

Powys County Council

Annual Governance Statement 2019-20

Section 1. Executive Summary

This Annual Governance Statement (AGS) provides an account of the processes, systems and records the council has in place to demonstrate effectiveness of its governance arrangements. It principally covers the period April 2019 to March 2020. However, during the period to September 2020, when the accounts are signed, it is updated. The Statement therefore includes details of the Council's response to the COVID19 Coronavirus pandemic.

Powys County Council adopted a system of corporate governance in June 2008, which is consistent with the seven principles of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) Framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government (2016 Edition). This statement is structured around the seven core principles, which are set out in Section 3, and gives an account of how the Council has discharged its responsibilities during 2019-20 as well recommendations for development.

Based on the evidence set out in this annual governance statement, including the impact of the pandemic on our governance framework, we consider the level of assurance to be Reasonable.

Assurance levels for annual opinion:

Substantial	▲ ★ ★ ★	We are able to offer substantial assurance that the Council's arrangements adequately reflect the principles of good governance as indicated in the CIPFA Governance Framework. Processes are in place and operating effectively and risks to effective governance are well managed.
Reasonable	▲ ★ ★ ★	We are able to offer reasonable assurance that the Council's arrangements adequately reflect the principles of good governance as indicated in the CIPFA Governance Framework. Generally, risks are well managed, but some processes could be improved.
Partial	▲ ★ ★ ★	We are able to offer partial assurance that the Council's arrangements adequately reflect the principles of good governance. Some key risks are not well managed and processes require the introduction or improvement of internal controls to ensure effective governance.

None	▲☆☆☆	We are not able to offer any assurance. The Council's arrangements were found to be inadequately controlled. Risks are not well managed and processes require the introduction or improvement of internal controls to ensure effective governance.
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Section 2. Introduction

2.1 Ensuring Good Governance

Powys County Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards; that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for; and is used economically, efficiently and effectively. Powys County Council also has a duty under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised.

In discharging this overall responsibility, Powys County Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

This Annual Governance Statement will explain how Powys County Council has complied with the code.

Powys County Council is the Administering Authority for the Powys Pension Fund (the Pension Fund). The governance arrangements detailed in this Annual Governance Statement apply to the council's responsibilities to the Pension Fund. There are further specific requirements for the Pension Fund which are:

- The Investment Strategy Statement
- Funding Strategy Statement
- A full Actuarial Valuation to be carried out every third year

2.2 The Governance Framework

Powys County Council's governance framework comprises the systems, processes, cultures and values, by which the Council is directed and controlled and through which it engages, leads and is accountable to residents and communities. It enables the Council to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of outcome-focused and cost-effective services.

The system of internal control is a significant part of the framework and is designed to manage risk at a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure

to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness.

The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of Powys County Council's policies, aims and objectives. In addition, it assists in evaluating the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The following sections summarise the governance framework and the system of internal control, which has been in place in Powys County Council for the year ended 31 March 2020. In addition, the Council's constitution can be found at: [Link to Council Constitution.](#)

The COVID19 Coronavirus pandemic did not change the Council's governance frameworks until the last few weeks of the 2019-20 financial year, but it has had a significant impact on them in the first six months of 2020-21. As the Annual Governance Statement covers the control / governance framework in operation up until the date that accounts are signed off the changes to our control framework are set out in Appendix 6. The relevant regulator guidance which has affected or directed changes to control frameworks is also shown here.

There may be a delay in achieving some of the actions and outcomes for 2020-21 identified below due to the pandemic and the period of recovery thereafter. In addition, the Council will need to take economic, environmental and social factors into account as part of the recovery process which may result in other changes to governance arrangements during the year.

Section 3. The Core Principles

3.1 Core Principle A

Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.

How we do this:

Our Values

The Council places a high value on upholding the highest standards in public office for both Members and officers.

Creating a Council of the future that is driven by the right culture and behaviours is important. The Council wants to deliver high performance and value for communities by listening to, and working with, the public as well as private, voluntary and community sectors.

The Council has a set of values that underpin all the work of the Council and guide the behaviours that are expected of everyone engaged in our work, or working with us. Our values are embedded into staff appraisals. Awareness of the values are tested out by means of the Council's staff survey conducted every two years.

Professional	Whatever role we play in the council, we act with professionalism and integrity
Positive	We take a proactive attitude in all we do
Progressive	We take a proactive and responsible approach to planning for the future
Open	We keep each other informed, share knowledge and act with honesty and integrity
Collaborative	We work constructively and willingly on joint initiatives

These values are detailed in [Vision 2025](#) (See item 9 in the agenda) our Corporate Improvement Plan (CIP) for 2020-25 which was updated and approved by Council on 5 March 2020.

Members' Code of Conduct / Standards Committee

For elected Members, the Council has adopted the Model Code of Conduct for County Councils in Wales, which came into force on 1 April 2016. Conduct of Members is monitored by the Public Services Ombudsman and the Council's Standards Committee. The Council has adopted other protocols for elected Members such as one relating to gifts and hospitality and in respect of Planning Applications / Matters. Mandatory training for Members in relation to the Code of Conduct was undertaken following the election in 2017. The Council, following the recommendation of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, has adopted a Local Resolution Process whereby low-level complaints between Members (or between officers and Members) can be resolved locally rather than being referred to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

The Standards Committee is active in trying to assist Members, either individually or collectively, in taking part in discussions where they might otherwise be debarred from taking part by the Code of Conduct by the granting of individual or general dispensations. By this means, the Standards Committee seeks to ensure that the representative role of Members is protected as well as protecting the Council's decision-making processes from being brought into disrepute.

The Standards Committee will also monitor attendances at Mandatory Member Development Sessions to ensure that Members complete the Mandatory Training.

The Standards Committee monitors the attendances of Members at committees. Failure to comply with the 60% attendance requirement will lead to the Member having to account for their absences to the Committee.

Officers' Code of Conduct

For officers, the Council follows the statutory Code of Conduct. Conduct and behaviour is the responsibility of the individual officer and a breach may constitute a disciplinary matter. In addition, the Council has within its Constitution a protocol for Member and officers relations as well as relationships between officers and political groups.

Anti-Fraud / Anti-Corruption and Whistleblowing

The Council has an Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Strategy and a Whistleblowing Policy, which allows matters of concern to be raised and sets out how they will be investigated.

Audit Committee

The Audit Committee is responsible for examining, approving and reviewing the adequacy of risk assessment, risk management and internal controls, including compliance.

Compliments and Complaints

The Council has a formal compliments and complaints procedure that enables complaints to be escalated and investigated independently of the service concerned.

[Link to Complaints Policy](#)

Information Governance

Powys County Council continues to develop its information governance maturity working to its agreed framework, to initiate, develop, and monitor policies and practices in relation to information security, management, assurance and risk, in order to improve and ensure on-going compliance with relevant information legislation and standards.

The Council has robust information personal data breach reporting and management processes in place, which ensures swift containment action, enables informed identification of information risks and mitigation, and supports regulatory reporting requirements.

The Council continues to provide those who choose to exercise their right of access to information held by the Council, or who choose to exercise their data protection rights with an effective and professional service. Further reporting has been developed to not only identify timeline compliance for requests for information, but also includes disclosure and exemption data, indicating the extent of disclosure of information to the public.

The training of staff in the basics of data protection and information security continues to be an important reported measure in the Council's information assurance design.

Powys County Council continues to progress its information management, assurance and governance policies, procedures, and practices. In addition, the Corporate Governance Information Group comprising of the Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) and Directors developed appropriate planning and response strategies to the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulations and the UK Data Protection Act 2018.

The SIRO receives an annual Information Governance Report.

Review of effectiveness:

In the 2018-19 Annual Governance Statement the following areas for development during 2019-20 were identified:

- Continue to embed the Council's values and guiding principles (5 ways of working) into strategic and service planning and staff appraisals to encourage staff to think differently, act differently and therefore deliver differently
- Improve the response rate to requests made under data protection legislation (including GDPR / SARs)
- Ensure customer data is safe
- Improve IT governance processes to support digital transformation agenda

An assessment of effectiveness against Core Principle A during 2019-20 is set out below.

Our Values

In November 2019 a staff survey was conducted. 1,421 employees responded to survey in 2019, compared to 332 in 2018.

In the 2019 survey staff were given a list of ten values and asked to select the Council's values with the following results:

- Collaborative 70%
- Open 71%
- Positive 67%
- Professional 80%
- Progressive 65%

The survey also found that:

- 77% are proud to work for the Council (compared to 62% in 2018)
- 77% are proud of the work they do (compared to 65% in 2018)
- 83% feel confident making decisions without having to seek permission from their line manager (compared to 73% in 2018)
- 91% will go that extra mile to get the job done (compared to 88% in 2018)
- 32% don't feel involved in discussions around changes in their service area (43% in 2018)

During 2019-20 the Council promoted the staff values through internal communications and included a section in individual appraisal forms to facilitate a discussion between line managers and employees about the extent to which individuals are demonstrating behaviours consistent with our values.

Members' Code of Conduct / Standards Committee

During 2019-20 68 Members completed mandatory training and development in Treasury Management, 59 Members completed mandatory training in Corporate Safeguarding and 49 completed mandatory training in Corporate Parenting.

In relation to the monitoring of attendances at committees, there are few Members who fall beneath the 60% requirement, and those that do have valid reasons such as a period of illness. In 2019-20 10 Members were reported to the Standards Committee for a failure to achieve the minimum level of attendance for the period May 2018 to May 2019. Of these 2 Members had their statistics corrected following review, 2 Members resigned and the remainder provided satisfactory responses to the Committee.

The Standards Committee is informed at meetings of the numbers of referrals to the Ombudsman. There were five complaints against Members referred to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales in 2019-20 of which one is still awaiting a decision. Three were closed following receipt by the Ombudsman's Office (i.e. no evidence that there was a suggested breach of the Code of Conduct) and one was closed following an investigation.

Officers' Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct for employees will be reviewed in 2020-21.

Anti-Fraud / Anti-Corruption and Whistleblowing

In 2019-20 the Council introduced a new [Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy](#) (See Item 9).

There were no referrals in the year under the Whistleblowing Policy.

Audit Committee

The Audit Committee undertook a self evaluation in January 2020 which was approved at Audit Committee on 7 February 2020. The Committee recommended that the Terms of Reference of the Committee be reviewed as the core principles of audit committees were not reflected within the Constitution. The Committee met on nine occasions, three of which were in seminar mode to consider the draft and final Statement of Accounts and one to undertake the self assessment. During the year the Committee and its Working Group considered 13 Internal Audit reports. Members of the Audit Committee undertook training in financial planning.

Compliments and Complaints

The Council has a formal compliments and complaints procedure that enables complaints to be escalated and investigated independently of the service concerned. [Link to Complaints Policy](#)

Local Resolution Process

There were three complaints dealt with under this process in 2019-20. 2 issues were resolved and 1 was not resolved.

Information Governance

There were 230 information security incidents reported during 2019-20, with 9 requiring notification to the Information Commissioner. No further regulatory action was considered necessary in any of these cases.

In 2019-20 the Council has retained 76% of employees in Cyber Security and GDPR following the introduction of new mandatory regulations in April 2019.

In 2019-20 the response rate to

- Freedom of Information requests was 69% against 76% in 2018-19
- Environmental Information Regulations was 58% against 78% in 2018-2019
- Data Subject Access Requests was 29% against 40% in 2018-2019

Management actions were also taken to improve patch management following an Internal Audit report and the Council achieved Cyber Essentials Plus and IASME accreditations.

Conclusion

The Council can offer substantial assurance that the Council's arrangements adequately reflect the principles of good governance as set out in Core Principle A: *Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law*. Processes are in place and operating effectively and risks to effective governance are well managed.

Recommendations for further development in 2020-21:

During 2020-21 the following developments will be undertaken:

Development Action:	Lead / deadline
Review the arrangements for Members' Code of Conduct training for TCC Members	Clive Pinney 30 September 2020
Review Employees Code of Conduct	Clive Pinney 31 March 2021
Refresh County Councillor training in 2020-21	Clive Pinney 31 March 2021
Complaints and Compliments Policy to be reviewed in the light of any updates in the PSOW guidance	Diane Reynolds 30 June 2020
Local Resolution Process to be reviewed	Clive Pinney October 2020

3.2 Core Principle B

Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

How we do this:

Engagement and consultation

Powys County Council is signed up to the National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales¹ to ensure conversations with our stakeholders are meaningful, timely and appropriately resourced.

We believe all our citizens, partners and businesses should be engaged and consulted so their voice influences future decisions and service provision. While we continue to engage citizens using both traditional methods like surveys, focus groups and meetings, we are increasingly also investing in and using digital tools such as online platforms, survey software and social media channels to listen to residents voices.

The Council has a corporate Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Flickr account and its own YouTube channel. A proactive approach to the use of video, animations and infographics to promote key campaigns like Foster Carer recruitment has resulted in the growth of followers on both our Facebook and Twitter accounts and we monitor and share posts from partner organisations wherever relevant to ensure our residents gain access to information that may be useful to them.

LinkedIn and Facebook are both used to advertise job vacancies so residents who may not look at our website can see what's on offer. The Chief Executive has her own Twitter account as do some of the Strategic Directors and Heads of Service alongside several key services, providing choice and a voice so Powys residents are kept up to date about the design, planning and delivery of our services.

The Big Squeeze Budget Exercise

During the year several consultation and engagement exercises were conducted to seek views from the residents of Powys on a range of policy and service matters.

The Big Squeeze – the Council's budget consultation exercise – was one of the key exercises which helped to inform the Council's 2020-2021 budget. The exercise took place during late Autumn using an online budget simulator completed by 621 residents. The simulator tasked residents with finding savings to the tune of between £8 -£13m so the Council could set a balanced budget. Users could see a range of proposals to save money across several Council services and choose how, or if to reduce this budget, sustain it or increase it for each service proposal. People could submit at any point during the exercise and were not forced to meet the budget shortfall. This provided useful feedback and resulted in an increase of £0.5m for road maintenance and a Council Tax increase which was set in line with the views given by respondents.

