

Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee

Meeting Venue
By Zoom

Meeting Date
Monday, 11 September 2023

Meeting Time
10.00 am

For further information please contact

Rachel Pugh - Scrutiny and Democratic Support Officer
01597 826496
rachel.pugh1@powys.gov.uk



County Hall
Llandrindod Wells
Powys
LD1 5LG
04.08.2023

Mae croeso i chi siarad yn Gymraeg neu yn Saesneg yn y cyfarfod. Rhowch wybod pa iaith rydych am ei defnyddio erbyn hanner dydd, ddau ddiwrnod gwaith cyn y cyfarfod.

You are welcome to speak Welsh or English in the meeting. Please inform us of which language you wish to use by noon, two working days before the meeting.

AGENDA

1.	EXEMPT ITEM
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The Monitoring Officer has determined that category 3 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules applies to the following items. His view on the public interest test (having taken account of the provisions of Rule 14.8 of the Council's Access to Information Rules) was that to make this information public would disclose information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). These factors in his view outweigh the public interest in disclosing this information.

Members are asked to consider these factors when determining the public interest test, which they must decide when considering excluding the public from this part of the meeting.

2.	APOLOGIES
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To receive apologies for absence.

3.	DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIPS
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To receive disclosures of prohibited party whips which a Member has been given in relation to the meeting in accordance with Section 78(3) of the Local Government Measure 2011.

(NB: Members are reminded that under Section 78 Members having been given a prohibited party whip cannot vote on a matter before the Committee.)

Declarations in respect to the exempt item.

4.	DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST
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To receive any disclosures of interests by Members relating to the exempt item.

5.	WINTER MAINTENANCE
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To receive and consider a report of the Cabinet Member for a Greener Powys.
(Pages 5 - 396)

Public Meeting

**The public session will begin at 10.30am
or on the completion of the exempt agenda item
thank you for your patience**

Recap - Apologies

6.	DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIPS
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To receive disclosures of prohibited party whips which a Member has been given in relation to the meeting in accordance with Section 78(3) of the Local Government Measure 2011.

(NB: Members are reminded that under Section 78 Members having been given a prohibited party whip cannot vote on a matter before the Committee.)

Declarations in respect to the items below.

7.	DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST
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To receive any disclosures of interests by Members relating to the items below.

8.	MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS
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To authorise the Chair to sign the minutes of the previous meeting held as follows as a correct record: 17.07.2023.

(Pages 397 - 404)

9.	FREEDOM LEISURE ANNUAL REPORT
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To receive the Freedom Leisure Annual Report 2022/23.
(Pages 405 - 420)

10.	PERFORMANCE REPORT - Q1
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(Pages 421 - 438)

11.	MARCHES PARTNERSHIP
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(Pages 439 - 450)

12.	SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME
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To note that future meetings of the Committee will be held as follows:

Thursday- 26-10-23 - 14.00	Pre-Meeting
Monday - 30-10-23 - 10.00	Committee - Public Powys Economy – Full round-up Customer Services Review outcome reports Powys Tourism Visitor Approach Report Q2 Strategic Risk Register
Wed – 06-12-23 – 10.00	Pre-Meeting
Monday - 11-12-23 - 10.00	Committee – Public 1. Housing waiting list 2. Garage / Property maintenance 3. Clearsprings – accommodation for asylum seekers / update / entitlement

Committee Reflection

Following the close of the meeting the Committee is asked to take 5 to 10 minutes to reflect on today's meeting.

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ECONOMY, RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT BY ZOOM ON MONDAY, 17 JULY 2023

PRESENT

County Councillor Karl Lewis

County Councillors B Davies, A Jones, E A Jones, K Lewis, G Mitchell, S L Williams, J Berriman, J Charlton, R Church, M J Dorrance, D A Thomas, P James, C Kenyon-Wade, G Preston and L Rijnenberg

J Charlton Cabinet member of a Greener Powys

R Church Cabinet member of a Safer Powys

D Thomas Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Transformation

J Berriman Cabinet Member for a Connected Powys

M Dorrance Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for a Fairer Powys

Nigel Brinn (Executive Director Economy & Environment)

Diane Reynolds (Head of Economy and Digital Services)

Paul Bradshaw (Head of Workforce and OD)

Gwilym Davies (Head of Property, Planning and Public Protection)

Matthew Perry (Head of Highways, Transport and Recycling)

Lynne Griffin (Professional Lead Organisational Design and Development)

Wayne Welsby - Professional Lead Procurement and Commercial Services

Tom Yeo - Programme Delivery Manager (Climate and Nature)

Jenny Ashton – Interim Head of Community Services

Anne Phillips – Deputy Head of Finance

Sarah Quibell - Service Manager for Education Support Services

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor A Davies

2. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest by Members relating to items to be considered at the meeting

3. DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIPS

The Committee did not receive any disclosures of prohibited party whips which a Member has been given in relation to the meeting in accordance with Section 78(3) of the Local Government Measure 2011.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Outcome: The Chair was authorised to sign the Minutes of the previous meetings as a correct record 05.06.2023.

5. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN WORKING GROUP - OBSERVER

Resolved: that County Councillor A Jones volunteered to be the Observer on the Local Development Plan Working Group.

6. FREE SCHOOL MEAL VOUCHERS

The Committee were reassured that:

Vouchers provided to families through the Catering Services are tracked.
Families can only use the vouchers in specifically allocated locations.
For those families without an email address direct bacs payments are made.
The SHEP (School Holiday Enrichment Programme) scheme is available, but this is not universal and is only available in certain areas of Powys.

The Committee expressed concern that:

The short notice from Welsh Government given to the Council regarding the withdrawal of the scheme.
The disparity being created across Wales with some authorities continuing the scheme or providing alternatives.
Families having to manage and adapt budgets accordingly at short notice due to the impending summer holidays.
The potential additional demand on Council Services if the vouchers/payments are not provided to families.
The Council intends making a single year extension to the scheme i.e., for this summer only.
Direct payments are not capable of being tracked and we are unable to ensure that the payments are used for the correct purpose.
Vouchers although issues are not fully utilised in all cases.
Less financial reserves will be available within the authority for families with complex needs.

Correspondence to the Welsh Government will be drawn up by the Committee to express concerns around the position that the Council has been presented with and in particular the short notice period provided for the existing schemes withdrawal.

Recommendations:

1. That the Cabinet accepts Option 2 and continues to provide the Scheme previously provided by Welsh Government during the school summer holiday period in 2023 only.
2. The sum of £280k is vired from the central Risk Budget to the catering budget.

7. HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY

Background:

- The updated Home to School Transport Policy aims be aligned with the School Admission arrangements.
- The new Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations (PSVAR) are to be introduced in January 2026, which would enable all public transport to be accessible to disabled people and 'spare seats' will then be available for sale.
- The cost to the Council is £11m per annum to provide transport for learners.
- The average cost per pupil for transport to school is approximately £1500, the Council propose to charge £400 per spare seat.
- It was clarified that the Policy was brought to the Committee under the Portfolio for a Green Powys which includes transport.

Points raised by the Committee:	Responses received from Officers or Cabinet Members:
Align Policies	
Clarification was required If the proposal were to amend the policy from the nearest school to the catchment area school.	Currently the Council policy states nearest or catchment area. The Learner Travel Wales Measure States that travel provision must be made to the pupils nearest suitable school and would be a matter for the local authority to determine the most suitable school.
Would the Learner Travel Wales Measure be contravened if the Council policy is changed.	Specific legal advice will be taken.
Simplicity is key, a catchment area map when selecting a school would help parents make informed decisions.	The Council aim to provide a streamlined process for parents to make informed decisions.
Concerns were raised around siblings attending different schools.	The change in policy has led to very few cases of siblings attending different school. The Council have an appeal process for parents if required.
It was asked if the allocation of spare seats could be brought forward before the 2026.	The date is changeable, however the officer advised for consistency matters of implementation across Powys the date remain as set.
	It was clarified that the catchment areas are defined as the normal place of residence of parents and learner.
	It was clarified that only one primary and one high school would be available within the catchment area and stressed that parents always have a choice of schools.
Has the figure of £59k (Council transport cost per day), been remodelled for potential catchment changes.	Due to the complications more work would be conducted around the modelling.
What was the process in which the catchment areas were determined.	Assurances were provided that an admissions process consultation was conducted annually as a statutory requirement.
Changes on catchment areas around vacancy rates could significantly impact on the transformation agenda.	
PSVAR	
Concerns were raised around the equality of the providing spare seats, as not all parents would be able to afford the additional cost.	
With fuel prices dropping and the move to electric vehicles, would the	PSVAR requires an additional cost, with a year-on-year additional cost due to contract

<p>cost to spare seats change.</p>	<p>changes. Electric vehicles would be marginally cheaper to run but the capital outlay would be significantly higher than diesel/petrol vehicles. Clarification was provided to the Committee around the PSVR regulations from Welsh Government and the dates set for implementation.</p>
<p>Why was the vacant seat scheme cancelled.</p>	<p>The vehicles used to transport children to school were not PSVAR compliant and therefore the Council were not authorised to provide the spare seat scheme within the regulations of the Department for Transport.</p>
<p>It was commented that equity of the spare seat scheme would mean a cheaper option than parents driving children to school.</p>	
<p>It was asked if information was available around the number of private companies that were compliant with PSVAR. Concerns were raised that smaller firms may find it difficult to comply.</p>	<p>Operators have been required to provide fleet information to the Welsh Government. Transport contracts will be renewed at the end of July 2025.</p>
<p>Concerns raised that if the spare seat scheme was available out of catchment areas, it may encourage parents to choose a different school.</p>	
	<p>The Cabinet Member expressed the complexity of the process and added that the Council supported 68 operators. Twice yearly meetings were held with operators to enable information to be gathered. The spare seat scheme was not an income generating scheme.</p>
<p>If a school would like to amend a cluster would transport be provided.</p>	<p>The annual consultation process would raise any concerns from schools around any changes to cluster areas.</p>

It was moved and duly seconded to recommend the Home to School Transport Policy is received by the Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee.

