



Work-based Learning Project

Abstract

The relationship between promoting and implementing change, and the obstacles preventing change taking place within the Housing division.

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1. Project Proposal

The overarching goal of the Housing Division is to drive continuous improvement through effective engagement with staff, ensuring both the workforce and the community benefit from enhanced service delivery. Saks (2006) defines employee engagement as the level of commitment employees have toward their division and their willingness to contribute to its success. His research indicates that engaged employees are more likely to drive improvements, directly supporting the Housing Division's goal of continuous improvement.

The division plays an integral role in the well-being of tenants, residents, service users, and businesses across the county, with a dedicated workforce of 159 individuals working across five distinct service areas. These services are critical to shaping the lives of thousands, ranging from providing essential housing services to supporting vulnerable populations such as refugees and the elderly. A summary of each key divisional service is provided in Appendix 1.

The division's performance is evaluated based on key Well-being Objectives (WBOs) and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), aligning its efforts with broader community goals. These WBOs, which guide and measure the division's success, include (Appendix 2):

- WBO 1 Start Well:
Enabling our children and young people to have the best possible start in life.
- WBO 2 Live & Age Well:
Enabling our residents to live and age well.
- WBO 3 Prosperous Communities:
Enabling our communities and environment to be healthy, safe and prosperous.
- WBO 4 Our Council:
To further modernise and develop as a resilient and efficient Council.

The Housing Division's focus on continuous service improvement directly contributes to the achievement of WBO 4 which is to modernise and develop a more resilient, efficient council. However, realising this potential depends on actively engaging staff, whose insights and ideas are integral for driving change and enhancing service delivery.

The willingness of staff to share innovative ideas is influenced by several motivating and inhibiting factors. Whilst employees are motivated by opportunities for professional development, contributing to better service delivery, and gaining a sense of ownership in shaping the division's future, there are also barriers that discourage engagement. Employees may hesitate to share ideas due to concerns about negative consequences or lack of recognition. Without visible encouragement from management, staff may feel their contributions are undervalued. Employees may also

view proposing changes as risky, especially if resources are limited or success is uncertain.

Whilst promoting change can encourage innovation, the practical implementation of new ideas often faces significant obstacles including (but not limited to) limited resources, culture and bureaucracy. Addressing these barriers is essential to ensuring that ideas not only emerge but also become actionable, impactful improvements across the division. Sheth et al. (2000) argue that divisional culture can either support or obstruct innovation. They highlight that deeply rooted values, norms, and practices often generate resistance to change, and overcoming this resistance is key to implementing new ideas.

This project may help towards fostering a sustainable, responsive, and forward-thinking Housing Division capable of addressing the evolving needs of both staff and the communities it serves. Engaged, motivated staff are essential to the division's success, as their ideas and contributions drive service improvement. Without a culture that actively supports idea-sharing, the division risks stagnation, inefficiency, and missed opportunities for better service delivery. Kouzes and Posner (2012) highlight that effective leadership involves developing a shared vision and empowering employees to contribute to divisional goals. For the Housing Division, creating an environment where staff feel encouraged to share ideas is crucial for adapting to the changing needs of the community and ensuring the division remains sustainable and forward-thinking. Furthermore, Kuvaas (2006) argues that workplace inefficiency can reduce employee motivation and impact their commitment to divisional objectives. This increases the risk of missed opportunities for improvement, which in turn negatively affects service quality and overall divisional performance.

By breaking down the barriers to idea-sharing and empowering staff to engage in continuous improvement processes, the division can better meet the needs of its staff, community in which is services and technological needs whilst contributing to the strategic goal of modernising and developing a resilient, efficient Council. This initiative will align with the Council's objectives for operational efficiency and resilience, ultimately benefiting the entire community.

This research will explore the factors that encourage or inhibit staff in the Housing Division from contributing innovative ideas for service improvement. The aim is to assess how well the division recognises and implements good practices and to identify the barriers that prevent individuals, teams, and services from effectively supporting enhanced service delivery. The key research objectives include:

- Highlight the key factors hindering positive change and explore the reasons behind such resistance.
- Recognise potential new practices, ideas, and operational methods emerging from staff across various service areas.

- Conduct a critical analysis of communication and engagement strategies, as well as change management theories, exploring their relationships and mutual influence in shaping organisational change.

This research hopes to achieve the following key learning outcomes, these include:

- Identify the common barriers that prevent staff from contributing ideas and propose strategies to address these barriers.
- Develop effective strategies for communication and staff engagement, ensuring that employees feel valued and empowered to share their ideas.
- Strengthen the division's change management strategies, ensuring that they are informed by staff insights and foster a culture of innovation.
- Promote an ongoing commitment to continuous improvement, ensuring that the division remains responsive and adaptable to the needs of its workforce and the community.
- Foster a culture of collaboration, trust, and openness, where staff feel safe to contribute their ideas and are actively supported in the process.

The intended impact of this research will lead to:

- A more engaged workforce will result in increased idea generation and participation in service improvement initiatives, fostering a sense of ownership and commitment to the division's success.
- Encouraging the sharing of innovative ideas and addressing implementation challenges will lead to more efficient processes, better service delivery, and an enhanced ability to respond to community needs.
- As the Housing Division becomes more efficient and responsive, the Council will be better equipped to achieve its modernisation and resilience objectives, boosting its overall effectiveness and reputation.
- This project will contribute to the long-term development of a culture where continuous improvement is embedded in daily operations, ensuring the division consistently seeks new and better ways to serve the community.

This project aims to unlock the potential of staff within the Housing Division by addressing the key factors that influence their engagement and overcoming barriers to implementing innovative ideas. By fostering a culture of continuous improvement and providing staff with the tools and support they need to contribute to service enhancement, the Housing Division will not only align with the Council's modernisation objectives but will also establish a sustainable framework for ongoing innovation in service delivery. This research will hope to ensure that the division is better equipped to meet the needs of its workforce and the community, enhancing its overall effectiveness and service quality.

2. Project Report

2.1 Introduction

The Housing Division's dedication to driving continuous improvement and the crucial role that staff engagement plays in reaching this objective. By actively involving employees, the division not only enhances internal processes but also ensures that both staff and the communities served experience the direct benefits of better service delivery. The success of the division is intrinsically tied to the active participation of its workforce. Staff perspectives, ideas, and insights are crucial in driving meaningful, sustainable change and innovation that can address the evolving needs of the division and the broader community.

Despite the motivation employees have to contribute towards service improvements and advance their career development, several barriers hinder their active participation. Key obstacles include fears of negative repercussions for sharing ideas, a lack of recognition for contributions, and concerns over the perceived risks of proposing changes. Furthermore, challenges such as limited resources, entrenched divisional culture, and bureaucratic processes often act as roadblocks, stifling innovation and impeding the implementation of new ideas.

To unlock the division's full potential, it is essential to address these barriers head-on. Only by fostering a culture that encourages open dialogue, supports risk-taking, and actively values employee contributions can the division ensure that its innovative ideas lead to tangible, impactful improvements in service delivery. A concerted effort to reduce these obstacles will not only enhance the division's operational effectiveness but will also empower employees, ensuring that they are an integral part of the ongoing journey towards better serving both staff and the community.

Ultimately, the aim of this research is to foster a more engaged workforce, elevate service delivery, and instil an established commitment to innovation and continuous improvement within the Housing Division. By gaining a deeper understanding of the factors that motivate or hinder staff participation, the research seeks to offer valuable insights for building a Housing Division that is adaptable, forward-thinking, and capable of thriving in a rapidly changing environment. Central to this vision is the promotion of a culture of ongoing improvement that empowers staff to contribute innovative ideas that drive service excellence.

This study will identify the key drivers and barriers influencing staff's willingness to engage in the ideation and implementation of new initiatives. Furthermore, it will explore strategies to overcome these challenges, particularly focusing on enhancing communication, staff engagement, and change management practices. By creating

an environment where employees feel supported, valued, and empowered to participate, the division can unlock its full potential. Removing these barriers will allow the Housing Division to better meet the evolving needs of both its workforce and the communities it serves, whilst also supporting the broader Council goals of modernisation and operational efficiency. This research aspires to provide a roadmap for transforming the Housing Division into a more resilient, efficient, and innovative unit that can respond proactively to the demands of the future.

2.2 Literature Review

This literature review will explore current body of academic knowledge of key concepts related to divisional engagement, innovation, service improvement, and the factors influencing staff participation in change initiatives. This review will also examine different methodologies, to determine what methods are most suitable and effective to yield the best insights for this study.

For instance, employee engagement, is recognised as a vital element in nurturing a culture of continuous improvement. Saks (2006) highlights how engagement boosts employee commitment, enthusiasm, and ultimately, organisational performance. Bakker & Demerouti (2007) suggests that engaged employees tend to be more proactive, take initiative, and actively look for opportunities to enhance work processes, which directly supports the idea of continuous improvement. The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model highlights that when employees feel supported and appreciated, they are more inclined to share ideas for improvement and innovation. This also aligns with the Gallup Q12 Engagement Model. Gallup (2013) suggests that when employees feel valued and supported, they are more likely to become deeply committed to the organisation's goals, including continuous improvement efforts.

However, the literature also identifies several barriers that can inhibit staff participation in service improvement, particularly resistance to change. Hall & Hord (2001) note that employees who have unresolved personal or managerial concerns about the change process may be reluctant to engage in service improvement efforts, especially if they perceive the changes as a threat to their professional identity or job security. The Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) outlines various stages of concern that employees may go through when facing change, including awareness, informational, personal, and management-related concerns. In addition, West and Dawson (2012) suggest that employees in the public sector are frequently reluctant to offer ideas for improvement due to fears of political consequences, strict policies, or bureaucratic barriers. Their research indicates that establishing a psychologically safe environment is pivotal for public sector organisations to navigate these barriers and encourage creative problem-solving and service innovation.

Several factors that encourage participation in service improvement, such as intrinsic motivation and meaningful work, are explored by (Steger, Dik, & Duffy, 2012). The Meaningfulness of Work (MW) Theory suggests that when employees view their work as meaningful, they are more motivated to engage in activities that enhance their work environment or services. This theory posits that employees who believe their work has purpose or contributes to a larger goal are more engaged and more likely to offer ideas for improvement, thereby driving innovation in service delivery. This theory suggests that employees who see their work as meaningful or contributing to a larger purpose are more engaged and more likely to propose ideas for improvement, thereby promoting innovation in service delivery. This theory is also relevant to the Housing Division, as a sense of purpose and skill development could help employees see the value in contributing to the division's wider goals. However, the literature does not provide specific evidence on how these motivational factors function within the context of housing services, indicating a gap in understanding the key drivers of employee engagement in this sector.

Effective communication is also emphasised as a crucial element for successful change management. Hiatt (2006) highlights the need for clear communication to build awareness and secure buy-in from employees. Within the Housing Division, this suggests the importance of inclusivity, ensuring that staff are fully informed about the objectives and benefits of change initiatives. The role of communication in promoting collaboration and trust is further supported by Cameron and Green (2015), as well as Moynihan (2008) and Bertelli and Lynn (2009) who suggest that public sector employees may feel disconnected from decision-making processes or view communication from leadership as top-down and one-way, leading to resistance or disengagement during change initiatives. This highlights a significant gap in the literature regarding tailored communication strategies that can effectively engage staff, particularly in highly structured sectors like Housing, Health, and Education.

Whilst fostering innovation is crucial, the literature also points to the challenges of overcoming bureaucratic barriers and rigid structures. Shein (2010) describes how a culture focused on control, standardisation, and hierarchy, which are common in bureaucratic environments, can hinder innovation. In such cultures, employees may hesitate to offer new ideas or challenge existing practices due to fear of negative repercussions. In contrast, a culture of innovation is defined by openness, trust, and flexibility, qualities that are often limited in bureaucratic environments. This is particularly relevant for the Housing Division, where existing processes may restrict creative thinking and the adoption of new ideas. Yet, there is limited research focusing on the specific structural and resource-related barriers to innovation within public sector housing divisions, representing a gap in the literature.

In conclusion, this literature review has explored key concepts related to employee engagement, innovation, service improvement, and the factors influencing staff participation in change initiatives, specifically in the context of public sector

organisations. The review has highlighted the significant role that employee engagement plays in fostering a culture of continuous improvement. However, the review also identifies significant barriers to staff participation in change processes, particularly within bureaucratic public sector environments. The literature highlights that resistance to change can stem from unresolved personal or managerial related concerns, fears of job insecurity, and a lack of psychological safety. Models like the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) and research by Hall & Hord (2001) shed light on the different stages of concern employees experience when facing change, which can hinder their willingness to engage in service improvement initiatives. Furthermore, West and Dawson (2012) point to specific challenges within the public sector, such as political ramifications, strict policies, and rigid structures, which can discourage employees from offering ideas for improvement. Creating a psychologically safe environment, as recommended by these authors, is essential for overcoming these barriers and fostering a culture where innovation can thrive.

The review also highlights the role of intrinsic motivation and the Meaningfulness of Work (MW) Theory, which suggests that employees are more likely to engage in service improvement when they perceive their work as meaningful and aligned with a broader purpose (Steger, Dik, & Duffy, 2012). This theory emphasises the importance of employees viewing their work as contributing to the overall divisional as well as organisational goals, a concept that is particularly relevant to the Housing Division. However, a notable gap in the literature exists, as there is limited research on how these motivational factors specifically apply within the context of the housing division, suggesting the need for further investigation in this area.

Another critical element emphasised in the literature is the pivotal role of communication in successful change management processes. Effective communication is widely recognised as essential for facilitating understanding, alignment, and engagement amongst employees during periods of organisational change. A variety of studies suggest that clear, timely, and inclusive communication is key to reducing resistance, building trust, and fostering a sense of ownership are essential for the successful implementation of change initiatives (Hiatt, 2006; Cameron & Green, 2015).

However, despite the general consensus on the importance of communication, there remains a significant gap in the literature regarding the development and application of tailored communication strategies that specifically cater to the unique dynamics of highly structured public sector divisions, such as Housing. In these sectors, where bureaucratic processes, hierarchical structures, and rigid policy frameworks are often prevalent, traditional communication methods may not effectively engage staff or address the complexities of their roles. This gap presents a valuable opportunity for future research, as understanding how to design communication strategies that resonate with employees in these contexts could lead to more effective engagement,

smoother transitions during change processes, and ultimately, more successful outcomes for public sector organisations.

Furthermore, existing literature tends to focus on generic communication practices without taking into account the specific needs and challenges faced by employees in public sector divisions. Future research could explore how tailored communication methods such as organizational culture, the complexity of the changes being implemented, and the varying levels of employee involvement reduce anxiety, and improve the overall effectiveness of change management. By addressing this gap could significantly contribute to more effective, employee-centred change management practices within public sector organisations.

Whilst fostering innovation is essential, the review also explores the challenges posed by bureaucratic structures. This is particularly relevant for public sector organisations including divisions such as Housing, where rigid processes and structures can stifle creativity and hinder the implementation of new ideas. However, the literature reveals a gap in research regarding the specific structural and resource-related barriers to innovation within public sector housing divisions, highlighting the need for further exploration in this area.

Overall, there is considerable research on the role of employee engagement and its influence on innovation and service improvement, the literature identifies several gaps that require further investigation. These gaps include understanding the specific motivational drivers within sectors, developing tailored communication strategies for public sector divisions, and addressing the structural barriers to innovation in bureaucratic environments. Exploring these areas could offer valuable insights into how public sector organisations can more effectively engage their employees, encourage innovation, and promote continuous improvement, ultimately improving service delivery and performance.

This research study is unique in its aim to address these gaps by investigating the specific dynamics of employee engagement, motivation, and change management within the Housing Division. By focusing on the division's distinct challenges, such as resistance to change, limited resources, and hierarchical structures, the study will provide valuable insights into how staff can be better supported and encouraged to contribute to service improvement initiatives. Furthermore, this research will examine the role of communication strategies in facilitating change within a public sector context, an area that remains underrepresented in the literature. The key objective of the study will be to provide valuable insights that will help develop more effective strategies to enhance engagement and innovation, ultimately improving service delivery within the Housing Division.

2.3 Methodologies

It is anticipated that the research study will take around three months to complete and will consist of quantitative and qualitative approaches.

2.3.1 Surveys

The primary objective of conducting surveys is to gather insights from staff regarding their ideas and perspectives on promoting continuous improvement. Participants will receive an email invitation to participate in the survey, which will be conveniently accessible through a link to Microsoft Forms. This online format ensures that staff can complete the survey using either a laptop or a mobile device from any location within the county, promoting accessibility for all.

To facilitate the completion process, the estimated required for participants to finish the survey will be 8 to 12 minutes. Importantly, all responses will remain anonymised to protect participant privacy. The survey will encompass a range of questions focused on ideas, suggestions, potential barrier, benefits, drawbacks, and participant expectations. A blended approach will be utilised, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative questions to provide a comprehensive understanding and insight into staff perspectives, opinions and feelings.

A response rate of approximately 31% is expected, resulting in around 60 completed questionnaires. This data will be analysed and presented into themes and displayed in a tubular format which will provide quantifiable insights.

2.3.2 One to One Interviews (semi-structured)

The purpose of one-to-one interviews is to obtain a deeper qualitative understanding from participants. These interviews will incorporate a blended approach, allowing flexibility in their executions. To maximise efficiency and minimise resource demands, a combination of in-person and virtual meetings will be arranged based on the individual preferences and circumstances. All meetings will be scheduled using Outlook calendars, ensuring that protected time is allocated for the interviews, which can be booked in advance.

Each interview is expected to last approximately 20 to 25 minutes, during which responses will be recorded through detailed interviewer notes or, with consent, via a Microsoft Teams recording. Recognising that some participants may prefer not to have their sessions recorded, the alternative method of taking notes will be applied.

A semi-structured approach to the interview will enable the researcher to strike a balance between structure and flexibility. Allowing researchers to enter interviews with

some predetermined questions that are open-ended and permit elaboration but allows the freedom to deviate to explore unexpected avenues (Dearnley, 2005).

Following the analysis of the initial survey results, a series of open-ended questions will be developed to align with the findings, allowing the researcher to delve deeper into participants motivation, feelings, and thoughts. Should additional detail be necessary, the researcher will seek approval to obtain relevant contact information to enhance the study's depth. As an insider researcher, several steps will be taken to ensure the integrity and comfort of the interview process:

- Preparation of relevant questions in advance to guide discussions effectively.
- Selection of a comfortable, accessible, and safe environment for interviews.
- Provision of a welcoming atmosphere, including introductions and refreshments.
- Active listening to participants responses, capturing comprehensive notes, and following up on any questions they may have, adhering to best practices.

2.3.3 Focus Groups (semi-structured)

Focus groups, consisting of 3 to 5 participants, aims to harness the interactive dynamics among the core group to enable and promote insightful reflections and discussions that enhance the overall outcomes of the study. These sessions will promote effective brainstorming and provide richer, more valuable data for consideration. Open-ended questions will be used to encourage discussion, formulated following the responses collected from the surveys and one to one interviews.

Focus group sessions will typically last between 30 to 40 minutes, with responses captured through interviewer notes. Invitations will be sent to staff via email, followed by courtesy reminders as the scheduled dates approach. The advantage of being an insider researcher includes a deep understanding of existing processes, organisational culture, and available services.

Responses from both interviews and focus groups will be thematically analysed to identify key factors influencing feedback. It is important to note that while the participation rate may be limited in comparison to the overall workforce of the division, the insights gained will still offer valuable indications of general trends, opinions, and perceptions.

2.3.4 Ethical Approach

Soobrayan (2003) implies that all researchers need to learn to think and reflect upon their project holistically and to see ethics as an integral part of the research, rather than something that is tacked on at the end. To address potential ethical concerns

associated with insider research, the following key principles will be adopted and implemented.

2.3.4a Integrity

Acknowledgement of participants autonomy and cultural differences. Reporting of accurate data, removing any opportunity to omit and manipulate information that may skew results and being detrimental to the study.

2.3.4b Informed Consent

Obtain voluntary informed consent as well as engagement with participant managers for approvals. Clear communication in relation to how participant information will be handled and stored. This will also involve informing participants of the purpose, procedures, potential risks as well as the benefits.

2.3.4c Compliance

Adhere to organisational guidelines and statutory obligations in relation to data protection (GDPR). This is supported by Kitchener (2000) who states that a researcher will need to consult with appropriate agencies, policies, rules and regulation to ensure ethical compliance.

2.3.4d Minimising Harm

The organisation predominantly undertakes its own in-house research and whilst there are several advantages, it is critical to acknowledge the internal ethical considerations associated when conducting insider research.

Utilising staff within the organisation to conduct research is much more cost effective as opposed to buying in such resources. Using in-house resources will have an impact on actual day-to day duties which may compromise service delivery, deadlines, etc. due to additional duties incurred.

Knowledge and awareness of processes, culture, services, and staff are useful insights and tools to have, as they enable the study to become seamless and efficient in the organisation of resources. There is a greater risk of cutting corners including bypassing line management for approval, reduction in the level of communication being offered as well as specifically cherry-picking participants to enhance research outcomes which may skew the data. There is also a tendency to become advocates as opposed to being seen as researchers, allowing bias towards individuals if known to them and therefore already having pre-determined thoughts/outcomes. All of which elevates the risk of the insider researcher mis-interpreting the data including reshaping and/or omitting resulting in a breach of integrity. In addition, due to familiarity, there is more of a focus on perhaps the drama and conversational chat rather than the study and the insider researcher maintaining a neutral stance.

A thematic approach has been used to analyse the captured data, enabling a thorough examination of the key patterns, insights, and trends that emerged. This analysis will not only help uncover areas of strength and success but also identify challenges and opportunities for improvement, offering a robust foundation for informed decision-making and targeted action. Creswell and Plano Clark (2017) endorse this approach, emphasising that qualitative methods such as thematic analysis are instrumental in exploring the context and underlying factors that drive quantitative findings.

In conclusion, the research will provide a pathway to enhance engagement among staff, leading to a more responsive and effective Housing division. By prioritising the voices of employees, the division can tap into the wealth of knowledge that will drive meaningful change, improve service delivery, and benefit the customers. It will also provide recommendations aimed at enhancing continuous service improvement initiatives.

2.4 Findings

This research aims to explore the factors that promote and inhibit staff from suggesting ideas for positive change within the Housing division within Carmarthenshire County Council. The focus of the research is to:

- Understand the relationship between implementing positive change and removing potential inhibitors to change
- Critically analyse communication, engagement and change management theories, exploring their interrelation and mutual influence.
- Identify potential good practices and methods of operation derived from staff across the division.

2.4.1 Staff Survey

Quantitative surveys were chosen as the primary research method for this study as they can be utilised effectively to identify patterns and trends across large sample sizes. By incorporating fixed-response questions, I was able to gather standardised data, which streamlined the process of comparing and statistically analysing responses from different groups.

A significant advantage of quantitative surveys is their ability to handle large sample sizes efficiently. This capacity allows researchers to extrapolate findings to a broader population, improving the reliability and validity of the results. For instance, the Licensing Consultation Analysis Report 2021 utilised surveys to collect data from

more than 2,000 individuals and organisations, providing a comprehensive understanding of stakeholder views.

The use of quantitative surveys is widely documented. For instance, Saunders et al. (2016) note the efficiency of surveys in collecting standardised data, which is important for exploratory and descriptive research. Additionally, Cychota and Harrison (2006) state that mailed questionnaires are among the well-researched data collection methods within organisational sciences, supporting the effectiveness of this approach.

Reflecting on past surveys conducted across the organisation, it has been evident that the predominant approach has been the development and distribution of quantitative surveys. Whilst these surveys are quicker to administer than qualitative approaches, they often operate more as a "bean counting" exercise, emphasising numerical data at the expense of deeper insights. This approach typically offers a simplified, broad overview of staff, reducing complex experiences to binary terms. As a result, it fails to capture the rich context and nuanced understanding that qualitative data can reveal, limiting its ability to fully reflect the complexity of staff perspectives and experiences. According to Stoecker, R. (2005) there is an over reliance on quantitative surveys in organisational research and emphasises the importance of qualitative data to better understand lived experiences of individuals. Stoecker argues that qualitative methods provide a more holistic picture of the numerical data.

In response to this limitation, the decision was made to incorporate both quantitative and qualitative questions, aiming for a more comprehensive approach to data collection and analysis. By integrating both measurable trends and rich narrative data, this combined methodology supports data triangulation, hopefully enhancing the reliability and depth of the findings. The inclusion of qualitative insights alongside quantitative metrics not only deepens the understanding of staff experiences but also provides a more robust foundation for informed decision-making, ultimately facilitating the successful implementation of change.

A Microsoft Teams Form survey (Appendix 3) was distributed to all 159 staff within the Housing Division after receiving approval from the Head of Service. The survey was sent via email, providing an option to access it through a link or QR code. To encourage maximum participation, the Head of Service prepared a covering email, which was circulated to everyone (Appendix 4). A total of 64 (40%) of staff responded to the survey within the allocated two-week period.

The findings and analysis of the staff survey provide valuable insights into the perspectives and experiences of employees within the Housing Division. By analysing the responses from a diverse group of staff members, the survey aims to identify key factors that influence staff engagement and their willingness to contribute to continuous improvement initiatives. This section will delve into the survey results,

highlighting the themes and trends that emerged from the data, and offer a comprehensive understanding of the current state of staff morale and the potential barriers to effective service delivery.