A regional survey was also conducted in partnership with Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire Councils whereby residents were asked to rate their experiences of several services highlighted in the Equality and Human Rights Commission's report into equality in Wales. An online survey was promoted by all the public sector partners including fire, police and ambulance and a regional report

¹ <https://www.participationcymru.org.uk/national-principles/>

and localised reports produced to inform the Strategic Equality Plans for the year ahead.

A new Ask Sara directory of services for adults who may be seeking support in their local community was launched during the year alongside a survey conducted to name a new service for children to complement the Assist Service launched for adults during 2018/19. The services aim to ensure that all children and adult care referrals are directed through one team to improve access to timely information, advice and assistance.

Welsh Language and stakeholders During the year we also conducted an internal campaign focussing on some of the main elements of providing a service in Welsh, to ensure that we as a Council provide the Active Offer of a service in Welsh when interacting with the public. This included services by telephone, in meetings, in correspondence and through digital communication, but also emphasised the importance of considering the impact of our policies and services on the Welsh language.

To ensure the impact of our services in the Welsh language is considered, all surveys now incorporate three standard questions to capture feedback on how our decisions impact the Welsh Language and how they could be changed to ensure a more positive outcome.

A summary of some of the key consultations conducted during the year is contained in Appendix 1.

Cabinet Forward Work Programme

In 2019-20 the Head of Democratic Services became accountable for maintaining and updating the Cabinet Forward Work Programme 18 months ahead, in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team. This has improved the completeness and quality of the Forward Work Programme.

Committee Agendas and Reports

In 2019-20 the Council published all the agendas, reports and minutes of the Council, the Cabinet and committees on its public website within timescale. In addition, all Council meetings were webcast and a new and improved webcast system was introduced.

Members' Annual Reports

In 2019-20 all Members produced an Annual Report on their activities and these are all published on the Council's public website. [Councillor Annual Reports](#)

Public Participation at Council Meetings

The Council received eight questions from members of the public during 2019-20. Of those four people attended the Council meeting where they were able to ask a supplementary question and two submitted supplementary questions by email. All the questions were to Cabinet Members.

Conclusion:

The Council is able to offer substantial assurance that the Council's arrangements adequately reflect the principles of good governance as set out in Core Principle B: *Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement*. Processes are in place and operating effectively and risks to effective governance are well managed.

Recommendations for further development in 2020-21:

During 2020-21 the following developments will be undertaken:

Recommended Action	Lead / deadline
Effectiveness of new scrutiny arrangements to be reviewed	Clive Pinney 31 July 2020
Further strengthen Cabinet and Committee Forward Work programmes	Clive Pinney 31 July 2020

3.3 Core Principle C

Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits

How we do this:

Corporate Planning Cycle

The Council has a set process in place for annually reviewing its objectives and corporate plans to ensure that they remain relevant and focussed on improving the right outcomes for residents and communities.

Vision 2025: Our Corporate Improvement Plan (CIP)

The Council's long-term vision and objectives for improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Powys are set out in Vision 2025: Our Corporate Improvement Plan.

Vision 2025 is the Council's vision for the future. Within it are four priority areas: Economy; Health and Care; Learning and Skills; and Residents and Communities. These are supported by a 'Making It Happen' priority which focuses on engagement and communication; leadership and governance; and changing how we work.

Delivering Vision 2025

By 2025 Powys will be widely recognised as a fantastic place in which to work, live and play

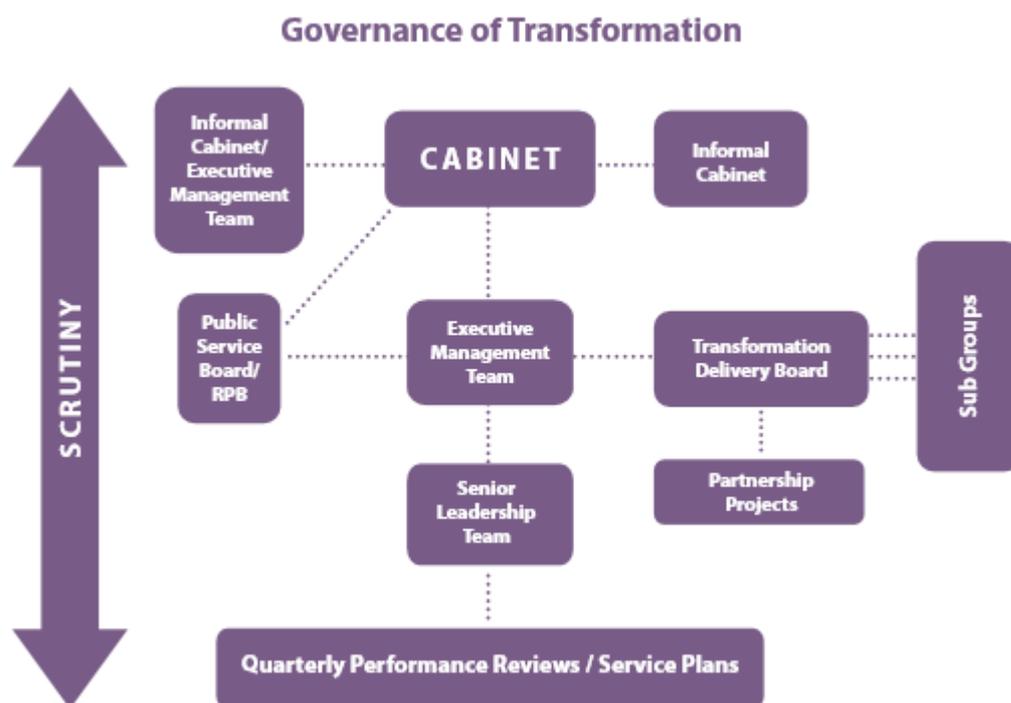


Vision 2025 provides an important framework for engaging residents, councillors, staff and other stakeholders, such as regulators, in the vision and the Council's key objectives. It sets out a series of aspirational outcomes for improving well-being for Powys residents, communities and businesses. The plan is reviewed and updated annually and an Annual Report of progress is published in July each year.

Our Corporate Improvement Plan integrates with our partnership plans including the Powys Public Service Board well-being plan *Towards 2040*, and the Powys Regional Partnership Board Joint Area Plan *Healthy Caring Powys*.

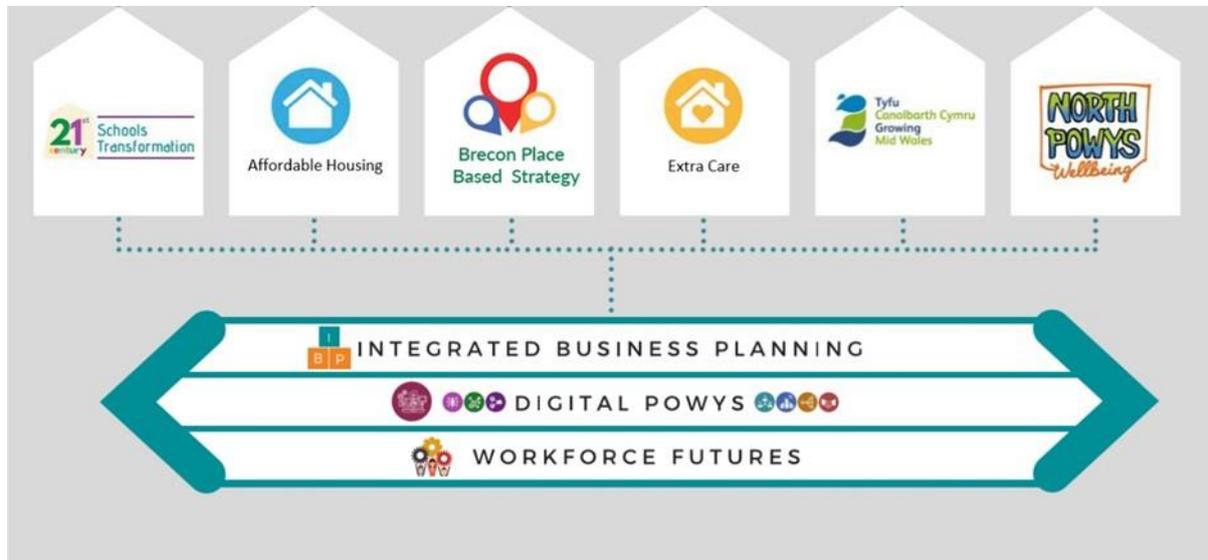
Vision 2025 also shows how we are embracing the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, by ensuring that our objectives contribute to the seven national well-being goals and that we are considering the five ways of working in the way we plan our services.

The diagram below outlines the governance of transformation within the Council.



Vision 2025 Transformation Programme

The Vision 2025 outcomes are being delivered by the Transformation Programme which consists of nine core projects together with service transformations:



Medium Term Financial Strategy

The Council's [Medium-Term Financial Strategy](#) (MTFS) (Please See Item 5 – Appendix A) articulates how the Council plans to use its resources (revenue and capital) to support the achievement of its corporate priorities as well as the management of its statutory and core duties, known pressures and risks. The MTFS helps the Council to work more effectively with partners in other sectors and provides a strategy for the use of reserves to meet changes in resources, risks or unforeseen demands from year to year without impacting unduly on services or council taxpayers. It includes a set of principles that will govern the strategy, a five-year Financial Resource Model, Capital Financing and Treasury Management Strategies and a Capital Programme.

Strategic Equality Plan

This [plan](#) sets out our equality objectives and action plans for making Powys a fairer place to live where people can achieve their potential, thrive and prosper. It focuses on three things: improving our services, making our organisation a better place to work, and improving the most important life outcomes for local people.

Service Improvement Plans

In 2019-20 all Council's services have a Service Improvement Plan to show how they will deliver continuous service improvements in line with Vision 2025.

Integrated Impact Assessments

The Council undertakes Integrated Impact Assessments for all significant service, financial or policy changes to ensure the implications are understood, to support

effective decision making and to ensure compliance with respective legislation, including the Well-being of Future Generations Act, the Equalities legislation and the Welsh Language Standards.

Scrutiny Functions

In February 2019 the Council introduced three new scrutiny committees to align more closely to Vision 2025:

- Health and Care Scrutiny Committee
- Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee
- Economy, Residents, Communities and Governance Scrutiny Committee

At the same time Audit Committee remit was focused on the Committee's statutory financial functions while the Finance Scrutiny Panel was renamed the Finance Panel, with a focus on strategic financial scrutiny only and scrutiny of individual services being undertaken by the 3 scrutiny committees. In addition, a Co-ordinating Committee was established comprising representatives of the Cabinet, Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Scrutiny and Audit Committees and representatives of the Executive Management Team to undertake the development of the Scrutiny Forward Work Programme.

The Constitution sets out clear terms of reference for all Committees of the Council. The Cabinet, and the Scrutiny and Audit Committees have rolling work programmes.

Scrutiny Committees undertake reviews and inquiries, within the Committee as a whole or within Working Groups. The findings of Scrutiny reviews and inquiries are presented to Cabinet with recommendations for action. Since December 2016, greater emphasis is now placed on pre-decision scrutiny of significant strategic policy issues and service changes.

The Health and Care and Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committees have overseen the Council's recovery plans following adverse reports by external regulators to ensure that the required improvement is achieved and this work is ongoing.

The Audit Committee oversees the work of Internal Audit, Risk Management and receives the reports of the Wales Audit Office. It has responsibility for approving the council's Accounts.

The Council's scrutiny committees also include some representatives who are not County Councillors. The Audit Committee has an independent "lay" member, the Learning, Skills and Economy Scrutiny Committee has co-opted Members in respect of education scrutiny. The Economy, Residents, Communities and Governance Scrutiny Committee has a co-opted member in respect of crime and disorder matters, although this role is currently vacant.

Public Service Board Scrutiny

The Council has established a PSB Scrutiny Committee comprising those agencies who currently make up the PSB with the first meeting held in September 2018. Its role is to scrutinise the implementation of the Powys Well-being Plan as well as integration projects between the Council and the Powys Teaching Health Board.

Review of effectiveness:

In the 2018-19 Annual Governance Statement the following areas for development during 2019-20 were identified under Core Principle C:

- Improve decision making through the embedded use of analytics, research and horizon scanning
- Design and implement our digital transformation, setting the map for how the Council will take advantage of digital technologies to transform service delivery through the way we work, how we use information, support our customers, improve resident opportunities and help our businesses to compete
- Continue to embed the Council's values and guiding principles (5 ways of working) into strategic and service planning and staff appraisals to encourage staff to think differently, act differently and therefore deliver differently
- Deliver Children's Service Improvement Plan Partnership Working objectives

An assessment of effectiveness against Core Principle C during 2019-20 is set out below.

Corporate Planning Cycle

In 2019-20 the Council introduced a new corporate planning approach, Integrated Business Planning, which involves the development of a single plan that connects the Council's Corporate Improvement Plan and statutory obligations to service area operational plans, budget and workforce plans while balancing practical constraints about the availability of financial and workforce resources with the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy. To assist in the development of an integrated business plan the organisation is adopting Outcome Based Budgeting (OBB) to seek to allocate financial resources to achieve priority outcomes. Crucially the success of OBB depends on the organisation understanding the value it derives (e.g. outcome / cost) from all its activities. The aim is to understand what outcomes the Council is achieving from the money it is spending so that resources can be redirected to where they will add greatest value.

Integrated Business Planning, and OBB within it, takes time to implement and the Council is therefore adopting a phased approach to its adoption. In 2019-20 this focused on supporting services to produce Integrated Business Plans for 2020-23, using the data currently available. It resulted in the Council having service plans that for the first time also articulate the financial and workforce plans required for the achievement of the outcomes set out in Vision 2025.

Successfully moving to Integrated Business Planning and Outcome Based Budgeting is dependent on the provision and analysis of data and the Council has

benefited from the investment it is making in digital technology and data analytics. During 2019-20 the Council secured nearly £1 million from the Welsh Government to support further developments in this area over the next two years.

Vision 2025: Our Corporate Improvement Plan (CIP)

The Council published its 2018-19 Annual Report on Vision 2025 in July 2019.