Recommendation:

The Home to School Transport Paper be considered by the Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee.

8.	WORKFORCE PLANNING
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Background:

- A comprehensive presentation was provided to the Committee.
- It was explained that Workforce Planning is a strategic organisational development activity and an integral part to the Integrated Business Planning process which is supported by the Service.
- The Service is seeking continuous improvement through training and shared good practice examples from service areas within the Council.

Resolved: The Committee noted a very positive presentation from Workforce Planning.

9.	PROCUREMENT - CLIMATE ACTION PLAN
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Background:

- Key activities were provided to the Committee including:
Gathering emissions information in order to provide a full picture for the Council.
- The four key spend areas showed that a third of emissions levels fall within the Highways, Transport and Recycling supply chain.
- The Procurement Service supports Council Services to identify and drive opportunities.

Points raised by the Committee:	Responses received from Officers or Cabinet Members:
What percentage of carbon emissions does Wales equate to, in the overall total for the UK. What is the Powys percentage of carbon emissions in Wales.	Information to be provided.
Would the Procurement Service actively change contracts with suppliers that were taking steps towards reducing carbon emissions. Concerns were raised that the process may exclude smaller suppliers that are less able to adapt. What support would the Council provide as a purchaser to mitigate impacts.	The full life cycle of the procurement process has been reviewed, considered financially and environmentally. The aim was to provide mechanisms and support for the smaller suppliers to help reduce carbon emissions. An example provided showed that the Council would provide an Information Tool to local suppliers, with the opportunity to work with Business Wales to submit tenders to meet Council needs to gain a competitive advantage.
How would the Council police suppliers in the reduction of carbon and evident it as a true record.	Methodology issued by the Welsh Government was very limited, the aim of the Council was to gain information at a granular level to provide better understanding. New contract management framework approach will be introduced which will provide a standards criteria to tier supply chains.

Resolved: The Procurement Climate Action Plan be noted.

10.	BUILDINGS AND LAND - CLIMATE ACTION PLAN
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Background:

- Work continues to compile the Building and Land Climate Action Plan.
- Positive actions have been taken including the ECO4 scheme, schools having led lighting and a new asset collaboration programme, which also assists schools and community centres to be more sustainable.
- It was noted that in order to meet the ambitions of the Council, a better understanding of assets was needed, by measuring emissions and conducting condition surveys will ensure a more informed decision-making process and value for money.

Points raised by the Committee:	Responses received from Officers or Cabinet Members:
It was noted that farm tenants have expressed that they were unable to access the ECHO 4 scheme.	Condition and sustainability surveys of farm estate buildings were being undertaken to ensure the Council can take informed decisions for the future of the estate.
Clarification was asked regarding the need for electricity at landfill sites and settlement ponds.	Clarification was provided that settlement ponds require an electric supply for aeration, the Property Team were exploring opportunities around grant funding to implement the infrastructure.
How would resources be sourced to conduct the Climate Action Plan.	Most of the actions on the plan would be carried out as business as usual, however if a more ambitious approach was taken, investment would be required for Project Managers.
The work of the Council was encouraging, however without a wraparound view including the National Grid, the Welsh Government target of 2030 and UK Government 2050 may not be achieved.	Cabinet Member: Work carried out on the Local Area Energy Plan for Powys has a strong and positive network. The whole estate of Powys was being reviewed and was explained that the National Grid may not be able to assist, therefore the Council will look at what can be done and what infrastructure can be introduced.
	Cabinet Member: Added there was a real need to address National grid issues and capabilities. Resources were a concern and Transformation Programme was being looked into to ensure officers were in the correct roles to conduct Climate Action plans.

Resolved: The Building and Land Climate Action Plan be noted.

11. GOVERNANCE - CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Background:

- The Governance Climate Action Plan is in place as part of the wider actions undertaken by the Council in response to the Climate and Nature Emergency.
- It demonstrated the commitment to the Welsh Government public sector 2030 targets.
- The plan is based around 7 key themes to be considered to meet the climate needs and ambitions.
- And would identify funding and where resources were needed for effective impact.
- Actions within the Council was running in parallel along with the Welsh Government targets.

Points raised by the Committee:	Responses received from Officers or Cabinet Members:

	<p>Cabinet Member Expressed thanks to all the services for the hard work being conducted and the collaboration that is being conducted. For additional support and actions, the staff Green Network would begin meeting on a regular basis.</p>
	<p>Cabinet Member A red rag status was highlighted and expressed concern that the climate action plans need to be costed as assistance will be required from both Welsh Government and UK Government.</p>

Resolved: The Governance Climate Action Plan be noted.

12.	SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME
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Resolved: The Work Programme be noted.

County Councillor Karl Lewis (Vice-Chair)

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Powys County Council

Leisure operating contract annual report
April 2022 - March 2023

“ improving lives
through leisure ”



Introduction

freedomleisure commenced a 15-year contract to manage Powys council's leisure facilities in 2015.

2022-2023 was our 8th year of the contract, our facilities include:

- Brecon Leisure Centre
- Bro Ddyfi Leisure Centre
- Builth Wells Sports Centre & Swimming Pool
- Caereinion Leisure Centre
- East Radnor Leisure Centre
- Flash Leisure Centre
- Knighton Sports Centre
- Llandrindod Wells Sports Centre
- Llanfyllin Sports Centre
- Llanidloes Sports Centre
- Maldwyn Leisure Centre
- Rhayader Leisure Centre
- Ystradgynlais Sports Centre

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“The 2022-23 financial year has again been challenging for the sport and leisure sector, predominantly due to the alarming increases in energy prices. Despite this, Freedom Leisure with the support of Powys county Council has continued to provide the best possible service for its customers, offering value for money and accessible leisure facilities in the communities we serve.

In 2023-24, the team in Powys will continue to work tirelessly to ‘improve lives through leisure’ and have a positive impact on both the physical and mental wellbeing of all its customers across the Powys County.”

Ivan Horsfall Turner | Chief Executive Officer - Freedom Leisure



An introduction to the Uk's second largest genuine charitable leisure trust:

freedomleisure has worked closely in 2022/23 with their local authority partners to deliver on our mission of improving lives through leisure. Nationally, Freedom Leisure was selected as the preferred operator of 2 new leisure contracts, increasing their portfolio to 110 leisure & cultural facilities, 25 individual clients and over 3,500 employees.



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110

Leisure and Cultural Facilities, including 2 theatres, on behalf of 25 individual clients across Wales and England.



not for profit

freedomleisure is a not-for-profit leisure trust which manages leisure and cultural facilities on behalf of partners across the UK to realise our vision of “improving lives through leisure”



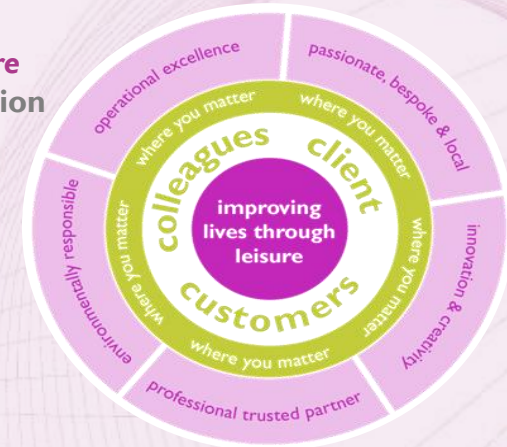
focus

Committed to providing and developing inclusive leisure facilities for everyone. Delivering a service to exceed our customers' expectations

Our ethos:

- Provide affordable and accessible health, leisure and sport facilities for everyone, therefore having a positive impact on the local communities in which we operate and serve – we aim to inspire people to be more active more often
- Reinvest surplus into quality services
- Exceed our partners' desired outcomes for local communities
- Enhance our reputation and status
- Grow and develop as a company in a sustainable way
- Develop our people
- Renew existing contracts and win new ones

freedomleisure corporate vision



Finance summary:



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Freedom Leisure Powys Contract Summary			
April 2022 to March 2023	Actual 12m	Bid 12m	
Income	5,566,873	4,802,097	
Contract Fees	2,190,239	2,337,855	
Contract Support	287,000	0	
Total Income	8,044,112	7,139,952	
Expenditure	7,833,160	6,835,202	
Total	210,952	304,750	
Freedom Overhead	304,750	304,750	
Surplus (Deficit)	(93,798)	0	

Powys year in numbers - visitors



Compared to 2021-22, 2022 – 23 has seen a 35% increase in the total participation with active participation increasing by 28%.