Throughout the survey, a range of qualitative questions were employed, including:

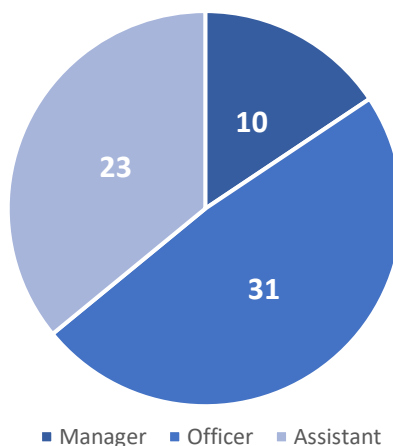
- Question 5 (Appendix 5)
- Question 7 (Appendix 6)
- Question 9 (Appendix 7)
- Question 11 (Appendix 8)
- Question 13 (Appendix 9)
- Question 15 (Appendix 10)
- Question 17 (Appendix 11)
- Question 19 (Appendix 12)
- Question 21 (Appendix 13)
- Question 23 (Appendix 14)
- Question 25 (Appendix 15)
- Question 27 (Appendix 16)
- Question 29 (Appendix 17)
- Question 32 (Appendix 18)
- Question 34 (Appendix 19)

Following completion of the survey, these questions generated a diverse and detailed range of responses, all participant responses have been captured within appendices as outlined above. The responses for all questions have been thoroughly analysed and captured as part of the thematic approach, with the findings presented within the analysis section below.

Section 1: Workforce Demographic

Q1. What best describes your role within your division?

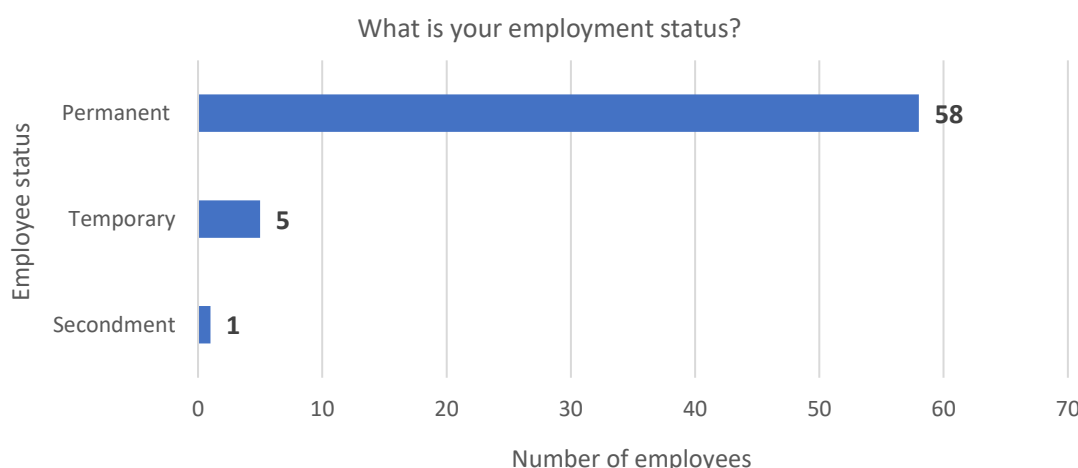
What best describes your role within your division?



48% (31) of respondents classified themselves as *Officers*, closely followed by **36% (23)** identifying as *Assistants*, and **16% (10)** categorising themselves as *Managers*. This distribution indicates that *Officers* make up the majority of respondents, with *Assistants* forming a significant secondary group, followed by a smaller proportion of *Managers*. As *Officers* occupy a mid-level position within the divisional hierarchy, their perspectives could offer a more balanced and representative view of the overall experience.

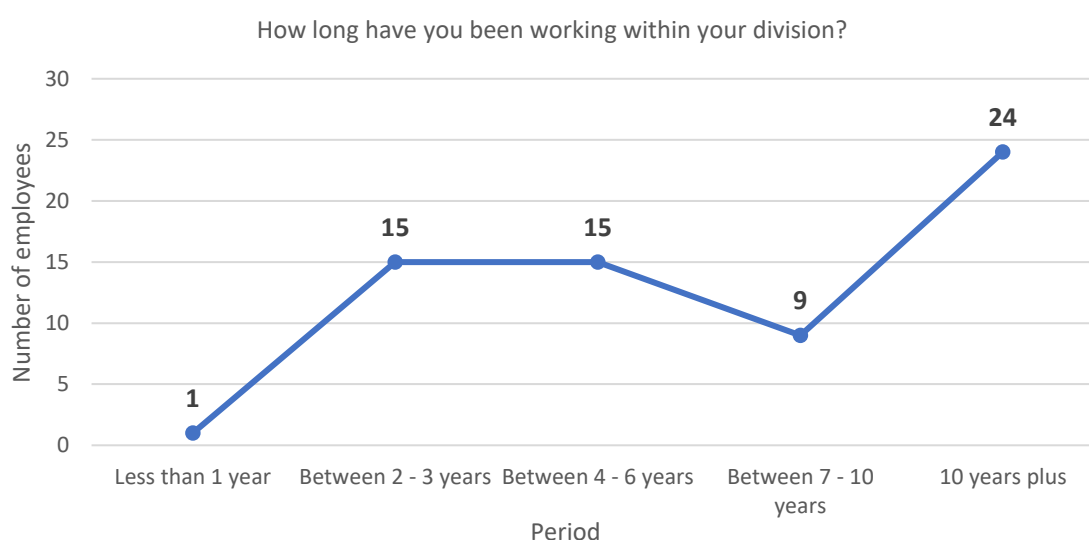
Dillman et al. (2014) on organisational structure and power dynamics, argues that the demographics of survey respondents should align with the divisional hierarchy to ensure a well-rounded understanding of different perspectives within the division. In this context, the significant representation of officers in the survey is valuable, as their mid-level roles enable them to provide more balanced and nuanced perspectives on divisional processes and improvements. This group is well-positioned to identify both the challenges and opportunities faced at different levels, offering a more thorough and representative view of the division as a whole.

Q2. What is your employment status?



An overwhelming **91% (58)** of respondents identified their employment status as *Permanent*, representing the vast majority of the group. This was followed by **8% (5)** who indicated they were employed on a *Temporary* basis, whilst just **2% (1)** classified themselves as being on a *Secondment*. This distribution shows that most employees are permanent, whilst temporary and secondment workers make up a much smaller share. This further enhances the validity of these research findings, as permanent employees are likely to have a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the workplace dynamics, given their longer tenure and established roles within the division. Typically, permanent employees have a greater commitment to the organisation and a deeper understanding of its practices, structures, and dynamics, which leads to more valuable insights (Harrison & Rainer, 2014).

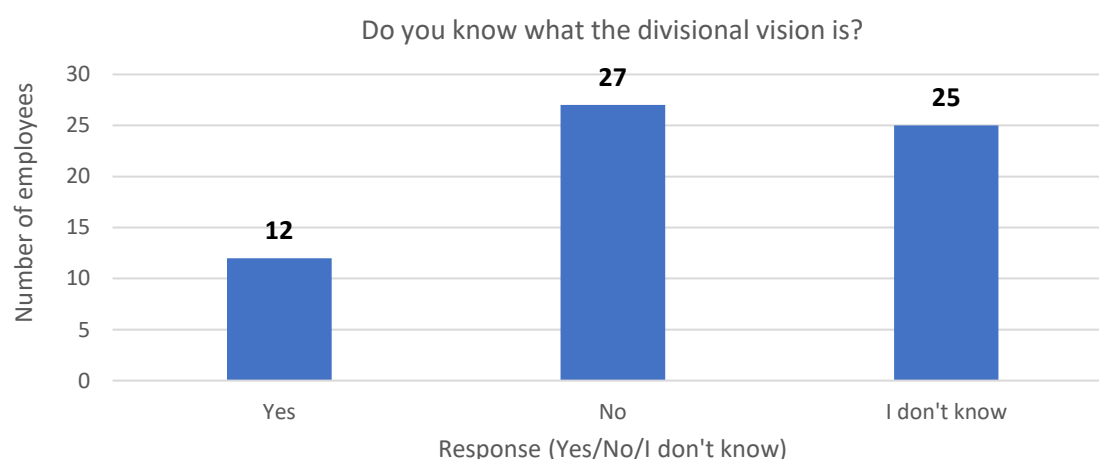
Q3. How long have you been working within your division?



A significant **37% (24)** of respondents have been with the authority for over 10 years, all of whom hold permanent positions. Another **23% (15)** have worked for 2-3 years, including 10 permanent staff, 4 temporary, and 1 on secondment. Similarly, **23% (15)** have been employed for 4-6 years, all of whom are permanent staff. **14% (9)** have between 7-10 years of service, all of whom are permanent, whilst **1% (1)** have worked for less than 1 year as a temporary employee. This demonstrates a strong presence of long-term, permanent staff across the division, further contributing to the validity of my findings. Baker, D., & Proctor, J. (2016) suggest that extended service is linked to the accumulation of tacit knowledge, which enhances decision-making and may result in higher-quality research. They further state that in longitudinal studies, the duration of service is often a crucial factor influencing the quality of research and its findings.

Section 2: Purpose

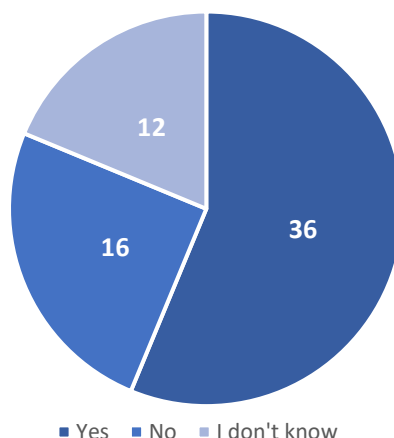
Q4. Do you know what the divisional vision is?



Only **19% (12)** of respondents indicated that they are aware of the divisional vision, whilst a significant **81% (52)** either stated they were unaware or did not know what the vision is. This demonstrates a clear gap in communication or understanding regarding the divisional vision among most staff. Kouzes and Posner (2012) highlight the crucial role of leaders in effectively communicating the vision to inspire and align employees with the division's goals. Their research suggests that unclear communication or a lack of messaging from leadership can result in confusion, disengagement, and misalignment within the division.

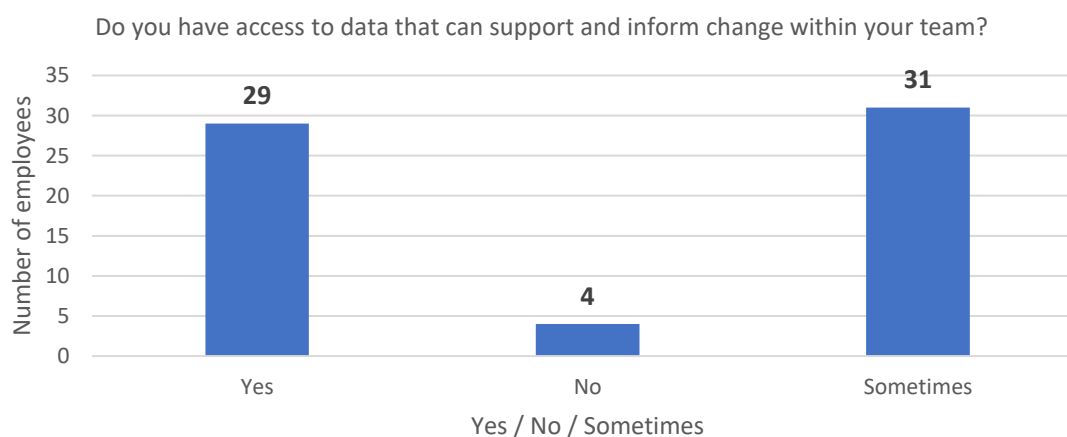
Q6. Are you clear on the goals and ambition of your team?

Are you clear on the goals and ambition of your team?



Only **56% (36)** of respondents reported having a clear understanding of their team's goals and ambitions, whilst a notable **44% (28)** either stated they were unaware or did not know what these are. This reveals a significant communication gap and a lack of clarity surrounding the team's objectives for a substantial portion of staff. The research undertaken by Edmondson, A. (2003), highlights that effective communication and clear understanding of team goals are integral to fostering a learning and ensuing team effectiveness. From a divisional customer perspective Grönroos (2000) explains that divisional performance is closely tied to employees' ability to understand and address customer needs. From a customer perspective, when team goals are unclear, it can disrupt service delivery and reduce customer satisfaction, as employees may not be fully aligned with the division's priorities. The communication gap regarding team goals can negatively affect how employees engage with customers, ultimately influencing the overall customer experience within the division.

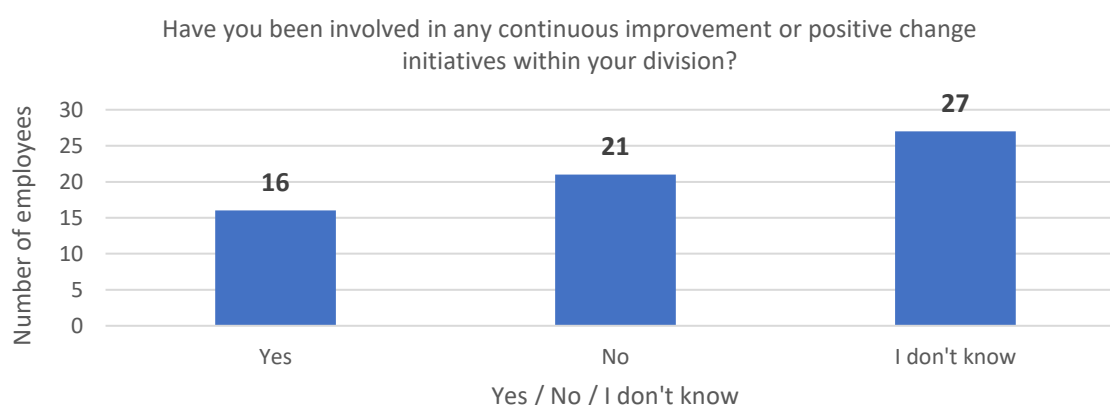
Q8. Do you have access to data that can support and inform change within your team?



A substantial **45% (29)** of respondents reported having *consistent* access to data that supports and informs change within the team. However, **48% (31)** indicated that data is only *sometimes* available, and a concerning **6% (4)** reported having *no* access to data at all. This suggests that either data availability to staff is inconsistent or limited, leading to missed opportunities for innovation and change (Ransbotham and Kiron, 2014), or that data is available but, staff are not aware of it.

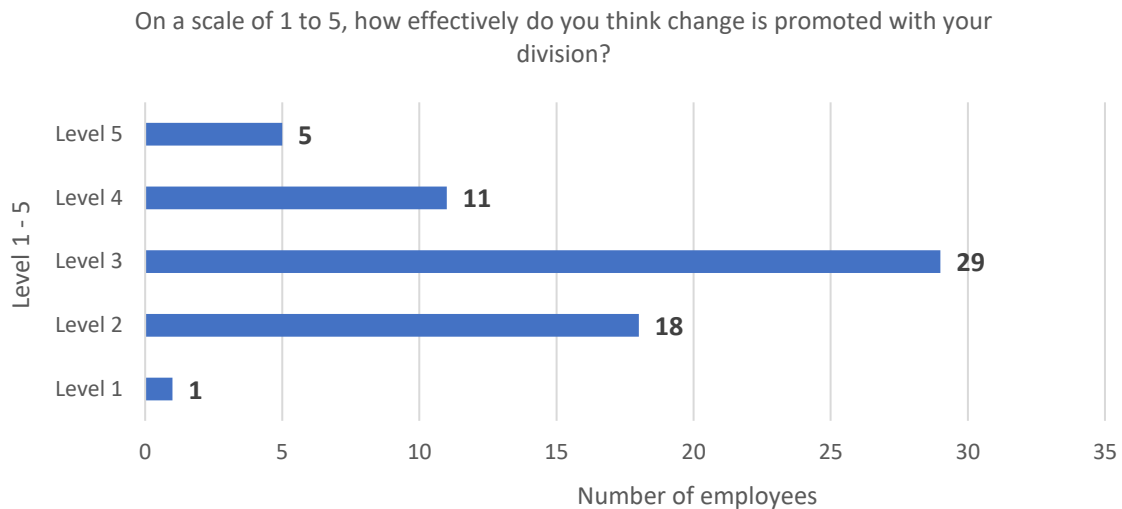
Section 3: Promoting Change

Q10. Have you been involved in any continuous improvement or positive change initiatives within your division?



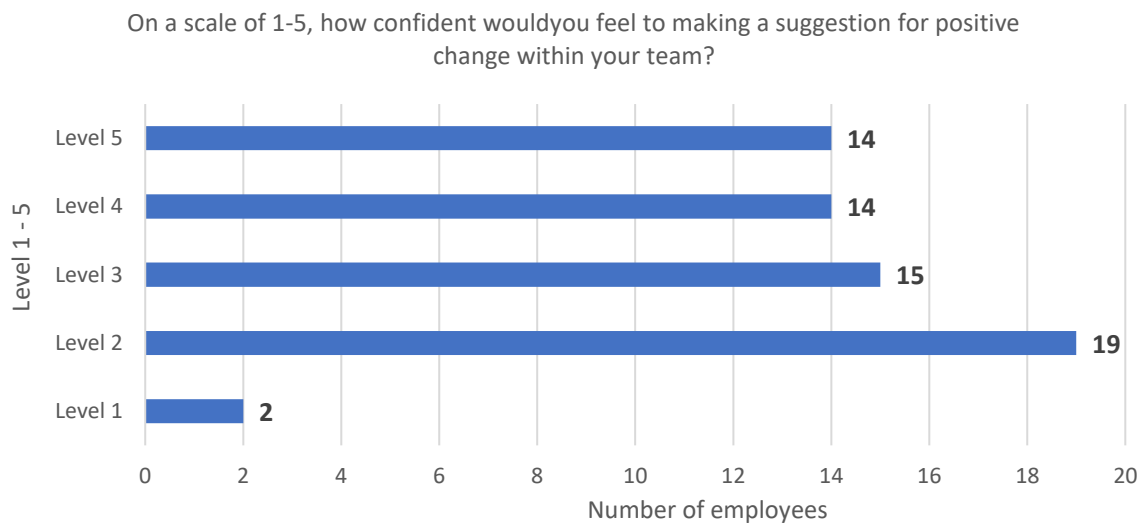
Only **25% (16)** of respondents reported having participated in continuous improvement or positive change initiatives within the division, whilst a significant **75% (48)** either stated they have *not been involved* or *were unsure*. This indicates a substantial lack of engagement or awareness around initiatives aimed at driving improvement, suggesting a need for greater involvement and communication to foster a culture of continuous development within the division.

Q12. On a scale of 1 to 5, how effectively do you think change is promoted within your division? (1 - not effective at all to 5 - extremely effective)



The majority of respondents, **45% (29)**, rated the effective promotion of change within the division a *Level 3*, indicating a moderate perception of effectiveness. However, only **25% (16)** rated it at *Level 4* or *5*, suggesting that a minority perceives change promotion as highly effective. A concerning **30% (19)** of respondents rated it *Level 1* or *2*, indicating that they perceive the promotion of change as ineffective. This highlights a clear divide in perceptions of change promotion within the division, suggesting significant room for improvement. The average score level is **2.8** indicating a generally moderate, but not strong, perception of change promotion effectiveness. Fedor, Caldwell and Herold (2007) also highlight that employee commitment to change often weakens when they perceive its implementation as unsuccessful or ineffective.

Q14. On a scale of 1-5, how confident would you feel to making a suggestion for positive change within your team? (1 - not confident at all to 5 - extremely confident)



A significant **23% (15)** of respondents rated their confidence in suggesting change within the team as level 3, indicating a moderate level of confidence. However, only **44% (28)** gave a rating of 4 or 5, reflecting a smaller group who feel confident in proposing ideas for change. A concerning **30% (19)** of respondents rated their confidence at level 1 or 2, suggesting that a substantial portion of the team lacks confidence in suggesting positive change. This highlights a significant barrier to fostering a culture of continuous improvement and innovation within the team. The average score level **2.7** indicating a generally low to moderate level of confidence in making suggestions for change. Miller et al. (2004) suggest that fear of negative consequences, such as criticism or reprimand, can greatly diminish employees' willingness to engage in change processes.

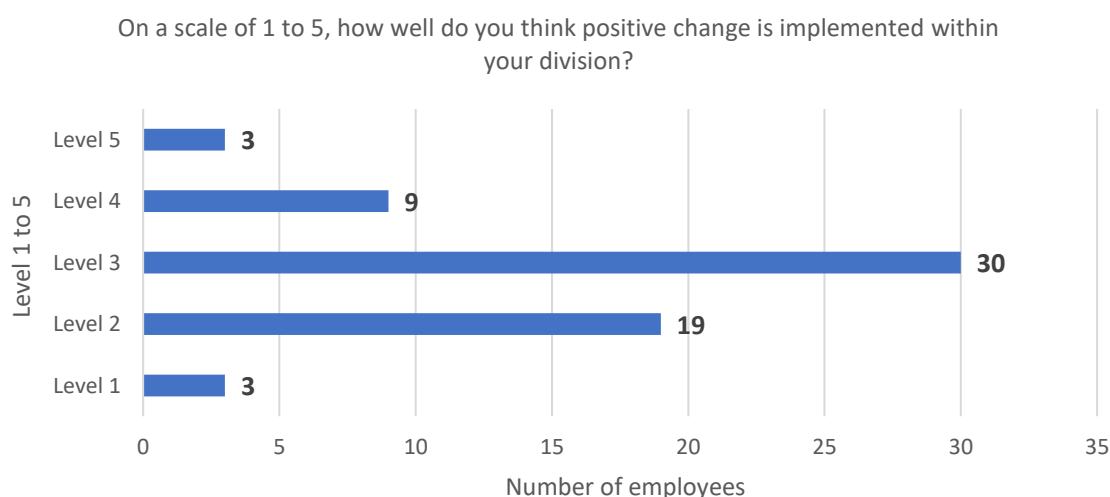
Q16. What factors motivate you to suggest ideas for positive change within your team now? (please select one or more statements that best describes you)



Respondents identified multiple factors that contribute to their comfort in sharing ideas within the workplace, feeling heard, and seeing those ideas acted upon. There are **18** instances where respondents would *comfortably share ideas for change within their workplace*. However, there are **29** instances where responses included the category 'other'. Additional context and elaboration are outlined in Appendix 15.

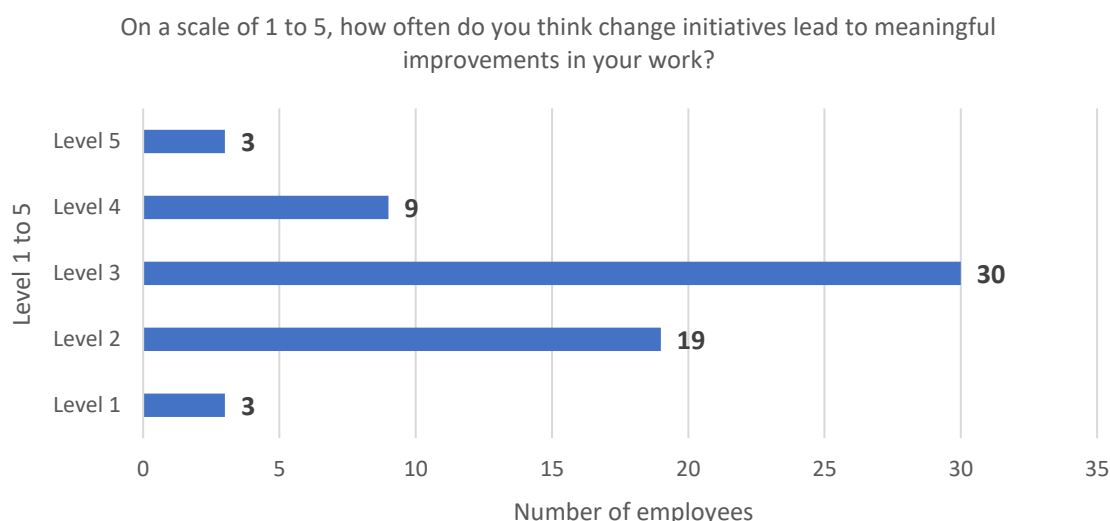
Section 4: Implementing Change

Q18. On a scale of 1 to 5, how well do you think positive change is implemented within your division? (1 - Poorly implemented to 5 - Very well implemented)



A notable **47% (30)** of respondents rated the implementation of positive change within the division as moderate, indicating some level of effectiveness. However, only **19% (12)** rated it at *Level 4* or 5, reflecting a smaller group who feel that positive change is effectively and thoroughly implemented. A concerning **34% (22)** of respondents rated the implementation at level 1 or 2, suggesting that a significant portion of the team lacks confidence in the division's ability to implement meaningful change. This indicates a considerable gap in perception, highlighting the need for stronger, more consistent efforts to drive and communicate positive change. The average score level of **2.9** indicates a moderately low perception of the effectiveness of positive change implementation within the division.