During 2019-20 a review has been undertaken of the Vision 2025 outcomes, actions and measures and the latest update to Vision 2025 Corporate Improvement Plan was approved unanimously by full Council on 5 March following engagement with Members, scrutiny and consultations with services.

Vision 2025 Transformation Programme

In 2019-20 the Council consolidated its arrangements for planning and delivering Vision 2025 with the establishment of the Vision 2025 Transformation Programme and the Transformation Delivery Board. This has helped the Council to focus on key projects on which Vision 2025 outcomes will depend.

The Transformation Programme is governed by the Transformation Delivery Board, comprising Cabinet / EMT and includes programmes that will have the most dramatic impact on the Powys population, including schools' transformation, a place-based strategy for Brecon, a well-being programme for the whole of North Powys, a Mid Wales Growth Deal, investment in extra care and affordable housing. There are also three cross cutting programmes around workforce, digital technology and integrated business planning which are focused on transforming the way in which the Council works. The Vision 2025 Transformation Programme governance is proportionate and consistent across the programme and the focus is on delivery. 2019-20 saw the programme really take shape and start to deliver. The individual programmes are at different stages of development with some only being brought into the programme in December 2019, but all will be in implementation phase during 2020-21.

During 2019-20 the Council has also developed a corporate transformation narrative, methodology and standardised governance and documentation for all programmes. These measures ensure rigour, consistency and appropriate accountability of the overall programme.

The Digital Powys Programme is one of the nine projects in the Vision 2025 Transformation Programme. In 2019-20 following engagement with the public, staff and stakeholders we developed a Digital Powys strategy and a programme to ensure its delivery. Supported by Council investment and grant funding from the Welsh Government the programme is enhancing our customers' experience across all our platforms.

Medium Term Financial Strategy

Council approved the MTFs for 2020-25 on 28 February 2020 and this can be found [here](#) (See Item 5 Appendix A).

There has been a significant change to medium term financial planning in the Council since April 2019, with the introduction of Integrated Business Planning. The budget allocation process has focused on how best to use our resources to make the biggest impact on the outcomes the Council is seeking to achieve, informed where available by comparative performance and unit cost data and feedback from regulators and customers. In May 2019 services were given notional budget allocations for 2020-23 to work from, but through an iterative process of challenge and engagement over a number of months the final allocations reflect as well as possible how the Council should use the resources available to it to achieve Vision 2025. As such the Council has moved away from salami slicing.

There is further work to do to move properly away from incremental budgeting and to Outcome Based Budgeting and this work is planned, starting with a project focused on setting an outcome-based budget for Powys children, but with a plan over the period of the MTF5 to move fully to OBB as part of our Integrated Business Planning Programme.

2019-20 has seen much a higher level of engagement in the development of the budget and the MTF5 with staff, members, stakeholders and the public, albeit consultation on the detailed proposals was later than desired due to the lateness of the Provisional Local Government Settlement in December 2019. Use of the budget simulator, numerous member engagement sessions, staff engagement events, meetings with stakeholders and scrutiny of the Draft 2020-21 budget and the 2020-25 MTF5 have all helped to bring greater openness and transparency to the financial planning process.

For 2020-25 the MTF5 has been strengthened to include key principles that will guide the Council's financial planning and management over the medium term. The Council's capital strategy and programme have been strengthened in 2019-20 and are now integral to the Integrated Business Planning process. The strategy facilitates a seamless interface between business planning within the Council and the management of assets and capital resources. The introduction of a new framework for the inclusion of projects in the capital programme supported by CIPFA training for key staff in business case development has helped to improve the quality of advice and decision making around capital investment.

Strategic Equality Plan

2019-20 was the final year of the 2016-2020 Strategic Equality Plan and a performance report will be presented to Council when the current pandemic is over. From 2020-21 the Council has incorporated its equality objectives into its Corporate Improvement Plan.

Service Improvement Plans

In 2019-20 all twelve service areas had a Service Improvement Plan for 2019-22. Each of these plans was presented to Members in a Member Development session and individual Heads of Services were held to account for their delivery by their Director and Cabinet Member.

Children's Services, Adult Services and the Education Service all have specific improvement plans to respond to recommendations made by regulators. These plans are overseen by the Improvement and Assurance Board (see below).

Adults Services

Through 2019-20, there has been consistent leadership within Adult Services, with a permanent senior leadership team in place. This continues to provide the stability in leadership required to further the vision for continued transformation of the service as well as managing day to day sustained improvements. The service has further embedded a strengths-based approach to its work and has invested jointly with Powys Teaching Health Board to develop the community connector capacity with partners in the voluntary sector. ASSIST, our adult services front door, has increased its ability to respond to initial calls for information and advice, resolving issues at the earliest opportunity.

Our partnership working with PTHB has also seen a refinement of our hospital discharge pathways and improved performance in transferring people from hospital back into the community at the earliest opportunity.

The challenges of ensuring availability of domiciliary care where and when required has improved during the year. The numbers waiting for care reduced significantly towards the end of the year and the service continues to work towards rolling out the dynamic purchasing system. There is significant work in developing Community Catalysts and an increase in Direct Payments take up. Using the strengths-based approach, integrated reablement service, and technology enabled care, the service has reduced the average size of domiciliary care packages and is delaying the need for residential care. The Service has developed excellent working relationships with statutory partners and made significant progress in early 2020 in reducing Delayed Transfers of Care and lengths of stay in hospital.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic placed the service in business continuity from mid March 2020 onwards and many developments, including the dynamic purchasing system roll-out, were put on hold.

Children's Services

Throughout 2019-20 there has been consistent leadership across Children's Services with all Senior Manager posts appointed permanently. This has established a clear strategic vision for improving the service. The Service is two years into a journey of improvement. Key areas of improvement to date are:

The restructure of the Service from one based on generic teams where workers were required to undertake tasks from referral to adoption to specialist teams. The restructure enables workers to have clarity of role and manageable workloads and makes Children's Services in Powys an attractive place to work. The specialist teams are now made up of the following:

- Early Help and Assessment
- Intervention and Prevention
- Care and Support

- Corporate Parenting
- Safeguarding and Quality Assurance

Following the restructure, staff morale has improved and colleagues report feeling better equipped to undertake their roles. The restructure also included a big focus and investment in Early Help Services and Intervention and Prevention Services. The Intervention and Prevention Service works directly with children, young people and their families to help keep families together wherever it is safe and in the child's best interests and with foster carers to stabilise placements which may be at risk of breaking down and prevent escalation. Since these services began the number of children becoming looked after from April 2019 to March 2020 is 59, 23 fewer than in 2018-19. This can directly be attributed to the work of the Early Help and Intervention and Prevention Services and is evidence that the restructure has positively changed the way we work.

The practice framework Signs of Safety has been rolled out and embedded across the service. Training for all staff has been implemented and a Signs of Safety Implementation Group was established and meets monthly to review all the forms the services uses to ensure they are in line with Signs of Safety. The Group is attended by staff from all aspects of the Service and examples of good practice are shared. Team Managers report that using Signs of Safety has transformed the way they work with families and the focus is on developing family support networks and keeping children safely at home wherever possible.

A focus for the Service has been on stabilising the workforce and the recruitment of a Permanent Director, Head of Children's Services, Senior Managers and Team Managers and Team Leaders has been achieved alongside key roles within the structure including; Children's Services Participation and Engagement Officer, Children's Services Development Manager – Residential and Supported Accommodation, Safeguarding Manager, and Exploitation and Safeguarding Lead. Since April 2019 when the restructure began there have been 56.2 FTE permanent appointments across the service. The number of agency social workers has reduced from 63 in November 2018 to 34 at end of March 2020. Every Senior Manager, Team Manager and Principal Social Worker in the Service is permanent.

The number of qualified social work vacancies have reduced along with the reliance on agency staff. As at 31 March 2020 there were 32 posts vacant (29.41fte) of which 9 (8fte) are not covered by agency staff. This number is reducing steadily month by month. Social workers are applying for jobs with us having heard through word of mouth that Powys is a positive place to be a children's social worker. The Service has undertaken several recruitment drives and initiatives to raise the profile of the Service and these are contributing to the steady permanent recruitment.

The Service is implementing a Closer to Home strategy to increase the supply of a range of placements that will meet the needs of children and young people while enabling them to live in their communities. We have reduced the number of children

who are looked after from a high of 250 in February 2019 to 237 at the end of January 2020. We have established supported accommodation for care leavers in the North and South of Powys so that young people no longer have to go out of county, as well as opening a training flat to begin preparing young people for life as tenants of social housing. We have acquired a property which is being prepared as a children's home which will be able to accommodate two children. We have consulted with foster carers and reviewed the support offer, whilst working with national colleagues on the harmonisation of fees for foster carers across Wales.

We have worked with Housing colleagues to establish a Housing Gateway Panel so that our care leavers no longer have to present as homeless in order to access social housing (the previous process).

The voice of the child and young person has been at the forefront of the restructure and the change in the way we work. All appointments are made with a young person's panel. The creation of the Children's Services Participation and Engagement Officer who will mentor and line manage the Participation and Engagement Care Leaver apprentice post, is linked to the youth work pathway. We have also re-established the Children in Care and Care Leaver fora. The service has invested in the app Mind of My Own which helps children and young people express themselves and communicate with professionals making sure they are heard. This app is currently being rolled out with training being provided to practitioners across the service.

The Service has established a quality assurance framework and audits are regularly taking place with a quarterly theme. The Service has integrated the Social Services and Well-being Act and is continuing to develop practice standards for every part of the service.

The Wales Community Care Information System (WCCIS) has been developed to provide essential management information data to enable the effective management of the business and contribute to effective strategic planning. A performance management framework has been developed working in collaboration with corporate colleagues. Performance has significantly improved with average performance for visits to children looked after within statutory timescales at 95% for the last 6 months and the visits to children on the Child Protection register averages at 90% completed within the statutory timescales.

Education Service

Powys Local Authority Education Service was inspected by Estyn in July 2019 and its report was published in September 2019. The inspection team concluded that "...there are many areas of the authority's work causing significant concern, such as those relating to school organisation, financial management, school governance, lack of action regarding schools causing concern and the co-ordination of provision for pupils with special educational needs or who may require extra support. These issues affect school leadership, staffing structures, curriculum planning and staff morale."

The Council was required to prepare a Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) in response to the recommendations made and in November 2019 a Post Inspection Improvement Conference was held, chaired by Estyn to seek assurance that the Council had:

- identified and understood the current issues
- coherent plans to address these issues
- enough resources to implement its plans
- rigorous processes in place to monitor the implementation of its plans and evaluate the impact.

Following the conference, the PIAP was refined and detailed actions were put into team plans leaving strategic priorities in the PIAP. The Education Service, supported by the Transformation Team have worked with headteachers, teachers and governors to develop a case for change and a vision for the future of education provision in Powys. Cabinet approved a report approved a draft vision and engagement plan in January and the current consultation closed on 24 February. Estyn held a link visit with the Council on 11 February and concluded that that improvements are being made at pace.

Integrated Impact Assessments

The quality of Integrated Impact Assessments improved during 2019-20 although room for further improvement was identified by Scrutiny during the 2020-21 budget consultation process.

Scrutiny

The new scrutiny committees have been bedding in during 2019-20 and an interim review of them was conducted in September 2019. The results of the review were considered by the Co-ordinating Committee in December 2019 and concluded that the majority of responses regarding the way that scrutiny was operating were positive.

A full review was due to take place in April 2020, but this has been deferred due to the Coronavirus pandemic and the need for the Council to focus on its response to that.

Conclusion:

The Council is able to offer **reasonable** assurance that the Council's arrangements adequately reflect the principles of good governance as set out in Core Principle C: *Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits*. Processes are in place and operating effectively and risks to effective governance are well managed.

Recommendations for further development in 2020-21:

During 2020-21 the following developments will be undertaken:

Recommended Action	Lead/deadline
Review Vision 2025 and the Council's operating model to embed good practice developed during the COVID19 pandemic	Emma Palmer 31 March 2021
Quality assurance process for Integrated Impact Assessments	Emma Palmer 30 September 2020

3.4 Core Principle D

Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes

How we do this:

Strategic plans

The Council's Corporate Improvement Plan, Vision 2025, was developed taking account of evidence gained through a population needs assessment and a well-being assessment. This plan identifies the interventions necessary to achieve the outcomes set out in the document. With its partners on the Regional Partnership Board the Council has also developed a Health and Care Strategy for Powys and with its Public Service Board Partners, Towards 2040, our Well-being Plan. These strategic plans all align and are designed to ensure the Council focuses its activities and resources on optimising the achievement of its intended outcomes.

Performance Management and Quality Assurance Framework

The Council has a Performance Management and Quality Assurance Framework in place to ensure a consistent approach and clear accountability for performance improvement. Our organisation is large, complex and needs to work with multiple external partners to deliver overall results for our residents. A performance management framework is therefore essential as it lays out the common system and methods needed to perform and improve, helping us to work as one 'joined up' community rather than separate services. The framework ensures that staff can clearly understand their responsibilities regarding performance management on which the Council's governance arrangements will hold them to account.

Management Information and Business Intelligence

The Council has a Business Intelligence Team which is responsible for the development of management information through the collection, collation and analysis of data to aid decision making and performance management.

Improvement and Assurance Board

The Improvement and Assurance Board (IAB) was established in April 2018 by the Welsh Government to provide challenge and support to the Council to assist the Leader in driving forward required change and improvement, particularly in respect of corporate governance, social services and in 2019-20 education improvement was

added. Part of its remit has been to support the Council in identifying and pursuing the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.

Review of effectiveness:

In the 2018-19 Annual Governance Statement the following areas for development during 2019-20 were identified:

- Strengthen Public Service Board, Regional Partnership Board, Powys County Council golden thread alignment of planning and reporting
- Review and embed a Performance Management and Quality Assurance Framework to ensure our decisions are underpinned by accurate information
- Review and re-design our services to ensure that they are more efficient and focus on our customers' requirements

Strategic plans

During 2019-20 the Council has worked with its Regional Partnership Board partners to develop the North Powys Well-being Programme under the Powys Health and Care Strategy, including developing an assurance framework for that programme. The Partnership has also developed and published a Strategic Framework for the Health and Care workforce in Powys and is currently working on a similar Framework for digital. The Council continues to work with its Public Service Board partners on the delivery of Towards 2040 and in 2019-20 held engagement event with Town and Community Councils to extend the reach of the plan. The PSB membership was also extended to include a TCC representative.