1,834,931
total centre participation



1,469,305
total active participation



Participation increase demonstrates we are providing a good all-round service with good accessibility to all forms of exercise. This is Supported by centre programs and offerings to engage with the local communities

Powys year in numbers - aquatics

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Casual Swimming in 2022-23 has seen growth of 8.58% compared to 2021-22

Similarly, we have also seen growth in our Learn to Swim (LTS) program, with 3% growth this year.

261,828
Casual swim visits



5,416
Enrolled in LTS School (March 23)



Powys year in numbers - programming



Across Powys, there has been consistent growth and uplift across all areas of programming.

Membership level has increased by 19% and group exercise has increased by 23% from previous year March 2022



5,438

Members March 23



150,996




Group exercise visits

NPS – Net Promoter Score

Users of our centres were emailed with a link to the NPS (Net Promoter Score) survey, with one simple question:

How likely are you to recommend your local Freedom Leisure centre of sports facility to your friends and family?

Powys Contract

 Detractors	 Passive	 Promoters
159	300	659
14%	27%	59%

Scores

National Average

45

Powys Average

57



National average compares other companies doing NPS in the same time period.

Energy & Sustainability

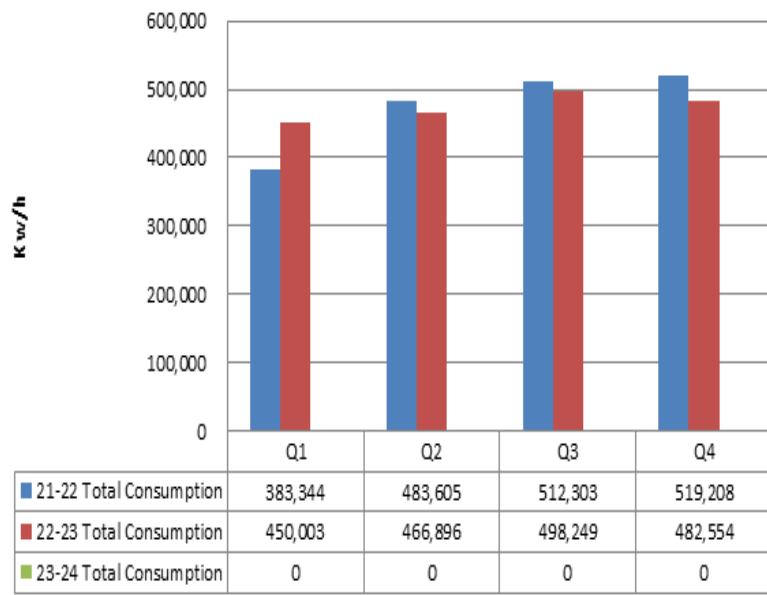
Energy statistics for 2022-23 show a 3.71% decrease in electricity consumption compared to 2021-22.

We have also seen a 2.75% decrease in our gas usage in 2022-23 versus 2021-22.

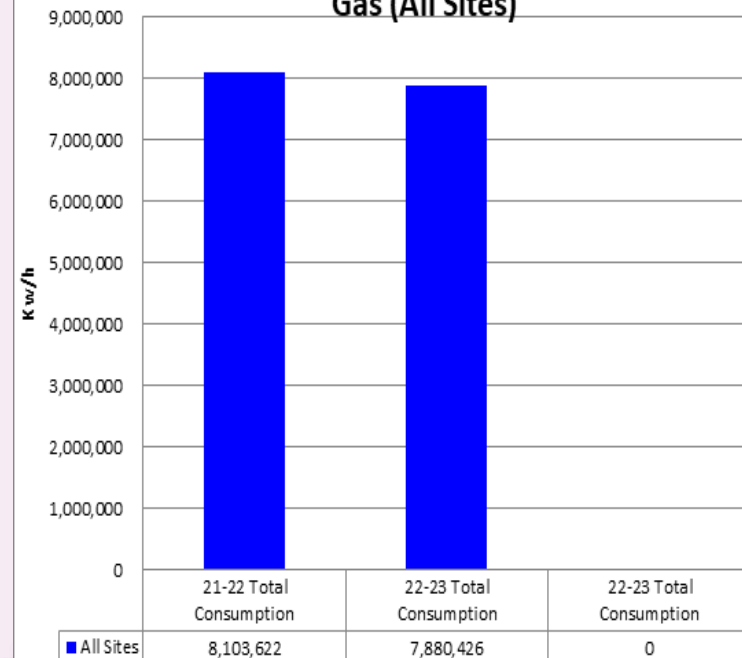
This has been achieved by the replacement of mechanical and electrical plant equipment, investment in LED lighting technology and regular energy monitoring. In addition to this we have also issued 26 point 'non-negotiables' actions that all our sites have adopted.

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Electric by Quarter (All Sites)



Gas (All Sites)



Health & Safety

All accidents are reported through the STITCH national database system. During the 2022-23 reporting period there have been a total of 266 accidents, 34% increase compared to 2012-22. None of these accidents were reportable.

Area	Total Accidents	Reportable	Non-Reportable
Powys	266	0	266
Wales & The North	1737	0	1737
Freedom Leisure	6238	2	6236

Centre	Total Accidents	Reportable	Non-Reportable
Brecon	19	0	19
Bro Ddyfi	9	0	9
Builth Wells	19	0	19
Caereinion	0	0	0
East Radnor	17	0	17
Flash	60	0	60
Knighton	17	0	17
Llandrindod	22	0	22
Llanfyllin	3	0	3
Llanidloes	7	0	7
Maldwyn	58	0	58
Rhayader	13	0	13
Ystradgynlais	22	0	22

Our Colleagues

With colleagues always at the forefront of providing activity to the community, there has been some fantastic successes:

- During this reporting period we have reviewed our workforce structures across the organisation from executive, regional, area and site level. Powys now benefits from two area managers North & South, Richard Milne & Gwyn Owen, respectively. General Managers have now been revised to North & South too, Denise Hazelwood and Richard Gealy respectively.
- Investing in training/development – We have continued to upskill our colleagues with further training in Leisure, these have included NPLQ qualifications, Swim Teacher L1 and L2 qualifications, Pool Plant Operator qualifications, First Aid at Work.
- IHASCO – Regular monthly training is completed by employees for upskilling and to ensure monthly Health & Safety training is completed.
- Our ‘freedom choices’ continues to prove most popular across Powys. This is a scheme whereby our employees can take advantage of some truly exciting travel discounts, shopping and café offers from well-known national brands. This scheme will be enhanced in the new financial year when we adopt the ‘my staff shop’ offer, which again provides our employees with a range of offers.



National Exercise Referral Scheme – Powys: 2022 - 2023



Cynllun Atgyfeirio Cleifion
i Wneud Ymarfer Corff Cymru
Wales National Exercise
Referral Scheme (NERS)


Powys


freedomleisure
where you matter

-  **100** | referrals received
-  **599** initial consultations
-  **244** currently on programme
-  **7977** attendances
-  **315** 16 week completions

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participant's comments

"The NERS Scheme has been a completely positive experience. It has given me confidence to go back into the gym, the discipline to exercise regularly and to really enjoy the progress that I've made over 16 weeks. The supervision is tailored and excellent and the provision of exercises to do at home is really helpful. It's a great offer and I would thoroughly recommend this Scheme. I even had the unexpected benefits of lower blood pressure and improved core strength and stability."

"I am more positive in my outlook to exercise and trying new experiences, have a better body image & confidence in my abilities."

"It has helped me physically, mentally & motivated me to be healthier."

"Great social interaction. Fun teacher. Look forward to each session."

"I am loving being active again. The sessions have given me the confidence to move more"



Powys NERS Annual Figures 2022 - 2023



**NERS Annual figures 2022 - 2023
against the same period 2021 - 2022**



1001 ↑ **29%**
referrals received



598 ↑ **38%**
initial consultations



545 ↑ **37%**
first exercise sessions



315 ↑ **125%**
16 week completions



177 ↑ **247%**
52 week review



64%
female participants



36%
male participants



53%
Generic NERS
programme participants



47%
L4 NERS pathway
participants



53% Lowered systolic blood pressure



47% Lowered BMI / lost weight



62% Increased activity levels



90% Increased fitness



90% Increased function



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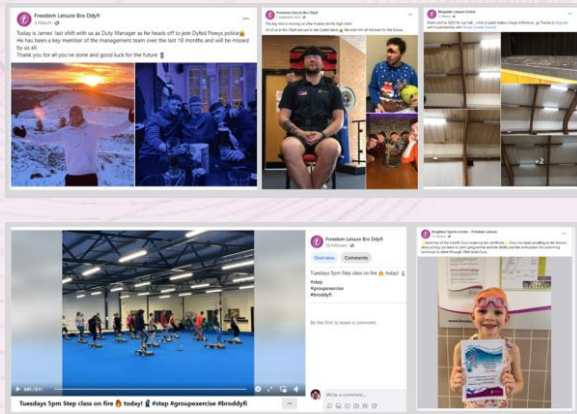
**Would you have participated in
exercise if NERS was not available?**

94% said no

Marketing

Social Media

The importance of social media remains a key part of our marketing strategy and allows us to communicate with customers as well as promote our facilities. A key part of this has been showcasing the power of our centres to our community & the importance of our centres to our members.