Q20. On a scale of 1 to 5, how often do you think change initiatives lead to meaningful improvements in your work? (1 - Never to 5 - Always)



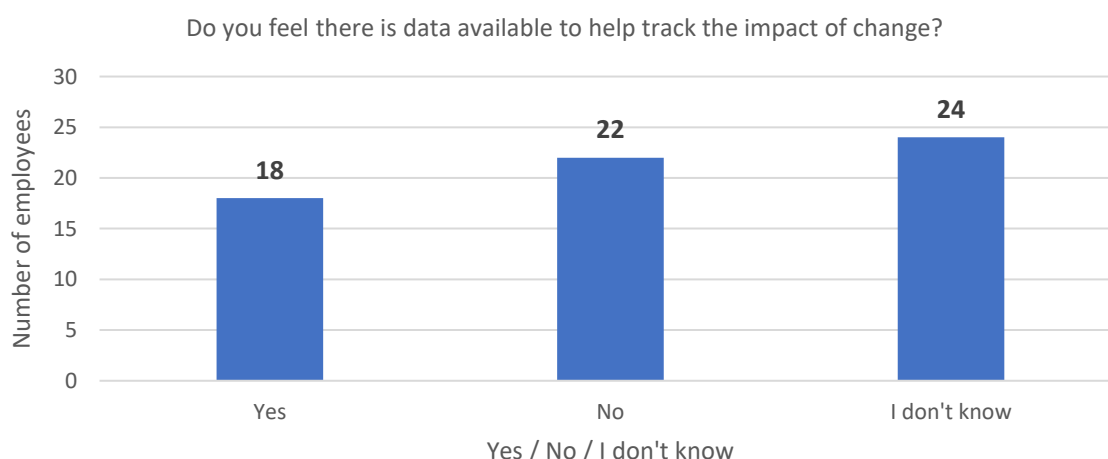
A significant **47% (30)** of respondents rated the implementation of positive change as moderate, indicating that while some progress is being made, it is not yet seen as highly effective. However, only **19% (12)** rated it at level 4 or 5, signalling that a relatively small group feels change initiatives lead to meaningful and impactful improvements in their work. A concerning **34% (22)** of respondents rated the implementation of change at level 1 or 2, suggesting that a large portion of the team perceives these changes as ineffective or not impactful. This highlights a substantial gap in perceptions of the success and value of change initiatives, underscoring the need for more impactful and well-communicated change processes. The average score level of **2.8** indicates a moderate to low perception of the effectiveness of positive change initiatives within the division.

Q22. Do you feel your team has the right tools to help you implement change?



Only **30% (19)** of respondents reported having the right tools to help implement change initiatives within the division, whilst a significant **70% (45)** either stated they do not have or are unsure. This disparity highlights a significant gap in the resources required for effectively driving change, indicating a substantial challenge for successful implementation within the division. According to Beer, M., & Nohria, N. (2000), organisations who attempt to implement change without the tight tools and support systems will have a higher likelihood of failing. The research undertaken by Robinson, S. P., & Judge, T. A. (2019), also emphasises the need for the right resources as employees will feel unprepared and disengaged, again leading to failure in achieving desired outcomes.

Q24. Do you feel there is data available to help track the impact of change?

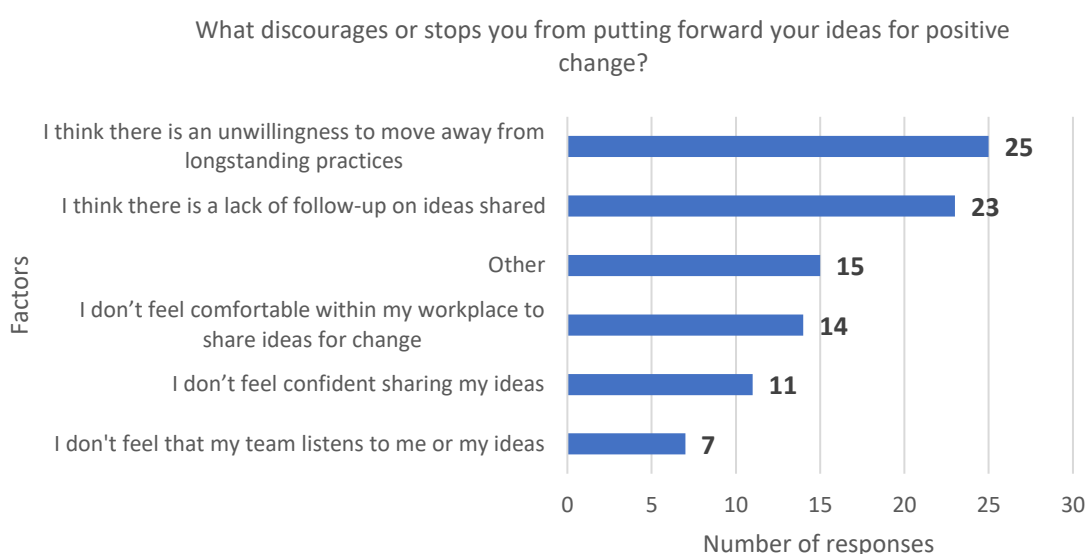


Only **28% (18)** of respondents reported having key data available to help track the impact of change, whilst a significant **72% (46)** either stated they do not have or are unsure. This discrepancy suggests a lack in the tools and resources needed to

effectively monitor and assess change initiatives within the division. Beer and Nohria (2000) maintain in their Theory E and O of change management that effective divisional change relies on thorough data collection to track progress and implement required adjustments. Without the ability to robustly capture and track data, divisions cannot evaluate the success or impact of change initiatives.

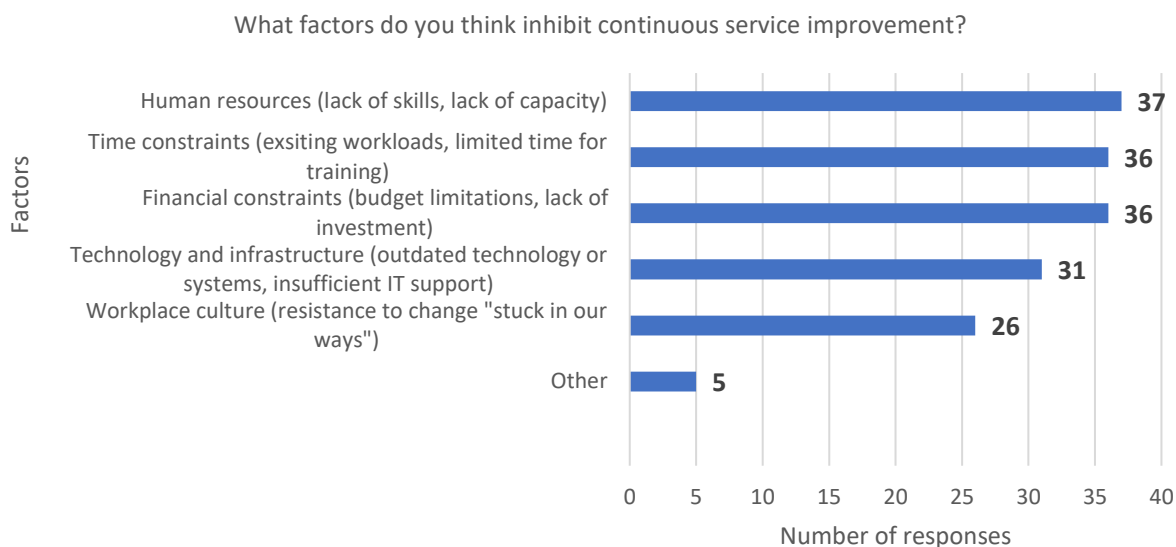
Section 5: Obstacles to Change

Q26. What discourages or stops you from putting forward your ideas for positive change? (Please select one or more statements that best describes you)



Respondents identified multiple factors that contribute as to what discourages or stopped them putting forward ideas. There are **25** instances where respondents feel there is an *unwillingness to move away from longstanding practices*. However, there are **15** instances where responses included the category 'other'. According to Schein (2010) deeply ingrained practices and norms can lead to resistance to change. In organisations with well-established cultures, employees often struggle to suggest changes that disrupt existing routines and traditions. The instances where respondents cite resistance to longstanding practices highlight the influence of divisional culture in shaping how employees respond to change. Additional context and elaboration are outlined in Appendix 16.

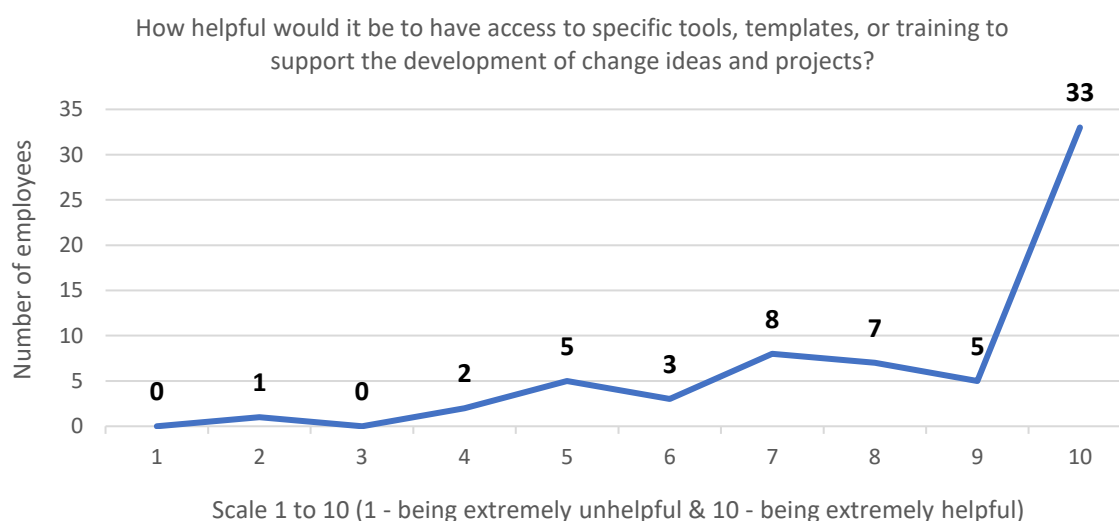
**Q28. What factors do you think inhibit continuous service improvement?
(please select one or more statements that best describes you)**



Respondents identified multiple factors that inhibit continuous service improvement. There are **37** instances where respondents claim that *human resources inhibit improvement*. There are **5** instances where responses included the category 'other'. Additional context and elaboration are outlined in Appendix 17.

Section 6: Suggestions for Improvement

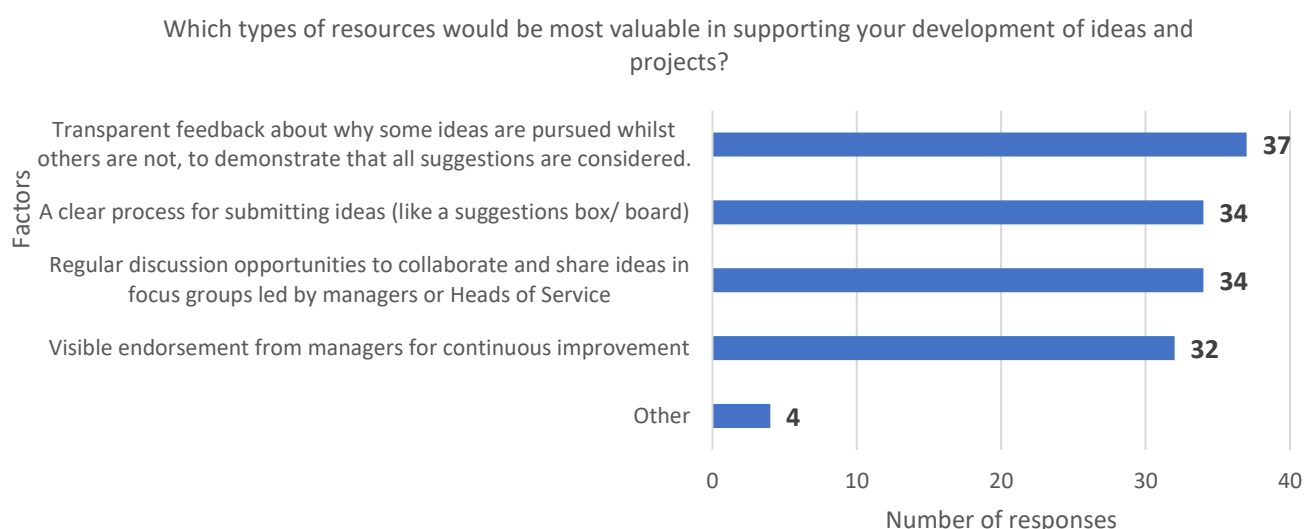
Q30. How helpful would it be to have access to specific tools, templates, or training to support the development of change ideas and projects?



A significant **52% (33)** of respondents expressed that access to specific tools, templates, or training would be extremely helpful in facilitating their work and supporting change initiatives. However, nearly half of the respondents provided a mixed review, with opinions ranging from "extremely unhelpful" to "helpful." This disparity highlights a gap in consistency and clarity regarding the effectiveness and utility of the available resources. It suggests that whilst some staff members would greatly benefit from targeted support, others may find the existing resources inadequate or irrelevant to their needs, indicating a need for a more tailored approach to training and tool provision within the division.

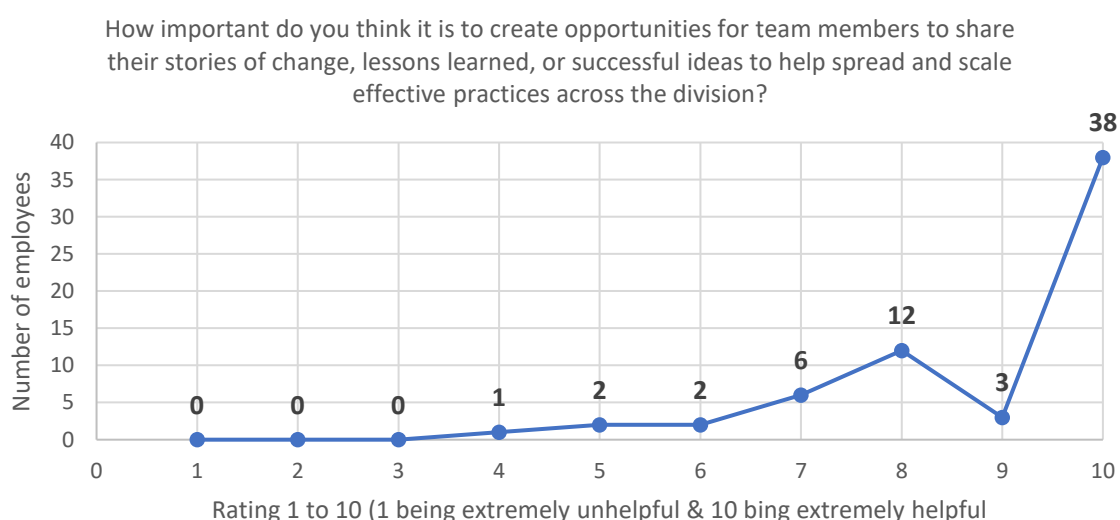
According to Kotter's (1996) 8-step model of change, the provision of appropriate resources and support is critical to overcoming resistance to change and ensuring its successful implementation. Specifically Step 4, communicating the vision, requires change leaders to equip employees with the necessary tools and training to understand and engage with the change process effectively. Moreover, contemporary studies underscore the importance of flexibility and personalisation in training and support during times of change. Morrison and Milliken (2000) discuss the role of organisational silence and how unclear or inadequate resources can contribute to disengagement and reluctance to participate in change, particularly in workplaces where there is a perceived lack of alignment between available resources and employee needs. Furthermore, post-pandemic challenges, particularly in remote working set-ups, have exacerbated the need for adaptable and targeted training. According to Allen et al. (2020), remote work has shifted the dynamics of collaboration, requiring organisations to reconsider how they deliver training and provide tools. Employees working remotely often report feeling disconnected from the change process due to a lack of tailored resources that are specific to their working context. Therefore, this research highlights the importance of developing customised support structures that not only address the varying needs of different employees but also align with the evolved work environment in the post-pandemic era.

Q31. Which types of resources would be most valuable in supporting your development of ideas and projects? (please select one or more statements that best describes you)



Respondents identified multiple types of resources that would be most valuable in supporting the development of ideas and projects. There are **37** instances where respondents feel that *transparent feedback about why some ideas are pursued whilst other are not, to demonstrate that all suggestions are considered*. There are **4** instances where responses included the category 'other'. Additional context and elaboration are outlined in Appendix 18.

Q33. How important do you think it is to create opportunities for team members to share their stories of change, lessons learned, or successful ideas to help spread and scale effective practices across the division?



Majority of respondents, **59% (38)**, *strongly believe* in the importance of creating opportunities for team members to share stories of change, lessons learned, and

successful ideas. In addition, **33% (21)** of respondents rated these opportunities highly (between 7 and 9), further reinforcing that the majority of employees also see significant value in these activities, though with slightly less urgency. Edmondson (2003) emphasises psychological safety, which enables individuals to share ideas, ask questions, and admit mistakes without fear of negative consequences. When employees feel safe, they are more likely to engage in knowledge sharing and contribute to team learning. The respondents' belief in the value of sharing stories of change highlights how fostering an open environment can boost trust, collaboration, and collective learning within teams. Additional context and elaboration are outlined in Appendix 19.

Q35. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences with change in the Housing division?

The feedback (Appendix 20) reveals concerns regarding divisional change, leadership effectiveness, and the implementation process. Despite frequent restructuring, staff feel that changes often fail to lead to lasting improvements, with a lack of evaluation contributing to recurring disruptions. In addition, change is often introduced without considering its broader impact across teams, highlighting a need for better co-ordination in the change process. The division's culture, particularly at senior leadership levels, also hinders progress, with some staff feeling their concerns are dismissed. Effective leadership is repeatedly emphasised, with staff requiring stronger, more supportive managers who listen and engage with staff during periods of change. Lastly, many staff members stressed the importance of understanding the purpose behind changes, suggesting that a clear vision and rationale are essential for successful and meaningful change initiatives.

2.5 One to One Interviews

A series of one-to-one interviews were conducted with 2 individual members of staff across the Housing division. The interviews were facilitated through a Microsoft Teams link (Appendix 21) and transcribed with the explicit consent of the interviewees (Appendix 22). To ensure the confidentiality and privacy of participants, all interview notes were anonymised, with a particular emphasis placed on capturing and analysing the feedback provided. This approach safeguarded participants' identities whilst allowing for a thorough examination of the insights gathered.

To minimise the potential bias inherent in insider research, an independent colleague was appointed to conduct the interviews. Standardised open-ended questions were employed to encourage comprehensive responses and ensure consistency across all interviews. Denscombe (2012) emphasises the importance of using structured interview techniques, including open-ended questions, to gather reliable data whilst maintaining consistency and mitigating interviewer bias, thus enhancing the validity of the research. Similarly, Costley (2010) contrasts unstructured and structured interview

methods, arguing that structured open-ended interviews provide a controlled environment while allowing participants to express themselves in depth, ensuring a balance between structure and participant freedom.

Can you provide any specific examples of how change is encouraged (or not) in your team?

The feedback indicates several key themes regarding communication, team dynamics, and the effectiveness of idea-sharing processes within the division. The comment about being the "last to hear about any changes" yet being referred to as "the backbone of the division" (Participant A) reflects a significant disconnect between the leadership and operational teams. The individual expresses frustration over the lack of communication regarding changes, which directly impact their team. The expectation that the team will "just change" without proper alignment or prior notice indicates poor change management practices and a lack of transparency, which are critical elements in successful organisational change. According to Northouse (2018), transformational leadership relies on transparent and inclusive communication, which engages employees in decision-making. The disconnect between leadership and operational teams, as described by the participant, indicates a failure in leadership communication, which can erode trust and reduce employee commitment to the change process. However, Participant B notes that change initiatives are always welcome within the team and is encouraged. A sense of opportunity to share and work through and idea allows the feeling of inclusivity, "knowing that my manager is always open to suggestions and ideas" (Participant B).

The feedback contrasts the experience of working in a small team with the challenges of being in a larger team, with the former allowing for more direct communication and idea sharing. The respondent values the close-knit, supportive environment of a small team, which promotes better relationships and morale. This observation aligns with research on team dynamics, which highlights that smaller teams tend to have more frequent and open communication, enabling faster decision-making and fostering stronger interpersonal connections. Hackman (2002) discusses how smaller teams can achieve higher levels of cohesion and trust, which are essential for effective collaboration, idea generation, and the implementation of change. The comment that *"there is no such thing as a silly question"* (Participant B) reflects an inclusive culture within smaller teams where individuals feel safe to voice their opinions and concerns. This supports Edmondson's (1999) concept of "psychological safety," where team members feel comfortable expressing ideas without fear of judgment or reprisal. Psychological safety is often higher in small teams, where there is greater familiarity and interpersonal trust.

However, the concern that in a larger team *"our voices get lost and unheard"* (Participant A) suggests that there may be structural or divisional barriers that prevent staff from having their input properly acknowledged in larger team settings. Salas et al. (2015) found that as teams grow, communication can become less efficient, leading

to delays in decision-making and deteriorated cohesion. More and perspectives can result in fragmented communication, making it harder to align everyone with the overarching goals of change. This can contribute to frustration, as seen in the feedback regarding lack of communication, which may exacerbate feelings of disconnection and disengagement among team members.

The feedback about attending *"people management sessions"* (Participant A) and the frustration that these sessions are often based on abstract ratings without context suggests a disconnect between how staff feel engaged and how their input is measured. The comment about the rating system being *"just a number with no context"* (Participant A) underlines a broader issue where feedback mechanisms might feel superficial or disconnected from the actual experiences and needs of staff. Participant B notes that *"It's easier to keep abreast of change within my team as it is relatively small and compact"* highlights the advantage of smaller teams in terms of communication and adaptability. This observation underscores the challenges faced by larger teams, where individuals may feel less connected and more anonymous. In larger teams, there's a higher risk of members being overlooked or perceived as just another cog in the wheel, which can lead to disengagement and hinder effective collaboration. The dynamic within a smaller team allows for more direct communication and a stronger sense of individual value, which can foster a more agile and responsive environment. This contrast suggests that as teams grow, it becomes increasingly important to implement strategies that ensure each member feels visible, valued, and informed.

However, the individual highlights the value of participating in this research study, hoping that this will result in meaningful outcomes rather than just data points. This reflects a desire for more tangible and actionable feedback from such engagements, with a focus on addressing real concerns rather than simply measuring performance.

Have you ever been involved in any so called 'continuous improvement' or positive change more generally in this division? If so, could you share more about your role in these initiatives?

Upon reflection, it is recognised that the phrasing of the question above could be considered leading, as it may inadvertently question the legitimacy or validity of the concept being discussed. This could introduce bias and steer respondents toward a particular viewpoint. Such wording could affect the neutrality of the research and the quality of the responses. In future studies, particular attention will be paid to phrase questions more neutrally, avoiding terms like "so-called" that might influence participants' perceptions. Instead, a key focus will be on crafting open-ended questions that allow participants to express their views freely, ensuring that their responses remain objective and truly reflective of their perspectives.

As a good example, an individual has taken a proactive role in developing step-by-step guides and providing accompanying training to both new and existing staff. This initiative shows a strong commitment to supporting colleagues and building resilience within the team. The use of Teams to store these resources indicates an effective, accessible knowledge-sharing system. This approach not only enhances staff competency but also fosters continuity and reduces the risk of knowledge loss due to staff turnover. The individual's experience traveling across the county to support other staff in reaching an agreed level of performance reflects a collaborative and supportive work culture. The success of this approach suggests that it could be scaled across other teams, which could improve overall team resilience and reduce the negative impact of workforce turnover. This insight points to a potential divisional opportunity for creating standardised resources that could benefit all teams, improving operational consistency and efficiency.

Whilst an individual acknowledges the positive impact of some changes, they express frustration with the cyclical nature of divisional change. The comment that *"things tend to go full circle"* (Participant A) suggests that, over time, the same issues re-emerge and require repeated efforts to address. This cyclical pattern may contribute to change fatigue and a sense that progress is not sustained or built upon.

The observation that the division sometimes creates *"gaps where things fall into a black hole"* (Participant A) suggests issues in maintaining improvements and coordinating across teams. The feedback across all participants suggests that the division may be prone to initiating large-scale overhauls without first addressing smaller, targeted issues that could have resolved the problem more effectively. This feedback promotes the need for a more strategic and sustained approach to change management, where continuous monitoring and incremental improvements are prioritised over sweeping, disruptive changes.

The feedback reveals an important challenge related to inter-team coordination. The individual highlights that teams sometimes fail to collaborate and join up efforts, which creates gaps in processes and services. This fragmentation can lead to inefficiencies and missed opportunities for improvement. The suggestion that *"targeting the gap and closing it"* (Participant A) could be more effective than a complete overhaul speaks to the need for a more nuanced, targeted approach to addressing gaps and ensuring ongoing coordination across teams.

The individual expresses a strong sense of duty to contribute to service improvement, even in seemingly small ways. Whether attending meetings, supporting actionable outcomes, or engaging in surveys, the respondent's day-to-day contributions reflect a deep commitment to the division's goals. This mindset indicates that staff members are willing to support positive change as long as there are clear channels for their involvement and meaningful outcomes that result from their contributions.

2.6 Focus Groups

A focus group was conducted with 4 individual members of staff across the Housing division. The session was facilitated through a Microsoft Teams link (Appendix 23) and transcribed with the explicit consent of the interviewees (Appendix 24). To ensure the confidentiality and privacy of participants, all interview notes were anonymised, with a particular emphasis placed on capturing and analysing the feedback provided. This approach safeguarded participants' identities whilst allowing for a thorough examination of the insights gathered.

To note, the initial plan was to conduct two focus groups. However, the survey yielded such rich and comprehensive qualitative data that it became evident that additional focus group sessions may not be necessary. The depth and breadth of the data gathered through the survey have provided a clear, nuanced understanding of the key themes and issues, surpassing initial expectations. As a result, the decision was made to prioritise further analysis of the existing data, ensuring that the findings are thoroughly explored and accurately represented.

What could make the promotion of change more effective?