Performance Management and Quality Assurance Framework

The Performance Management Quality Assurance Framework (PMQAF) has refreshed the whole Council's approach to improving and maintaining service performance. It is part of the new Managers' Induction Programme mandatory training and the Executive Management Team and Cabinet have attended a training session. Performance Assurance is embedded, and all services are clear on their targets. This enables challenge and accountability to be made at all levels.

The Executive Management Team has a Corporate Dashboard of service performance, providing timely, relevant and accurate performance and quality assurance information. Systems and processes have been established to ensure corporate visibility of all services.

Performance is now reported on a quarterly basis to the Executive Management Team, Cabinet and scrutiny committees. It is also available in the public domain. A detailed report is collated setting an analysis of the following information:

- Top 20 Performance Indicators - Powys specific Performance Indicators (PIs) based on what is most important to Powys, informed by Vision 2025 and regulatory reports.

- Corporate Improvement Plan 2018-2023 (CIP) - The Corporate Improvement Plan is our road map to Vision 2025, setting out our top priorities and milestones.
- Public Accountability Measures 2018-2019 – Performance framework set by Welsh Government and comparable across 21 Councils.
- Strategic Equality Plan 2016-20 – This provides an update of progress against the objectives, actions and measures within the Council’s statutory Plan.
- Quality Assurance – Framework to help measure and assess the quality and standards of services.

During the second quarter of 2019-20, the method for reporting quarterly performance and progress against Vision 2025, our CIP, was refined following officer feedback and a change in governance. All performance reporting is now based on a simplified ‘Achievements, Issues, Actions’ principle.

The Performance Management Framework also requires services to report on quality indicators including feedback from customers, compliments and complaints. This helps the Council to understand whether its interventions are having the desired impact and outcome and together with the other performance data allows us to adapt where required.

Management Information and Business Intelligence

During 2019-20 the data analytics capability within the Council has strengthened considerably, fully embracing Microsoft Power BI to undertake data modelling for service change (e.g. [North Powys Well-being Programme](#) and schools’ transformation) and to provide interactive [self-serve dashboards*](#), both internally and externally. The Council leadership now has self-serve access to 1500 management information reports (including sub-reports) from the online [Corporate Insight Centre](#) (which has 500+ users), covering Adults’ and Children’s Services, as well as Council-wide workforce, finance (revenue and capital) and customer service information. The most popular reports focus on sickness, supervisions, complaints and open assessments. The Council also has a [Well-being Information Bank](#) with 74 dashboards that the public can access on our website (average 150 hits per month). A [mobile management reporting](#) tool will be rolled out to SLT in February 2020 and in the summer of 2020 Power BI premium will be implemented across the Council.

Improvement and Assurance Board

The IAB met monthly during 2019-20 to monitor the Council’s improvement journey in respect of corporate governance, adults’ and children’s services and from October 2019 education service. The independent members of the board provided advice and guidance to officers on strategic and operational aspects of their plans throughout this period. A review has been undertaken by Sean Harriss of the effectiveness of the Improvement and Assurance Board.

Internal Improvement Boards

In addition to the IAB the Council has established other internal improvement boards during 2019-20 including one for housing and corporate compliance improvements, one for social services. These boards have focused on identifying the interventions needed to drive rapid improvements in service performance.

Conclusion:

The Council is able to offer reasonable assurance that the Council's arrangements adequately reflect the principles of good governance as set out in Core Principle D: *Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes*. Processes are in place and operating effectively and risks to effective governance are well managed.

Recommendations for further development in 2020-21:

During 2020-21 the following developments will be undertaken:

Objective	Responsible Service
Review and strengthening Improvement and Assurance arrangements to take account of recommendations from the Sean Harriss review	Caroline Turner July 2020
Understanding the Impact of the pandemic on Powys (short/medium/long term)	Emma Palmer June 2020
Evaluate with stakeholders where possible, all pre-COVID19 Council activities to determine changes to services and activities required during the recovery phase	Caroline Turner July 2020
Adjust 2020-21 content of Integrated Business Plans to include short term recovery action	Heads of Service July 2020
Produce 2021-24 Integrated Business Plans to include medium term recovery action	Heads of Service September 2020

3.5 Core Principle E

Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

How we do this:

Constitution

The Council's Constitution sets out the roles and responsibilities of Members and officers so that accountability for decisions made and actions taken are clear.

The Council has processes in place for the appointment by political groups to committees, as well as processes for the appointment of the Parent Governor Representatives onto the Learning, Skills and Economy Scrutiny Committee and the

appointment of Independent “Lay” Members on the Standards Committee and Audit Committee.

There are clear schemes of delegation to officers, which are being revised as a result of a revision to the Council’s Senior Management Structure, as well as limits to such delegation set out within the Constitution. The Council’s constitution is published on the public website. Revisions of the Constitution are ongoing and future changes are incorporated in a new full version being published each time which will make easier the identification of versions in force at a particular point in time, which was not the case previously. The eighth version of the Council’s constitution was approved by full Council on the 23 January 2020.

Council

The Council has seventy-three elected members. The current political composition of the Council is: Independent (24); Conservative (18); Liberal Democrat / Green (15); Welsh Labour (8); Plaid Cymru (2); Action for Powys (4); Non-aligned (2). The ruling administration is a coalition between the Independent and Conservative Groups.

Cabinet

The Council operates a Leader and Cabinet model of governance. The Council is responsible for appointing the Leader. The Leader appoints the remainder of the Cabinet. The Council retains responsibility for approving the council’s CIP and the annual budget.

The Cabinet has delegated responsibility for some functions, including:

- Strategic leadership and direction
- Developing and proposing to Council for approval the CIP, the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and the Annual Budget
- Ensuring delivery of the CIP
- Consulting with relevant Scrutiny Committees in the development of policy
- Delivering services in line with adopted policies and budgets.

In addition, the Leader has delegated authority to individual Cabinet members to take decisions on all matters within their individual Portfolios, and there is a process set out in the Constitution so that the decision-making process is open and transparent.

Member Development

The Council provides a wide range of opportunities to support Members’ development. All newly elected Members receive induction training. There is also specific training relating to whichever committees they are appointed. Powys County Council is accredited with the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development. An annual Member Development Programme is in place and the Council has identified mandatory and discretionary training as well as possible sanctions which can be utilised by the Standards Committees for Members failing to achieve mandatory training set by the Council. Members in receipt of Senior Salaries (e.g.

Cabinet Members and Committee Chairs) have undertaken personal development reviews (PDRs) to assess their individual training needs. This is undertaken on a two-yearly basis or within three months of their initial appointment.

A Member Development Working Group consisting of Councillors and officers develops and monitors the implementation of the Member Development Programme. The programme is reviewed and amended on a regular basis with input from the Council's Senior Leadership Team to ensure that it includes the current areas of priority for the Council.

Partnership Working

The Council works closely with key partners through statutory and non-statutory arrangements. The Council is a member of the Regional Partnership Board, established under the Social Services and Well-being Act 2014 to drive the strategic regional delivery of social services in close collaboration with health. We are also a member of the statutory Public Service Board established under the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 to improve joint working across all public services in the local authority area. These arrangements enable the Council to achieve more for our residents through joint planning and co-ordination of our shared resources.

The Council also has a number of Section 33 Agreements with Powys Teaching Health Board in relation to the provision of health and care services as well as ICT. The Section 33 Agreements are governed by a Joint Partnership Board (JPB) which also oversees our ambitious change shared agenda set out in the Area Plan and our CIP.

Improvement and Assurance Board

See Core Principle D above for details

Senior Officer roles and responsibilities

The Chief Executive is the Head of Paid Service who leads the Council's officers. They are responsible for signing the Council's Annual Governance Statement

During 2019-20, the following officers held statutory roles:

- The Head of Legal and Democratic Services was the designated Monitoring Officer and the Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO)
- The Head of Financial Services was the designated Section 151 Officer, responsible for certifying that the Council's Accounts present a true and fair view of its financial position and income and expenditure
- The Corporate Director – Children and Adults was the designated Statutory Director for Social Services, responsible for an annual review of the Council's social services under the ACRF
- The Corporate Director – Children and Adults was the Chief Education Officer for the period 1 April 2019 to 29 April 2019
- The Chief Executive was the Chief Education Officer for the period 29 April 2019 to 30 July 2019
- The Interim Head of Education was the designated Interim Chief Education Officer from 30 July 2019 to March 2020

- The Corporate Director – Children and Adults was the designated Lead Director for Children and Young People for the period
- The Scrutiny Manager was the designated Head of Democratic Services

Workforce Planning and Development

All staff have clear conditions of employment and job descriptions which highlight their roles and responsibilities. This is supported by a range of Human Resources policies.

Effective workforce planning and development is in place to ensure the Council has the workforce it needs to deliver its statutory functions and improvement outcomes.

All new employees receive induction training and are required to complete corporate mandatory training and any other related to their role. A range of role-based training is available across the Council to ensure staff operate in a safe manner to protect themselves, the public and their colleagues.

The Council has a Leadership Programme for managers at all levels as well as a coaching programme.

There is an annual appraisal system through which individuals' objectives are agreed, training needs are identified and performance assessed. There is a full appraisal once a year and an interim appraisal after six months. The appraisal process helps managers and staff have a greater focus on performance management to ensure work is directed towards achieving the goals of the individual services and the organisation as a whole. Therefore, the golden thread linking the Council's strategic plans to the work of individual officers and operational staff is ensured.

Digital Services

The Council has a well developed digital infrastructure which facilitates the work of its employees and services, using the latest technology to enhance our residents' and employees' experience of engaging with the Council.

[Review of effectiveness:](#)

In the 2018-19 Annual Governance Statement the following areas for development during 2019-20 were identified:

- Develop initial workforce strategy in order to improve the recruitment, retention and quality of leadership (at all levels), across our schools with a specific focus on secondary schools
- Continue to embed the Council's values and guiding principles (5 ways of working) into strategic and service planning and staff appraisals to encourage staff to think differently, act differently and therefore deliver differently
- Re-model the Council's staffing structure to embed changes in organisational culture, while making significant financial savings

- Equip the workforce with the right skills, attitude, behaviours and experience and develop our own talent through apprenticeships and training, to enable them to reach their potential
- Support services in developing short to medium term workforce resourcing plans to ensure we have the required skilled and competent workforce in place. Facilitate an internal talent management pipeline/process to ensure services have succession plans in place as part of their Workforce Planning. This will link into effective sub-regional workforce planning key areas such as Social Services
- Design and implement our digital transformation, setting the map for how the Council will take advantage of digital technologies to transform service delivery through the way we work, how we use information, support our customers, improve resident opportunities and help our businesses to compete
- Develop and implement a workforce plan for Digital Service
- Improve governance of Section 33 Agreement with Powys Teaching Health Board

Constitution

In January 2020 Section 13 Council Functions and scheme of delegations was updated.

Cabinet

In 2019-20 there were eight Cabinet Members, including the Leader. The Cabinet portfolios are as follows:

- Leader - Councillor Rosemarie Harris
- Portfolio Holder for Education and Property - Councillor Phyl Davies
- Portfolio Holder for Young People and Culture - Councillor Rachel Powell
- Portfolio Holder for Finance, Countryside and Transport / Deputy Leader - Councillor Aled Davies
- Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Welsh Language - Councillor Myfanwy Alexander
- Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance and Engagement - Councillor Graham Breeze
- Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Housing and Regulatory Services - Councillor James Evans
- Portfolio Holder for Environment - Councillor Heulwen Hulme

During 2019-20 relationships between the Cabinet and opposition groups has been developing. The Leader holds monthly meetings to compliment the work of the Improvement and Assurance Board in respect of social care and education. These meetings are attended by Opposition Group Leaders. The Opposition Group Leaders are also members of the Improvement and Assurance Board.

The relationship between the Cabinet, Scrutiny Committees and the rest of Council also needs further development so that all elected members value their respective

roles and responsibilities. In April 2020 a new member development framework and programme will be introduced which will include further opportunities to develop Members' understanding and recognition of scrutiny as a catalyst for improvement and an essential part of the democratic process.

Partnership Working

The Council continued to strengthen its partnership working through 2019-20 as evidenced under Core Principle D above. Weaknesses identified in an internal audit report on Section 33 Agreements with Powys Teaching Health Board have been addressed. Reductions in the number of Delayed Transfers of Care across the health and care system in the final quarter were a testament to the strong working relationships that have been developed across the Council and Powys Teaching Health Board.

Improvement and Assurance Board

The Improvement and Assurance Board has added value to the Council's improvement and transformation journey during 2019-20. The Board's role has moved to one of assurance, holding officers to account on performance and the development and delivery of robust improvement and transformation plans. During this time the IAB has adopted a lighter touch approach to corporate arrangements being satisfied with the progress being made in this area. Following a review of the Improvement Board in September 2019 two external advisors were stood down (one with finance expertise, the other with Adult Service's expertise) recognising the progress the Council had made. One External Advisor on social services (Phil Hodgson) was appointed as an Independent Member. At the same time following an Estyn inspection of the Council's Education Service, education improvement was added to the IAB's remit. Dr Gwynne Jones joined as an Independent Member for education.

Member Development

In 2019-20 Member Development has been strengthened with a comprehensive programme including sessions on: financial planning and management (led by CIPFA); Service Improvement Plans; the 2020-25 MTFS and 2020-21 budget; the Vision 2025 transformation programme; the Estyn report and Post Inspection Action Plan; and schools' transformation (including presentation of data). The full Member Development programme for 2019-20 is at Appendix 2.

These new arrangements have strengthened the understanding of Members and the quality of scrutiny of Council business, but further improvement is required consistently to provide the level of challenge and assurance needed for the wider political membership to hold the Executive to account and to help drive further improvement and transformation across the Council.