37,893

following (or have liked) our social media pages

Press Coverage

We actively engage with the press to publish news stories to a wider audience across the area. Some examples of press coverage are below:

- [Rhayader 30th Birthday celebrations](#)
- [National Fitness Day](#)
- [Learn to Swim](#)
- [New 3G pitch at Llanfyllin](#)

Website and customer communication

Our brand-new website was launched not just in Powys but across all Freedom Leisure sites in July 2022. The design allows customers to easily find the information on any device they require with coordinated branding across all leisure centres.



Freedom Leisure App

Across Powys at many centres, we have the Freedom Leisure Mobile App on android and apple which members can use to book classes. Non-members and members can view news, up to date timetables and receive “push notifications”. Users can choose their leisure centre (s). Across Powys we had 3,948 users at the end of March 23.



Over the last 12 months there has been further developments that have taken place across the Contract. This has been part of the Capital Investment plan as well as additional investment into the sites.

Remaining Capital Investment

- Remedial maintenance works that are funded from the 2022/23 PCC Remedial / Backlog fund have been actioned with further works submitted to PCC for consideration. Following partial approval of a capital funding programme to cover critical replacement of building plant and fabric, other larger projects have also been started. To date a total of £250K from the remedial / backlog fund has been spent. An additional £1.7m of capital funding has also been spent and/or committed to delivering essential projects across the portfolio. A summary report of all works across our sites is shared with the client on a regular basis.

Ystradgynlais

- Design work by PCC Property continues to partly replace the roof

Builth Wells

- Work continues to replace the outdoor tennis courts/MUGA at Builth Wells, partly funded by Sport Wales. Estimated completion May 2023.

Llanfair Caereinion

- Heating system replacement project completed

Maldwyn

- Fire alarm system replaced

Brecon

- Outdoor floodlighting at Penlan Athletics Track and Outdoor All-Weather Pitch replaced at Brecon, partly funded by Sport Wales.

Rhayader

- Refurbishment works to the community hall completed

Builth Wells Sports Centre

- Heating system upgraded

All Centres

- Remedial work to buildings, heating and plant systems completed across all sites to reduce risk of unplanned closure and subsequent disruption to service delivery.

Major capital projects currently on hold pending completion of the PCC leisure service review including Brecon Swimming Pool phase 2 project.



www.freedom-leisure.co.uk

Report Title:	Corporate Strategic and Equality Plan Scorecard: Quarter 1 Performance
Lead Officer:	Catherine James, Head of Transformation and Democratic Services

Key Issues in the report highlighted by Lead Officer

1. It should be acknowledged that the measures within the CSEP are under continuous review and improvement. The measures do not yet all include reporting from all services, as mechanisms are still under development to support this aspiration. For example, CSEP measure 1 reports the '*Number of contacts to Powys County Council (Number of times people have contacted the Council)*', but at present includes data from Economy and Digital and Housing Services only.
2. It is requested that the committee's attention is drawn to the objective 2 action that states 'By March 2026, we will establish a fair pay commission that will set out how the Council will become a fully accredited living wage employer. We will do this in consultation with trade unions and our partners'. The Council already pays a Real Living Wage to all the staff it directly employs. The aspiration to seek accreditation is contingent on the Council's contractors paying their staff a Real Living Wage, and work will be undertaken to gain insight into the current wage arrangements that exist within contractor organisations. This information will enable the Council to plan progress towards achieving this aim.
3. Please note the following clarifications to measure wording:
 - **Measure 15:** ('Number of apprentices within the Council') has been updated to clarify that it reports the number of new apprentices. It now reads: 'Number of (new) apprentices within the Council'.
 - **Measure 19:** ('Staff turnover rate') has been updated to clarify that it is the: 'Staff turnover rate during the quarter'.
 - **Measure 20:** ('Sickness absence rate') has been updated to clarify that it is the: 'Average days sickness per full time equivalent employee'.
4. The following amendments have been presented to Cabinet for decision (19 September 2023). Proposed amendments to the following measures:
 - **Measure 4: Amend** from: 'Number of people accessing leisure facilities' to 'Number of people participating in leisure activities'; this will clarify that it will measure participations rather than people.
 - **Measure 6:** Amend from 'Percentage of leisure users who are satisfied or more than satisfied with the service' to 'Net Promoter Score of leisure users who are satisfied or more than satisfied with the service'; this will reflect that percentages are not being to measure satisfaction.
 - **Measure 9:** Amend from 'Percentage increase in user (active) participations' to 'The number of (active) user participations'; this will reflect the number of participations rather than measuring a percentage increase.
 - **Measure 35:** Amend from: 'A reduction in the child poverty rate' to 'A reduction in the child absolute poverty rate'; this will clarify that absolute poverty is the basis of measurement.
 - **Measure 36:** Amend from: 'Number of families with children who are living in absolute poverty in Powys' to 'Number of children living in absolute poverty'; this is because relevant data are not available for families.

For reference:

APPENDIX 1 – QUESTION BANK (Extracted from the Performance Document)

What should we think about when reviewing our performance and business plans? The bullets below are a brief example of the types of questions we should ask ourselves when we are evaluating our performance.

- **What are you concerned about?**
 - What plays on your mind? What would you change if you could?
- **Have there been any situational/policy changes which have impacted upon delivery?**
 - These may be internal, external, local, or national – please think about the broader environment and bigger picture.
- **How much have we achieved this quarter?**
 - This is a good place to share any measurements you may use, such as % customer satisfaction, number of surveys circulated and number returned, % planned activity completed within timescale, etc.
- **How do we know how well it has gone?**
 - What did we achieve?
 - What did we learn? Are there any lessons learned/areas of good practice which could be noted / shared wider?
 - Who has benefited from what we've done? How? What difference has been made?
 - What have residents, partners, and regulators said during the quarter (including engagement activities, complaints, compliments, and audits) about your service?
 - What messages do you need to share with the people of Powys? How have you planned to progress them?
- **Have any risks or issues changed, or have new ones been identified? Have any risks been de-escalated?**
 - Has the risk / issue register been updated?
- **Do we have the necessary resources to progress this work?**
 - For example, identify any issues with workforce, finance, assets, and other resources.
 - Are you delivering within budget?
 - If the necessary resources are not available, what plans have been put in place? Can the activity continue?
- **Do we need any support from others (other services, partners, etc.)?**
 - For example, where delivery is dependent upon support services like Transformation and Democratic Services, Digital and Economy Services, or strategic partners like PTHB, we need to liaise with them to keep them informed and to seek assistance where they can help unblock some barriers to completion.
- **Other**
 - Is there anything that may affect whether this activity can be achieved as planned and within timescale and current resources?
 - What can we do differently?
 - What changes do we need to make to our action plan (including our Integrated Business Plan) based on what has happened and what we've learned this quarter?
 - Do any activities need to be escalated to discuss whether they should be put on hold or ceased entirely?

Key Feeders (tick all that apply)

Strategic Risk		Cabinet Work Plan	
Director / Head of Service Key Issue		External / Internal Inspection	
Existing Commitment / Annual Report		Performance / Finance Issue	✓
Suggestion from Public		Referral from Council / Committee	
Corporate Improvement Plan	✓	Impacting Public / other services	
Service Integrated Business Plan			

Suggestion from Members			
Partnerships			

Scrutiny Impact (tick all that apply)

Policy Review		Performance	✓
Informing Policy Development		Evidence Gathering	
Risk		Corporate Improvement Plan	✓
Service Integrated Business Plan		Partnerships	
Pre-Decision Scrutiny		Finance / Budget	

Other (please specify)

N/A

Suggested scrutiny activity - Committee's Role:

Scrutinising the progress, processes, and impact of performance and performance management within the Council.

- Responsibility to continuously ask whether we are doing what we said we would do, and whether we are doing it well.
- Reviewing, analysing, and evaluating the performance of the Council, including the Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan Scorecard, for quality, relevance, and usefulness.
- Identifying and voicing any queries or concerns that arise, helping to ensure robust procedures and activities.
- Working with Cabinet to seek assurance and develop performance and performance approaches.
- Balancing the concerns of the people and communities of Powys with issues of strategic risk and importance.
- Supporting the voice of the people of Powys to be heard in the decision-making process.

On what specific elements of the report would scrutiny comment add value

- Review and evaluation: informed enquiry / recommendations; to review the information, ask questions, make enquiries, and make recommendations.
- Seek assurance and clarification about progress towards achieving the Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan priorities, and ensuring that service priorities will be met effectively, efficiently, and within the allocated timescales and resources.