A key issue raised is the timeliness and quality of communication around changes. Participant A highlights that communication often occurs too late and that there is a need for better inclusivity in the process. This lack of communication, especially when changes directly impact staff, creates a sense of exclusion and can lead to unnecessary uncertainty or resistance. Cameron and Green (2015) emphasise that effective and timely communication is crucial for helping employees understand the change process and its implications. When communication is inadequate or delayed, employees may feel disengaged and unclear about their roles, which can result in uncertainty and resistance. The request to be “included” in the process rather than having changes “happen to us” (Participant A) reflects the desire for involvement and the need for respectful, transparent communication (Participant B). Lines (2004) suggests that participative communication plays a crucial role in overcoming resistance to change, which aligns with the respondents' desire to feel included in the change process rather than excluded from decisions that directly affect them.

Participant A suggests that face-to-face communication should be prioritised at the beginning of a change initiative, followed by standard communication channels such as emails. The emphasis on face-to-face communication indicates that the respondent values personal interaction and believes it promotes trust and a sense of respect. This method could also contribute to a better understanding of the change, as it provides an opportunity for staff to ask questions, voice concerns, and gain clarity directly from leadership.

Participant D expresses a strong belief that following through on ideas is essential to demonstrating real commitment to change. They suggest that if an idea is implemented, it should be allowed to run as a pilot, and if it fails, it should be seen as a learning opportunity rather than a setback. This reflects a growth mindset, where failure is framed as an integral part of the process and learning. The participant also highlights a disconnect between ground-level staff and senior management. They note that whilst they feel engaged at an operational level, there is a gap in ensuring that ideas are escalated and taken seriously by senior management. The comment about the idea “sitting at Manager level” (Participant D) and not progressing further suggests frustration with the lack of upward visibility for suggestions made at the staff level.

Furthermore, there is a clear call for senior leadership involvement in discussions around ideas. Participant D believes that having the Head of Service actively involved in discussions and promoting ideas at the Senior Management Team (SMT) level would demonstrate willingness from leadership to support change and innovation.

How do you think the Housing division could better foster a culture of innovation and positive change?

Participant A highlights that some members of the team feel as though they are “*still in the stone age*,” sticking to traditional methods despite the ongoing changes happening elsewhere in the division. The suggestion that management needs to address these issues to ensure equality and fairness indicates that the current approach to change is not fully inclusive. There is a strong call for leadership to actively manage these cultural challenges and monitor progress, suggesting that without this effort, the division risks perpetuating a divide between teams and fostering a negative work environment.

In contrast to the resistance noted, the Participant B speaks about working in a small team that is constantly adapting and innovating due to external factors such as legislative changes and funding opportunities. This reflects a more agile approach to change, where the team’s ability to innovate is directly linked to the need to keep up with external demands. The small-team dynamic may allow for greater flexibility and responsiveness, which helps the team stay relevant and competitive. Participant C also expresses a positive outlook on the role of change, indicating a commitment to continuous improvement in the face of external challenges. However, this adaptability is contrasted with wider divisional and departmental challenges where change is not as readily embraced, particularly in larger teams. Cameron and Green (2015) highlight that larger teams can often struggle with agility and innovation, as they tend to have more bureaucratic structures that inhibit flexibility and rapid decision-making. This suggests that the more dynamic, small-team model may be a key factor in fostering a culture of innovation, but the division must address the broader challenges in larger teams to ensure a more widespread culture of continuous improvement.

The feedback points to the importance of leadership consistency. When managers lead in a similar way, they can create a unified and supportive environment where staff feel more comfortable sharing ideas and taking risks. However, the suggestion that this practice is not widespread across the division implies that there is variation in leadership styles and managerial support between teams. Participant B discusses how a collaborative and inclusive leadership style helps to empower employees to contribute their ideas and feel valued in the decision-making process. This approach not only improves the quality of decisions but also enhances staff engagement and ownership of the change process.

The feedback also raises the question of why successful change practices and innovations are not more broadly applied across other divisions and departments. Participant C proposes a strategic platform to share best practices to support continuous service improvement. This indicates a need for more cross-departmental collaboration and knowledge-sharing to scale effective change across the organisation. It also highlights a missed opportunity to leverage existing resources and expertise, such as the TIC team, which could be used proactively to support change rather than being brought in only during a crisis. This reflects a reactive approach to problem-solving that may lead to unnecessary tension and heightened emotions among staff.

The final point raised by Participant D is the need for the division and organisation to think in a more digital way. The mention of keeping up in the world of tech and data suggests a gap in the digital skills within the workforce. This reflects a broader concern about digital literacy and the organisation's readiness to leverage technology and data effectively.

2.7 Analysis

The following eight themes provide a more detailed and structured analysis of the data.

As part of the analysis both a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) and Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, and Environmental (PESTLE) analysis has been incorporated into this research study to provide a comprehensive examination of both internal and external factors influencing the work-based research study.

The PESTLE analysis (Appendix 25) will offer external factors that attribute to the obstacles preventing change from taking place. According to Grant (2016), environmental analysis tools, such as PESTLE are integral to supporting long-term strategic planning. This tool can help organisations plan and horizon scan potential challenges and/or opportunities following external factors. This can directly contribute

to the development and the effectiveness of the Corporate Risk Management Plan, helping to mitigate risks and seize opportunities.

In addition, the SWOT analysis (Appendix 26) will focus on the internal dynamics of the division, assessing its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This combined internal and external perspective offers a comprehensive framework for assessing the factors that are influencing current operations and will support proactive decision-making for future improvements and strategic initiatives. Kotler & Keller (2016) maintain that the SWOT analysis is a strategic management tool that is widely recognised for supporting organisations in identifying internal strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats. This is also supported by both Robbins and Judge (2019) who emphasise that this tool can enable organisations to reflect on its internal culture, employee engagement and structural challenges. This valuable insight can help towards being a catalyst for future development of strategies to support the improvement of performance and mitigate potential risks.

2.7.1 Theme 1: Communication

2.7.1a: Vision and goals

The feedback indicates a general lack of awareness of the Divisional vision and the goals of the teams. Key themes include:

Vision

- Providing high-quality, energy-efficient, affordable housing.
- Expanding affordable homes by 2,000 properties.
- Addressing homelessness.
- Reducing vacant properties and boosting the local economy.
- Promoting teamwork, integrity, customer satisfaction, and continuous improvement to enhance community well-being.

Goals

- Increasing quality housing stock.
- Improving private sector housing standards.
- Supporting tenants, landlords, and developers with efficient services.
- Reducing homelessness.

The divisional vision is “*maintaining homes and safer communities*” whilst some elements are reflected in the responses, they appear fragmented and lacking coherence. This could stem from inadequate communication from leadership or insufficient emphasis on the vision during team meetings and updates. Such a gap may impede the alignment of staff efforts, undermining the collective drive towards shared goals. According to Cameron, E., and Green, M. (2015), a well understood vision helps employees at all levels within an organisation align their actions with strategic goals to support successful transformational change.

Similarly, the diversity in responses to the goals of teams suggests that staff have a broad understanding of their roles and responsibilities. However, the variation also indicates a need for more unified and clear communication regarding team objectives to ensure everyone is working towards the same goals. Gratton and Erickson (2007) highlight that team alignment is essential for performance. They argue that clear communication helps ensure all team members understand the common goals, promoting collaboration and unity. Without clarity around team objectives, confusion and disunity can arise, which ultimately affects overall performance. This is supported by Locke and Latham's Goal Setting Theory (2002) which emphasises that clear, specific goals are crucial for motivating employees and enhancing performance. The varying understanding of team goals among respondents indicates that inconsistent or unclear communication of objectives could impede goal alignment and progress.

2.7.1b: Consultation and engagement

The feedback reveals several communication challenges within the division, notably a lack of timely updates, especially for remote workers, and inconsistent communication from managers. Staff often feel excluded from the change process, particularly those in frontline roles who are directly affected by the changes. In addition, many report that whilst initial communication about changes is clear, follow-up information is lacking, which hinders successful execution. Some staff also feel that changes are reactive ("knee-jerk") and poorly planned further complicating the change process.

Information flow within teams and across departments appears inconsistent, with one respondent stating that *"some managers communicate better than others - we don't always get told of changes (i.e., new staff, people moving or leaving)."* In addition, communication quality amongst managers is inconsistent. Whilst some effectively inform staff about changes, others fail to provide important updates, especially to remote workers, leaving them out of the loop as one respondent states, *"as I mostly work from home, I am not told a lot of new things."*

Several responses highlight a lack of follow-through in communication, with initial updates being clear but followed by insufficient updates or actions. This can lead to frustration, as some participants feel that changes are rarely completed, and senior management delays or fails to finish what was started, resulting in ongoing discussions without resolution. This points to a recurring issue of inadequate ongoing communication and accountability. According to Beer, M., & Nohria, N. (2000), successful change requires more than just initial communication or encouragement, it requires continuous support, clear follow-up actions, and reinforcement ensuring change is embedded.

In contrast, there is a clear emphasis on open communication, with phrases such as *"My manager is always open to suggestions"* and *"Team Leader encourages all officers and assistants to come forward with suggestions."* However, it has been noted that *"the way change is promoted varies throughout the year."* There are times when

change is actively and thoroughly communicated, followed by periods when it is not.". This inconsistency may stem from frequent staff turnover, including changes at management level, which can disrupt the continuity and effectiveness of change efforts. Chadwick, C., & Rainer, G. (2004) support this by arguing that turnover at various staffing levels often leads to communication gaps and the loss of critical knowledge. They emphasise that when employees, particularly in managerial roles, leave, it can cause substantial disruptions in the flow of communication, undermining the successful execution of change processes.

2.8 Theme 2: Culture

2.8.1a: Status quo

Feedback reveals frustration with unclear authority and reluctance to make decisions, slowing progress and creating inefficiencies. Some team members are receptive to new ideas, whilst others resist change, hindering the implementation of improvements. A lack of buy-in from stakeholders often leads to missed opportunities as a result of insufficient support, with one participant stating, *"It did not go well and whilst the idea was excellent there was a lack of buy-in from others which meant the money invested was wasted and we did not get to implement a really excellent, time and money-saving idea."* There are also mixed attitudes toward change within teams, with some welcoming it whilst others feel discouraged or unsupported, particularly at divisional level.

Fear of change, preference for established processes as one respondent states, *"people are attached to their own processes and will not support changing them,"* and siloed working exacerbate this resistance. Inconsistent support from senior management and conflicting priorities further disrupts the change process. It seems that some employees feel threatened by change, and when excluded from early decision-making, they may resist the change altogether.

There is significant resistance to change from some employees, particularly when changes are not well-communicated or are perceived as unnecessary. One respondent mentions, *"not all change is positive,"* especially if it disrupts established processes. In addition, a participant highlights, *"you can't keep everybody happy all the time, some people just reject change no matter if it's good or bad,"* suggesting that change, whilst potentially positive, often faces backlash from those resistant to it.

However, the broad statement provided by an anonymous participant, claiming that *"people at all levels are generally resistant to change"* does not fully capture the opinions of the entire respondent cohort. Whilst there are specific instances where respondents note that *"people are attached to their own processes"* or that some *"prefer the way things were,"* these views seem to represent isolated pockets rather than the overall attitude. Overall, there does not appear to be an overwhelming sense of resistance to change within the group. According to Ford, J. D., & Ford, L. W.

(2009), inadequate communication and the exclusion of key stakeholders, particularly frontline employees are some of the reasons that can attribute resisting change.

2.8.1b: Hierarchy

The feedback suggests mixed responses to leadership involvement in the change process. Whilst some managers encourage suggestions, others are perceived as less responsive. A respondent states, *"I send suggestions to my line manager to decide if it's a good/not so good suggestion,"* which indicates a reliance on individual discretion rather than a collective approach to decision-making. A more concerning theme arises in the feedback where it is stated *"no one listens,"* which reflects frustration with managers not fully engaging with the ideas or concerns raised by team members. However, whilst the team leaders may actively encourage feedback and discussion, broader divisional management commitment to change is questioned. One respondent stated, *"changes are actioned without consultation or seemingly with no consideration for the negative impact it has on personnel and the service,"* which elevates the tension between encouraging change and actualising it at the divisional level.

Feedback highlights structural barriers to change, particularly when team priorities differ, preventing successful implementation. Leadership approaches to change vary, with some seen as supportive and others are criticised for their lack of involvement. Whilst one respondent notes, *"as a team, I feel we have no real say in how it works, we are just made to feel that we have to accept everything that is said."* In contrast another respondent feels that *"Seniors and Team Leads have a positive approach to change."* Kotter and Schlesinger (2008) highlight strategies such as communication, participation, and involvement to overcome resistance to change. They argue that when employees feel excluded from decision-making or believe their input is undervalued, resistance grows. The feedback indicating feelings of exclusion and dissatisfaction with leadership aligns with this theory, suggesting that fostering greater employee participation and involvement can help reduce resistance and enhance the success of change initiatives.

A common theme is the tension between top-down changes, where staff have little input, and the need for a bottom-up approach. One respondent noted that *"change is implemented regardless of staff agreement"*, leading to feelings of disempowerment and resentment. Another criticises consultations as a *"tick box exercise,"* where staff input is sought but doesn't influence decisions. This creates a sense of 'tokenism', resulting in disengagement from staff who feel their input is ignored or undervalued.

2.8.1c: Bureaucracy

Whilst there is a positive attitude toward submitting ideas, there is also frustration surrounding the actual implementation of change. Some respondents express a lack of confidence that change will happen in a reasonable timeframe, citing *"political and bureaucratic interference"* that often halts progress. According to Buchanan, D. A., &

Badham, R. J. (2008), both power dynamics and political processes within bureaucratic organisations influence the ability to manage change.

2.9 Theme 3: Collaboration

Collaboration for idea generation and refinement was a recurring theme, with many employees valuing group discussions for instant feedback and idea expansion. However, whilst staff are encouraged to share ideas, opportunities for doing so are limited. Team meetings often prioritise operational issues, leaving little room for new ideas. Whilst some employees feel comfortable suggesting changes within smaller teams, they hesitate at the divisional level due to concerns about criticism or negative reactions. Instances of ignored suggestions and poor follow-through further discourage participation.

Despite some teams embracing change and valuing input, there is a lack of formal channels for submitting ideas, particularly those requiring divisional approval. This gap creates frustration, as one respondent asked, *"happy to share my ideas, but where?"* Whilst local teams may welcome change, broader divisional support is often lacking.

Employees support change, especially when it enhances efficiency and service delivery, with smaller teams adopting new ideas more readily. However, there is a call for balance between innovation and stability to ensure high-quality service delivery. Suggested improvements include dedicated time for idea-sharing, structured platforms for submission, and transparent feedback on why ideas are accepted or rejected.

Employees advocate for more involvement in decision-making, particularly in areas that directly affect their work. In addition, concerns about policy enforcement were raised, with staff urging clear action on policy breaches to support effective change management. Ultimately, whilst enthusiasm for change exists, it seems a lack of formal structures, feedback, and leadership support limits its impact.

Collaboration is seen as vital for refining ideas, with some teams participating in focus groups. Long-term support from senior leadership is also identified as crucial for successful change. According to Higgs, M., & Rowland, D. (2005), effective change requires collaboration across all levels within an organisation. To enhance the impact of collaboration, it is crucial to extend the process beyond internal teams and actively engage external stakeholders. By incorporating external perspectives can tap into diverse expertise, gain fresh insights, and foster innovation. This broader input can only enrich decision-making processes and help align change initiatives with the needs and expectations of those outside the immediate organisation.

2.10 Theme 4: Environment

Respondents highlighted the supportive, non-blaming culture in their teams, which nurtures the piloting of new ideas. One participant noted, *"we know that sometimes ideas sound good but don't work in practice, so we allow people to try things and adjust if needed."* This environment of mutual trust and flexibility encourages staff to share ideas without fear of failure. Feedback such as *"we have mutual trust"* indicates that teams can rely on each other to adapt and improve service delivery when change is needed.

There were also suggestions for improving communication, particularly through more relevant and frequent content in staff newsletters. Whilst some respondents felt that success stories from other teams were valuable, they also noted that these stories often lacked relevance to their specific teams. A suggestion to tailor newsletters to focus on team-specific content or broadly applicable lessons could enhance engagement.

A need for regular updates from other teams to promote cross-functional understanding was also mentioned. Respondents suggested that updates could help align staff with the broader goals of the division and organisation, promoting a more collaborative environment. In addition, several respondents proposed creating online forums or noticeboards for sharing lessons learned and success stories, enabling staff to exchange insights and best practices. One participant suggested, *"staff leading projects can link with others who have delivered change initiatives successfully for advice and guidance."*

The feedback also emphasised the need for a culture that supports open feedback and idea-sharing without judgment. Respondents stressed the importance of creating a safe environment where staff feel comfortable sharing experiences and receiving constructive feedback. A participant noted the importance of a system that is *"encouraged by management"* and open to *"constructive challenge,"* ensuring mutual respect. This is supported by Kegan, R., & Lahey, L. L. (2001) who advocate for organisations to create environments to enable employees to feel secure in making mistakes and engaging in the process of change without fear of judgement.

Finally, respondents called for better follow-up on submitted ideas. There was frustration over a perceived lack of action after ideas were shared, with one participant stating, *"If ideas were listened to in a structured way, with lessons learned and changes made, it wouldn't feel like lip service."* To address this, many suggested implementing a formal system to track ideas, ensuring transparency and accountability. This would make staff feel their contributions are valued and considered.

2.11 Theme 5: Data analytics and system integration

Feedback highlights challenges around data accessibility and system integration within the division. Many employees seem to struggle to find the information they need, with one noting, *"I would like to think that information is available, but I would not know where to look for it."* Whilst some employees recognise the value of accessible data, such as housing need data, they also express frustration with delays in obtaining it. Some rely on other teams, such as Council Tax and Housing Benefit, leading to time delays that hinder fast-paced decision-making in areas like housing.

However, new tools like Power BI have improved data accessibility, but a broader desire for better systems and a more comprehensive view of data remains. For example, one employee expressed the need for a process management system to obtain data more efficiently. Many respondents also called for a deeper understanding of the data that impacts service delivery 'make-up of the household', such as rents, repairs, and household allowances, to better inform holistic decisions.

Despite the availability of some systems for tracking performance, employees point out limitations, particularly with easily measurable data, which may overlook qualitative aspects like staff morale. Some also highlighted the challenge of assessing the full impact of changes, with one noting, *"I don't believe as a team we have any way of tracking the impact of change."* It seems rapid implementation of changes often leaves little room for follow-up evaluation, which some feel is essential for assessing effectiveness. The lack of integration between data systems across departments is also a key barrier to measuring change, with one respondent suggesting, "Cross-collaborative systems are key to measuring tangible change, but we're a way off yet."

Whilst new tools and systems show promise, there are significant challenges around data accessibility, integration, and the ability to track the outcomes of change initiatives. The need for a more comprehensive, streamlined approach to data management and better systems integration is clear. According to Davenport, T. H., & Harris, J. G. (2007), organisations that fail to leverage data analytics are at a disadvantage in making strategic decisions and driving effective change. Both Haffke, I., Kalgovas, B., & Benlian, A. (2016) support this by emphasising that poor data infrastructure and lack of integration between systems are key challenges that are impacting on sufficient data-driven decision-making processes.

2.12 Theme 6: Lack of resources

Respondents generally feel they have access to the necessary tools to perform their roles, with one participant noting, *"our management has access to many tools and if we don't have something we need, we can find it when required."* However, concerns about outdated software were expressed, with one respondent stating, *"we don't enjoy*

the best software systems," suggesting the need for modernisation to better support change initiatives.

Strong leadership was appreciated, with one respondent highlighting, *" my Team Leader is vocal and at the forefront of everything."* Regular meetings and appraisals further encourage and promote open communication, allowing staff to contribute ideas for consideration. However, one participant stated, *"we need more training in planning skills and understanding change."*

Staffing shortages were a recurring challenge, with participants noting the strain on teams due to vacancies and turnover. One respondent emphasised, *"capacity is the challenge, with more work than we can manage within a small team."* This limits the ability to take on additional projects or implement change effectively. In addition, budget constraints were cited as a barrier to implementing new ideas, with one participant noting, *"there is not always enough money in our budgets to implement new ideas."*

Finally, balancing day-to-day operations with change efforts was a key concern. As one participant noted, *"everyone is incredibly busy doing 'the day job' and not enough time is set aside to implement change,"* reinforcing the difficulty of prioritising change in a busy work environment. According to Hughes, M. (2011), the lack of resources including people, processes, budgets and time can impact the implementation of change. Hughes states that organisations regularly neglect to effectively allocate sufficient resources.

2.13 Theme 7: Non-commitment

Despite a strong emphasis on continuous improvement, suggested changes often fail to materialise, primarily due to lack of follow-through or insufficient support. Employees have been involved in secondments and working groups aimed at improving other areas, such as the repairs team, which has contributed to broader organisational improvements. However, many respondents highlighted a recurring issue that whilst change is discussed positively, it is rarely implemented. One participant shared, *"change is listened to, even positively received, but rarely happens."* This gap between discussion and action leads to frustration and disengagement amongst team members.

A key concern is the slow pace of change implementation. Respondents expressed frustration over delays, with comments like, *"positive changes take a long time to come to fruition."* Many also noted that changes are often initiated as a reactive response to events but lack proper follow-through. This perception of slow or ineffective execution diminishes confidence in the change process.

A common frustration is the failure to follow through on shared ideas. One respondent stated, *"ideas are suggested but not followed through,"* which impacts morale. Another pointed to a disconnect between management decisions and operational-level needs, noting, *"managers have an idea but won't deviate from their stance or listen to the team."* This highlights a lack of alignment between management and staff, leading to feelings of being unheard.

Furthermore, many respondents feel senior management struggles with follow-through, with decisions often left incomplete. This resonates with the research of Buchanan & Badham (2008) and Cameron & Green (2015), who note that poor communication and lack of employee involvement leads to ineffective change management and disengagement.

2.14 Theme 8: Review

It is also important to note the frustration expressed by staff around the absence of clear, measurable outcomes following changes. According to Johnson, G., Scholes, K., & Whittington, R. (2008), the lack of evaluation as part on change initiatives will result in missed opportunities for learning and improvement. They state that ongoing regular reviews and feedback to assess progress ill support successful outcomes. As one respondent notes, *"some do and that positive change benefits those locally within teams as opposed to adopting across all service areas."* This highlights the perception that whilst change may benefit certain teams, the division does not always see the widespread benefits. The lack of follow-through on larger changes are supported by a participant who states *"things within my control which can be implemented are normally executed well and improvements are seen. But the bigger changes needed which I do not have control over are continuously talked about but again not implemented,"* emphasising a gap between discussion and action.

In contrast, some participants report that changes are actively evaluated to assess their impact. One respondent mentions, *"we evaluate how changes are going to impact our service before bringing them in, so they are most likely to succeed,"* suggesting that some measures are taken to anticipate and mitigate potential challenges.

3. Conclusion

It is crucial to highlight the significance of addressing a query raised at the outset of the survey, especially when a participant expressed concerns regarding anonymity. These concerns were appropriately addressed, which, in turn, encouraged the participant to reassure colleagues within the office that ethical practices were being

robustly followed. Whilst the number of responses didn't quite meet expectations, the quality of the data collected far surpassed initial assumptions, providing invaluable insights through its rich qualitative context.

In conclusion, the research conducted within the Housing division has provided valuable insights into the factors that promote and inhibit staff from suggesting ideas for positive change. By understanding the relationship between implementing positive change and removing potential inhibitors, the division can foster a culture of continuous improvement. The findings highlight the importance of effective communication, engagement, and change management theories in shaping organisational change.

Whilst the division demonstrates a general openness to change, significant barriers to effective implementation remain. Feedback highlights key challenges, including resistance to change, lack of follow-through on ideas, ineffective leadership, and communication breakdowns. Despite staff enthusiasm for improvement, the failure to act on suggestions and the slow, often poorly executed implementation of changes create frustration and hinder progress. Furthermore, issues such as insufficient staffing, outdated systems, and a lack of coordination across teams exacerbate the difficulties in driving lasting change.

The feedback suggests that recent changes have often worsened working conditions, leading to increased workloads and heightened scrutiny, which has contributed to resistance and resentment amongst staff. There is also a clear call for change initiatives to be underpinned by a clear purpose and rationale, ensuring that employees understand the reasons behind changes and feel that they are being implemented with their well-being in mind. Addressing these concerns will require a more thoughtful, coordinated, and empathetic approach to change management, with an emphasis on effective leadership and staff engagement.

Prioritising the voices of employees and fostering a supportive, inclusive environment within the Housing Division is crucial for unlocking the full potential of its workforce. By actively engaging staff, the division can harness the wealth of knowledge, skills, and experience that exists within the teams. This approach will drive meaningful, sustainable change, enhancing service delivery and directly benefiting the wider communities and customers.

The recommendations presented are aimed at strengthening continuous service improvement, ensuring that the Housing Division not only meets the evolving needs of its workforce, but also delivers exceptional, high-quality services to the community. By addressing both internal and external needs, the division will be better positioned to foster a culture of innovation, collaboration, and efficiency, ultimately achieving greater organisational success and positive community impact.