A new Member Development strategy and programme is in development for 2020-21 but is delayed by the Council's focus on responding to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Senior Officer roles and responsibilities

In February 2019 a new Chief Executive took up post. An Interim Chief Executive had implemented a restructure to the managerial leadership with Council approval and a new operating model took effect from 1 March 2019. The new structure and operating model has been bedding in during 2019-20.

The Executive Management Team comprises the CEO, three corporate directors and two Heads of Service with statutory roles (i.e. S151 and Monitoring Officer). The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) which includes EMT and the other ten Heads of Service is now complete albeit two roles are interim with officers on promotion into them (Education Service and Digital Services). Of the 16 roles in the SLT six have been filled with external appointments and of the remainder seven have been promoted within the Council in the last two years. These appointments have created a healthy balance with the team of external officers with considerable improvement and transformation experience with talented internal officers with strong corporate memory and local knowledge. Recognising that many are new to the chief officer role mentors have been found for SLT members and individual development needs have been identified and are being addressed. SLT has also recognised a collective need for digital skills training and increased media awareness and this is being addressed.

Workforce Planning and Development

The new Annual Appraisal is ensuring individuals are accountable for and receive feedback on their performance. The organisation is becoming more attractive to work for, and attracting new recruits, is reducing agency staff reliance. The Workforce Analysis Report presented to the Improvement and Assurance Board regarding Children's Service Performance contains a high level of analysis of performance and is being used as a benchmark by other local authorities. The organisational culture is changing as a result of the performance and workforce improvement work, and this is evidenced in the enhanced challenge happening in EMT on a fortnightly basis, and will continue as new posts are appointed to enhanced job descriptions with a strong focus on performance.

In 2019-20 the Council developed a workforce strategy, supported by a Workforce Futures Programme which includes developments in leadership training, development and coaching as well as improved staff engagement and workforce planning all of which are designed to support the development of a highly skilled and productive workforce.

Every service area has produced a workforce plan as part of the Integrated Business Planning process and an organisation Training Needs Analysis has been undertaken. A corporate training plan and individual service training plans have been developed as a result of the TNA.

As part of the Workforce Futures Programme a new Leadership Development Programme has been developed.

The Council has also developed, with Regional Partnership Board partners, a strategic framework for the health and care workforce in Powys.

The table below outlines the number of Council staff who completed Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) programmes during 2019-20.

Programme	Completed course
ILM Coaching and Mentoring	5
ILM Level 3 in Leadership & Management	39
ILM Level 5 in Leadership & Management	26
Powys Executive Programme	0
Total	70

Conclusion:

The Council is able to offer reasonable assurance that the Council's arrangements adequately reflect the principles of good governance as set out in Core Principle E: *Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.* Processes are in place and operating effectively and risks to effective governance are well managed.

Recommendations for further development in 2020-21:

During 2020-21 the following developments will be undertaken:

Objective	Responsible Service
To implement new member development strategy and programme	Clive Pinney 31 March 2021
Deliver planned 2020-21 leadership development programme, using e-learning where possible	Paul Bradshaw 31 March 2021

3.6 Core Principle F

Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management

How we do this:

Risk Management

We are continuously improving and updating our approach to risk management to help better understand and manage the risks the Council faces, prepare for future challenges and to increase the likelihood of achieving objectives. Risk management is a core management discipline that supports organisational delivery. The risks that the organisation faces are changing all the time, so the art of good risk management is to combine planning for what we know might happen with preparation for unknown situations, to safeguard the organisation and in turn make it more resilient.

The Portfolio Holder for Risk Management is the Leader of the Council. The Portfolio Holder is updated on the progress of the risk management programme on a quarterly basis. The Strategic Risk Register is also reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis.

Consideration of risk is an integral part of quarterly performance reviews held with Portfolio Holders, Directors and Heads of Service. The Audit Committee has a key role in monitoring and challenging the Council's risk register.

Performance Management and Quality Assurance Framework

See Core Principal D for details on the PMQAF.

We monitor a set of Public Accountability Measures which consist of "outcome focussed" indicators. They reflect those aspects of local authority work which local authorities agree are considered to be important in terms of public accountability. For example, Social Care, educational attainment and waste. This Data allows us to compare our performance in key areas, against the 21 other local authorities in Wales.

Financial Management

The management of the Council's financial affairs are conducted in accordance with the Financial Procedure Rules set out in Section 16 of the Constitution. This sets out the financial management standards for staff and members and their duty to abide by the highest standards of probity in dealing with financial issues and the use of the public's money. This is facilitated by ensuring everyone is clear about the standards to which they are working and the controls that are in place to ensure that these standards are met.

The Financial Procedure Rules set out the systems and procedures, key controls, and responsibilities for Financial Management, Financial Planning and Risk Management and the Control of resources.

The Council has well established budget monitoring and internal control arrangements and these act as an effective early warning system in identifying potential problems and for managing potential areas of risk.

Monthly reports are provided to Budget Holders, Heads of Service, Directors and Cabinet. The reports monitor performance against budget with full year forecasting and variance reporting. The delivery of savings and the forecast use of reserves are also included.

Budget Challenge events are undertaken throughout the year to challenge financial performance at a service level. No service area should plan to overspend, all expenditure must be consistent with approved service priorities and the overall approved budget.

The Council commissioned CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) to undertake a Financial Management Assessment using their Financial Management Model – the global standard in public finance good practice. The model measures the financial management performance including the

identification of strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement. Importantly it measures the whole organisation's attitude to financial management.

The assessment reports that "Powys is able to demonstrate a basic level of financial management capability with foundational delivering accountability stewardship being secured through a competent finance service, supporting governance and assurance functions. Financial reporting, internal control and assurance arrangements are sound."

The Council recognises that financial management across the organisation can be improved. The conclusions and recommendations from this assessment have been used to develop a plan for improvement across the organisation. The delivery and monitoring of the programme is governed through the Finance Transformation Board.

Powys Pension Fund

The Fund's Governance Policy and Compliance Statement sets out in detail the Governance arrangements of the Fund.

[Link to Pension Fund Policy and Compliance Statement](#)

Powys is one of eight LGPS Administering Authorities in Wales who make up the Wales Pension Partnership. A Joint Governance Committee (JGC) for the Partnership was formally established in 2017/18 and comprises of one elected member from each of the Authorities. The JGC oversees the operations of the Partnership and is supported by an Officer Working Group.

Internal Audit (SWAP)

The detailed review for SWAP is set out in Appendix 5.

Responding to external regulatory inspections

The Council recognises the value of regulatory inspections in helping to drive improvement. Our core regulators are Care Inspectorate Wales, Wales Audit Office and Estyn, who carry out routine inspection on our services. All recommendations and proposals for improvement that we receive from our core regulators are recorded on a corporate Regulatory Signposting tracker, which shows which service is responsible for taking action to make improvements. Services are required to embed any recommendations they receive into their Service Improvement Plans to ensure that they are being addressed through appropriate improvement objectives. The objectives then get monitored quarterly to ensure the necessary improvement is being made. This information is also monitored as part of the Council's key Performance Indicators (Top 20 PI set), to determine whether our assessments from regulators are improving overall.

Review of effectiveness:

In the 2018-19 Annual Governance Statement the following areas for development during 2019-20 were identified:

- Develop, agree and implement an audit/improvement plan in high risk service areas
- Embed the Risk Management Toolkit to ensure effective risk management throughout the Council. Ensuring all decisions are underpinned by a well-managed risk management approach

Risk Management

There have been significant improvements to the Council's risk management arrangements during 2019-20 in response to an internal audit report of risk management in March 2018. The Council now has a risk management system in place where all service and strategic risks are registered, mitigated actions are identified and risks monitored. Risk management reports are presented to Cabinet quarterly and are reviewed by the Audit Committee.

Performance Management and Quality Assurance

See Core principal D for details.

Quarterly Performance Reports detailing progress against Vision 2025: Our Corporate Improvement Plan were presented to the Cabinet and can be found on the Council's website:

[Link to Cabinet meetings page](#)

A report on our performance against the national Public Accountability Measures was presented to Cabinet in November 2019 (Annual Performance Report 2018-19) and can be found [here](#) (See Item 5).

Budget Setting

The Council's budget planning has traditionally been determined using an incremental budgeting approach and has tended to focus on one year with limited development over the longer term. This will not deliver a sustainable financial position for the Council going forward. The Council is therefore moving to an Outcome Based Budgeting approach, focused on the medium to long-term and aligned to service and workforce planning.

The strategy is based on an approach which brings together all elements of the Council activity to deliver Vision 2025, a programme of transformation, and one which encompasses service improvement and delivers appropriate levels of statutory service. It will better align revenue and capital to ensure that our limited resources are prioritised to achieve maximum effectiveness and based on securing outcomes that matter to our residents.

The strategy is supported by a detailed five year budget model, this has been strengthened in recent years with the development of service financial models which inform the corporate plan. The budget model has been improved with scenario planning across Best, Most Likely and Worse case scenarios.

Integrated Business Plans were introduced in 2019/20 and have been developed by each service building on previous Service Improvement Plans and capturing all service objectives, expenditure and workforce implications.

Service Evaluation is key to the process: performance, cost analysis, benchmarking, regulatory recommendations, proposals for improvement and Service User / Resident Feedback all feature. The objectives for the services which align to the 5 ways of working and the 7 Well-being goals of The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015) and meet statutory requirements and legislative changes are defined.

Building on the work we have already done the further development of Integrated Business Planning and Outcome Based Budgeting is captured in the Council Transformation Programme.

Feedback from our regulators

Appendix 3, 4 and 5 detail the key feedback that we have received from our regulators during 2019-20 and the plans we have in place to address them to ensure continuous improvement.

Conclusion:

The Council is able to offer reasonable assurance that the Council's arrangements adequately reflect the principles of good governance as set out in Core Principle F: *Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management*. Processes are in place and operating effectively and risks to effective governance are well managed.

Recommendations for further development in 2020-21:

During 2020-21 the following developments will be undertaken:

Objective	Responsible Service
Transfer risk management to Financial Services	Jane Thomas 31 May 2020
Establish and maintain risk register for pandemic response and recovery	Jane Thomas 31 March 2021
Ensure reporting and analysis is made simple for the user, and integrated reporting links performance data to ease forecasting that they will deliver each month and measured through improving data (revenue & capital)	Jane Thomas 31 st March 2021
Ownership and accountability for financial performance developed. Budget holders complete revenue and capital budget forecasts, that include savings assumptions, which are challenged to ensure improvements as the budget holders get better at this role	Jane Thomas Wef 1 st April 2020 with ongoing development through the year
Delivery of the Finance Transformation Project (individual workstreams delivered throughout 2020/21).	Jane Thomas 31 st March 2021

Balance sheet management more effectively managed through the year and reported widely	Jane Thomas 30 th September 2020
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3.7 Core Principle G

Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability

How we do this:

Constitution

The Council's Constitution sets out how the Council operates and the process for policy and decision making. Within this framework, decisions are taken by Council, Cabinet, individual Cabinet Members and Officers. Certain specific decisions are taken by the Planning, Taxi Licensing and Rights of Way Committee, The Licensing Act 2003 Committee, Pensions and Investment Committee and the Employment and Appeals Committee.

Meetings and Reporting Documents

The Council presumes that reports will be publicly available unless certain, specific tests are met. There are seven categories of exempt information and these include:

- Information relating to a particular individual
- Information relating to legal matters

For information to be treated as exempt, an assessment of public interest has to be made, to ensure proper balance is achieved between the right to know, the right to personal privacy and the delivery of efficient government.

Agendas, reports and minutes of the Council's committees are published online and are accessible to the public unless an item contains information which is classed as exempt.

There is a presumption that most meetings will be open to the public, again except where information is to be discussed which is classed as exempt.

The Council now webcasts all Council and Cabinet meetings and is considering whether other meetings could also be webcast in the future.

Quarterly and Annual Performance Reporting

As outlined in Core Principle F, the Council publishes its quarterly performance reports on its website as part of the Cabinet Meeting agendas. This ensures transparency and accountability.

In line with the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and Well-being of Future Generations Wales Act 2015, the Council also publishes an annual Performance Report (Well-being Report) which sets out an open and honest

assessment of performance against the Well-being objectives, activities and performance measures in its Corporate Improvement Plan. Powys County Council agreed its 2019 Annual Performance Report in October 2019 and this detailed performance against the Corporate Improvement Plan 2018-23 that was implemented during 2018-19.

The Council contributes to a set of Public Accountability Measures. Results of these are submitted to the Local Government Data Unit who in turn publish an annual performance bulletin, which compares performance of all 22 Welsh local councils in delivering key services. The Council's detailed position on the indicator set is published as part of its Annual Performance Report.

Scrutiny

See Appendix 3.

Internal Audit

From 1 April 2017 the Council's internal audit service was provided by South West Audit Partnership (SWAP). SWAP is a not for profit organisation that was originally set up in 2003 and the arrangement sees Powys County Council become a partner in the company that provides audit services to various public sector bodies including Somerset County Council and Herefordshire Council.

In accordance with the recognised standards, the Head of Audit is required to give an opinion on the overall internal control environment based on the work undertaken throughout the year.

Annual Report of the Director of Social Services / Annual Council Reporting Framework (ACRF)

Under the Social Services and Well-being Act 2014 the Director of Social Services is required to produce and publish an annual report of the impact and performance of the work of social services and demonstrate how the Council has promoted well-being and accounted for the delivery of the well-being standards contained within the Social Services and Well-being Act

Review of Effectiveness

In the 2018-19 Annual Governance Statement the following areas for development during 2019-20 were identified:

- Improve the effectiveness of scrutiny
- Improve the Cabinet Forward Work Programme
- Develop, agree and implement an audit/improvement plan in high risk service areas
- Review and embed a Performance Management and Quality Assurance Framework to ensure our decisions are underpinned by accurate information which are aligned to the Council's vision and priorities
- Strengthen Public Service Board, Regional Partnership Board, Powys County Council golden thread alignment of planning and reporting

- Improve decision making through the embedded use of analytics, research and horizon scanning
- Deliver Children's Service Improvement Plan Independent Reviewing, Quality Assurance and Complaints objectives
- Deliver Children's Service Improvement Plan Infrastructure and Support objectives

Constitution

The Council is using the new model Constitution provided by Welsh Government with amendments to suit Powys County Council. The Constitution is kept under constant review by officers and the Democratic Services Committee and amended when required, in particular taking into account the learning from difficulties as experienced from time to time.