Example questions:

- a. Is the content accessible and easy to understand?
- b. Does the information provide a clear understanding of what work the Council is undertaking to meet the ambitions of *Stronger, Fairer, Greener*?
- c. Are the targets provided against measures appropriate e.g. too high/too low etc?
- d. Does the Committee feel the future actions will help achieve the objective and to what extent?
- e. Based on your work as a Committee in the last quarter, is there anything the Committee aware of which they feel should be considered within the report?
- f. Based on your work as a Committee, does the information interact with any resource (workforce or finance) challenges identified?
- g. Thinking around access to services, can the Committee provide views based upon the aspirations of the Plan and what is being delivered so far based upon the information provided?
- h. Thinking around workforce and real living wage accreditations, can the Committee provide views based upon the aspirations of the Plan and what is being delivered so far based upon the information provided?
- i. Thinking around poverty and inequality, can the Committee provide views based upon the aspirations of the Plan and what is being delivered so far based upon the information provided?
- j. Is there anything identified within the report which the Committee would like a further follow up/deep dive session around?

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee, 13 September 2023
Economy, Residents and Communities Scrutiny Committee, 18 September 2023
Health and Care Scrutiny Committee, 22 September 2023

Report Author:	Councillor James Gibson-Watt, Leader, and Cabinet Member for an Open and Transparent Powys
Lead Officer:	Catherine James, Head of Transformation and Democratic Services
Report Title:	Corporate Strategic and Equality Plan Scorecard: Quarter 1 Performance
Report For:	Information

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to present the Council's 2023 to 2024 Quarter 1 (April to June) Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan Scorecard.
- 1.2. The Scorecard is available on the Council's website by visiting: <https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/14124/Corporate-Plan-Updates>

2. Background

- 2.1. This is the first presentation of the Council's progress against the new [Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan](#). The Quarter 1 Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan Scorecard shows the Council's performance against its expectations between April and June 2023.
- 2.2. The new performance year commenced on 01 April 2023 to coincide with the publication of the Council's new [Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan: Stronger, Fairer, Greener](#). (We abbreviate references to this plan as 'CSEP'.)
- 2.3. The purpose of the CSEP is to present the well-being priorities for the Council for the years 2023 to 2027, which support the [seven national well-being goals](#) of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The Council's priorities are its three corporate well-being objectives, which are:
 1. We will improve people's awareness of services, and how to access them, so that they can make informed choices.
 2. We will support good quality, sustainable, employment, providing training opportunities, and pursuing real living wage employer accreditation.
 3. We will work to tackle poverty and inequality to support the well-being of the people of Powys.

- 2.4. The CSEP contains all the priority work for the Council, driven by the Cabinet's work programme and ambitions. The objectives and measures integrate the equality objectives and measures to ensure that we work towards a fairer Powys in all aspects of our work, and that equality is at the heart of our approach.
- 2.5. The well-being objectives are organisation-wide areas of focus that we actively pursue so that we can make positive improvements to our services. The performance process helps the Council to reflect on the year so far, to evaluate its approaches and contributions, to consider what has been learned, and to plan what actions can or should be taken to support ongoing progress.
- 2.6. All council services and staff help to contribute to meeting the Council's ambition. Each service has provided a written update about how they have contributed towards the achievement of the Council's three corporate objectives and, where appropriate, the supporting measures.
- 2.7. The new reporting system only provides the following options for identifying progress against a measure target:
 - On track
 - Off track
 - No data (data not due to be reported)
 - Not reported (data unexpectedly unavailable or not yet provided)

Importantly, measure statuses are automatically calculated by the system as an indicator to identify whether the progress towards the activity met planned expectations (the targets). These statuses are used as conversation starts to enable activities to be considered in a more detailed context to determine what went well, where more or different support or resource may be necessary, and what lessons may be learned.

3. Advice

- 3.1. That the committee receive the Quarter 1 (2023-2024) Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan Scorecard that is published on the Council's website: <https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/14124/Corporate-Plan-Updates> and review the Council's progress against the Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan.
- 3.2. That the committee recognise that this report is the first time that the Council is reporting against its new Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan (CSEP) and, as such, the Council is keen to progress and improve the quality and content of the reporting.
- 3.3. All Directors, Heads of Service, and Senior Managers are asked to review the appropriateness and relevance of the reporting on an ongoing basis to support the continuous improvement and to identify areas to which their work contributes. The Council's long-term aspiration is to use each quarter's reporting to develop a relevant and informative source of information that is used both as a mechanism for recognising achievements and opportunities and

as a means of identifying patterns and areas in need of further development or adaptation.

4. Resource Implications

- 4.1. Services set out their objectives that contribute to the delivery of the Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan in their individual Integrated Business Plans. The activity undertaken and reported in this quarter has been delivered from within service budgets. Any subsequent remedial action to improve performance will be considered by the relevant service, it is anticipated that this can be delivered from existing resources.
- 4.2. The Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer) notes the report.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1. Professional Lead – Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer notes the content of the report. There are no other legal matters arising from the report.

6. Data Protection

- 6.1. Not applicable. No identifiable information is contained within the reporting.

7. Comment from local member(s)

- 7.1. Comments were not sought from individual members, as the performance report is equally applicable to the whole county.

8. Impact Assessment

- 8.1. An impact assessment has not been undertaken for the quarterly performance updates as it does not include any proposals or service changes. However, the impact assessment of the CSEP is available [here](#).

9. Recommendations

That the committee:

- 9.1. Consider whether they are assured that performance is progressing well, or that mitigating actions have been identified.
- 9.2. Consider whether they are satisfied that any future actions identified within the CSEP Scorecard will effectively improve performance in line with outcomes set out in the [Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan](#).

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Head of Service: Catherine James (Head of Transformation and Democratic Services)

Corporate Director: Emma Palmer (Director of Corporate Services)

SCRUTINY REPORT NEW TEMPLATE

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

CABINET EXECUTIVE

19 September 2023

REPORT AUTHOR: Councillor James Gibson-Watt
(Leader, and Cabinet Member for an Open and
Transparent Powys)

REPORT TITLE: Corporate Strategic and Equality Plan Scorecard: Quarter
1 Performance

REPORT FOR: Endorsement and Decision

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This report presents the Council's 2023 to 2024 Quarter 1 (April to June) Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan Scorecard. Cabinet are asked to review the performance, and confirm that they are assured by the performance or that they are satisfied that remedial actions will effectively improve performance where this is not on track.
- 1.2. The full content of the Scorecard is available on the Council's website by visiting: <https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/14124/Corporate-Plan-Updates>.

2. Background

- 2.1. **Objective 1: We will improve people's awareness of services, and how to access them, so that they can make informed choices.**

Overall, progress against this objective has been broadly positive as we have sought to improve how we work with our people and communities. Three measures were allocated as 'off track', which were:

- 'Percentage (children) using Intervention and Prevention remain with families safely (89% against a target of 91%)
- 'Percentage accessing Intervention and Prevention that demonstrate positive progression (80% against a target of 88%)
- 'Percentage of people report achieving their family goal through Early Help' (82% against a target of 90%)

Importantly, the percentage of customers satisfied with their responses when contacting the Council exceeded the target (84% against a target of 82%).

It was announced that the Digital Transformation Programme approved work to investigate the potential of AI (artificial intelligence) Chat across our customer channels. The aim is to support a 24/7 conversational self-serve chat experience that will enable our customers to access information and answers faster.

A range of updates were made to the Council's website to provide more information, including:

- Information about Adult Services.
- New voter ID information for elections. All canvass communications now provide voters with options of how to respond, including a choice of voting methods.
- The Apprenticeship and Work Experience pages, which are now aligned to the new branding used in the Recruitment and Retention Project.

The Dewis Cymru self-help well-being website was also promoted, which provides access to around 6,000 local and national services, will help the people of Powys to choose services that best meet their needs.

Finance and Education Services both reflected on their use of social media and the benefits of promoting information using different communications channels to maximise the opportunities for all. The Education Service identified that there is an opportunity to provide enhanced information to schools and families about admissions and admissions processes and will be exploring how they develop this.

Colleagues from the Workforce and Organisational Development Team attended a range of recruitment events to promote career opportunities with the Council, and to provide support to those applying for roles. This includes targeted, difficult to recruit roles, such as Reablement.

The number of people accessing leisure facilities and the satisfaction levels with those services were notably higher than the targets. The Leisure Review was ongoing during the quarter, and data and insight were being used to better understand leisure centre usage, costs, distance to facilities, the facilities available, and so on, as part of the evidence-based decision-making process. The review will close on 28 August 2023.

Although a significant percentage of children using Intervention and Prevention remain with their families safely, currently the percentage accessing Intervention and Prevention that demonstrate a positive progression is slightly lower than the target. However, a number of children and their families were 'stepped down' to the Early Help service or to more specialist services like the Youth Justice Service before they reached their goals. Similarly, the percentage of people that report achieving their family goal through Early Help is slightly lower than hoped for. Children's Service will be reviewing the distance travelled tool, as well as the model of crisis intervention that is used.

2.2. Objective 2: We will support good quality, sustainable, employment opportunities and pursue real living wage accreditation.