4. Recommendations

The following recommendations are designed to strengthen continuous service improvement initiatives within the Housing division, with a focus on actively engaging and empowering staff to drive the division's success. Key recommendations include:

- Clarify the purpose of change and ensure future change initiatives are guided and supported by a clear vision.
- Improve communication channels within the Housing division to ensure that all staff are aware of the divisional vision and respective team goals.
- Establish and implement cross-team collaboration to enable the sharing of ideas, key learning and good practices.
- Develop on-line forums/platforms to share knowledge, etc locally within teams and services as well as at a divisional and departmental level.
- Increase management support to encourage staff to share innovative ideas without fear of perceived risks.
- Establish a mechanism or governance structure to formally capture ideas for consideration and provide a robust response where its transparent and constructive.
- Allocate sufficient resources to implement new ideas and overcome bureaucratic obstacles.
- Provide training and development opportunities to help staff understand and engage with change management processes.
- Provide training and development opportunities to upskill around existing and innovative digital technologies.
- Create a supportive environment where staff feel empowered to voice their ideas and contribute to operational improvements.
- A clear commitment and active role from senior management levels to support change is essential for improving culture in order to embrace improvement.
- Ensure that contributions to service improvement no matter how small are acknowledged and valued, leading to a culture where staff feel genuinely invested in the division's success.
- Regularly celebrate successful improvement initiatives and highlight the impact of staff contributions to reinforce the value of continuous improvement.
- Empower managers to advocate for their teams, ensuring that issues raised by staff are taken seriously and addressed at the senior management level.
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of changes regularly to ensure they are leading to desired outcomes and that they are built upon to achieve continuous improvement.
- Create a suite of standardised resources (guides, training materials, knowledge bases) that can be accessed by all teams, ensuring consistency in service delivery and reducing the learning curve for new or transferring staff.
- Encourage team members who have successfully developed resources or training to share their methods and tools across the division.

- Organise post-feedback discussions to evaluate the impact of feedback on actual work practices, ensuring continuous learning and improvement.
- Support the testing of new ideas through pilot programmes, allowing space to prove or refine their impact before full-scale implementation.
- Provide early notifications of upcoming changes and involve staff from the outset, reducing uncertainty and resistance.
- Ensure that change initiatives are introduced as collaborative processes.
- Manage and address cultural barriers that hinder change, ensuring a more inclusive and unified approach across teams.

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6. E1 Ethics Form



PG2 / E1 FORM

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

In order for research to result in benefit and minimise risk of harm, it must be conducted ethically. A researcher may not be covered by the University's insurance if ethical approval has not been obtained prior to commencement.

The University follows the OECD Frascati manual definition of **research activity**: "creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications". As such this covers activities undertaken by members of staff, postgraduate research students, and both taught postgraduate and undergraduate students working on dissertations/projects.

The individual undertaking the research activity is known as the "principal researcher".

Ethical approval is not required for routine audits, performance reviews, quality assurance studies, testing within normal educational requirements, and literary or artistic criticism.

Please read the notes for guidance before completing ALL sections of the form.

This form must be completed and approved prior to undertaking any research activity. Please see Checklist for details of process for different categories of application.

SECTION A: About You (Principal Researcher)

1	Full Name:	Nicola Jones			
2	Tick all boxes that apply:	Member of staff:	☐	Honorary research fellow:	☐
	Undergraduate Student	☐	Taught Postgraduate Student	☒	Postgraduate Research Student
3	Institute/Academic Discipline/Centre:	Wales Academy for Professional Practice and Applied Research Institute of Management and Health			
4	Campus:	Carmarthen			
5	E-mail address:	NicJones@carmarthenshire.gov.uk			
6	Contact Telephone Number:	07379271040			
For students:					
7	Student Number:	1815692			
8	Programme of Study:	MA in Professional Practice			
9	Director of Studies/Supervisor:				

SECTION B: Approval for Research Activity

1	Has the research activity received approval in principle? (please check the Guidance Notes as to the appropriate approval process for different levels of research by different categories of individual) (Approval process for WAPPAR – Tutor > Institute Ethics Representative) Complete once approved by WAPPAR.	YES	☒	NO	☐
2	If <u>Yes</u> , please indicate source of approval (and date where known): <i>Approval in principle must be obtained from the relevant source prior to seeking ethical approval</i>	<i>Date</i>			
	Research Degrees Committee		☐		
	Institute Research Committee		☐		
	Other (write in)		☒		

SECTION C: Internal and External Ethical Guidance Materials

	Please list the core ethical guidance documents that have been referred to during the completion of this form (including any discipline-specific codes of research ethics, location-specific codes of research ethics, and also any specific ethical guidance relating to the proposed methodology). Please tick to confirm that your research proposal adheres to these codes and guidelines. You may add rows to this table if needed.	
1	UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice	☒
2	UWTSD Research Data Management Policy	☒
3	Corporate Equality and Diversity Policy Strategic Equality Plan Handling Personal Data Policy	☒

SECTION D: External Collaborative Research Activity

If there are external collaborators then you should gain consent from the contact persons to share their personal data with the university. **If there are no external collaborators then leave this section blank and continue to section E.**

1	Institution	N/A				
2	Contact person name					
3	Contact person e-mail address					
4	Is your research externally funded?	YES	☐	NO	☒	
5	Are you in receipt of a KESS scholarship?	YES	☐	NO	☒	
6	Are you specifically employed to undertake this research in either a	Voluntary	YES	☐	NO	☒
7	paid or voluntary capacity?	Employed	YES	☐	NO	☒
8	Is the research being undertaken within an existing UWTSD ~~Athrofa~~ Professional Learning Partnership (APLP)?	If YES then the permission question below does not need to be answered.	YES	☐	NO	☒

9	Has permission to undertake the research been provided by the partner organisation?	(If YES attach copy) If NO the application cannot continue	YES	☐	NO	☒
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Where research activity is carried out in collaboration with an external organisation

10	Does this organisation have its own ethics approval system?	YES	☐	NO	☐
	If <u>Yes</u> , please attach a copy of any final approval (or interim approval) from the organisation (this may be a copy of an email if appropriate).				

SECTION E: Details of Research Activity

1	Indicative title:	The relationship between promoting and implementing change, and the obstacles preventing change taking place within the Housing and Public Protection division.		
2	Proposed start date:	March 2024	Proposed end date:	Approximately February / March 2025
	Introduction to the Research (maximum 300 words per section) Ensure that you write for a Non-Specialist Audience when outlining your response to the points below:			
3	Purpose of Research Activity Background As a Project and Programmes Officer working in the Communities department within Carmarthenshire County Council, this role has a departmental remit both leading and supporting the delivery and implementation of transformational projects. A clear objective has been set by the directorate to identify and implement change through robust engagement with staff in order to promote continuous service improvement, benefiting both the workforce and the customer. Purpose The purpose of the research is to explore and understand the correlation between recognising and identifying good practices and innovative ideas, as well as the obstacles inhibiting teams, services, and individuals from effectively fulfilling their roles to support improved service delivery within the Housing and Public Protection division. Previous Research and Policy As the insider researcher, the aim is to evaluate how empowering staff through collaboration can effectively foster innovation and drive change. Innovation is recognised as a crucial competency in the 21st century, contributing to growth across various sectors (Barak & Usher, 2019; Damannpour, 2014; Lindfors & Hilmola, 2016; Shepard, 2019; Short & Keller-Bell, 2019; Wagner, 2015). Additionally, Adair (2009) highlights several key benefits of overcoming barriers to generating new ideas. By consolidating these key readings, the study seeks to delve into how innovation occurs and identify factors hindering its implementation. This research study aims to provide valuable insights into promoting continuous service improvement moving forward.			

4	Research Question To understand the correlation between recognising and identifying good practices and innovative ideas, as well as the obstacles inhibiting teams, services, and individuals from effectively fulfilling their roles to support improved service delivery within the Housing and Public Protection division.
5	Aims of Research Activity The aims of the research will be to: - Identify: - potential new good practices, ideas and methods of operation derived from staff across the division. - key factors preventing positive change from taking place. - Critically analyse both communication and engagement and change management theories, exploring their interrelation and mutual influence. - Understand the relationship between implementing positive change and removing potential inhibitors to change.
6	Objectives of Research Activity The objective of this research is to discover innovative ideas and operational methods within the workplace, whilst also determining the obstacles that could impede change. It aims to explore the most effective ways to implement change within the division. Ultimately, the goal is to provide staff with a supportive environment to exchange ideas and effective practices, eliminate hindrances, and remove barriers. This approach aims to actively encourage continuous improvement in service delivery whilst ensuring that the workforce is engaged throughout the process.
	Proposed methods (maximum 600 words) Provide a brief summary of all the methods that may be used in the research activity, making it clear what specific techniques may be used. If methods other than those listed in this section are deemed appropriate later, additional ethical approval for those methods will be needed. You do not need to justify the methods here but should instead describe how you intend to collect the data necessary for you to complete your project.
7	Methodological Approach: This study will centre on individuals' experiences, primarily embracing a subjectivist ontology and interpretivist in epistemology. There is also a necessity to identify trends using quantitative data. As a result, a mixed-method approach will be adopted, incorporating both quantitative elements (surveys) and qualitative components (interviews, focus groups). Participants: The Housing and Public Protection division has a total of 475 staff situated within 7 key service areas including: - Consumer and Business Affairs - Care and Support - Investment and Development - Housing - Housing Hwb - Contracts and Service Development - Business Transformation and Programmes To ensure clarity for all participants, a comprehensive briefing will be provided, outlining the study's remit including aims and objectives, of which will clearly outline the specific information to be gathered from staff.

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	• Omit any intention of acting bias towards individuals if known to them and therefore already having pre-determined thoughts/outcomes. • Alleviate the risk of mis-interpreting the data including reshaping and/or omitting resulting in a breach of integrity. • Maintain a neutral stance when familiar with participants, ensuring clear boundaries to remove opportunities to participate in drama and conversational chat. Analysis Surveys: Responses will be evaluated based on percentages, while staff satisfaction will be assessed utilising a scale value. The data will then be organised into themes and presented via a variety of graphs and charts for clarity and ease of understanding. Interviews and Focus Groups: Responses will undergo thematic analysis to systematically identify any key factors that may influence feedback. It is important to note that the proportion of participants supporting the study is very limited in comparison to the overall workforce number of the division, therefore the outcomes will be indicative.						
	Location of research activity Identify all locations where research activity will take place.						
8	Suitable locations will be based within the researcher's organisation located between 3 Spilman Street, Carmarthen, SA31 1LE and Ty Elwyn, Llanelli, SA15 3AP. All surveys via Microsoft Forms will be issued via email.						
	Research activity outside of the UK If research activity will take place overseas, you are responsible for ensuring that local ethical considerations are complied with and that the relevant permissions are sought. Specify any local guidelines (e.g. from local professional associations/learned societies/universities) that exist and whether these involve any ethical stipulations beyond those usual in the UK (provide details of any licenses or permissions required). Also specify whether there are any specific ethical issues raised by the local context in which the research activity is taking place, for example, <u>particular cultural</u> and/or legal sensitivities or vulnerabilities of participants. If you live in the country where you will do the research then please state this.						
9	N/A						
10	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Use of documentation not in the public domain: Are any documents NOT publicly available?</td> <td>NO</td> <td>☐</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>YES</td> <td>☒</td> </tr> </table>	Use of documentation not in the public domain: Are any documents NOT publicly available?	NO	☐		YES	☒
Use of documentation not in the public domain: Are any documents NOT publicly available?	NO	☐					
	YES	☒					
11	If <u>Yes</u>, please provide details here of how you will gain access to specific documentation that is not in the public domain and that this is in accordance with the current data protection law of the country in question and that of England and Wales. There may be documents utilised throughout this study such as policies and procedures as well as frameworks and/or reports of which are held internally not within the public domain. As the insider researcher, access to these documents will be relatively easy and will be referenced within the document with the option to include appendices where appropriate to do so.						
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Does your research relate to one or more of the seven aims of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015? well-being-of-future-generations-wales-act-2015-the-essentials.pdf (gov.wales)</td> <td>YES</td> <td>NO</td> </tr> </table>	Does your research relate to one or more of the seven aims of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015? well-being-of-future-generations-wales-act-2015-the-essentials.pdf (gov.wales)	YES	NO			
Does your research relate to one or more of the seven aims of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015? well-being-of-future-generations-wales-act-2015-the-essentials.pdf (gov.wales)	YES	NO					

12	A prosperous Wales	☒	☐
13	A resilient Wales	☐	☒
14	A healthier Wales	☐	☒
15	A more equal Wales	☐	☒
16	A Wales of cohesive communities	☐	☒
17	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	☐	☒
18	A globally responsible Wales	☐	☒
19	If YES to any of the above, please give details:		
	Developing a workforce to work collaboratively and cohesively through sharing good practices and innovative ideas to promote continuous service improvement to support service delivery to customers, communities, etc.		
	(this box should expand as you type)		

SECTION F: Scope of Research Activity

	Will the research activity include:	YES	NO
1	Use of a questionnaire or similar research instrument?	☒	☐
2	Use of interviews?	☒	☐
3	Use of focus groups?	☒	☐
4	Use of participant diaries?	☒	☐
5	Use of video or audio recording?	☒	☐
6	Use of computer-generated log files?	☐	☒
7	Participant observation with their knowledge?	☐	☒
8	Participant observation without their knowledge?	☐	☒
9	Access to personal or confidential information without the participants' specific consent?	☐	☒
10	Administration of any questions, test stimuli, presentation that may be experienced as physically, mentally or emotionally harmful / offensive?	☐	☒
11	Performance of any acts which may cause embarrassment or affect self-esteem?	☐	☒
12	Investigation of participants involved in illegal activities?	☐	☒
13	Use of procedures that involve deception?	☐	☒
14	Administration of any substance, agent or placebo?	☐	☒
15	Working with live vertebrate animals?	☐	☒
16	Procedures that may have a negative impact on the environment?	☐	☒
17	Other primary data collection methods. Please indicate the type of data collection method(s) below.	☐	☒

	Details of any other primary data collection method:		
	(this box should expand as you type)		

If NO to every question, then the research activity is (ethically) low risk and may be exempt from some of the following sections (please refer to Guidance Notes).

If YES to any question, then no research activity should be undertaken until full ethical approval has been obtained.

SECTION G: Intended Participants

If there are no participants then do not complete this section, but go directly to section H.

Who are the intended participants:		YES	NO
1	Students or staff at the University?	☐	☒
2	Adults (over the age of 18 and competent to give consent)?	☒	☐
3	Vulnerable adults?	☐	☒
4	Children and Young People under the age of 18? (Consent from Parent, Carer or Guardian will be required)	☐	☒
5	Prisoners?	☐	☒
6	Young offenders?	☐	☒
7	Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator or a gatekeeper?	☐	☐
8	People engaged in illegal activities?	☐	☒
9	Others. Please indicate the participants below, and specifically any group who may be unable to give consent.	☐	☒
	Details of any other participant groups: (this box should expand as you type)		

Participant numbers and source	
Provide an estimate of the expected number of participants. How will you identify participants and how will they be recruited?	
10	How many participants are expected? Surveys: Over 400 participants with the hope that responses will be statistically viable. Interviews: 5-8 participants per session.
11	Who will the participants be? Service Managers and Leads Staff will include: • Consumer and Business Affairs • Care and Support • Investment and Development • Housing • Housing Hwb • Contracts and Service Development • Business Transformation and Programmes

12	How will you identify the participants?	The insider researcher will ensure buy-in from senior managers who will cascade one message to staff which will include the importance of the study and potential outcomes. However, all participation will be on a voluntary basis.
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Information for participants:		YES	NO	N/A
13	Will you describe the main research procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	☒	☐	☐
14	Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	☒	☐	☐
15	Will you obtain written consent for participation?	☐	☒	☐
16	Will you explain to participants that refusal to participate in the research will not affect their treatment or education (if relevant)?	☒	☐	☐
17	If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?	☐	☐	☒
18	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	☒	☐	☐
19	With questionnaires, will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer?	☒	☐	☐
20	Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs?	☒	☐	☐
21	Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation, in a way appropriate to the type of research undertaken?	☒	☐	☐
22	If NO to any of above questions, please give an explanation			
	(this box should expand as you type)			

Information for participants:		YES	NO	N/A
24	Will participants be paid?	☐	☒	☐
25	Is specialist electrical or other equipment to be used with participants?	☐	☒	☐
26	Are there any financial or other interests to the investigator or University arising from this study?	☐	☒	☐
27	Will the research activity involve deliberately misleading participants in any way, or the partial or full concealment of the specific study aims?	☐	☒	☐
28	If YES to any question, please provide full details			
	(this box should expand as you type)			

SECTION H: Anticipated Risks

Outline any anticipated risks that may adversely affect any of the participants, the researchers and/or the University, and the steps that will be taken to address them. If you have completed a full risk assessment (for example as required by a laboratory, or external research collaborator) you may append that to this form.					
1	Full risk assessment completed and appended? <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>☐</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>☒</td> </tr> </table>	Yes	☐	No	☒
Yes	☐				
No	☒				
2	Risks to participants For example: sector-specific health & safety, emotional distress, financial disclosure, physical harm, transfer of personal data, sensitive organisational information <table border="1"> <tr> <td> Risk to participants: • Identification of participants name or job role. • Disclosing participant information. • Miscommunication and lack of communication and transparency. • Participant Integrity. </td> <td> <i>How you will mitigate the risk to participants:</i> • All participant names and any other identifying information will be redacted from all research documents. • Adhere to GDPR guidelines and utilise internal resources to further support should there be any additional concern. • Two-way communication will be implemented with clear aims and objectives and full transparency throughout the study. Escalation process will be developed and accompanied by robust governance arrangements. Full transparency through the process will be implemented (e.g. interviews can stop at any time, withdrawal mechanism, HR advice and support, etc). • Acknowledge participants autonomy, cultural differences throughout the research process. </td> </tr> </table>	Risk to participants: • Identification of participants name or job role. • Disclosing participant information. • Miscommunication and lack of communication and transparency. • Participant Integrity.	<i>How you will mitigate the risk to participants:</i> • All participant names and any other identifying information will be redacted from all research documents. • Adhere to GDPR guidelines and utilise internal resources to further support should there be any additional concern. • Two-way communication will be implemented with clear aims and objectives and full transparency throughout the study. Escalation process will be developed and accompanied by robust governance arrangements. Full transparency through the process will be implemented (e.g. interviews can stop at any time, withdrawal mechanism, HR advice and support, etc). • Acknowledge participants autonomy, cultural differences throughout the research process.		
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3	If research activity may include sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics (e.g. sexual activity, drug use) or issues likely to disclose information requiring further action (e.g. criminal activity), give details of the procedures to deal with these issues, including any support/advice (e.g. helpline numbers) to be offered to participants. Note that where applicable, consent procedures should make it clear that if something potentially or <u>actually illegal</u> is discovered in the course of a project, it may need to be disclosed to the proper authorities The insider researcher does not for see any potential issues, but should they arise, they will be addressed in accordance with the organisation's policies and codes of practice. The insider researcher will be adopting a positive approach to formulating questions and is not expecting any negativity or shame.				
4	Risks to the investigator For example: personal health & safety, physical harm, emotional distress, risk of accusation of harm/impropriety, conflict of interest <table border="1"> <tr> <td> Risk to the investigator: As an insider researcher, there is risk of being biased (conflict of interest) </td> <td> <i>How you will mitigate the risk to the investigator:</i> Key questions clearly aligning to the research will be developed <u>in order to</u> mitigate any unfair bias or the opportunity lead and skew the capturing of participant responses. In addition, the insider will mitigate the risk of cherry-picking </td> </tr> </table>	Risk to the investigator: As an insider researcher, there is risk of being biased (conflict of interest)	<i>How you will mitigate the risk to the investigator:</i> Key questions clearly aligning to the research will be developed <u>in order to</u> mitigate any unfair bias or the opportunity lead and skew the capturing of participant responses. In addition, the insider will mitigate the risk of cherry-picking		
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		certain participants by arranging volunteers and/or nominations.
5	University/institutional risks For example: adverse publicity, financial loss, data protection	
	Risk to the University: Impact on resources due to undertaking work that sits outside current job remit (day-to-day duties). Mishandling of data (e.g. notes, survey outcomes, etc) can result in unnecessary harm to individuals. Reputational damage to the insider researcher if the study was not to be fully completed and/or outcomes not actioned.	How you will mitigate the risk to the University: Clarity on aims and objective of the study as time that is invested now may help to save in the future (e.g. review of processes to maximise efficiencies, etc). All documentation is to be kept within a secure location on the work device with device to be locked when unattended. No ad-hoc paperwork to capture information pertaining to the study which will mitigate the risk of falling in the wrong hands. Commitment to the study is paramount which is supported by an instruction and objective set by the Head of Service. Failure to complete and undertake actions/recommendations to support change will be non-negotiable.
6	Environmental risks For example: accidental spillage of pollutants, damage to local ecosystems	
	Risk to the environment: No such issues are anticipated.	How you will mitigate the risk to environment:

Disclosure and Barring Service				
	If the research activity involves children or vulnerable adults, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate must be obtained before any contact with such participants.	YES	NO	N/A
7	Does your research require you to hold a current DBS Certificate?	☐	☒	☐
8	If YES, please give the certificate number. If the certificate number is not available please write "Pending"; in this case any ethical approval will be subject to providing the appropriate certificate number.			

SECTION I: Feedback, Consent and Confidentiality

1	Feedback What de-briefing and feedback will be provided to participants, how will this be done and when?
	The insider researcher will circulate an introductory email to all in relation to the survey, 1:2:1 interview and focus group participants, informing them of their ability to request access to the results. Furthermore, the findings including actions will be delivered to the Senior Management Team meeting and escalated to the Departmental Management Team meeting. To support the research journey, a summary of the results will be circulated to staff with appropriate actions and timeframes, ensuring the data captured is effectively utilised and put into practice to support continuous service improvement.
2	Informed consent

	Describe the arrangements to inform potential participants, before providing consent, of what is involved in participating. Describe the arrangements for participants to provide full consent before data collection begins. If gaining consent in this way is inappropriate, explain how consent will be obtained and recorded in accordance with prevailing data protection legislation.
	The purpose of the research will be clearly articulated to participants as part of the introduction to the survey as well as at each 1:2:1 interview and focus group. In addition, a management email will be circulated prior to the survey reaffirming the key processes and practices <u>in order</u> to ensure all participants are comfortable and well informed to support with the uptake of responses. During 1:2:1 <u>interviews</u> and focus groups there will be a heavy reliance on participant volunteers, of which informed consent will be obtained through the acceptance of the meeting request and in addition a verbal confirmation of consent at the start of the session. It is important to note that participants have the right to withdraw from the research study at any point.
3	Confidentiality / Anonymity Set out how anonymity of participants and confidentiality will be ensured in any outputs. If anonymity is not being offered, explain why this is the case.
	Surveys: The use of Microsoft Forms will be used to develop the surveys of which all responses will be anonymous. Interviews: A cross section of participants will be anonymised throughout the process and represented in the findings as Participant A, B, C, etc. All identifiable data such as specific job roles will be redacted to support anonymity.

SECTION J: Data Protection and Storage

	Does the research activity involve personal data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 "GDPR" and the Data Protection Act 2018 "DPA")?	YES	NO
1	"Personal data" means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ("data subject"). An identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, <u>in particular by</u> reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person. Any video or audio recordings of participants <u>is considered to be personal data</u>.	☐	☒
	If YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
2			
	Does it involve special category data (as defined by the GDPR)?	YES	NO
3	"Special category data" means sensitive personal data consisting of information as to the data subjects' – (a) racial or ethnic origin, (b) political opinions, (c) religious beliefs or other beliefs of a similar nature, (d) membership of a trade union (within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992), (e) physical or mental health or condition, (f) sexual life, (g) genetics, (h) biometric data (as used for ID purposes).	☐	☒
	If YES, provide a description of the special category data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
4	(this box should expand as you type)		

	Will data from the research activity (collected data, drafts of the thesis, or materials for publication) be stored in any of the following ways?	YES	NO
5	Manual files (i.e. in paper form)?	☐	☒
6	University computers?	☐	☒
7	Private company computers?	☒	☐
8	Home or other personal computers?	☐	☒
9	Laptop computers/ CDs/ Portable disk-drives/ memory sticks?	☐	☒
10	"Cloud" storage or websites?	☒	☐
11	Other – specify:	☐	☒
12	For all stored data, explain the measures in place to ensure the security of the data collected, data confidentiality, including details of backup procedures, password protection, encryption, anonymisation and pseudonymisation: All data will be kept within the organisation's databases such as SharePoint which is permission based. Access to the organisation's work laptop will require a username and password which will be specific to the insider researcher. In addition, all systems and software are protected by the organisation's firewall. The data generated by the research will be anonymised before saving to protected folders, ensuring full compliance with GDPR.		

Data Protection			
	Will the research activity involve any of the following activities:	YES	NO
13	Electronic transfer of data in any form?	☒	☐
14	Sharing of data with others at the University outside of the immediate research team?	☐	☒
15	Sharing of data with other organisations?	☐	☒
16	Export of data outside the UK or importing of data from outside the UK?	☐	☒
17	Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, emails or telephone numbers?	☐	☒
18	Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals?	☐	☒
19	Use of data management system?	☒	☐
20	Data archiving?	☐	☒
21	If YES to any question, please provide full details, explaining how this will be conducted in accordance with the GDPR and Data Protection Act (2018) (and any international equivalents, where appropriate): This study will utilise the organisation's database primarily for the use of standard storage purposes which will include the Council File Plan and SharePoint (cloud storage). The insider researcher will have access to these folders/files via the work laptop. Robust restrictions will be placed on the key files/folders, ensuring the data is secure. Data transfer may occur through the use of Microsoft forms, but all data will be anonymised. In addition, all surveys circulated will be included as part of a large email distribution list of which the names will be blind copied in order for staff to not see who it will be circulated to.		
22	List all who will have access to the data generated by the research activity: The insider researcher only.		