Meetings and Reporting Documents

All agendas are issued within the required legal timescales. There are only a few committee reports which are deemed to be confidential during the year which have been assessed using the public interest test. Therefore, the majority of documents and meetings are open to the public. The Council is continuing to webcast Council and Cabinet meetings, but due to financial pressures have been unable to expand this further. However, this will be reviewed once Welsh Government enact the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act which is expected to contain provisions relating to the webcasting of meetings.

Quarterly and Annual Performance Reporting

During 2019-20 the Council has introduced a new method for reporting performance information with the use of Microsoft SharePoint Lists. Services take ownership to update the necessary performance information in a central SharePoint list, and then it is imported to Power BI to create interactive dashboards. The dashboards have been made accessible to all services, Members and the public using Microsoft SWAY, where filtering and drill-down capabilities allow the user to focus on specific issues and actions. Further improvements are underway to allow improved visualisation of trend data.

Based on an analysis of 24 of the Public Accountability Measures, Powys ranked 6th out of 22 in 2018/19, compared to 10th the previous year (3 of the PAM's relating to Social Care, have not been included in the analysis, as data is only available at an all Wales level and is not broken down to local authority level).

Some of the measures where Powys performed best, include:

- Number of visits to local authority sport and leisure facilities during the year where the visitor will be participating in physical activity per 1,000 population - **this has improved from last year and Powys is ranked 1st in Wales.**
- Number of working days/shifts per full-time equivalent (FTE) local authority employee lost due to sickness absence during the year – **this has improved from last year and Powys is ranked 3rd in Wales.**

- Kilograms of residual household waste generated during the year per person - **Powys is ranked 3rd in Wales.**
- Average number of calendar days taken to complete all repairs – **Powys is ranked 2nd in Wales.** It should be noted that not all authorities have housing stock.

Measures where Powys were ranked amongst the worst Councils are:

- Percentage of rent debit lost due to lettable units of permanent accommodation being empty during the year – **Powys are ranked 22/22.**
- Average number of working days taken to clear fly-tipping incidents reported to the authority during the year – **Powys are ranked 20/20.**
- Percentage of C roads that are in overall poor condition - **Powys are ranked 22/22.**
- Number of additional affordable housing units delivered during the year per 10,000 households - **Powys are ranked 19/22.**

Scrutiny

The review of Scrutiny for 2019-20 is set out in Appendix 3.

Internal Audit

The Head of Audit's opinion on internal control for 2019-20 is as follows (See Appendix 5 for the detailed opinion):

REASONABLE ASSURANCE: The control framework is adequate and controls to mitigate key risks are generally operating effectively, although a number of controls need to improve to ensure business objectives are met.

Annual Report of the Director of Social Services / Annual Council Reporting Framework (ACRF)

The 2018-19 Annual Director's Report on Social Service in Powys (ACRF) was presented to Full Council in July 2019. It provided an objective assessment of the impact and performance of the work of social services and demonstrated how the Council has promoted well-being and accounted for the delivery of the well-being standards contained within the Social Services and Well-being Act.

Conclusion:

The Council is able to offer reasonable assurance that the Council's arrangements adequately reflect the principles of good governance as set out in Core Principle G: *Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability.* Processes are in place and operating effectively and risks to effective governance are well managed.

Recommendations for further development in 2020-21:

During 2020-21 the following developments will be undertaken:

Objective	Responsible Service
Continue to improve the effectiveness of scrutiny	Clive Pinney 31 March 2021
Continue to improve the Cabinet Forward Work Programme and links to the Scrutiny Work Programme	Clive Pinney 31 March 2021
Continue to embed a Performance Management and Quality Assurance Framework to ensure our decisions are underpinned by accurate information which are aligned to the Council's vision and priorities	All Heads of Service 31 March 2021

Section 4. Conclusions – Main Governance Issues Facing the Council and Requiring Action

The table below identifies the most significant governance issues (prioritised from the recommendations for development outlined in section 3 above) and how we will address them during 2020 / 21.

Governance Issue	How we are addressing the Issue
<p>Core Principle A: <i>Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law</i></p> <p>Councillor training, compliments and complaints policy and local resolution process need review to ensure they continue to be fit for purpose.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the arrangements for Members' Code of Conduct training for TCC Members Review Employees' Code of Conduct Refresh County Councillor training in 2020-21 Compliments and Complaints Policy to be reviewed in the light of any updates in the PSOW guidance Local Resolution Process to be reviewed
<p>Core principle B: <i>Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement</i></p> <p>Scrutiny arrangements introduced in 2019-20 need to be reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose and forward work programming needs to be further improved.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectiveness of new scrutiny arrangements to be reviewed Further strengthen Cabinet and Committee Forward Work programmes
<p>Core Principle C: <i>Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits</i></p> <p>Vision 2025 outcomes to be reviewed in the light of the pandemic and good practice and quality of impact assessments needs improvement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Vision 2025 and the Council's operating model to embed recovery and good practice developed during the COVID19 pandemic Develop a quality assurance process for Integrated Impact Assessments

Governance Issue	How we are addressing the Issue
<p>Core Principle D: <i>Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes</i></p> <p>Council’s internal improvement and assurance arrangements need to be reviewed in the context of the Council’s improvement agenda and recommendations made by Sean Harriss</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and strengthen Improvement and Assurance arrangements to take account of recommendations from the Sean Harriss review
<p>Core Principle E: <i>Developing the entity’s capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it</i></p> <p>Member and staff development need further attention and improvement during 2020-21</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To implement new Member Development strategy and programme • Deliver planned 2020-21 leadership development programme, using e-learning where possible
<p>Core Principle F: <i>Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management</i></p> <p>Council’s corporate planning, including MTFS and risk management need to be developed to take account of pandemic and continued delivery of Vision 2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer risk management to Financial Services • Establish and maintain risk register for pandemic response and recovery • Ensure reporting and analysis is made simple for the user, and integrated reporting links performance data to ease forecasting that they will deliver each month and measured through improving data (revenue & capital) • Ownership and accountability for financial performance developed. Budget holders complete revenue and capital budget forecasts, that include savings assumptions, which are challenged to ensure improvements as the budget holders get better at this role • Delivery of the Finance Transformation Project (individual workstreams delivered throughout 2020/21. • Balance sheet management more effectively managed through the year and reported widely

Governance Issue	How we are addressing the Issue
<p>Core Principle G: <i>Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to improve the effectiveness of scrutiny • Continue to improve the Cabinet Forward Work Programme and links to the Scrutiny Work Programme • Continue to embed a Performance Management and Quality Assurance Framework to ensure our decisions are underpinned by accurate information which are aligned to the Council's vision and priorities

Section 5. Certification of the Annual Governance Statement 2019-2020

Signed on behalf of Powys County Council:

.....

Chief Executive

Date: 29 September 2020

.....

Leader of the Council

Date: 29 September 2020

Section 6. Appendices

Appendix 1: Engagement and Consultation Exercises 2019-20

Economy:

Lakeside Regeneration Surveys – Two surveys were conducted during the year to capture views following a successful bid from the Welsh Government’s Landfill Tax Community Scheme to enhance the environment and facilities for those who enjoy fishing or birdwatching at the lake in Llandrindod Wells. The £50k grant provided funding for new fishing platforms and a wheelchair/pushchair friendly bird-hide for users of all ages. The survey responses: The ‘before work started’ survey showed that 77 per cent of respondents thought that improvements were needed to the fishing and bird watching facilities, with 80 per cent of respondents feeling that the proposed work would improve the lake park. The follow-up survey closed with only 50 responses (Covid-19 impact). However, of these 18 respondents had used the new fishing platforms, 26 the boardwalk and 30 had visited the bird hide. Overall, over half rated the new facilities as either good or excellent.

Planning Agents and Planning Officers Workshops - A six-monthly workshop session to strengthen relationships between planning agents and planning officers was established during the year with a trained facilitator. The first session took place in October 2019 and the second in January 2020. The response: A clear set of priority areas (e.g. statutory consultees) and actions have been agreed for both parties to progress. The outcome will be improved understanding and processes that relate to the legislative framework that both work to.

Health and Care:

North Powys health and well-being - The Council is working together with Powys Teaching Health Board to identify a health and well-being model for the North of Powys. Two rounds of engagement and consultation took place during the year which has resulted in a draft model of care being developed and consulted upon. Over a thousand people took part in either workshops, meetings or drop in sessions in the communities of North Powys. Some in addition responded to the two online surveys that ran – the first captured what helped them to keep well at home, in their community and in the North Powys region. The second used that information to set out the draft model of care and sought views on the health and care services that may be available to people at home, in their community, in the region and also out of the region. The Welsh Government will now consider the findings and bid from the Regional Partnership Board to progress the project which supports both the Health and Care Strategy for Powys and Towards 2040 - the county’s Well-Being Plan.

Learning and skills:

Transforming education in Powys – During late 2019/early 2020 the Council organised a series of meetings with head teachers, school staff, governors and other education partners to consider the future of the education service and how to

transform it to meet the needs of all children in the county. Supporting this was an online survey which captured additional feedback from parents and pupils alongside professionals. Over 450 responses were received to the survey which asked people to give their views on the draft vision for education in Powys, leadership, retention of teaching staff, the Welsh language provision and education for pupils with additional learning needs. The feedback given has been fed into the next phase of the process and follow up consultation and engagement will take place once the Covid-19 restrictions are lifted.

Review of the school formula – An online survey was produced to comply with the requirement to review the funding formula for schools in Powys. The response: The feedback and analysis of the responses led to some minor changes to the formula creating a more equitable working model which has been implemented.

Llanerfyl and Banwy primary schools – The Council consulted on a proposal to close Llanerfyl Church in Wales School and Banw CP School and re-open a school on the site of one of the two establishments' sites. A consultation was carried out – a mixture of drop ins and an online survey, the latter of which received 250 responses. There was a mixed reaction to the proposal with arguments for and against both sites. The response: Cabinet discussed the findings in March 2019 but deferred the decision until a date in April to consider further information. Subsequently it was decided to close Ysgol Dyffryn Banw and Llanerfyl Church in Wales school on August 31st 2020. A new school will be opening on 1st September 2020.

Residents and communities:

Town and Community Council Twice Yearly Meetings - Two meetings took place during the year initially at the request of the Association of Town Clerks to aid their understanding around the Council's budget position and laterally to build a better awareness and understanding of the two democratic roles that the councils play in relation to service delivery. The outcome: Useful conversations and presentations have taken place around the budget, the Council's highway maintenance programme and planning.

Electric Vehicle Charging Points Survey - To respond to the UK Government's 'Road to Zero' strategy which will see an increase in electric vehicles being used, the Council ran an online survey to capture views from residents about preferred location of and potential use of charging points so as to put a bid to the Office for Low Emission Vehicles to install fast electric charging points in Council long stay car parks. The response: With over 700 residents responding to the survey the Council was able to put forward a comprehensive and successful bid which resulted in a grant of £100k.

Active Travel Survey – This survey conducted in 2018 captured feedback on how frequently people walk or cycle short distances in the 11 designated Active Travel towns. 92 responses were received with residents in Brecon, Presteigne and Llandrindod giving compliments regarding the ethos of active travel and requests for more collaboration and partnership working with Town and Community Councils and

others (nature reserves) etc. The response: Views expressed around pavement conditions, cycle racks, safety for pedestrians have been used to inform successful bids and resulted in improvements for Powys communities. One such project looking at the redevelopment of a busy high street in Llandrindod Wells was about to commence just as the Covid lockdown occurred. The team is currently looking at ways to conduct online engagement on this topic with a view to doing wider public engagement post Covid.

Library Engagement Exercise – Following on from drop-in sessions in branch libraries held in Feb 2019, the Cabinet Member and Chief Librarian held meeting with town and community councils Friends and volunteers. Potential options to address challenging budget savings were discussed with views, concerns and solutions sought from the communities.

Library Childrens Satisfaction – this national survey ran across all libraries in Wales for one week seeking views on satisfaction with the core library service from children aged 7 – 11 years or age and 11 – 16 years of age. Library staff hand out a paper survey and ask children attending to complete. All responses are then input and analysed and fed back to the relevant Welsh Government division. The response: Around 60 responses were received from the 7-11 age group. They stated that their key reasons for visiting the library were to choose books to take home, to read books whilst in the library or to attend a club or a Storytime session. The older children (43 responded) replaced the club/Storytime session with use of the PC or to do homework as their joint third reason. All children agreed that the library was a safe and enjoyable place to be. The feedback was positive overall regarding services used.

Welshpool Library Co-location - A review of buildings in the north of the county led to a proposal to co-locate the current library with the museum in Welshpool. The decision was taken to consult residents in the town about the preferred proposal. An online survey was launched to capture views on how to make the best use of space if co-location were to go ahead. Alternative options were also listed, and residents asked to give their preferences. The response: There was opposition to the proposal to co-locate the library into the museum and some alternative options put forward. These options were given due regard and, following discussions with the town council about their proposal, it was deemed that the co-location was the best approach to enable staff to relocate into the library building and continue to provide services like housing advice, social care and trading standards to residents whilst also retaining a combined library and museum service – albeit in a smaller space. A legal challenge was then put forward by a group of residents opposed to the decision and dismissed twice – in the first instance and then again on appeal. Both judges were content that the Council had not made a decision in advance of the consultation exercise and had given feedback due regard before reaching its final decision.

Registrars Survey – the service hands out a survey to everyone who registers a birth, death or marriage along with a pre-paid envelope to capture feedback on the

service provided. The response: The findings are used to better understand customer needs and to enhance/improve the service given wherever possible.