Progress against this objective has been extremely positive as the Council seeks to address the workforce challenges that face the County. However, there still remains a significant amount to do due to the challenging workforce situation which is being experienced nationally.

Only one measure was allocated as 'off track', which was the 'Percentage of staff who feel proud / very proud to work for the Council'. However, the achievement of 80% equalled last year's result, and was only marginally lower than the target of

81%. This evidence helps support the work surrounding the retention of staff currently being undertaken to ensure that existing staff are supported and retained within the Council.

The Council supported a variety of degree schemes:

- Staff from across Social Services were invited to apply to join the next cohort of the 'Grow Our Own' Social Work scheme, which has been successful in strengthening the Social Care workforce by enabling the appointment of 8 'Newly Qualified Social Workers'.
- Interviews started for (Social Services) degree sponsorship, which included 7 applicants from Adult Services and 7 from Children's Services.
- In addition, all Council staff were eligible to apply to undertake the 1-year social work degree, for which there were 3 applicants at time of reporting.
- The Digital Teams were invited to apply to undertake a Degree Apprenticeship in Applied Software Engineering through the Open University.

An apprentice was successfully employed within the Property Design Service. The Highways, Transport and Recycling Service considered that the apprenticeship scheme had been 'a huge success' within the Service and would become a rolling programme.

Reflection during the quarter identified that project roles being advertised within the Economy and Digital Service were not attracting applicants, and as a result work was ongoing with Workforce and Organisational Development to improve the advertising of such roles and to approach internal staff with relevant matching skills.

We have also looked at how we recruit differently. A three-week course was developed as a pilot to support members of the public to gain the Level 1 Food Hygiene Certificate. It is hoped that this will assist them in gaining the skills needed to apply for catering vacancies within the Council, which are roles that are hard to recruit to.

Additionally, Housing have undertaken recruitment for tradespeople differently by visiting a series of locations across Powys, which resulted in a better than expected number of applicants, and the number of tradespeople being recruited being significantly beyond what was originally planned for.

There was an increase in attendance at the recruitment roadshows for Children's Services following a successful recruitment (leaflet) campaign for our in-house therapeutic home.

Powys County Council has signed up to become an Endometriosis Friendly Employer, the first local authority in the UK to do so. By becoming an Endometriosis Friendly Employer, Powys County Council is showing a commitment to support staff who have the condition and tackling stigma and changing culture surrounding endometriosis in the workplace.

Data about disability employment (paid / voluntary) was reviewed to establish a baseline and start work on the Live Well Forum, which is co-produced with the people of Powys to develop meaningful employment opportunities for adults with disabilities. There is now a better understanding of the financial sustainability of different organisations. However, it was acknowledged that further work is needed

to determine who delivers accessible employment opportunities in Powys, how these are coordinated, and how these data are collected and used.

Recipients of Direct Payments (in relation to Adult Services) received an uplift on their rate to facilitate the real living wage, and the Finance Service identified the need to encourage more contractors to pay a real living wage. [All employees of the Council receive a real living wage.] The real living wage activity is an important ambition for the Council to strengthen the county for the people of Powys by increasing fairness and supporting personal and economic resilience.

Please note that:

- Data is not yet available for the measure 'Number of guaranteed interviews offered to (eligible) Armed Forces veterans'; it is due to be reported in quarter 2.
- It was not possible to report against the measure 'Workforce quality and diversity better compares to Powys' demographics' during quarter 1. This measure is under review to ensure that it presents accurate and relevant data in future reports.
- It was not possible to report against the measure 'Job applicants and staff reflect (generally) the equality and diversity of Powys' during quarter 1. This measure is under review to ensure that it presents accurate and relevant data in future reports.

2.3. Objective 3: We will work to tackle poverty and inequality to support the well-being of the people of Powys.

Progress against this objective has been extremely positive despite the Council operating against a challenging socioeconomic backdrop.

Of the 13 measures, only one measure was allocated as 'off track', which was 'The number of households who are homeless' (408 against a target of 304). During the quarter, 79 homeless households were accommodated permanently by the Council, in our own stock, through housing associations and in the private sector. It is important to note that this is an indicator of homelessness in Powys and is impacted by wider external factors beyond the control of the Council.

The number of households registered with 'Homes in Powys' for affordable and secure homes was higher than expected. Similarly, the number of homeless households was significantly higher than hoped. Nevertheless, it is pleasing to report that the number of rough sleepers was lower than expected, as was the number of households living in temporary accommodation. The Housing Service identified the opportunity to maintain close contact with residents and tenants as a way of helping them to feel confident in contacting the Council for advice and help. Positively, at the time of reporting, the percentage of rental income lost through Council unoccupied housing was also slightly lower than expected.

An accommodation tracking form was developed by Adult Services to provide intelligence on future accommodation needs of individuals with a disability. This has resulted in the identification of a potential need in a specific area of the county, which can now be investigated.

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) registration was gained for an in-house residential provision in South Powys, offering 2 additional (child) residential placements. A further 3 additional places became operational for those (children) aged 16+ in Mid Powys.

A new partnership was formed between the Council's Preventative and Restorative Justice Team and Freedom Leisure to support families in accessing facilities in the Llandrindod Wells area as part of the 'Turn Around Project'. This contributes to creating a 'stronger' Powys, where communities succeed together and are personally resilient.

The rollout of Universal Primary Free School Meals (UPFSM) continues and will include Year 3 learners from September 2023. 190,490 meals have been provided since 01 September 2022.

The Money Advice Service has been strengthened, using Shared Prosperity Funding to support additional staff to offer free and confidential advice to residents.

The decision-making process (the Impact Assessment) has been developed with specialist support to strengthen guidance about the climate and nature emergency.

3. Advice

- 3.1. That Cabinet receive the Quarter 1 (2023-2024) Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan Scorecard that is published on the Council's website: <https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/14124/Corporate-Plan-Updates> and review the Council's progress against the Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan.
- 3.2. That Cabinet recognise that this report is the first time that the Council is reporting against its new Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan (CSEP) and, as such, the Council is keen to evolve and embed the process over the coming months.
- 3.3. It should be acknowledged that the measures within the CSEP are under continuous review and improvement. The measures do not yet all include reporting from all services, as mechanisms are still under development to support this aspiration. For example, CSEP measure 1 reports the '*Number of contacts to Powys County Council (Number of times people have contacted the Council)*', but at present includes data from Economy and Digital and Housing Services only.
- 3.4. It is requested that Cabinet's attention is drawn to the objective 2 action that states 'By March 2026, we will establish a fair pay commission that will set out how the Council will become a fully accredited living wage employer. We will do this in consultation with trade unions and our partners'. The Council already pays a Real Living Wage to all the staff it directly employs. The aspiration to seek accreditation is contingent on the Council's contractors paying their staff a Real Living Wage, and work will be undertaken to gain insight into the current wage arrangements that exist within contractor organisations. This information will enable the Council to plan progress towards achieving this aim.

3.5. The Council continues to seek to engage with the people of Powys to help achieve our ambition of being a stronger, fairer, greener Powys. In particular, our engagement activities contribute to our aim to be an open, well-run, Council where people's voices are heard and help us to shape our work and priorities. An update on progress is provided here as supporting information. During quarter 1, 3,190 external people visited our Engagement Hub, of which 589 people participated in our engagement and consultation activities. Of those that responded to our ongoing engagement project, 28% felt they had opportunities to have their say and participate in decision-making, and 25% said they speak positively about the Council. Seven external engagement projects were started during the period, which were:

- Do you have a minute? (Ongoing engagement project)
- Powys Winter Roads Service Review
- Powys Arts Strategy
- Customer Service Review (public)
- Local Housing Market Assessment (open until 10th July)
- Housing Need in Llanfair Ym Mochnant
- Ystradgynlais Replacement of Outdoor Synthetic Pitch (open until 15th July)

A further 348 people joined the Powys People's Panel by opting in through their My Powys Account, which brings the total to 4,837 members.

4. Resource Implications

4.1. Services set out their objectives that contribute to the delivery of the Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan in their individual Integrated Business Plans. The activity undertaken and reported in this quarter has been delivered from within service budgets. Any subsequent remedial action to improve performance will be considered by the relevant service, it is anticipated that this can be delivered from existing resources.

4.2. The Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer) notes the report.

5. Legal implications

5.1. Professional Lead – Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer notes the content of the report. There are no other legal matters arising from the report.

6. Data Protection

6.1. Not applicable. No identifiable information is contained within the reporting.

7. Comment from local member(s)

- 7.1. Comments were not sought from individual members, as the performance report is equally applicable to the whole county.

8. Impact Assessment

- 8.1. An impact assessment has not been undertaken for the quarterly performance updates as it does not include any proposals or service changes. However, the impact assessment of the CSEP is available [here](#).

9. Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- 9.1. Confirm they are assured that performance is progressing well, or that mitigating actions have been identified and reflected in updates to service Integrated Business Plans.
- 9.2. Confirm they are satisfied that any remedial actions will effectively improve performance in line with outcomes set out in the [Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan](#).
- 9.3. Consider for approval the introduction of a **new measure** to support Objective 1 (We will improve people's awareness of services, and how to access them, so that they can make informed choices.):
- **Number of 'keeping in touch' visits**; this is in relation to Housing Services and would enable the team to regularly demonstrate some key work that is being undertaken to support the Council's tenants.
- 9.4. Note the following **clarifications** to measure wording:
- **Measure 4**: 'Number of people accessing leisure facilities' has been amended to 'Number of people participating in leisure activities'; this clarifies that it will measure participations rather than people.
 - **Measure 9**: 'Percentage increase in user (active) participations' has been amended to 'The number of (active) user participations'; this reflects the number of participations rather than measuring a percentage increase.
 - **Measure 15**: 'Number of apprentices within the Council' has been updated to clarify that it reports the number of new apprentices; it now reads: 'Number of new apprentices within the Council'.
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 - **Measure 20**: 'Sickness absence rate' has been updated to clarify that it is the: 'Average days sickness per full time equivalent employee'.
 - **Measure 35**: 'A reduction in the child poverty rate' has been amended to 'A reduction in the child absolute poverty rate'; this clarifies that absolute poverty is the basis of measurement.

- **Measure 36:** 'Number of families with children who are living in absolute poverty in Powys' has been amended to 'Number of children living in absolute poverty'; this is because the relevant data is not available for families.

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Head of Service: Catherine James (Head of Transformation and Democratic Services)

Corporate Director: Emma Palmer (Director of Corporate Services)

Appendix A: Technical Notes and Background

- A. This is the first presentation of the Council's progress against the new Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan. The Quarter 1 Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan Scorecard shows the Council's performance against its expectations between April and June 2023.
- B. The new performance year commenced on 01 April 2023 to coincide with the publication of the Council's new Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan: Stronger, Fairer, Greener. (We abbreviate references to this plan as 'CSEP'.)
- C. The purpose of the CSEP is to present the well-being priorities for the Council for the years 2023 to 2027, which support the seven national well-being goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The Council's priorities are its three corporate well-being objectives, which are:
1. We will improve people's awareness of services, and how to access them, so that they can make informed choices.
 2. We will support good quality, sustainable, employment, providing training opportunities, and pursuing real living wage employer accreditation.
 3. We will work to tackle poverty and inequality to support the well-being of the people of Powys.
- D. The CSEP contains all the priority work for the Council, driven by the Cabinet's work programme and ambitions. The objectives and measures integrate the equality objectives and measures to ensure that we work towards a fairer Powys in all aspects of our work, and that equality is at the heart of our approach.
- E. The well-being objectives are organisation-wide areas of focus that we actively pursue so that we can make positive improvements to our services. The performance process helps the Council to reflect on the year so far, to evaluate its approaches and contributions, to consider what has been learned, and to plan what actions can or should be taken to support ongoing progress.
- F. The new reporting system only provides the following options for identifying progress against a measure target:
- On track
 - Off track
 - No data (data not due to be reported)
 - Not reported (data unexpectedly unavailable or not yet provided)

Importantly, measure statuses are automatically calculated by the system as an indicator to identify whether the progress towards the activity met planned expectations (the targets). These statuses are used as conversation starts to enable activities to be considered in a more detailed context to determine what went well, where more or different support or resource may be necessary, and what lessons may be learned.

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Marches Forward Strategic Partnership

Overview – Powys CC ERC Scrutiny – September 2023

Recapping objectives

A Marches Strategic Partnership provides a flexible umbrella framework for joint working

Such an approach supports us in driving the best deal for our geography

It helps us to deliver services that respond to how our area actually functions

It enables us to unlock additional value using our unique cross border location

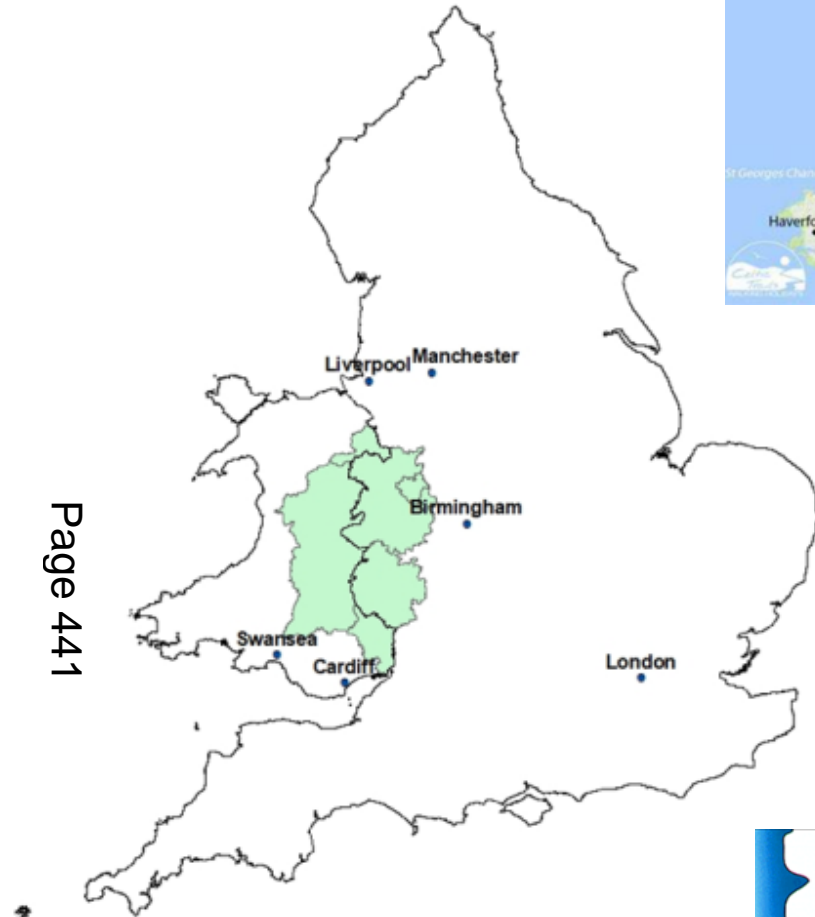
It provides an open basis for us to collaborate and push the boundaries on what is possible for the area to shape and deliver the best short, medium and long term future

Location of the Combined Area



Our geographical profile

- Local authority areas which are contiguous, straddling 80% of the English/Welsh border.
- Combined character which is predominantly rural in nature.
- Significant cross border / boundary assets eg Offas Dyke, the River Severn Basin (includes Wye) and the Shropshire Hills AONB.
- Shared transport routes eg M54/A5, A49 and Heart of Wales and Cambrian rail lines



Our functional profile

Travel to Work- commuting to the other local authorities within the area accounts for approaching half of all commuting in Shropshire, and and Powys.

Retail- Shared retail centres and access to specialist services.

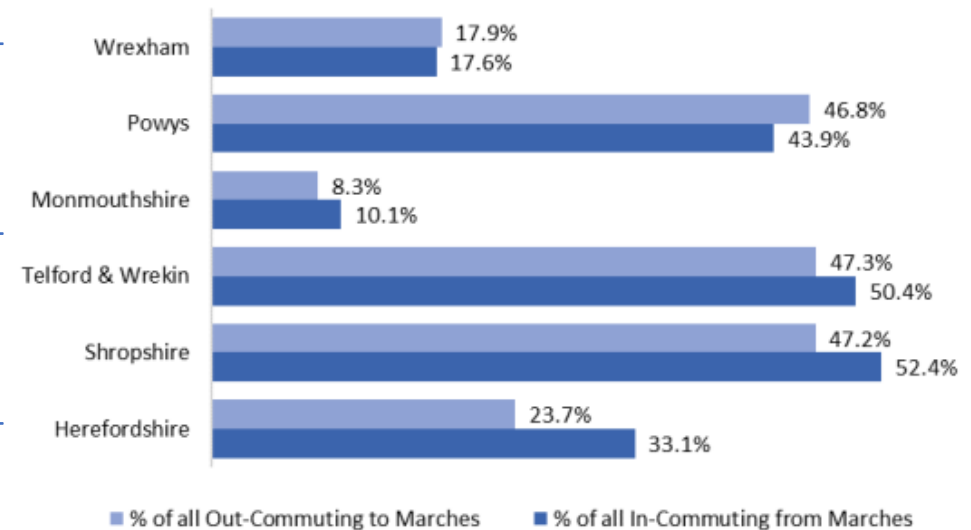
Education - significant cross border movement for education and skill development.

Business Support- use of Marches Growth Hub for Mid Wales business support.