23	List who will have control of, and act as custodian(s) for, data generated by the research activity:		
	The insider researcher only.		
24	Give details of data storage arrangements, including security measures in place to protect the data, where data will be stored, how long for, and in what form. Will data be archived – if so how and if not <u>why not</u> .		
	The data produced by this research will be stored on the organisation's secure IT system, which is <u>password-protected</u> . The stored data will be anonymised and utilised solely for the outlined research purposes. Following the completion of analysis, all data will be destroyed.		
25	Please indicate if your data will be stored in the UWTSD Research Data Repository (see https://researchdata.uwtsd.ac.uk/). If so please explain. <i>(Most relevant to academic staff)</i>		
	N/A		
26	Confirm that you have read the UWTSD guidance on data management (see https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/)	YES	☒
27	Confirm that you are aware that you need to keep all data until after your research has completed or the end of your funding	YES	☒

SECTION K: Declaration

The information which I have provided is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have attempted to identify any risks and issues related to the research activity and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants. In submitting this application I hereby confirm that I undertake to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice which is published on the website: https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/research/research-ethics/		
1	Signature of applicant:	N. Jones Date: 15/03/2024

For STUDENT Submissions:

2	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Date:
3	Signature:	

For STAFF Submissions:

4	Academic Director/ Assistant Dean:	Date:
5	Signature:	

Checklist: Please complete the checklist below to ensure that you have completed the form according to the guidelines and attached any required documentation:

☒	I have read the guidance notes supplied before completing the form.
☒	I have completed ALL RELEVANT sections of the form in full.
☒	I confirm that the research activity has received approval in principle
☐	I have attached a copy of final/interim approval from external organisation (where appropriate)
☐	I have attached a full risk assessment (where appropriate) ONLY TICK IF YOU HAVE ATTACHED A FULL RISK ASSESSMENT
☒	I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the <u>above named</u> research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice.
☒	I understand that before commencing data collection all documents aimed at respondents (including information sheets, consent forms, questionnaires, interview schedules etc.) must be confirmed by the DoS/Supervisor, module tutor or Academic Director.

RESEARCH STUDENTS AND STAFF ONLY

All communications relating to this application during its processing must be in writing and emailed to pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk, with the title 'Ethical Approval' followed by your name. You will be informed of the outcome of your claim by email; therefore it is important that you check your University and personal email accounts regularly.

STUDENTS ON UNDERGRADUATE OR TAUGHT MASTERS PROGRAMMES should submit this form (and receive the outcome) via systems explained to you by the supervisor/module leader.

This form is available electronically from the Academic Office web pages:

<https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/academic-office/appendices-and-forms/>

Appendix 1: Housing Divisional Service Areas

Overview of the main services within the Housing Division

1. **Housing “Hwb” Services** - delivering front-line preventative services around housing advice, options, homelessness, pre-accommodation support and housing support management and provision. It also leads on identifying housing needs, the allocation of homes and the provision of services for Ukraine and general refugee re-settlement.
2. **Housing Services** - delivering focussed services for over 9,000 council tenants covering rental income, estate, tenancy and leasehold management, tenant engagement, temporary accommodation, private rented sector standards and energy efficiency, social lettings agency, empty private sector homes and management of Traveller sites.
3. **Care and Support Services** - delivering front line services to our seven in-house care homes, day support and 21 older person housing schemes.
4. **Development and Investment Services** - delivering more affordable homes across the county through our Housing Regeneration and Development Delivery Plan, creating more homes for rent and sale and stimulating economic growth in the county. Developing our new “standard” for Council homes which focus on decarbonisation and creating affordable warmth for tenants. Developing and delivering care home, specialist housing and older person housing investment programmes.
5. **Contracts and Service Development Services** - delivering a collaborative approach, and link in with departmental and corporate initiatives, to Divisional work-force planning, developing and delivering on new services (e.g. leading on implementation on new Rented Homes Act, website development) and procuring and implementing new key service contracts e.g. Housing and Public Protection IT systems.

Appendix 2: Carmarthenshire County Council Well-being Objectives

[Carmarthenshire County Council – Corporate Strategy 2022 - 2027](#)

Well-being Objectives	7 National Well-being Goals						
	Prosperity	Resilience	Healthier	More Equal	Cohesive Communities	Vibrant Culture and Welsh Language	Global Responsibility
1. Enabling our children and young people to have the best possible start in life (Start Well)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. Enabling our residents to live and age well (Live & Age Well)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3. Enabling our communities and environment to be healthy, safe and prosperous (Prosperous communities)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4. To further modernise and develop as a resilient and efficient Council (Our Council)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Well-being Objective 1

Enabling our children and young people to have the best possible start in life (Start Well)

Why is this important?

1. Giving every child the best start in life is crucial to reducing health inequalities across the life course. The foundations for virtually every aspect of human development – physical, intellectual and emotional – are laid in early childhood. What happens during these early years, starting in the womb, has lifelong effects on many aspects of health and well-being – from obesity, heart disease and mental health, to educational achievement and economic status. To have an impact on health inequalities we need to address the social gradient in children's access to positive early experiences. Later interventions, although important, are considerably less effective if they have not had good early foundations. Fair Society, Healthy Lives, the Marmot Review, 2010
2. Adverse Childhood Experiences ACE's are stressful experiences during childhood that directly harm a child (e.g. sexual or physical abuse) or effect the environment in which they live (e.g. growing up in a house with domestic violence) that can impact throughout the course of life. For every 100 adults in Wales, 47% have suffered at least one ACE and 14% have suffered 4 or more.
3. Early language acquisition is important in the development of the child. Welsh language development in the early years can encourage feelings of belonging.
4. In March 2022, there were 165 Looked After Children in Carmarthenshire, which equates to 45 per 10,000 population compared to the Welsh average of 112.
5. 31% of children are living in poverty in Carmarthenshire (in households with less than 60% of the average income before housing costs). This is just above the Welsh average of 30.6%.
6. Carmarthenshire is the 5th worst county in Wales for levels of childhood obesity. In 2018/19, almost a third of children aged 4 to 5 were overweight or obese.
7. Compulsory education is changing in Wales and a new curriculum is being introduced that aims to provide young people with the skills they will need in the future.



A recent consultation with Carmarthenshire's residents indicates that there is overall agreement that local schools provide children and young people with a good education.

8. Children learn through play and develop essential skills - play sufficiency is essential.
9. Attendance at a quality pre-school (aged 0-3) is shown to improve outcomes for children.
10. Making sure young people are in Education, Employment or Training reduces the effects of poverty and the wider cost to society of support services, reliance on benefits and offending.
11. Young carers are more likely to achieve poorer educational outcomes – there are 1,800 young carers in Carmarthenshire.
12. There is a net migration over the last five years in the 16-24 range.
13. Key local issues identified by the Carmarthenshire Youth Forum are:
 - a. access to training and jobs with 21.3% of votes
 - b. homelessness with 20.9% of votes,
 - c. domestic violence with 17 of votes%.
14. Concern over mental health is a key issue raised by young people.
15. Young people are also concerned with bullying and cyberbullying.
16. Research on early years investment suggests significant returns for each £1 invested.



Outcomes we hope to achieve

- Improved availability of early years education and childcare settings across the county, particularly in rural areas; with a particular focus on providing and strengthening Welsh-medium childcare.
- Pupils with Additional Learning Needs are fully supported.
- Increased school attendance rates and access to education for vulnerable pupils.
- Deliver a rounded curriculum raising educational standards.
- Nutritious free school meals for all primary school pupils.
- Increased bilingual and Welsh medium education.
- Improved opportunities for all residents in literacy, numeracy and digital skills to upskill for employment.
- Schools for sustainable community learning that are fit for 21st Century
- Keeping children at home with their families whenever possible.
- Reducing the inequalities faced by children from disadvantaged backgrounds which may affect their later life chances.
- Families facing difficulties are supported to provide stable, safe and secure home environments for their children.
- Families from disadvantaged backgrounds are able to access health and well-being provision within their local areas.

What will we do?

As a Council we will focus on the following thematic and service priorities with separate detailed delivery plans outlining our approach to making progress against our outcomes in each of the areas.

Thematic Priority: Healthy Lives – prevention /early intervention

We will give every child the best start in life, improving their early life experiences and ensuring they live healthy lifestyles. We will protect children and young people from harm and work to ensure their emotional and physical well-being.

Service Priority: Early years

Protecting children who are experiencing, or are at risk of abuse, neglect, or other kinds of harm is our priority. Our focus is on early intervention / prevention to ensure all children can reach their full potential and be healthy, happy and safe. Helping to give every child the best start in life and improve their early life experiences is our key aim.

Service Priority: Education

We will support all Carmarthenshire learners. We will ensure that they are happy, safe, are thriving, and are fulfilling their personal, social and learning potential.

The future direction of Education Services will focus on supporting learners to become:

- Ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives.
- Enterprising, creative contributors, ready to provide a full part in life & work.
- Healthy and confident individuals, ready to learn fulfilling lives as valued members of society.
- Ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world.

Well-being Objective 2

Enabling our residents to live and age well (Live & Age Well)

Why is this important?

1. Poverty and deprivation have serious detrimental effects, impacting all aspects of well-being. Over a third of our households continue to live in poverty (35.6%), a level which has increased by 0.9% over the last ten years. This translates to around 29,500 households, suggesting that almost 600 additional households have slipped below the income threshold over the last ten years.

A large proportion of respondents to a recent consultation agreed that poverty is a problem in their respective area.

2. The cost of living is rising across the UK, with more working families experiencing poverty.
3. According to the Census 2021, Carmarthenshire has an ageing population, whereby 11% of the county's population are aged over 75 (above the national average of 9.8%). This will require the NHS and the Local Authority to plan for the expected increased demand for health and social care services.

Health and Social Care was indicated to be the most important theme in terms of prioritisation for investment by Carmarthenshire's residents through a recent consultation.

4. The challenge is to prevent ill health, living healthy lives allows people to fulfil their potential, meet educational aspirations and play a full part in the economy and society of Carmarthenshire, many of the preventive services and interventions lie outside health and social care.
5. Dementia prevalence is projected to significantly increase in the next 15 years.
6. Mental ill health is something that one in four adults will experience in the course of their lifetime.

There was overall strong agreement from residents that it is important that consideration is given to supporting people's mental health and wellbeing.

7. Homelessness, and the risk of homelessness, poses significant risk to a person's well-being, negatively impacting on emotional, mental and physical health as well as indicating poor social and economic circumstances
8. Access to good quality, affordable homes promotes improved health and well-being, meeting the individual needs of residents, building strong sustainable communities and places where people want to live. It is also good for the economy - in order to thrive, new businesses need easy access to its workforce and quality housing will help to attract this cohort.

There was overall strong agreement from residents that it is important that local people are supported to buy homes locally.

9. Good quality energy efficient affordable homes are good for the people and the environment – well insulated homes fitted with the latest innovative technologies not only serve to reduce carbon emissions but also promote affordable warmth for our residents.



Outcomes we hope to achieve

- Help and support to alleviate the effects of the 'cost of living' crises and poverty in the County.
- Seamless integrated services between Health and Social Care.
- Accessible, inclusive, sustainable services, which promote and facilitate learning, culture, heritage, information, well-being and leisure.
- Improved preventative services to meet the demands of an ageing population.
- A reduction and working towards an end to homelessness.
- Availability of good quality and energy efficient affordable homes in the County.
- Recognise and seek to limit the disproportionate barriers faced by marginalised groups in accessing services and support which allow them to live and age well.
- Improved opportunities for all residents in literacy, numeracy and digital skills to upskill for employment.
- People are supported to take advantage of local opportunities whether it be through starting a business, gaining qualifications or gaining meaningful employment.

What will we do?

As a Council we will focus on the following thematic and service priorities with separate detailed delivery plans outlining our approach to making progress against our outcomes in each of the areas.

Thematic Priority: Tackling Poverty

Poverty and deprivation have serious detrimental effects across all aspects of well-being. It limits the opportunities and prospects for children and young people and damages the quality of life for families and communities.

Poverty can be a barrier to full participation in society and is too often an intergenerational experience which poses a significant threat to experiencing positive well-being both now and in the future.

With the added pressures of the cost of living crisis impacting residents, businesses and organisations there is a need for a fully integrated and collaborative approach to responding and supporting in the areas that we can influence.

Service Priority: Housing

Good quality affordable homes as well as continued significant investment in existing homes promotes health and well-being, meeting the individual needs of the residents, building resilient and cohesive communities and places where people want to live. Work to existing homes and availability of new provision across our rural and urban communities across the County will be key to enabling community resilience and cohesion.



Service Priority: Social Care

Social care services across a range of client group areas are likely to see an increase in demand over coming years and with the sector facing significant pressures in terms of workforce capacity there is a need to focus attention and respond innovatively.

The further development of collaboration and integration with health will be essential in order to deliver the key principles and standards relating to prevention, system flow, proactive care and planned care, and long-term care. The long-term aim is to wherever possible help people to maintain their independence at home for as long as possible, prevent unnecessary admissions to hospital and support timely discharge home from hospital to ensure that those that need good hospital care can access it.



Well-being Objective 3

Enabling our communities and environment to be healthy, safe and prosperous (Prosperous Communities)

Why is this important?

1. Providing secure and well-paid jobs for local people is crucial as increasing employability is fundamental to tackling poverty and reducing inequalities. This has a dramatic impact on our health and ability to function in everyday society.
2. Carmarthenshire has a high economic inactivity rate. This is a significant barrier to growth for Carmarthenshire, as the economically inactive represent a significant source of labour supply which is a crucial element of a well-functioning labour market. This is also concerning given that being inactive for a long period of time can negatively impact a person's well-being, health and life-satisfaction.
3. A barrier to employment for many is a lack of qualifications or skills. This applies to those that have no qualifications at all and those that wish to re-skill or up-skill to better themselves and seek higher level or alternative employment. This is a pertinent issue for Carmarthenshire, as the county exhibits a higher-than-average number of people with no qualifications and a lower proportion than average of people with higher level qualifications.
4. Business birth rates in Carmarthenshire have seen a small decline in recent years when compared with regional and national averages. A stagnant start-up rate is a barrier to growth and suggests a lack of confidence and capacity within the economy. Evidence highlighted in recent work on the Innovation prospects for the county suggests that the potential entrepreneurial capacity of the county is amongst the highest in Wales. Therefore, whilst current businesses within the county need relevant support there is also a need to focus on creating an ecosystem which harnesses existing entrepreneurial flare and make Carmarthenshire an attractive place to start a business.
5. The county is characterised by micro and small sized enterprises which account for 97.2% of the total business demography. Whilst they are the very foundation of the county's economic and cultural ecosystem their combined annual turnover is significantly less than that generated by the county's 430 (2.8%) medium and large sized enterprises.



If we are to realise notable economic growth and increase productivity, there is a need to focus on supporting these businesses to upscale.

The local economy was highlighted as the third most important theme for prioritisation for investment by respondents to a recent consultation. This included sub-themes such as local business investment and town centre regeneration.

6. Access to services is a challenge in some instances owing to a lower population density and rurality. Large travel distances increase the time and cost for accessing services, which can hinder an individual's ability to feel connected to their communities, worsen isolation and reduce feelings of local pride and belonging. This is especially pertinent for marginalised groups.

Findings from a recent Carmarthenshire residents survey highlights that whilst there was overall agreement from respondents that they can easily access services, a large proportion disagreed.

7. Transportation & highways play a key role in supporting and sustaining our communities, it provides the vital infrastructure which connects people to one another, binds communities and enables businesses to grow and expand. A modern, successful economy is reliant upon the safe and efficient movement of people and goods and providing opportunities for people to gain access to employment, education, health, leisure and shopping. The majority of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that there are good transportation links around them.
8. Areas of the county are susceptible to the negative effects of the climate emergency, especially flooding. Just over 15,000 properties (mostly residential) in the county are currently at some level of flood risk. 3,151 of these properties are at high risk. Climate change will increase the number of properties, infrastructure and key services at risk of flooding. Places which do not currently flood will become at risk of flooding and those already known to be at risk will see the level of that risk become greater.



The threats of the climate and nature emergencies were highlighted by residents as being a concern. Particular reference was made by some to the threats posed by flooding.

9. A biodiverse natural environment is good for well-being, with healthy functioning ecosystems, supporting social, economic and ecological resilience. Planning plays an integral role in order to deliver the Council's vision.
10. To reduce carbon outputs and meet Welsh Government National targets, we must deliver our Waste Management and Recycling Strategy and meet our statutory recycling targets (70% by 2025 / 100% by 2050) and wider obligations including improvements to the quality of recyclable materials or suffer financial penalties.
11. The latest Census data for 2021 indicates that Carmarthenshire is home to 72,838 Welsh speakers which translates to 39.9% of the county's total population. This figure has decreased by 5,210 since the last Census in 2011, which translates to a percentage point decrease of 4.0. This is the largest percentage point decrease of all local authorities in Wales. In 2001 and 2011, Carmarthenshire had the highest number of Welsh speakers of all local authorities in Wales, with 84,196 and 78,048 Welsh speakers respectively. These new figures mean that the county now has the second highest number of Welsh speakers of all local authorities in Wales and the fourth highest in terms of the percentage of the population that are able to speak Welsh. The county remains a key strategic stronghold for the future of the Welsh language and the social and economic benefits of bilingualism are widely recognised. Evidence gathered via the residents' survey indicates that overall respondents agreed that it is important that the Welsh language is promoted and protected.

Evidence gathered via the residents' survey indicates that overall respondents agreed that it is important that the Welsh language is promoted and protected.

12. Carmarthenshire exhibits increasing crime rates in some areas, however the county remains among the safest areas in the UK, with Carmarthenshire ranking 13th safest out of the 22 counties in Wales with a rate of 83.6 crimes per 1,000 population.

Overall, there was agreement that residents feel safe in their communities.



Outcomes we hope to achieve

- Businesses supported and employment provided.
- People are supported to take advantage of local opportunities whether it be through starting a business, gaining qualifications or gaining meaningful employment.
- Businesses are supported to take advantage of local supply chains and procurement opportunities.
- People feel empowered to lead active and healthy lives through access to fit for purpose services and provision
- On track to meet the national recycling targets.
- Continue to work towards becoming a Net Zero Carbon Local Authority by 2030.
- Look to improve the availability and affordability of early years education and childcare settings across the county, to address one of the common barriers faced by individuals looking to return to, or find employment.
- Look to improve access to services through enhanced transportation networks and infrastructure.
- Improve current and explore new developments to limit the effects of flooding and other environmental threats which affect our residents and service users.
- Sustain low crime rates whilst continuing effective partnership working to address increasing rates evident in some areas of the county.
- Increase in the number of Welsh speakers.
- Increased confidence and use of Welsh as a thriving language.

What will we do?

As a Council we will focus on the following thematic and service priorities with separate detailed delivery plans outlining our approach to making progress against our outcomes in each of the areas.

Thematic Priority: Economic Recovery and Growth

The strength of our local economy is central to our communities' wider well-being and going forward we will focus our regeneration efforts on developing our businesses, people and places. In our future plans we will enable Carmarthenshire to become more productive whilst being more equal, greener and healthier and supporting business and community resilience and growth.

Thematic Priority: Decarbonisation & Nature Emergency

The Natural Environment is a core component of sustainable development. The Council has already declared its commitment to addressing the climate and nature emergencies and will continue on its route towards becoming a Net Zero Carbon Local Authority by 2030 and addressing the issues that are driving a decline in our biodiversity and support nature recovery.

Thematic Priority: Welsh Language & Culture

Carmarthenshire is a stronghold for the Welsh language and is considered to be of high strategic importance in its future. Bilingualism is beneficial to both the economy and individuals through cognitive and social benefits. We will work towards increasing the number of Welsh speakers and supporting the regular use of the language across all aspects of our daily lives.

Engaging in cultural activity has demonstrable positive impact on starting well, living well and ageing well. We want our future generations to be immersed in a strong, intriguing, wholly unique Carmarthenshire Culture, that reflects our past and shapes our future.

Thematic Priority: Community Safety, Resilience and Cohesion

Safety and a feeling of belonging are important to personal well-being and more people now appreciate the value of kindness and being part of a community. Supporting cohesive communities and ensuring those from different backgrounds share positive relationships, feel safe in their neighbourhood, and have a sense of mutual respect and shared values is central to having active and thriving communities.

Community Resilience is also essential to enable communities to respond to, withstand, and recover from adverse situations. When communities are able to work together to support each other it builds a sense of pride and belonging which is key for social well-being.

Service Priority: Leisure & Tourism

Sport and leisure, culture and outdoor recreation are the heartbeat of our communities. These services provide a range of health and well-being activities, facilities and programmes in order to support our residents and communities to lead healthy, safe and prosperous lives.

In a similar way the promotion of our County as an attractive and commercially viable place to visit and invest in is a key economic and well-being factor.

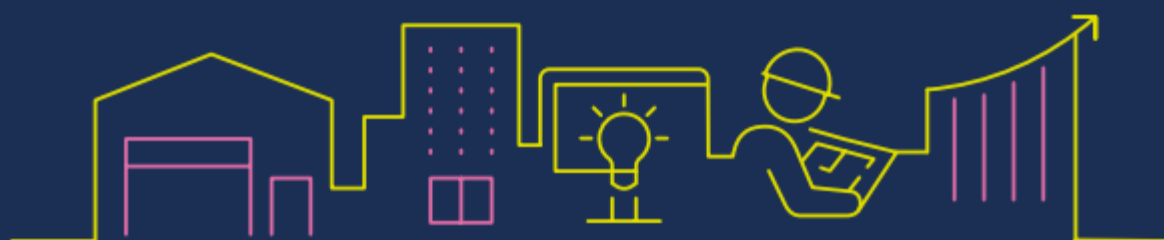
We will continue to develop these services in response to the need of our residents, businesses and visitors.

Service Priority: Waste

A circular economy keeps resources and materials in use for as long as possible and avoids all waste. Moving to a circular economy is key to the delivery of essential environmental outcomes in terms of the opportunity to reduce our carbon emissions and impact on natural resources whilst aiding nature recovery. We will ensure that we develop a new approach to waste management that embeds the circular economy principles in Carmarthenshire.

Service Priority: Highways & Transport

Our highway and transportation networks underpin the economic prosperity of Carmarthenshire, facilitating access to employment and learning opportunities, social connections, health, leisure, active travel and delivering services that touch every home every day. Connectivity and accessibility are central to facilitating economic and social well-being and we will continue to develop and enhance our local infrastructure in order to support our communities.



Well-being Objective 4

To further modernise and develop as a resilient and efficient Council (Our Council)

Why is this important?

1. In March 2020, we entered one of the most challenging periods ever faced by local government with the COVID-19 pandemic. Emerging from the crisis, there was a recognition that 'things would never quite be the same' and we would not be the same organisation that we had been. We therefore wanted to capture the learning from our response to the pandemic; what worked well/did not work so well, and how this could potentially change 'what we do' and 'how we do', it in the future. This is now an opportunity to re-set or go back to basics in using some core principles that underpin service delivery.

Findings from a recent staff consultation indicate that the vast majority of respondents feel proud of the way we responded as an organisation to the pandemic.

Additionally, the majority feel ready to move forward and work in a post covid world.

Mostly, staff agree that they were well led during the pandemic, however a lower proportion agreed that they feel valued for the contributions they made during this time.

2. We had to adapt our services quickly to continued delivery, which often required innovative and creative thinking, and a multi-team approach within the Council and with other public sector partners. Services demonstrated extreme resilience and as a result are now armed with more robust service continuity plans and a more mature approach to risk – having greater confidence and ambition in seeking ways of developing more purposeful services.



3. The benefits of having a more flexible, dynamic, empowered workforce will be important to support a transformation programme, to help us achieve our wider aims and objectives. The likelihood is that our staff recruitment challenges are likely to be with us for at least the medium term, and therefore there will need to be a greater focus on the development and retention of staff - priority of our Workforce Strategy.
Overall respondents to the staff consultation strongly agree that they have the right skills and equipment to do their work, however a lower proportion agrees that they are encouraged to learn and develop in their role.
4. We are able to develop a more sustainable approach to meet our future workforce needs by adopting a 'grow your own' strategy - our 'Future Workforce' programme will seek to increase graduate, apprenticeship and work experience opportunities.
5. Therefore, our Transformation Programme based on what we have learnt, will design and implement a programme of internal change and transformation that will support the Council to deliver on our vision and priorities as set out within this Corporate Strategy.



Outcome we hope to achieve

- To further modernise and develop the Council's ways of working.
- Support the development of the Council as a modern, diverse, inclusive and responsive organisation and be an 'Employer of Choice'.
- Listen to our staff through regular staff engagement and empower them to improve their own service areas.
- Ensure local and regional partnership working is efficient and effective and adds value to the work of the Council.
- Increased public engagement through engagement, participation and consultation.
- A more commercial approach to the delivery of Council services with a view to increasing the level of income generated.
- Make better use of digital technology to further transform our services into smarter, efficient service processes and to deliver a better experience for customers.
- Embrace and promote agile working, hybrid meetings and new ways of working across the organisation, by being more sustainable and creative to improve Council services.
- Deliver organisational change that supports key Net Zero Carbon targets.
- Ensuring the Council is using its resources economically, efficiently and effectively.
- Embedding the sustainable development principle in all that the Council does.

What will we do?

As a Council we will focus on the following thematic priorities with separate detailed delivery plans outlining our approach to making progress against our outcomes in each of the areas.

Thematic Priority: Organisational Transformation

Public service as a whole has been through a period like no other in responding to the pandemic and with a challenging period likely to be facing us in terms of budgetary pressure it is essential to improve our capabilities and the way that we use our resources economically, efficiently and effectively in order to provide more value and benefits to our customers and residents.