Engineering customer satisfaction feedback surveys - contractors, and clients were asked to rate the quality of workmanship, regard to health and safety and overall satisfaction with works completed via an online survey. Overall ratings have consistently been above 5 where 0 = poor and 10 = high

Appendix 2: Member Development

Core Principles to which this section relates:

- Core Principle E

A programme of Member Development Sessions / Seminars has been delivered for 2019 - 2020 which included:

Mandatory development

- Corporate Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting
- Equality & Diversity training
- Treasury Management
- Cyber security and GDPR

Finance

- Financial Planning x 2
- Budget seminars x 3
- Finance and budget training x 4 - facilitated by CIPFA

Service and Service Improvement Plans

- Winter Maintenance - Highways, Transport and Recycling
- Adult Services
- Financial Services
- Workforce and Organisational Development
- Digital Services, Legal and Democratic Services
- Property, Planning and Public Protection
- Housing and Community Development
- Education – Strategic Review of schools and post inspection

Briefings

- Estyn Inspection and Post Inspection Improvement Plan
- Budget Simulator Schools Transformation
- V2025 Transformation – updates x 2
- Housing update
- Education - Additional Learning Needs [ALN] and role of governors
- Mid Wales Growth Deal

Other topics

- Children's Rights and the UNCRC

Following a review of the Council's Corporate Governance, the Member Development Strategy has been reviewed and revised. This document together with the Member Development Framework will be further reviewed during 2020-21 in preparation for the County Council elections due in May 2022.

Appendix 3: Scrutiny

Core Principles to which this section relates:

- Core Principle C
- Core Principle E
- Core Principle G

Following the revision to the scrutiny committee structure in January 2019, the Co-ordinating Committee undertook a review of the operation of those committees in October 2019. The results were reported to the Co-ordinating Committee in December 2019.

Below is the analysis of the responses from the questionnaire sent to Members, Co-opted Members and the Council's Senior Leadership Team. The questions are drawn from the 'Characteristics of Good Scrutiny' developed by the Wales Scrutiny Officers' Network.

Question 1 – Respondents.

47 responses out of a total of 92 (71 Members, 16 Officers and 5 Co-opted Members) = 51% response rate.

Questions 2 to 18:

No.	Question	Strongly Agree / Agree (%)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (%)	Disagree / Strongly Disagree (%)
2	Scrutiny has a clearly defined and valued role in the Council's improvement arrangements	76.09	17.39	6.52
3	Scrutiny have the dedicated officer support it needs from officers	68.09	17.02	14.9
4	Scrutiny members have the training and development opportunities they need to undertake their role effectively	40.43	25.53	34.04
5	The scrutiny process receives effective support from the Council's Senior Leadership Team who ensures that information provided to scrutiny is of high quality and is provided in a timely and consistent manner	42.55	34.04	23.41
6	Scrutiny is recognised by the Senior Leadership Team as an important Council mechanism for community engagement	53.19	29.79	17.02

7	Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups are non-political, methodologically sound and incorporate a wide range of evidence and perspectives	53.19	29.79	17.02
8	Scrutiny is member-led and has ownership of its work programme taking into account the views of the public, partners and regulators, whilst balancing between prioritising community concerns against issues of strategic risk and importance	59.58	23.40	17.02
9	Stakeholders have the ability to contribute to the development and delivery of scrutiny forward work programmes	57.44	29.79	12.77
10	Scrutiny meetings and activities are well planned, chaired effectively and make best use of the resources available to it	42.55	42.55	14.9
11	Scrutiny is characterised by effective communication to raise awareness of, and encourage participation in democratic accountability	61.7	21.28	17.02
12	Scrutiny operates non-politically and deals effectively with sensitive political issues, tension and conflict	44.69	31.91	23.41
13	Scrutiny builds trust and good relationships with a wide variety of internal and external stakeholders	48.94	36.17	12.77
14	Scrutiny regularly engages in evidence based challenge of decision makers and service providers	52.18	32.61	15.22
15	Scrutiny provides viable and well evidenced solutions to recognised problems	38.29	42.55	19.15
16	Non-Cabinet members provide an evidence based check and balance to Cabinet decision making	51.07	29.79	19.15
17	Decision makers give public account for themselves at scrutiny committees for their portfolio responsibilities	53.19	25.53	21.28
18	Scrutiny enables the 'voice' of local people and communities across the area to be heard as part of decision and policy-making processes	40.43	31.91	27.66

A further review is to be undertaken once the new committees have been operating for 12 months, which will be in the 2020-21 financial year.

Reports from Scrutiny reviews containing the findings together with any recommendations are presented to Cabinet for their consideration. The Cabinet is expected to produce an action plan to respond to any recommendations made by Scrutiny. In respect of pre-decision Scrutiny the comments of the Scrutiny review

group are made to the Cabinet / Executive Management Team meetings to provide an opportunity for the final report to Cabinet to take account of Scrutiny's comments.

The following are examples of areas which were scrutinised / pre-scrutinised during 2019/20:

Health and Care Scrutiny Committee:

- Children's and Adults Performance Reports
- Children's and Adults Finance Reports
- Reports from the Children's and Adults Working Groups
- Workforce and Agency
- Supported Living Framework
- Extra Care Housing
- External Placements
- ACRF – Director of Social Services' Report
- Compliments, Complaints and Representations
- CIW Monitoring Visit (Adults)
- Discussion with Chief Executive of Powys Teaching Health Board
- Assist / Cymorth
- Day and Employment Services Options Appraisal
- Active Offer
- Carers' Steering Group Update
- Corporate Safeguarding Group
- Glan Irfon Update
- Children's Services Placements and Accommodation
- Early Help Hubs
- Child Exploitation
- Draft 2020-21 Budget
- North Powys Project – Model of Care
- Integrated Emotional Health and Well-being and South Support Update
- Children's First Project
- Quality Assurance

Adult Services Working Group

- Budget oversight
- Service Redesign and Efficiency
- Delayed Transfers of Care
- Home Support Evaluation
- North Powys Project
- Safeguarding
- Occupational Therapy Update
- Deprivation of Liberty
- Reablement
- Impact of Asset Based Collaborative Communication
- TEC
- Active Offer
- Carers and Respite
- Direct Payments

- Alternatives to Domiciliary Care
- Quality Assurance
- Care and Support in the Community:
 - TEC Cost Avoidance
 - Financial Assessment of Providers

Children's Services Working Group

- Member Development
 - The continuum of care
 - Children Who Are Looked After – including the role of the Court
 - Early Help and Eligibility Criteria
 - Children Subject to a Child Protection Plan
 - Children in Need of Care and Support
 - Children at the Edge of Care
 - Children Who Are Looked After – Placements
- Improvement Plan Scrutiny
 - Safeguarding and Good Social Work Practice
 - Independent Reviewing and Quality Assurance
 - Children Who Are Looked After – Placements
 - Eligibility Criteria (thresholds and early help)
 - Implementation of Signs of Safety
 - Children Accessing Support to Meet Identified Need
 - Commissioning and Placements

Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee:

- School Categorisation
- Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Transformation Programme
- Learning and Skills Scrutiny Committee Annual Report
- School Budgets 2019-20
- Review of Sixth Form Provision
- Schools Major Improvements (Welsh Government Grant Programme)
- ERW Joint Scrutiny Committee Group Update
- Responses to Scrutiny Recommendations to Cabinet
- Schools Service Finance
- Compliments, Complaints and Comments
- Schools Standards Report
- Estyn Inspection
- Amendments to the Schools Funding Formula and Scheme for Financing Schools
- Strategic Review of Schools
- Draft 2020-21 Budget
- ERW

Economy, Residents, Communities and Governance Scrutiny Committee:

- Housing Association Development
- Public Toilets Strategy
- Community Safety Partnership
- Police and Crime Commissioner

- HRA New Build Programme
- Tenant Satisfaction
- Powys County Council Brexit Preparedness
- Prosecution Enforcement Policy
- Revised Protocol for Authorising Motor Vehicle Events
- Welsh Library Standards
- Draft 2020-21 Budget
- Declaration of Revised Powys ECO Flex Statement of Intent

ERCG Working Groups:

- Vision 2025 Update and Annual Report
- Digital Strategy
- HAMP (Highways Asset Management Plan)
- Winter Maintenance

Finance Panel:

- Outturn 2018-19
- Capital Outturn 2018-19
- Savings Outturn 2018-19
- Capital Directive
- Forward Financial Planning
- CIPFA Financial Management Capability Review
- Transformation
- Budget Monitoring Report
- Children's Services – Savings Delivery
- Capital Monitoring Report
- Report of the Chair of the Improvement and Assurance Board
- Medium Term Financial Strategy including budget update
- Financial Overview and Forecast
- Capital Report
- CIPFA Review – Action Plan
- Efficiency Savings Report
- Budget 2020-21
- Stats Wales and Social Services Data
- Budget 2020-23
- Finance Panel Report to Council
- RA and RO Welsh Government Returns

Public Service Board Scrutiny Committee:

- Response from PSB on WCCIS
- Vision 2040 – Delivery Plans
- Vision 2040 – Steps
- PSB Annual Report / Scrutiny views on Annual Report
- Scrutiny Outcome letters and responses from the PSB
- Step 10 Update
- Governance Arrangements
- Step 6 Update / Response from PSB

- PSB Scrutiny Tracker
- Step 2 Update
- Minutes of the PSB
- WAO Review of Public Service Boards

Audit Committee:

- WAO Annual Audit Plans
- WAO Well-being of Future Generations – an Examination to Improve our School Infrastructure
- Annual Governance Statement
- Internal Audit Annual Plan
- Internal Audit Reports
- Treasury Management
- Closure of Accounts
- CIPFA Assessment
- Implementation of Finance System
- Risk Register
- Theatr Brycheiniog
- Procurement Processes
- Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement
- Annual Audit Opinion
- Internal Audit – Performance Monitoring
- Risk Management
- Corporate Anti-Fraud and Error Team
- Jiscourt and Dawnus
- Combined Improvement Plan 2019-20 and Annual Performance Report 2018-19
- Review of Misstatements and Errors
- Economic and Financial Assessments – Review of Progress
- Transforming Contract Management
- Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill – Governance and Audit Committees
- Internal Audit Work Plan
- Internal Audit Review
- WAO Annual Audit Summary
- Audit Committee Self Evaluation

Appendix 4: Regulator Reports 2019-20

Wales Audit Office

Wales Audit Office (WAO) is the public sector watchdog for Wales. Their aim is to ensure that the people of Wales know whether public money is being managed wisely and that public bodies in Wales understand how to improve outcomes.

Since their last Annual Improvement Report in October 2018, the Wales Audit Office has undertaken several examinations of the Council's processes and procedures, the outcomes of which are summarised in their Annual Audit Summary 2019. The WAO's key examinations and findings are outlined below:

Audit of Accounts 2018-19

We gave an unqualified opinion on the Council's financial statements on 10 September 2019, five days ahead of the statutory deadline

The Council's Annual Governance Statement and Narrative Report were prepared in line with the CIPFA Code and relevant guidance.

The quality of the draft statements presented for audit on 3 June 2019 was generally good.

Value for Money

We are satisfied that the Council has put in place proper arrangements to secure value for money from the resources it uses. Significant challenges remain particularly in terms of delivering timely transformation against the backdrop of a challenging financial position. The recent senior management restructure is beginning to provide a more focused strategic input to support the transformation agenda. The Council recognises the extent of the continuing financial challenge and the transformation required to its service delivery over the immediate and longer term.

Continuous Improvement

We are satisfied the Council has met its legal duties for improvement planning and reporting and is likely to meet the requirements of the Local Government Measure (2009) during 2019-20.

Well-being of Future Generations

Our examination in 2019-20 considered the design of the North Powys Well-being Programme and the steps taken by both Powys County Council and Powys Teaching Health Board. Our report concluded that the Council and the Health Board have applied the sustainable development principle and its associated five ways of working in designing the step. However, there are opportunities to further embed the five ways of working into the next phases of the North Powys Well-being Programme.

During 2019-20 the WAO has focussed its work on the following areas. However, the outcomes of these examinations are not available yet.

- Growing Mid Wales
- Delivering Vision 2025

- Assurance and risk assessment; and
- A review of the Council's financial sustainability

Care Inspectorate Wales

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) encourages the improvement of social care, early years and social services by regulating, inspecting, reviewing and providing professional advice to ministers and policy makers.

Since 2017 the Council has been addressing the recommendations of highly critical CIW reports into both children's and adult's social services. These inspection reports highlighted failings, not only in these services, but also in the corporate leadership of the authority. In order to address the recommendations, the Council has been focussed on delivering its Childrens and Adults Improvement Plans, progress of which have been monitored closely by a dedicated Improvement and Assurance Board.

In June 2019, CIW published their Local Authority Annual Performance Review Letter 2018-19 for Powys County Council. A full copy can be accessed here

<https://careinspectorate.wales/sites/default/files/2019-06/190628-powys-en.pdf>

Key findings from the review are outlined below:

Creating and maintaining a permanent workforce in children's services continues to be a major challenge. While recruitment and retention is not such a significant issue in adult services, difficulties in recruiting experienced by domiciliary care providers is having an impact on capacity within the sector.

On inspection, we found the strategic vision for children's services was poorly defined. A restructure of children's services is underway, the plan for which is well articulated by the Head of Service and is based on a coherent understanding of services and current legislative drivers.

Despite considerable focus on the importance of practitioners seeing looked after children and those on the child protection register at regular intervals, this remains an area for improvement.

Overall, the local authority has made significant improvements in the timeliness of its assessments of children.

We raised concerns with Powys County Council about how it engages with / protects children at risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE) in July and October 2018. In response, we are aware senior managers wish to bring in more expertise and capacity for staff development and operational management.

When we completed monitoring work in adult services in November 2018, we found assessments and care and support plans that we considered good and excellent because they were strengths based and outcome focused. However, we did not consistently identify improvement and so we could not be sure of the extent of change since the inspection in January 2018. We found delays and deficits in service provision seriously affecting people. The length of time for people to have an assessment was impacting on people, particularly those waiting to be discharged from hospital. Senior managers consider the number of people delayed in hospital for social care reasons unacceptable. A review of the reablement service has been initiated and the local authority and health board have developed a programme of work designed to bring improvement.

Powys County Council is completing almost all of its adult protection initial enquiries within the requisite timescale, an improvement across the year.