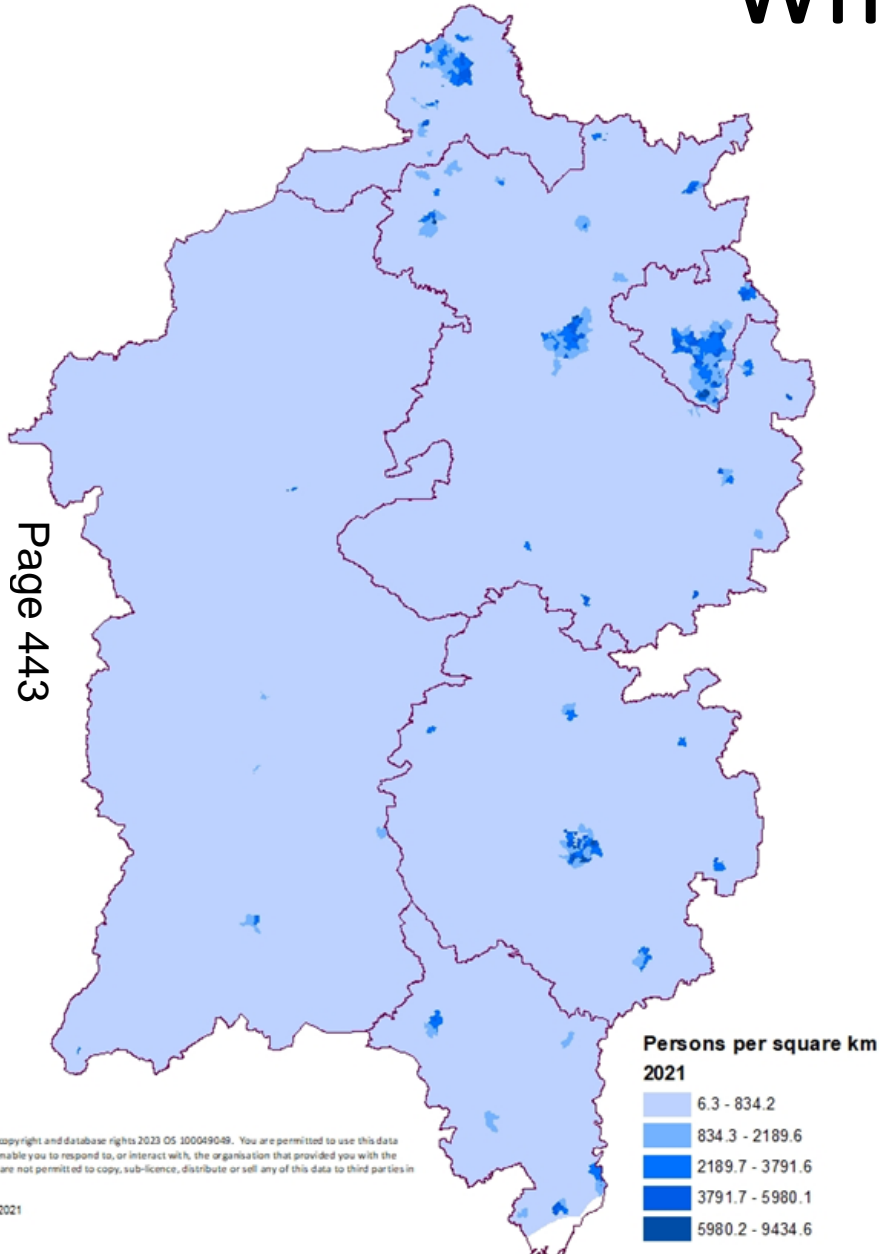
Tourism & Leisure- important cross border nature based and place based tourism activity between England and Wales.

Healthcare pathways for patients – shared acute and specialist health infrastructure and a significant flow of patients to Shrewsbury, Gobowen, Telford and Hereford hospitals)

Proportion of Commuting to Combined Area



What binds us with common purpose?



Rurality (population density 0.9 people per hectare)- **longer and more expensive access to services**

Ageing population (more than 30% of the population 65+ by 2043) – **changing service demands, especially the provision of adult social care, and a squeezing of the available labour force.**

Low levels of productivity (approx. 25% lower than UK average) - **impacted by older population, net out-commuting and the sector mix in the area**

Low employment growth (below national levels by 2031)- **growth is concentrated in a few urban areas but very muted in the more rural areas.**

Costly and challenging connectivity (fewer than 40% of premises in Shropshire, Monmouthshire and Powys can access Gigabit infrastructure) - **infrastructure is more costly and more challenging to deliver.**

Why?

Economic Uncertainty and Untapped Potential

As a collective we:

- Focus on our geography and maximising our potential
- Provide ourselves with the right tools for effective service delivery within each local authority
- Understand and work together to attract the right investment eg for critical infrastructure

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A flexible Strategic Partnership

As a collective we:

- Understand and innovate to address the needs of our rural communities
- Harness the value of our shared rural assets
- Align policy and investment drivers to obtain the best from cross border political ambitions

Focus on innovation and resilience

As a collective we:

- Understand future trends and service demands across our functional area
- Focus on where collaboration adds the greatest value
- Share learning and best practice

Memorandum of Understanding

- Representing spirit of co-operation and joint working between the local authorities
- Basis for operating as a collective
 - maximise efficient service delivery
 - attract investment
 - positively impact the area and benefit local communities
- Not constraining individual activities or constituent partnerships
- Not legally binding or involve any formalised governing structure
- Overseen by Strategic Board comprising all Leaders, with rotating Chair
- 18 month review with aim to evolve through implementation and learning

Short Term – Potential Opportunities (less than 12 months)

Shared Priority

Output

Outcome

Immediate Benefits

- Sustainable rural transport network
- Business growth, advice and support programme
- Visitor economy campaigns and key projects
- Housing need and investment
- Climate change and nature recovery

- Alignment of EV fleet
- Scoping potential for area franchising
- Share learning on LTP4 carbon approaches
- Expansion of Growth Hub model
- Expansion of Cool Shropshire and Telford model
- Supply chain engagement and cross border network
- Alignment of involvement to continue cross border projects eg Offa's Dyke, Montgomery Canal
- Joint destination marketing- shared assets/thematic propositions eg food and drink
- Joint design codes/retrofit options Understand infrastructure barriers for delivery of sites in Local Plans
- Cross reference net zero plans
- Scoping joint framework for Biodiversity Net Gain and Carbon insetting
- Align Green Infrastructure resources to provide strategic approach to connecting landscapes and assets.

- Improved rural bus services
- Aligned Transport Plans and Net Zero plans
- Cross border business support offer
- Free business advice on decarbonisation and energy efficiency
- Upskilling to meet business demands
- Enhanced management of major cultural heritage assets
- Aligned cultural and heritage agencies with wider investment opportunities eg agri-environment schemes
- Improved sustainability of housing stock
- Improved housing delivery
- Aligned energy masterplan
- Aligned land management and Local Nature Recovery Strategies

- Move towards coherent, consistent and integrated bus network
- Promotion of sustainable low carbon transport
- Networked business community
- Understanding shared value of cross border visitor and heritage assets
- Shared costs for development of new housing schemes
- Addressing differential standards eg retrofit standards across LPAs
- Joined up conversations with environmental partners/investors

Medium Term – Potential Opportunities (12-36 months)

Shared Priority

Output

Outcome

Longer Term Impact

- Sustainable rural transport network
- Skill development
- Digital connectivity and transformation
- Visitor economy
- Housing need and investment
- Climate change and nature recovery

- Partnership working on local rail provision
- Cross border integrated ticketing
- Transport corridor assessments and improvement plans eg A49
- Alignment of skills plans in tandem with training providers
- Digital inclusion and connectivity/mobile phone coverage mapping
- Scoping SMART collaboration opportunities
- Alignment of local visitor economy partnerships
- Development of a rural/market town supported housing model
- Cross border housing options strategy
- Develop environmentally focused investment propositions
- Develop area wide climate and nature investment framework

- Increased frequency and speed of rail provision
- Coordinated infrastructure proposals aligned to future growth strategies
- Joint skills plan to meet demands and market opportunities
- Collaborative opportunities for cross regional projects.
- Establish Destination Development Partnership for the area
- Long term housing investment plan to provide affordable and other options to balance the housing market
- Establish a Rural Resilience Strategy

- Improved and simplified travel for passengers so borders no longer become a restriction to travel
- Identified 'Cross Border Marches' skills offer
- Targeted improvements for digital and mobile provision
- Coordinated visitor economy engagement to unlock investment
- Improved cross border housing offer
- Opportunities to trade from shared and significant rural economy
- Unique focus and proposition around green growth.

Proposed management and delivery structure

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Leaders Group
Political leadership, strategic engagement and communications, *quarterly meetings*

Chief Executive Group
Strategic leadership, oversight and partnership engagement *monthly meetings*

Directors and Officers Group
Drive progress across working groups and manage programme, *monthly meetings*

Data, Evidence & Research Working Group
Joint narrative and intelligence, *officer led data and intelligence group*
functional geography, future projections and scenarios, data gaps and commissioning needs.

Thematic Working Groups
Proposal development, *officer led delivery groups*

Nature, Energy and Climate Adaptation	Transport and Digital Transformation	Health, Housing and Skills	Food, Rural Development and Visitor Economy
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Proposed working arrangements:

- Quarterly Leaders Group meetings
- Monthly Chief Executive and Director Groups meetings
- Joint working groups to take development and delivery forward:
 - *Data, Evidence and Research*
 - *Nature, Energy and Climate Adaptation*
 - *Transport and Digital Transformation*
 - *Health, Housing and Skills*
 - *Food, Rural Development and Visitor Economy*
- MOU as initial basis for joint working, with 18 month review period

Going forward -

- Joint communications plan
- Sharing thoughts and potential benefits with UK and Welsh Governments

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