A focus on organisational transformation will further accelerate the process of modernisation across the Council and allow us to deliver high-quality, cost-effective services within the context of a challenging external environment. There will need to be an inclusive and integrated approach to transformation that makes the best use of its people, systems and processes whilst encouraging the adoption of modern working practices and speeding up of processes.



Appendix 3: Staff Engagement Survey

Housing Division Staff Engagement Survey November 2024

This questionnaire is designed to better understand innovation to support continuous improvement within the Housing division.

Your insights will help me explore various aspects of how staff interact with their roles, contribute to improvement efforts, and navigate challenges in their workplace environment. This survey will cover topics such as your experiences with workplace processes, your involvement in change initiatives, and how ideas are shared within teams.

The questionnaire should take no more than 10-12 minutes to complete.

An honest recount of your experiences and insights will be integral to this research. Your candid feedback is greatly appreciated.

Your responses will be kept confidential and will only be used for research purposes.

Section 1: Workforce Demographic

1. What best describes your role within your division?

- ☐ Manager
- ☐ Officer
- ☐ Assistant

2. What is your employment status?

- ☐ Permanent
- ☐ Temporary
- ☐ Secondment
- ☐ Graduate
- ☐ Apprentice

3. How long have you been working within your division?

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ between 1-3 years
- ☐ between 4-6 years
- ☐ between 7-10 years
- ☐ 10 years plus

Section 2: Purpose

4. Do you know what the divisional vision is?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

5. If you have answered **Yes** to **Question 4** above, please describe...

6. Are you clear on the goals and ambition of your team?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

7. If you have answered **Yes** to **Question 6** above, please describe...

8. Do you have access to data that can support and inform change within your team?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ No

9. If you have answered **No/Sometimes** to **Question 8** above, please describe...

Section 3: Promoting Change

Continuous improvement (the ongoing effort to improve service delivery through monitoring key processes, practices, policies, and collaborative working)

10. Have you been involved in any continuous improvement or positive change initiatives within your division?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

11. If you have answered **Yes** to **Question 10** above, please describe...

12. On a scale of 1 to 5, how effectively do you think change is promoted within your division? (1 - not effective at all to 5 - extremely effective)

1	2	3	4	5
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13. Following on from **Question 12** above, please provide your feedback

14. On a scale of 1-5, how confident would you feel to making a suggestion for positive change within your team?

(1 - not effective at all to 5 - extremely effective)

1	2	3	4	5
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15. Following on from **Question 14** above, please provide your feedback

16. What factors motivate you to suggest ideas for positive change within your team now? (please select one or more statements that best describes you)

- ☐ I feel comfortable within my workplace to share ideas for change
- ☐ I feel that my team listens to me and my ideas
- ☐ I feel that positive change is welcomed and delivered upon
- ☐ I feel self-motivated to advocate for positive change, regardless of the factors listed above
- ☐ Other

17. Following on from **Question 16** above, please provide any feedback

Section 4: Implementing Change

18. On a scale of 1 to 5, how well do you think positive change is implemented within your division? (1 - Poorly implemented to 5 - Very well implemented)

1	2	3	4	5
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19. Following on from **Question 18** above, please provide your feedback

20. On a scale of 1 to 5, how often do you think change initiatives lead to meaningful improvements in your work? (1 - Never to 5 - Always)

1	2	3	4	5
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21. Following on from **Question 20** above, please provide your feedback

22. Do you feel your team has the right tools to help you implement change?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

23. Following on from **Question 22** above please provide your feedback

24. Do you feel there is data available to help track the impact of change?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

25. Following on from **Question 24** above please provide your feedback

Section 5: Obstacles to Change

26. What discourages or stops you from putting forward your ideas for positive change?
(please select one or more statements that best describes you)

- ☐ I don't feel confident sharing my ideas
- ☐ I don't feel that my team listens to me or my ideas
- ☐ I don't feel comfortable within my workplace to share ideas for change
- ☐ I think there is a lack of follow-up on ideas shared
- ☐ I think there is an unwillingness to move away from longstanding practices

Other

27. Following on from **Question 26** above, please provide your feedback

28. What factors do you think inhibit continuous service improvement? (please select one or more statements that best describes you)

- ☐ Financial constraints (budget limitations, lack of investment)
- ☐ Time constraints (existing workloads, limited time for training)
- ☐ Human resources (lack of skills, lack of capacity)
- ☐ Technology and infrastructure (outdated technology or systems, insufficient IT support)
- ☐ Workplace culture (resistance to change, "stuck in our ways")

Other

29. Following on from **Question 28** above, please provide your feedback

Section 6: Suggestions for Improvement

30. How helpful would it be to have access to specific tools, templates, or training to support the development of change ideas and projects?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Not helpful

Extremely helpful

31. Which types of resources would be most valuable in supporting your development of ideas and projects?
(please select one or more statements that best describes you)

- ☐ A clear process for submitting ideas (like a suggestions box/ board)
- ☐ Visible endorsement from managers for continuous improvement
- ☐ Transparent feedback about why some ideas are pursued whilst others are not, to demonstrate that all suggestions are considered.
- ☐ Regular discussion opportunities to collaborate and share ideas in focus groups led by managers or
- ☐ Heads of Service
- ☐ Other

32. Following on from **Question 31** above, please provide feedback

33. How important do you think it is to create opportunities for team members to share their stories of change, lessons learned, or successful ideas to help spread and scale effective practices across teams?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Not important

Extremely important

34. What would make it easier for you to share your experiences, successes, or lessons learned with other teams?

35. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences with change in the Housing division?

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Microsoft. The data you submit will be sent to the form owner.

 Microsoft Forms

Appendix 4: Staff Engagement Survey Email

Housing Division Staff Engagement Survey 2024



Andrea Thomas (Communities)

To Aimee Booth; Jonathan Morgan; Heike Clarke; Shaun M Lewis; Jade Evans; Rachel M Davies; Gareth Williams;
 Rachel Parkinson; Les James; Jonathan May; Angela Bowen; Caroline Davies; Kay L Howells; Chris Flattery; +150 others
Cc Nicola Jones (Project Officer); Aimee Booth; Jonathan Morgan

Hi all, please see email below sent on behalf of Jonathan Morgan, Head of Housing...

Prynhawn da pawb, Mae Nicola Jones yn cynnal astudiaeth ymchwil seiliedig ar waith fel rhan o'i chymhwyster, sy'n canolbwyntio ar ddeall y berthynas rhwng hyrwyddo a gweithredo newid, a'r rhwystrau sy'n atal newid rhag digwydd o fewn yr Adran Dai. Er mwyn ei chefnogi i gasglu data ystyrlon a fydd yn llywio ei hastudiaethau a gwelliannau posibl wrth symud ymlaen, gofynnwn yn garedig i chi gymryd ychydig funudau i gwblhau'r arolwg isod (cliciwch naill ai ar y ddolen neu'r cod QR). Mae ar gael yn Gymraeg ac yn Saesneg ar liniadur neu ddyfais symudol er mwyn sicrhau hygyrchedd i bawb.		Good afternoon all, Nicola Jones is conducting a work-based research study as part of her qualification, focused on understanding the relationship between promoting and implementing change, and the obstacles preventing change taking place within the Housing division. To support her gathering meaningful data that will inform both her studies and potential improvements moving forward, we kindly ask that you take a few minutes to complete the survey below (please click either the link or QR code). It is available in both Welsh and English via a laptop or mobile device to ensure accessibility for all.	
Link		Link	
Mae eich adborth yn amhysiadwy a bydd yn chwarae rhan allweddol wrth lunio newid cadarnhaol yn ein hadran. Sylwch, bydd eich ymatebion yn ddienw ac yn gyfrinachol ac yn cael eu defnyddio at ddibenion ymchwil yn unig. Bydd yr arolwg hwn yn dod i ben ddydd Mawrth 26 Tachwedd 2024. Diolch am eich amser a'ch cefnogaeth.		Your feedback is invaluable and will play a key role in shaping positive change in our division. Please note, your responses will be anonymous and confidential, and will only be used for research purposes. This survey will close end of play on Tuesday 26th November 2024. Thank you for your time and support.	

Many thanks,
Jonathan

Jonathan Morgan

Pennaeth Tai | Head of Housing

Adran Cymunedau | Department of Communities

Rhif Ffon | Telephone: 07546 999108

E-bost | Email: jmorgan@sirgar.gov.uk | jmorgan@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

Mae croeso i chi gysylltu â ni yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg | You are welcome to contact us in Welsh or English



Appendix 5: Q.5 Survey Participant Responses

Question 5: If you have answered Yes to Question 4 above, please describe...

(Question 4: Do you know what the divisional vision is?)

Anonymous participant responses include:

- *"To be the best Housing services department in the country, providing the best quality, energy efficient properties to our contract holders/tenants."*
- *"To provide 2000 additional affordable homes, good quality homes, at affordable rents and prices are essential to enable local people and families on low-income levels to live in homes in their community of choice."*
- *"I'm sure it's something about working well and caring about people but it is a bit meaningless, and I am not sure what the point is when each team has their own outcomes to achieve so they have a vision of how it should be."*
- *"To provide good quality affordable housing."*
- *"Investing in Council homes, providing affordable housing for people and ending homelessness, reducing the number of empty homes and boosting the local economy."*
- *"It is what we want to achieve and the direction we are taking to achieve it."*
- *"To work as one team, to act with integrity, focus on our customers, strive for excellence, take personal responsibility and listen to improve."*
- *"Provide the best housing service by working together to deliver excellent services that will improve the health and well-being of the people of Carmarthenshire."*
- *"To provide sufficient, safe, fit for purpose accommodation and related services, to those in need and in receipt of it."*
- *"We used to have it at the end of our email signature. Not sure what it is now."*
- *"Better homes for our tenants."*
- *"Keep people safe and well in their own homes."*

Appendix 6: Q.7 Survey Participant Responses

Question 7: If you have answered Yes to Question 6 above, please describe...

(Question 6: Are you clear on the goals and ambition of your team?)

Anonymous participant responses include:

- "To sell houses"
- "To increase the amount of good quality housing stock across the county."
- "To ensure that they carry out their duties efficiently and effectively to portray the council in a positive light."
- "To raise the standards of the private sector housing."
- "To provide support to private rented tenants/landlords and developers"
- "To assist the delivery of new affordable homes."
- "Look after the interests of Refugees with a particular focus on moving as many from Hosted arrangements to the private sector in order avoid taking from council resources wherever possible."
- "Have positive outcomes and get the job done - there should be a difference in people's lives at the end of it"
- "To provide good quality affordable housing."
- "To support those who need us"
- "Delivering transformational change projects that will deliver cost effective, efficient and improved services to our customers"
- "Reduce homelessness"
- "To deliver gold standard support and advice in relation to Infection Prevention and Control to our County Care Homes. To provide first class IPC training to CCC Dom care workers and care home staff."
- "To resolve and prevent the homelessness of the residents of Carmarthenshire."
- "To ensure our clients are able to integrate into the community and to support the people who host them"
- "Provide the best housing service by working together to deliver excellent services that will improve the health and well-being of the people of Carmarthenshire"
- "To prevent the ASB within allocated patches"
- "To provide safe, secure, efficient and affordable homes for residents in housing need"
- "To deliver on the actions within our long-term strategic plans"
- "Relieve people's homelessness".
- "To deliver emergency temporary accommodation to applicants in a considered and efficient manner. To continually review and improve efficiency to deliver service."
- "Working with council tenants to maximise income, maintain tenancies and reduce arrears."

- *"To identify and reach out to owners of Empty Properties, highlighting what financial assistances is available and try to bring them back into use."*
- *"Process grants and monitor schedules of work with associated interim payments."*
- *"Deal with any complaints associated with empty properties."*
- *"Provide homes and the necessary support to maintain tenants within their homes."*
- *"Maximise rental income"*
- *"Maintaining contract holders within their own homes"*
- *"For our tenants to live well"*

Appendix 7: Q.9 Survey Participant Responses

Question 9: If you have answered No/Sometimes to Question 8 above, please describe...

(Question 8: Do you have access to data that can support and inform change within your team?)

Anonymous participant responses include:

- *"I would like to think that information is available, but i would not know where to look for it."*
- *"Our housing need data helps guide us to provide what is needed and where it is needed in the county."*
- *"Some managers communicate better than others - we don't always get told of changes, i.e. new staff, people moving or leaving"*
- *"Reports from Civica are not fit for purpose"*
- *"Heavy reliance on other teams to provide accurate information – Council Tax, Housing Benefit, Universal Credit, etc"*
- *"Timeframes to get information back is not compatible with the fast passed nature of housing and impacts assessments and safeguarding for clients and security for staff"*
- *"I do not have access to data on Civica - i am restricted."*
- *"I would like a process management system to obtain data from my team as currently we only hold the returns and outcomes which i feel is not enough"*
- *"As I mostly WFH, I am not told a lot of new things."*
- *"I sometimes have relevant data that could be used to support change, such as caseloads, timeframes etc"*
- *"Data is held by specific individuals that is sometimes difficult to access. Data requests sometimes need to be made to the performance team that can take time to get hold of. recent access to Power Bi has been helpful"*
- *"Reliance on other teams to provide data (not at your fingertips)."*
- *"Not readily available. This needs to be requested and is sometimes received a bit too late"*
- *"Not always at our fingertips but it can be requested. It would be nice to have an understanding of the bigger picture, rents, repairs, care, allowances, support, etc (the make-up of the household) to help better inform decision making."*

Appendix 8: Q.11 Survey Participant Responses

Question 11: If you have answered Yes to Question 10 above, please describe...

(Question 10: Have you been involved in any continuous improvement or positive change initiatives within your division?)

Anonymous participant responses include:

- *“I have been invited to attend a session, but it hasn't been scheduled yet.”*
- *“It would not be a formal Improvement Project but as we are a comparatively new team our duties change and improve as we glean from; experience, situational, and process changes. We review what we do and why we do it and eliminate non-essential tasks, partly as a result of the team now being much smaller than was previously the case. We collectively review our approaches, and the manager does it on an individual basis monthly also. “*
- *“It was harder to do than I would have liked as the lack of clarity on chain of command can make decisions difficult and people are often reluctant to take a decision. Some people are very open to new ideas or ways of working and some are much less so.”*
- *“I help in the selection of the new IT system for Housing”*
- *“I was able to suggest changes to how my section was structured, these were trialled & are now being used by other areas”*
- *“The introduction of a new rostering system in Home Care, supporting the disaggregation of Housing Repairs from the Environment Department into Communities and the improvement work that has continued within the division.”*
- *“We continuously strive to improve our service.”*
- *“Trialling a new EntitledTo programme to work with homeless applicants on their finances and support needs.”*
- *“It did not go well and whilst the idea was excellent there was a lack of buy in from others which meant the money invested was wasted and we did not get to implement a really excellent, time and money saving idea.”*
- *“I have been seconded to help with other departments to support the improvements needed in the repairs team. “*
- *“I have been involved in work groups to improve our service.”*
- *“Currently taking part in a full review of the teams processes”*
- *“I think so, but nothing ever came of it.”*

Appendix 9: Q.13 Survey Participant Responses

Question 13: Following on from Question 12 above, please provide your feedback

(Question 12: On a scale of 1 to 5, how effectively do you think change is promoted within your division? (1 – not effective at all to 5 – extremely effective))

Anonymous participant responses include:

- *“CCC is always looking to improve its services and make it a more streamlined, efficient service, which is ever changing and improving what it does, providing staff with the tools to do this.”*
- *“I believe change is implemented when necessary. There can be some resistance when discussing change regarding working environments, agile working, and digitalising processes.”*
- *“We receive emails regarding any changes within the division.”*
- *“Changes are promoted at Team level via awareness sessions allowing feedback.”*
- *“Unsure if change is promoted, however I have heard suggestions on change within the team & division.”*
- *“There are new policies and procedures being introduced on a regular basis, to improve and implement change.”*
- *“As I'm not in a permanent role, visibility of division wide issues tends to be something that happens on the periphery - I'm very focused on achieving team goals.”*
- *“We are told we will be improving but it does not seem to happen. To effect real change sometimes difficult decisions, need to be made but there seems a reluctance to make them and carry them out.”*
- *“We continuously encourage good ideas.”*
- *“There is still a fear of change, it is not always explained why we are changing”*
- *“There is an appetite to review and improve services within the division as evidenced by the introduction of new technology and revised working practices”*
- *“We do have to be flexible and adaptable to changes particularly where infectious disease is concerned as at times, it is difficult to predict what illnesses may be circulating, and we have to be open minded to changes in legislation etc.”*
- *“There is not always ongoing support from senior management team to fully implement new ideas.” “There appears to be a reluctance to take difficult decisions and so sometimes, sadly, things do not progress as they ought.”*
- *“There is a reluctance to change from some quarters of the team, as it moves people out of their comfort zone. people still like to work in silos and not collaboratively.”*

- *“Certain departments promote change whereby i see other departments very reluctant to.”*
- *“I feel it's a mixed bag where some changes have had a positive impact whilst others sow discord and lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities.”*
- *“We have very little communication from the Housing manager and feel that he leads in a very autocratic way.”*
- *“Idea of change is discussed, implementing change seems to be far quicker in certain teams than others”*
- *“Change can occur naturally over time due to staffing changes or legislative requirements. Where this is the case, change seems to occur organically and isn't seen as a step-change. Where change is introduced through (for example) a realignment then this is a managed process where the reasons are outlined, opportunities are presented to feedback and then the change is implemented”*
- *“Conflicting demands/priorities are rarely reconciled- e.g. efficiency vs transparency/accountability. People at all levels are generally resistant to change, but change is too often imposed. Some changes are made that recreate old roles/processes and this creates cynicism, and increases resistance”*
- *“I think change can often be seen as a negative thing and sometimes only initiated when things are going wrong. If there was more focus on continuous improvement and striving for excellence change might be viewed differently”*
- *“Change has been promoted by management quite frequently as the demands of the service are increasing.”*
- *“The issue is, whilst change is needed, it rarely is carried through as senior management drag their feet and never complete through to the end. We just keep going around in circles talking about it but rarely does any action complete. Middle managers not given the authority to make the changes needed despite being more than capable of doing so.”*
- *“Continuous change for improvement is discussed within team meetings and amongst staff. We are encouraged to contribute our thoughts and ideas which are acted upon.”*
- *“Restructures are big noise to start with, then disappear from sight. It is unclear, who does what in other teams, anymore. It is also unclear what other teams do, within the division.”*
- *“The way change is promoted varies throughout the year. They may be times when change is thoroughly promoted and then other times when it is not.”*
- *“I have not been working in my current role long enough to comment.”*
- *“Communication is good at the start, but we are not informed or updated further down the line to confirm if aims and outcomes have been met.”*
- *“Initially, good ideas are shared, and we are encouraged to get behind them but unfortunately, these aren't always followed through.”*
- *“Doesn't happen often or if it does then I'm not aware of it. Perhaps better communication to help understand the wider intention of the division.”*
- *“Not sure when it occurs”*

- *“We are encouraged but that's as far as it goes, it then lacks follow through of any actions.”*

Appendix 10: Q.15 Survey Participant Responses

Question 15: Following on from Question 14 above, please provide your feedback

(Question 14: On a scale of 1-5, how confident would you feel to making a suggestion for positive change within your team? 1 - not effective at all to 5 - extremely effective)

Anonymous participant responses include:

- *“My manager is always open to any suggestions to improve the service or make what we do easier and more efficient, we regularly discuss operations and how we can improve on things.”*
- *“Purely down to what I believe would be positive change, may not be how management sees it.”*
- *“My team leader would listen and absorb any suggestions before making the decision.”*
- *“Feedback is encouraged.”*
- *“Team Leader takes on suggestions however, managers tend to ignore such suggestions”*
- *“My boss encourages us to come forward with ideas.”*
- *“We routinely put forward change recommendations which are frequently accepted.”*
- *“In my team we can change, and we do as we see changes in the needs of those who need our services”*
- *“My Team Leader is always asking for any ideas to be put forward and encourages all officers and assistance to come forward with suggestions.”*
- *“We have a few members that “like the way things were” , it can put a damper on things”*
- *“I feel confident in expressing my opinions and suggestions improvements to the way services are delivered. I also feel supported to do so and that any improvements suggested will be considered and where appropriate acted upon.”*
- *“Feel confident providing feedback, not confident of change happening in a reasonable timeframe. Political and bureaucratic interference often grinds change to a halt.”*
- *“I feel that I could quite freely provide my opinion on positive change or to share ideas as I know they would be taken on board. We are not made to feel inadequate if we present an idea.”*
- *“My team and I have the same vision and goals; they all want the best for the team, and they have a flexibility and ability to change as circumstances require changes and new ways of working. They embrace new ways of working if they will make service delivery better.”*

- *"I don't anymore. i used to make suggestions but was ignored and they were dismissed with no feedback, or my ideas were taken but no praise or further input"*
- *"I feel my opinions are no longer valued."*
- *"My line manager is involved and takes everything on board"*
- *"I feel the manager has no time for myself and colleagues, and just treats us all as a number. He has dismissed or ignored suggestions in the past. Therefore, I feel very despondent about being part of this team now."*
- *"Ideas and viewpoints not always listened to"*
- *"If change is needed, it can be raised for discussion/consideration. Doesn't mean anything will happen but that should not stop any suggestions from coming forward."*
- *"See 13 for some of this. Otherwise, people are attached to their own processes etc and will not support changing them (a kind of ownership, I guess) Often people are too busy to take on board change, leading to a lack of support for proposals"*
- *"Within my small team i would feel fairly confident in making suggestions but in the wider team I would be less confident and think this might be perceived in a negative way or as a criticism."*
- *"Not very confident as I lack experience compared to my colleagues."*
- *"Very confident at suggesting change, even coming up with innovative ideas. However, too often the change doesn't transpire, feels like it's in one ear and out the other until we hit crisis point by which no planning has been achieved and change is then rushed."*
- *"My team are friendly and positive I wouldn't hesitate to make a suggestion"*
- *"Within the team, we are definitely listened to, with a great team lead."*
- *"Whilst I am comfortable within the workplace, I feel I am still learning my role and would not be fully confident to make suggestions for change."*
- *"My colleagues are very approachable and open to suggestions of change or improvements"*
- *"I'm encouraged to suggest ideas, but these aren't followed through for further scrutiny, which means nothing is taken forward to support change."*
- *"There's not always the opportunity to share ideas as team meetings are more often consumed with operational issues."*
- *"Lack of opportunity"*
- *"Never really on the agenda"*

Appendix 11: Q.17 Survey Participant Responses

Question 17: Following on from Question 16 above, please provide any feedback

(Question 16: What factors motivate you to suggest ideas for positive change within your team?)