The Council have received the following CIW visits during 2019-20:

Adult Services:

- Assist – Information, Advice and Assistance Service (April 2019 Monitoring visit) – CIW acknowledged that this was a new service with processes and practice continuing to evolve and be refined. The commitment of staff and the team management was acknowledged in this task. Areas of good practice were identified including the presence of community connector resource within the team. Areas for improvement included improved website access for professionals, consistency of recording practices and ongoing monitoring and gap analysis to inform future commissioning activity.
- Strengths based outcome focused care and support for adults (September 2019 Monitoring visit) - Assessment and care and support planning was noted to be an improving picture with practitioners noted to have a greater understanding of the strength-based, outcome-focused approach. Lack of sufficiency in domiciliary care was found to be preventing people from receiving the necessary support to realise their goals of maintaining levels of independence within their own homes. The renewed senior management team in adult services was acknowledged to be determined to work more collaboratively with the health board to improve discharge arrangements and the reablement service. Focus was found to have been maintained on quality assurance and a growing culture of reflective practice and peer mentoring support was found.
- Reablement (January 2020 Monitoring visit) – Overall, CIW found that the promotion of independence and personal outcomes were well considered in the assessment, planning and delivery of reablement services. The service was found to be responsive to peoples' circumstances and using a range of services in working with people and securing their well-being. Partnership working with PTHB and joint strategic planning of reablement services was an area that required further attention to enhance peoples' opportunities to meet personal outcomes.
- Mental Health (Joint inspection March 2020) – The inspection report can be read by clicking the following link: <https://hiw.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-06/180131welshpoolcmhten.pdf>

Children's Services

- Care Leavers
- Children who had been subject to PLO – the following proposals for improvement were issued:
 - Achievement of a stable permanent social work complement in the care and support teams. Changes in social workers has contributed to drift and delays for children
 - Development of performance management information in relation to PLO timescales

- Further and continued improvement in individual relationships and communication between care and support social workers, IROs and Guardians (Cafcass Cymru), particularly in the north of the county
- Consistent decision-making with fully recorded rationale on child's file
- Standardised formats for all internal assessments and reports, including parenting assessment and chronologies
- Embedding of framework and culture of increased IRO scrutiny, monitoring and escalation of concerns, as part of QA framework
- Ensuring appropriate arrangements such that a dedicated QA officer is operational.
- Camlas - the Council is currently awaiting feedback on this visit

Estyn

Estyn is the Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales. Their mission is to achieve excellence for all learners in Wales through raising the standards and quality in education and training. Estyn has a wide range of statutory inspection and reporting responsibilities which include inspection of all publicly funded education and training across Wales.

In July 2019, Estyn carried out an Inspection of Local Government Education Services at Powys County Council - July 2019. A copy of the full report can be accessed here: <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/sites/www.estyn.gov.wales/files/documents/Powys%20County%20Council.pdf>

Key findings from the report are outlined below:

Overall, many pupils in Powys schools make sound progress. However, in many secondary schools, pupils do not sustain the good progress they achieve in early years settings and primary schools. In particular, the performance of more able pupils is too inconsistent across secondary schools. A few secondary schools perform strongly whilst performance in many others is weak.

Overall, the local authority knows its schools well and has generally strengthened how it challenges the performance of schools and supports them to improve. For example, the Team Around the School approach is a useful way for schools to gain suitable support and challenge from the local authority and its challenge advisers. There are recent worthwhile initiatives to improve the support for school leaders, such as through mentoring of new headteachers and the recent use of 'champion' governors.

However, there are many areas of the authority's work causing significant concern, such as those relating to school organisation, financial management, school governance, lack of action regarding schools causing concern and the co-ordination of provision for pupils with special educational needs or who may require extra support. These issues affect school leadership, staffing structures, curriculum planning and staff morale, which in turn limit the impact of challenge advisers and other school improvement staff.

Estyn issued five recommendations to the Council; these were:

- R1 Improve standards in secondary schools, and especially the performance of more able learners
- R2 Improve the evaluation, planning and coordination of provision for learners with special educational needs and other pupils who may require extra support
- R3 Improve the consistency and impact of senior leaders in improving the quality of education services and continue to strengthen the rigour, scrutiny and challenge about performance of the authority's services
- R4 Ensure that the organisation of provision for non-maintained, post16; Welsh medium education and secondary education meets the needs of the children and young people of Powys
- R5 Continue to improve the quality of financial management in schools and take appropriate action to address schools with significant deficit budgets

In response to these recommendations, the Council developed a Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP), with clear actions for delivery. A Post-inspection improvement conference was held on November 28, 2019, where Estyn approved the PIAP. Estyn will continue to review the Council's progress through progress conferences. A monitoring visit will also take place after the last progress conference to consider how well the local authority has addressed each of the recommendations and how much progress has been made overall.

Appendix 5: Internal Audit

Internal Audit is subject to the requirements and principles of:

- Public Sector Internal Audit Standards in the UK - 2017
- CIPFA Local Government Application Note – 2019

Reviews

An Internal Audit Charter was agreed by the Audit Committee in 2019/20 that defines the purpose, authority and responsibility in terms which are consistent with the professional standards.

Internal Audit undertook a programme of risk-based work, formulated using an approved planning strategy, to review the Council's internal control environment.

Each audit undertaken contained an opinion on the control framework and agreed actions by Management to correct the areas of risk identified. Internal Audit undertake a programme of follow-up reviews on high risk areas.

Internal Audit routinely considers the likelihood of fraud occurring within the systems being audited. Where necessary, it undertakes investigatory work in respect of fraud and corruption which can result in a Police referral and/or disciplinary action.

In accordance with the recognised standards, the Head of Audit is required to give an opinion on the overall internal control environment based on the work undertaken throughout the year. This report is presented to the Audit Committee annually.

For the majority of the year there were no significant issues that Internal Audit were aware of that would require inclusion in the Council's Annual Governance Statement. However, Covid-19 has disrupted the delivery of the 2019/20 audit plan at the end of the financial year. An update has been presented to the Audit Committee identifying that SWAP were supporting the Council in prioritising essential services whilst providing assurance by working remotely and focusing on a more agile and data driven audit methodology. This approach remains under review into 20-21.

Appendix 6: COVID19 Coronavirus pandemic

Council's response to the COVID19 Coronavirus pandemic

The Council established an internal Strategic Coordination group (GOLD Command) on 13th March 2020 and a Tactical Coordination Group (SILVER Command) on 16th March 2020.

The Council invoked its Business Continuity Plan on 18th March 2020. From this point the Council focused on Business Critical Activities (BCA) as follows:

Responding to Covid-19

- Adult Services – Domiciliary Care and Residential Care, Safeguarding
- Childcare for Key Workers and Vulnerable Children
- Homelessness Service
- Public Protection (enforcement and public health)

Keeping our communities safe and resilient

- Support for Businesses
- Refuse Collection
- Emergency Housing repairs and maintenance
- Highways – (Winter Maintenance and emergency response)
- Children's Services – including Safeguarding

Corporate – running the Council

- Cash Management
- Customer Services and Communications (to staff, Members and public)
- Corporate Support Services (including Workforce and ICT)

The Council has kept its BCA activities under review and has updated these regularly since the Business Continuity Plan was invoked.

The Council has taken into account all advice and guidance from the Welsh and National Government and regulators during the pandemic, including those relating to:

Physical distancing in the workplace; Funerals; Holiday Accommodation; Public Rights of Way; Meetings; Planning; Education and Schools; Social Care; Elections; Waste; Grants and Financial Assistance; Courts, Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages.

Cabinet and all Council committees were stood down between mid March and early May 2020. During that time Cabinet and the Executive Management Team met weekly using Microsoft Teams. These weekly meetings have continued during the pandemic. A public Cabinet meeting was held using Microsoft Teams on 5th May, 2020 and has met regularly since that date.

Scrutiny committees resumed from 13th May, 2020 and have been held remotely, in public, focusing only on activities relating to management of the pandemic.

All staff who can work remotely have been required to do so during the pandemic and internal control arrangements have continued to work effectively during this time although no new internal audit reviews have been undertaken to allow the organisation to focus on BCA.

The Council has developed a COVID19 risk register which is monitored weekly by GOLD and SILVER Command and has been reviewed by the Audit Committee and

The Council has continued to monitor and report on performance during the pandemic and has kept to the statutory deadlines for the publication of annual reports in relation to the Corporate Improvement Plan, the Strategic Equalities Plan, the Welsh Language Plan and the Public Service Board Well-being Plan.

The Council established a Recovery Coordination Group, chaired by the Chief Executive on 11th June 2020.

Activity	COVID19 impact	Action Taken to mitigate
Members' Code of Conduct / Standards Committee	No committee meetings since mid March. Code of Conduct refresher training for Members delayed. Members being unable to attend meetings due to shielding and other restrictions	Electronic meetings introduced for some meetings to enable Members to take part in meetings. Laptops provided to Co-opted Members to allow ability to take a full part in electronic meetings
Audit Committee	No committee meetings between mid March and early May	Electronic meetings started in May 2020.
Information Governance	Some delays in response to information requests due to staff shortages	Staff recruited and due to start in July / August
County Councillor Training programme	Formal programme suspended from March to August 2020	Some training undertaken electronically to assist Members with use of technology for electronic meetings and guides provided to them.
Engagement and Consultation	Consultation has not been possible during the period on the advice of Welsh Government	Public engagement on schools transformation, including a strategy for Additional Learning Needs has been undertaken.
Welsh Language Services	Simultaneous translation for meetings has not been	A temporary "work around" was devised

	possible due to a lack of capability within software packages.	whilst a more permanent solution was found in consultation with Welsh Government and Microsoft. If this is not forthcoming within a specific timescale alternative options to be pursued.
Cabinet Forward Work Programme	This has been amended to deal mainly with business critical activities and some other priorities such as Schools Transformation	Since the recovery phase started Cabinet is moving back to considering increasing numbers of business as usual items.
Committee Agendas and reports	Committees agendas have been published electronically as usual. However no new reports have been commissioned and any information for consideration by committees has been prepared as a requirement for the Council's Covid-19 business continuity plan.	Cabinet meetings have been broadcast live to the press and public as usual. In addition, some scrutiny meetings have been broadcast live to the public and the aim is to broadcast all where possible during this period as well as other meetings as they are held e.g. Planning.
Members Annual Reports	No impact and work on compiling the reports is continuing	
Public participation at meetings	No Full Council meetings held between March and July 2020.	
Scrutiny committees	No committees between mid March and early May	Remote meetings established on 13 th May and now fortnightly meetings of each committee focused on BCA
Corporate Planning Cycle	Focus on BCA has delayed the usual corporate planning timetable	The Recovery Coordination Group is overseeing the development of the 2021-24 integrated business planning process as part of recovery
Vision 2025, Our Corporate Improvement Plan	Some commitments in V2025 have been delayed	V2025 commitments are being reviewed as part of the Council's recovery work

Vision 2025 Transformation Programme	The Transformation Programme has been suspended to focus on BCA although elements of individual projects have continued, e.g. schools and digital	Transformation Delivery scheduled for July – remote meeting
Medium Term Financial Strategy	Significant impact due to income loss and additional costs	MTFS to be reviewed once Quarter 1 figures available
Strategic Equality Plan	None, all actions complete	Annual Report will be published before end of July
2020-12 Integrated Business Plans	Some actions delayed for 2020-21	Being reviewed as part of recovery work
Performance Management and Quality Assurance Framework	Staff appraisals delayed	To be restarted as part of recovery
Management Information and Business Intelligence	Work focused on COVID19 response	COVID19 dashboards produced to support GOLD and SILVER
Improvement and Assurance Board	No meetings between March and June.	Monthly phone calls between IAB Chair, Leader and CEO. Formal remote meeting scheduled for 29 July 2020
Partnership Working	PRB and PSB meetings not held between March - June	PSB met remotely at end of June. Joint Partnership Board met remotely in June.
Workforce Planning and Development	Leadership development programme suspended	
Digital Services	Work focused on COVID19 response	
Risk Management	Numerous risks to the Council due to COVID19	COVID19 risk register in place and regularly monitored
Financial Management	COVID19 pandemic requiring close continual financial monitoring and new returns to Welsh Government	Detailed review of quarter 1 to establish in-year and future years forecasts and actions required to mitigate
Powys Pension Fund	Impact on Fund value	Some equity protection has been put in place at the end of 2019-20
Internal Audit (SWAP)	New reviews delayed	SWAP 2020-21 programme to be

		reviewed as part of recovery
Responding to external regulatory inspections	No inspections undertaken during March to July	CIW monitoring visits planned for Summer and improvement conference for adults and Childrens scheduled for September 2020
Budget Setting	Slight delay to annual budget setting process	2020-21 budget review and 2021-24 budget setting to be worked through as part of recovery
Annual Report of the Director of Social Services / Annual Council Reporting Framework	Delay in reporting to Council which is usually scheduled for July each year	Report programmed for consideration by Cabinet and Council in September 2020.
Quarterly and Annual Performance Reporting	2019-20 reports unaffected. Impact in Quarter 1 – focus on COVID19 response performance	Restart reporting on CIP in Quarter 2 If possible

Glossary:

ACRF	Annual Council Reporting Framework
AGS	Annual Governance Statement
CIP	Corporate Improvement Plan
CIPFA	Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy
CIW	Care Inspectorate Wales
CLGP	Corporate Leadership and Governance Plan
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
EMT	Executive Management Team
ERW	Education through Regional Working
FSP	Finance Scrutiny Panel – now the Finance Panel from January 2019 (FP)
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulations
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspectorate
ILM	Institute of Leadership and Management
JCG	Joint Governance Committee (of the Wales Pension Partnership)
JMT	Joint Management Team (Powys County Council and Powys Teaching Local Health Board)
JPB	Joint Partnership Board
CLA	Children Looked After
LDP	Local Development Plan
LGPS	Local Government Pension Scheme
MTFS	Medium Term Financial Strategy
PDR	Personal Development Review
PMAQAF	Performance Management and Quality Assurance Framework
PSB	Public Service Board
SIRO	Senior Information Risk Owner
SOLACE	Society of Local Authority Chief Executives
SWAP	South West Audit Partnership
WAO	Wales Audit Office
WFG	Well-Being of Future Generations Act