....We Did....' Campaign



You said...

We did...

Making Better Use of Resources



That you would like to be able to make card payments at The Hub in Llanelli.

Self service payment kiosks will be installed in The Hub during 2016/17, enabling customers to make card (and cash) payments.

Building a Better Council



That, although very helpful, members of staff within the Contact Centre and Customer Service Centers could build on their wide knowledge base and increase their expertise in some areas.

Staff receive regular ongoing training and awareness sessions to remain up to date and knowledgeable on council services.

Healthier



You weren't always aware of the acceptable standards we expect Tenants to keep their properties in.

As part of the repairs review we undertook a pilot to establish the frequency and nature of regular visits to all Council tenant's homes

Parents wanted to be able to express a preference when applying for a school place for their child.

We have developed an affordable homes plan which addresses these issues and sets out how we will deliver over 1,000 additional affordable homes over the next 5 years with a total investment exceeding £60m.

You said...

We did...

Learning



Parents wanted to be able to express a preference when applying for a school place for their child.

We are implementing a change to the school admissions process to allow parents to express a 1st, 2nd, and 3rd choice when applying for a school place.

Environment



You wanted more reassurances when sending your children to school with Passenger Assistants.

The Passenger Transport section has reminded all transport contractors of the need to inform parents or guardians of any changes to travel arrangements and reminded all Passenger Assistants that personal identification must be worn at all times and shown upon request.

Economy



It was sometimes difficult to get through to the Housing Benefit team by telephone.

Supervisors have been reminded of the importance of monitoring call volumes regularly and will adjust call team staffing levels as required.

Additional lines are also opened at peak times.

For further information contact:



Regeneration and Policy,
Chief Executive's Department
County Hall
Carmarthen
Carmarthenshire
SA31 1JP



Tel: 01267 224486
Email: performance@carmarthenshire.gov.uk



Visit the Council's website

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