Anonymous participant responses include:

- *"If making things easier and more effective helps the team, then we are all open to change."*
- *"I do not feel I can suggest ideas for positive change."*
- *"If I think that something being changed would be a positive action I would make the suggestion."*
- *"Send suggestions to line manager to decide if a good/not good suggestion"*
- *"No one listens"*
- *"Positive change in the local team is welcomed but none of the above can be ticked for the division or department"*
- *"I have always been very opinionated and am happy to make suggestions to my manager."*
- *"Most of my team listen and welcome change"*
- *"I work in an environment where improvement suggestions are welcomed and encouraged"*
- *"Positive our team can react and adapt to change well"*
- *"We all have a role to play in building success for the team, therefore sharing ideas is a great platform to initiate positive changes."*
- *"I know the people in my team have the right attitude to work and we have mutual trust. We know that sometimes ideas sound good but don't work in practise and so allow people to try things out and then are able to make changes if needed. There is no finger pointing or blame as the ethos in the team is supportive, positive and aiming for continuously improving the service"*
- *"I think talking about positive change happens, but less focus on making it happen."*
- *"Changes are actioned without consultation or seemingly with no consideration for the negative impact it has on personnel and the service."*
- *"Good team bond"*
- *"Front line experience and customer feedback enables me to campaign for change based on needs of the communities we serve"*
- *"Again, see previous answers. I do not feel comfortable talking to my team about change."*
- *"I do feel change is listened to, even positively received, however meeting upon meeting, discussion after discussion, years later, change rarely happens."*
- *"Within the team, we are definitely listened to, with a great team lead."*
- *"Happy to share my ideas but where??"*

- *“No real opportunity to provide ideas”*
- *“Not really provided with an opportunity”*

Appendix 12: Q.19 Survey Participant Responses

Question 19: Following on from Question 18 above, please provide any feedback

(Question 18: On a scale of 1 to 5, how well do you think positive change is implemented within your division? 1 - Poorly implemented to 5 - Very well implemented)

Anonymous participant responses include:

- *"We are continually developing and improving the way we operate and do things, so any new ideas are adopted quickly and efficiently."*
- *"It's implemented whether staff agree with it or not."*
- *"You can't keep everybody happy all the time, some people just reject change no matter if it's good or bad"*
- *"Not all change is positive"*
- *"New procedures are brought in on a regular basis to improve what we do."*
- *"We need to design our services around the customer and the service to be delivered and not around the staff or the systems we have"*
- *"We are all happy to bring in change and new ideas."*
- *"Needs more communication"*
- *"Change initiatives are encouraged and supported. Larger change projects have project teams with resources allocated to them to deliver change successfully."*
- *"Any positive changes are implemented well as it is always to the benefit of the team and all opinions are considered and we are given the opportunity to collectively agree."*
- *"We are too disjointed - this sometimes means the necessary people who will be affected by the changes are not involved at an early enough stage. It does appear that some people feel threatened with change, that it might devalue their position, and so they do not enter into the change with the best attitude. If a manager feels this way then it is likely that feeling will be passed down to their team meaning the change cannot be made in the most efficient way as you do need buy-in from everyone to fully and efficiently implement change."*
- *"We have gone through a lot of change recently, the way it is explained to staff can be quite negative which then results in negative attitudes from staff due to the way it has been filtered down."*
- *"There seems little rationale for some of the changes"*
- *"As a team, I feel we have no real say in how it works. We are just made to feel that we have to accept everything that is said. There is no democracy whatsoever."*
- *"Positive changes take a long time to come to fruition"*

- *“Depends on what the positive change is. Sometimes, existing structures present a barrier to change taking place as one Team's priorities are not always the same as another's.”*
- *“Change is often planned poorly and implemented slowly as a result.”*
- *“I think there is often a "knee-jerk" reaction to events and change is initiated but not often followed through to implementation.”*
- *“Seniors and Team Leads have a positive approach to change.”*
- *“Some changes are implemented positively, however more structural/role changes are not. WE just keep going around in circles, talking but no actions are implemented.”*
- *“Poor divisional communication. It is still unclear, who does what in other teams. It is also unclear what other teams do, within the division.”*
- *“Ideas for positive change are provided; however, it can take a long time before changes are actually implemented.”*
- *“As previously stated, I have not been doing the job long enough to comment.”*
- *“Concepts are great but the follow through and momentum isn't always matched. Ideas then tend to fizzle out and get raised on multiple occasions over the years.”*
- *“Lack of communication. I only get to hear about it when its already implemented and from those in other teams.”*
- *“I'm sure very well.”*

Appendix 13: Q.20 Survey Participant Responses

Question 20: Following on from Question 19 above, please provide any feedback

(Question 19: On a scale of 1 to 5, how often do you think change initiatives lead to meaningful improvements in your work? 1 - Never to 5 - Always)

Anonymous participant responses include:

- *“Not everything we change works and as we are continually evaluating the changes we make, not every idea work out, sometimes these have to be amended.”*
- *“Change does not always mean improvement.”*
- *“I am not aware of any positive changes”*
- *“Our tenants are now updated annually and also consulted on any changes that may affect them.”*
- *“Some changes can end up working but so many are just so poorly implemented - the people managing projects seem to be too removed from those delivering the service they don't understand what is needed. Also there seems to be a lack of project management skills in those in charge.”*
- *“We evaluate how changes are going to impact our service before bringing them in, so they are most likely to succeed.”*
- *“Most of the time, but sometimes it does feel like we are going round in circles and going back to how things were before”*
- *“The change initiatives introduced have been successful in delivering improvements to services which has improved processes for staff and delivered improved services for the public”*
- *“Positive change is agreed by consensus of the team so we are all motivated to make the improvements since more often than not we are involved in decision making.”*
- *“I'd really like to be able to score higher than this but the changes I've seen do not allow me to award a higher mark. Some changes are excellent but never fully implemented or embraced and sometimes just never properly explained. Sometimes the changes made do not lead to the improvement promised due to the exclusion of the people who do the front-line work not being fully consulted and allowed to input on the change process.”*
- *“Change initiatives have led to less efficient working practices, increased carbon footprint, staff dissatisfaction and an erosion of motivation/moral”*
- *“Continuity serves as much importance as change when providing the best customer experience. Changes are often 'knee jerk' reactions that haven't been considered properly. Not enough focus on the impact change can have on staff, and using the phrase "business need" without any rational or supporting evidence doesn't lead to staff buy in”*

- *“Difficult to say specifically in my division, due to length of time I have been hear, but initiatives seem to peter out, and change I have observed is, from my perspective, as often negative as positive”*
- *“I think there is often a "knee-jerk" reaction to events and change is initiated but not often followed through to implementation. This means that the impact is lost”*
- *“Sometimes change initiatives lead to meaningful improvements. However, change in procedures based on cuts in funding and adapting to staff sickness etc. makes work more difficult when the service goals remain the same.”*
- *“Things within my control which can be implemented are normally executed well and improvements are seen. But the bigger changes needed which I do not have control over are continuously talked about but again not implemented.”*
- *“Unable to comment, as we don't know what other teams do.”*
- *“As previously stated, I have not been doing the job long enough to comment.”*
- *“Hard to tell really as I don't think outcomes are measured which means its more hear say rather than have having tangible evidence.”*
- *“I think some do and that positive change benefits those locally within teams as opposed to adopting across all service areas.”*
- *“Perhaps they do but if we as staff were more involved, I'm sure we could deliver much better outcomes.”*
- *“Perhaps there are pockets of good changes in the division but not sure where”*
- *“Perhaps in areas where change has taken place but there are no benefits felt across all service areas.”*

Appendix 14: Q.23 Survey Participant Responses

Question 23: Following on from Question 22 above, please provide any feedback

(Question 22: Do you feel your team has the right tools to help you implement change?)

Anonymous participant responses include:

- *“Our management has access to many tools and if we don't have something we need, then we are able to find what we need when we need it.”*
- *“Team Leader is vocal and at the forefront of anything that is going on within the teams.”*
- *“Unsure if other team members are given the right tools.”*
- *“Change is more about people & process rather than tools”*
- *“I have regular meetings and appraisals with my manager, where I can express my thoughts and ideas, which can then be considered and brought in, if appropriate.”*
- *“We don't enjoy the best software systems but overall we have what we need to be effective and deliver value”*
- *“The team I am in does as we all want the same outcome and work well as a team”*
- *“Need more training in planning skills and understanding change”*
- *“Capacity is the challenge where we have more work than we can manage within a small team. We have a vacant post within the team that has not been filled and this has reduced the team's ability to take on more projects. As for the skills and staffing within the team this is excellent.”*
- *“Funding and lengthy processes hold it back”*
- *“System constraints, long standing staffing issues. Team is willing, however considerable constraints remain in place”*
- *“Yes I would agree that the team has the correct tools to help us implement change.”*
- *“They are fully informed and the ethos in the team allows everyone to have a say - with no finger pointing. This is always easier in a smaller group but in any group the ethos comes from the top and if people think there are hidden agendas it makes it harder to implement change. Past experience makes it harder to change the ethos and convince people things are different now - because we just cannot see that they really are.”*
- *“Yes, but need to get buy in often across teams/services”*
- *“Need more processes in place as a department so change is implemented effectively and consistency across the board.”*
- *“Further training for staff required”*
- *“Change is implemented in an authoritarian manner with little justification or consultation.”*

- *“Requires legal intervention”*
- *“At present the demand is high and resources low, staff are working over their capacity, and until additional resources are given change shouldn't be promoted as it will be poorly implemented”*
- *“Software is poor and outdated. New software does not fill me with confidence, and much software used/provided to public service is poor”*
- *“I think there are barriers to change which prevent change. The governance structure can be cumbersome in trying to effect change at a strategic level”*
- *“Staffing, funding, influx of presentations, lack of properties and temporary accommodation are barriers.”*
- *“Either more authority given to middle managers is needed as they often understand the staff and the operational element better to make the changes. Or senior managers need to start agreeing or allowing implementation or else all ever happens is talking which is all well and good If it gets you to the end goal but more often than not, we talk, agree what needs to happen then months go by, talk again etc”*
- *“A new computer system is being developed which I feel will provide better tools to implement change.”*
- *“As previously stated, I have not been doing the job long enough to comment.”*
- *“Data helps drive change to support informed decisions, there is a lack of data, review and scrutiny of process to help implement change.”*
- *“Sometimes. It's not always the tools, but the management approach that will deliver.”*
- *“Perhaps more performance related tools to help measure and track changes. Would be great to know what's working well and what isn't working so well.”*

Appendix 15: Q.25 Survey Participant Responses

Question 25: Following on from Question 24 above, please provide any feedback

(Question 24: Do you feel there is data available to help track the impact of change?)

Anonymous participant responses include:

- *"We have several systems that track out performance and this helps guide service improvement and best practice."*
- *"Where would you look to find data that tracks the impact of any change?"*
- *"I don't believe as a team we have any way of tracking the impact of change"*
- *"Yes, we have several computer systems that track the improvements and performance of new procedures."*
- *"We know the limitations of the data available and don't just allow ourselves to be blinded by the easily measurable things"*
- *"Our computer systems provide us with the data we need."*
- *"Most data only reflects what can be reduced to numbers - it only tends to show things that can be measured - not morale"*
- *"I think that this is an area of improvement where measures to monitor and report on the return on investment and to track the benefits of change need to be considered and put in place at the start of the project"*
- *"Yes - google forms etc"*
- *"We need to ensure we collect the data that are relevant rather than just collecting the data that are easy. Care needs to be taken that decisions are made on robust data."*
- *"I believe there is systems to do this, if we had access to it"*
- *"Certain functions are measured, and the data should therefore be available"*
- *"Changes are so fast and often, there is little evidence of evaluation made available"*
- *"Could be a yes or a no, as this will depend on what the change is and what you are hoping to measure. It's easy to measure some change e.g. reduction in complaints as a result of the change, but difficult to measure other impacts e.g. staff wellbeing as these are softer impacts which are less easy to capture and can take time to bed in."*
- *"Depends- what data is collected seems to vary, and how it is used varies (and the choice of what data to collect, and what it means, is too often poor)"*
- *"We ned to devise the data recording and measuring systems to track the change we want to see. It's sometimes difficult to know what will be needed until after the fact"*
- *"Statistics can be compared, however I'm unsure how closely the impacts of changes are tracked."*

- *“We desperately need the new system in our service so that performance can be managed properly and reports from the operational tasks looked at to shape future service.”*
- *“We have access to Power BI - data produced from Council Tax division.”*
- *“Hit and miss - more effort needs to go into defining the right questions before capturing data and maintaining the same questions is vital to be able to track data.”*
- *“This tends to be hear say. Cross collaborative systems are key to measuring tangible change which we are a way off yet. Its great there are success stories locally but to make change we must share the knowledge, good practices and the data.”*

Appendix 16: Q.27 Survey Participant Responses

Question 27: Following on from Question 26 above, please provide any feedback

(Question 26: What discourages or stops you from putting forward your ideas for positive change? Please select one or more statements that best describes you)

Anonymous participant responses include:

- *"I don't feel that there are any obstacles, my team is always open to good/any ideas."*
- *"Managers make the decisions, it doesn't matter what staff say the decisions are already made. The staff are asked and consulted just as a ticky box exercise."*
- *"Confidence in myself"*
- *"I am always encouraged to share ideas, good or not so good, they are always discussed and explored."*
- *"I've witnessed capture sessions where processes and issues at fault have been well identified and analysed but the follow up hasn't been as sharply progressed and outcomes shared. "*
- *"In the division there appears to be a willingness to listen but a reluctance to act and move forward and then implement better working practices. If you have been told more than a couple of times that an idea is excellent and it will be taken forward and nothing happens you don't bother to offer suggestions."*
- *"My Team Leader has an open door policy, where ideas and procedures can be discussed and improved upon at any time."*
- *"Lack of support to investigate or implement changes"*
- *"Sometimes ideas are suggested that are not followed through and this can be a negative. It is important to explain why initiatives are not taking things forward. Good communication is important to maintain staff morale."*
- *"I do not feel discouraged to share my thoughts as I feel that our thoughts and ideas are always taken on board."*
- *"If you want to know about the team I work in - there are no issues about speaking up. If you would like to know about the suggestions in the divisional or departmental setting it is somewhat different - there is a lack of follow up on ideas and an unwillingness to change longstanding practices."*
- *"Agree with all of the above"*
- *"There are too many teams/divisions providing the Housing Service with conflicting drivers for them to be implemented."*
- *"Ideas aren't often followed up. Managers have an idea/ make a reaction and won't deviate from their personal stance and listen to the team at operational level"*

- *"I think there is a mis-match in values between myself and other members of the wider team. I feel that there is a "Carmarthenshire" way that is perceived as right and people are unwilling to question it"*
- *"I don't believe that everyone has an unwillingness to move away from longstanding practices as some people are welcoming to change."*
- *"I think higher managers are too often interested in the fancy stuff. The things that make the council look good when many other divisions/service areas are left to just exist. It's normally when we are at crisis point or when there are risks, emphasis is then put on areas of work. There is normally poor planning/contingencies in place."*
- *"I do not feel discouraged"*
- *"We don't know what's already implemented, so don't feel confident to suggest change"*
- *"As previously mentioned, team meetings are more operational spaces. Perhaps protected time once a month for sharing ideas would be beneficial as these meetings will be more focused and meaningful."*
- *"How and where can we share ideas?"*

Appendix 17: Q.29 Survey Participant Responses

Question 29: Following on from Question 28 above, please provide any feedback

(Question 28: What factors do you think inhibit continuous service improvement? Please select one or more statements that best describes you)

Anonymous participant responses include:

- *"Sometimes good ideas require additional staff, which is more difficult to bring into the service and takes a bit of time."*
- *"Takes longer to get anything sorted out to do with our databases etc as we now have to put a request online. Change seems to be less actual communication with people (within CCC) and more online."*
- *"All of the above are things that prevent change but mostly longstanding employees who are very resistant to change"*
- *"Lack of capacity in our team struggling with team as not enough staff. Department in a mess cannot keep staff"*
- *"There is not always enough money in our budgets to implement new ideas."*
- *"The skills of the staff being asked to implement new ways of working and people being reluctant to change. Some people appear territorial about their area and reluctant to give up what they see as within their control. Lack of strong and imaginative leadership and a reluctance to listen to people when those views differ from their own."*
- *"We need to keep up with the best IT systems for our service and ensure they are fit for purpose."*
- *"We often put in place short term solutions - but they end up as long term fixes."*
- *"One example is PP using inf@work, they were set up on app & Council file plan as a quick fix, 5+ years they are still on CFP / sharepoint"*
- *"I think that culture plays a large part in inhibiting change within the workplace with a lack of support from above and the attitude that 'this is the way we have always done things here!'"*
- *"Currently we are not faced with inhibiting factors."*
- *"All the above contribute but quite often the people with the power to implement will cite lack of money but actually it is far more complex than that."*
- *"One team's improvement or change often leads to another team being adversely affected."*
- *"Lack of investment in properties and staff mean that we are maintaining and not improving. The right resources aren't allocated to the actual critical areas"*
- *"Existing Team structures could also be a barrier to change. Also, everyone is incredibly busy doing 'the day job' and not enough time is set aside to implement change"*
- *"In my many years' experience, it's clear where there are poor performing staff/managers and even poor delivery of service. Although in areas we may*

lack resources, more often than not it is down to the wrong people in jobs and poor management. There are also many individuals not carrying out their role as per contractual obligations, yet senior management allow them to continue breaching policies/procedures yet still securely working and gaining their pay award. If we were in the private sector, many would not be still here.”

- *“As previously stated, I have not been doing the job long enough to comment.”*

Appendix 18: Q.32 Survey Participant Responses

Question 32: Following on from Question 31 above, please provide any feedback

(Question 31: Which types of resources would be most valuable in supporting your development of ideas and projects? Please select one or more statements that best describes you)

Anonymous participant responses include:

- *“This would be a good idea, as some staff members may prefer to make suggestions anonymously.”*
- *“There should be a way of submitting ideas and tracking them to see if they are being looked at and any actions taken.”*
- *“It is very helpful to discuss ideas in groups to get instant feedback and also expand on ideas.”*
- *“There needs to be a fundamental change in the ethos of the organisation of the division to effect any meaningful change going forward. People need proper feedback on what has happened to their idea and why it is not taken up or why it was started but never properly implemented.”*
- *“We need the ability to share experiences, advice, guidance and any tools that would help make the delivering of change initiatives more successful”*
- *“Fortunately, we get sufficient opportunity to collaborate and share ideas in focus groups and this is key to the success of our team.”*
- *“There are a number of excellent ways to drive improvement but unless it has long-term support from senior management it is doomed to fail. So, beware of setting up anything new now unless you have full guarantees that it will continue and not just fizzle out in a matter of months (sometimes these things fizzle out much quicker!)”*
- *“All the above would be helpful.”*
- *“Consultation and discussion would be far better than a single person making a decision that has a far-reaching impact on staff and customers. Operational staff need to be seen as experts in their fields and respected as drivers for change. More autonomy is needed and clear explanation of a decision-making process given, in 2024 Managers should know better than to enforce an idea without any consultation and discussion with staff”*
- *“Appreciate the difficulties involved, as budget constraints, accountability, transparency and security issues tend to push one way, but too often changes proposed by management feel like a negative change. Perhaps sometimes, change could make our work easier, more efficient and better for staff and clients/tenants?”*
- *“I think a full review/ restructure is needed. I think it should be conducted by someone outside of the authority who is independent to ensure an impartial and*

fair review. I think any information given by officer's managers should at the least be considered and acted on where there are clear breaches to policy/procedures."

Appendix 19: Q.34 Survey Participant Responses

Question 34: What would make it easier for you to share your experiences, successes, or lessons learned with other teams?

Anonymous participant responses include:

- *“More stories in the staff newsletter.”*
- *“Updates with/from other Teams would be helpful.”*
- *“Meetings with staff in the same division at the same level/same job role to discuss changes”*
- *“Staff conferences/Newsletters/Intranet”*
- *“That wouldn't be necessary in an environment that had embraced a continuous improvement culture but could be a valid stepping stone on the journey to becoming one.”*
- *“This will vary for different teams depending on what service is offered. While it is nice to hear about success stories in other teams it is not always relevant to what your own team does and so sending out newsletters etc just tend to fizzle out or people don't read them. To do this properly needs some proper thought around the best way for each team and then how to promote good practice. The ethos of an organisation is key to ensure this is done consistently going forward.”*
- *“By working in collaboration with other teams and find out what would help them with their part of the processes.”*
- *“Skills section as part of our training record”*
- *“A forum or electronic noticeboard where lessons learnt, and success stories can be shared. Also, where e staff leading projects can link with other officers who have delivered change initiatives successfully and can help provide advice and guidance.”*
- *“We have regular opportunities, my team leaders are open to suggestions and not afraid to try things.”*
- *“Opportunities such as meetings/ Teams dedicated to this topic, where we could all share/brainstorm ideas.”*
- *“This needs a lot of care - how many people just delete those 'newsletters'? They often don't contain much news, they refer to people we don't know and are unlikely to work with. It is encouraging to know of positive things happening within a service but how you let people know - again if something gets set up to do this it needs to keep going and not fizzle out after a couple of sessions / events/ publications”*
- *“Having a meeting or platform to do so.”*
- *“Regular discussions, focus groups, engagement events”*
- *“A more generic approach to service provision.”*

- *“If they were listened to in a structured way, and lessons learned/changes made as a result. Not lip service”*
- *“Culture change - I think there is a blame culture and a perception that failure is bad”*
- *“More regular meetings within the team.”*
- *“When change actually happens it is only then this can be done.”*
- *“Regularly meeting up with the wider team - which we do.”*
- *“An anonymous suggestion box”*
- *“Newsletters, forums, etc”*
- *“Protected time in team meetings that are collectively captured across the division and fed into SMT for a full airing and discussion.”*
- *“Designated time to share ideas”*

Appendix 20: Q.35 Survey Participant Responses

Question 35: Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences with change in the Housing division?

Anonymous participant responses include:

- “No.”
- *“There have been many changes within the Housing and Public Protection division over the years and the changes were not always for the better. There seems to be more staff but less done using the processes now in place for many job roles. It may be a good idea to look at what worked years ago and use the best practices from then with the best practices used now to get the best outcome for the present and future. Unfortunately, as I commented previously, asking the staff for their opinion when considering any changes is purely a tick box exercise so that it can be said that staff were consulted, it doesn't mean that they were listened to!”*
- *“We need stronger Managers and Line Managers that care”*
- *“Very helpful survey.”*
- *“As a front-line officer not in a permanent role, I think one can be forgiven for not focusing on bigger picture thinking and concentrating on doing the immediate tasks well. That said I don't know how many other people in the division are in a similar position but if these circumstances are common the issue in and of itself could be a barrier to effective change. I would be very supportive of quarterly gatherings where the Head of Service states what the SMART objectives are for the coming quarter and reviews the previous quarter's performance, with all relevant managers and staff in attendance, together with a manager representing the support departments who sometimes appear to be doing their own thing rather than seamlessly fitting into our processes.”*
- *“The people are generally really nice but unfortunately some of them are also incompetent”*
- *“More regular surveys to feedback these important change related procedures and policies”*
- *“A "looking for interest" in projects board - like vacancies, with a brief outline of the project, skills required & time per week / month to be part of project”*
- *“Yes the culture for and appetite for change comes from the top and this needs to be fostered across the whole organisation for continuous improvement to thrive and become the norm”*
- *“The willingness is there, the stumbling block is finance, procedure, policy and cabinet appetite”*
- *“My experiences have been positive.”*
- *“Organisational Ethos: This can only be changed from the top down and having seen a couple of issues that are important to operational staff dismissed out of hand by a Director I feel it is going to be difficult to change. I applaud the senior*

managers who shadow staff to see what it is like on the front line but after seeing this the issues noted do need to be addressed in a longer term way and a plan implemented and carried out in full - not just allowed to be kicked into the long grass after a few weeks have passed as the manager now has a new crisis to deal with"

- *"Cultural Shift: There are some who are tired of things never really changing - we reorganise but it often seems we progress slowly, and the disruption involved in the changes is dragged out interminably and demoralises people. Difficult Decision: There are a lot of really important changes that need to be made but I have concerns that the difficult decisions will be made to bring this change about. This is not a nice part of any manager's role, but it is a part and unless they happen nothing is really going to change."*
- *"Unless these things can be addressed, and the changes begin we will not be able to effect the changes that everyone would like to see. The tight financial situation mean it is imperative that changes are made."*
- *"I believe that the division has diverse and talented people who could bring about better services. i think there are a few who are not helpful or wanting to change and that needs to be addressed. i feel that housing needs to focus on being a landlord and making sure homes are safe, affordable and comfortable for our tenants."*
- *"Change is invariably implemented to address a particular concern or function without consideration for the negative impact it may have on other teams within the division. A more considered approach is needed to ensure any positive change doesn't cause a negative impact on other parts of the service"*
- *"Poor management of change at senior level. No discussion, forward planning, consideration for impact of change or contingency planning. Widescale change following a personal reaction to an isolated incident, with no evidential basis to change suggested. Processes should be followed, and change should be well structured and implemented if it is to succeed"*
- *"Change seems to imply worse conditions for staff. Most changes seem to involve more work (esp. admin) and more and closer scrutiny of staff work etc. This is negative from my perspective, so often, I'm glad something doesn't change! I don't want what too often feels like surveillance at work"*
- *"Need to understand WHY things may need to change. What is the PURPOSE? Our focus should drive our change, so we need to be really clear on what the vision and purpose of the Division is and work and change to implement this."*
- *"Whilst housing is an excellent placement of work, with many opportunities. The long-standing culture within housing is where change becomes difficult. We seem to re-structure every few years but rarely does the re-structure/new teams get reviewed. Then few years later when sections struggle it starts again. I think until someone independent comes in to look at it properly and have the conversations with different people, on the ground all the way up and actually spend time looking at current teams and working practices, it's difficult for any existing division to have a meaningful change. We never seem to review changes either which for me is key to the success of any new change."*
- *"As previously stated, I have not been doing the job long enough to comment."*

- *“It's a pleasure to work here and I'm sure there will be actions as a result of this survey that will hopefully be followed through.”*

Appendix 21: One-to-One Invites

Participant A

Attendee responses: 1 accepted, 0 tentatively accepted, 0 declined.

Send Update	Title	1:2:1 Session - Participant A (Work-based Research 1815692)		
	Required	Participant A		
	Optional			
	Start time	Tue 31/12/2024	11:00	☐ All day ☐ Time zones
	End time	Tue 31/12/2024	11:45	Make Recurring
	Location	Microsoft Teams Meeting Room Finder		

Good morning Participant A,

I am sending this email as a request for you to join a 1:2:1 session to further understand the relationship between promoting and implementing change, and the obstacles preventing change taking place within the Housing division.

The purpose of this session is to gather data in order to:

- Identify potential new practices, ideas, and operational methods emerging from staff across various service areas.
- Highlight the key factors that hinder positive change and examining the reasons behind such resistance.

The key aims are to accomplish the following learning outcomes:

- Understand barriers to change
- Enhanced communication and engagement approaches
- Informed change management approaches
- Support for continuous improvement
- Strengthened organisational culture

A series of recommendations will be developed to support future positive change initiatives.

This session will last around 45mins.

Participating in this 1:2:1 session is completely voluntary and all responses will be anonymised. The interview will be conducted on my behalf by a member of the Business Support Unit to further protect your anonymity and allow for free and open discussion.

The meeting will be supported by Sarah Harris, Business Support Administrator who's purpose will be to transcribe notes. These notes will be anonymously incorporated into the work-based research study and then deleted.

Please confirm your availability to attend the 1:2:1 session

Many Thanks,

Cyngor Sir Gâr | Carmarthenshire County Council

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For organisers: [Meeting options](#)



Cyngor Sir Gâr | Carmarthenshire County Council

Participant B

Attendee responses: 1 accepted, 0 tentatively accepted, 0 declined.

Send Update	Title	1:2:1 Session - Participant B (Work-based Research 1815692)		
	Required	Participant B		
	Optional			
	Start time	Tue 31/12/2024 14:00	☐ All day	☐ Time zones
	End time	Tue 31/12/2024 14:45	Make Recurring	
	Location	Microsoft Teams Meeting Room Finder		

Good morning Participant B,

I am sending this email as a request for you to join a 1:2:1 session to further understand the relationship between promoting and implementing change, and the obstacles preventing change taking place within the Housing division.

The purpose of this session is to gather data [in order to](#):

- Identify potential new practices, ideas, and operational methods emerging from staff across various service areas.
- Highlight the key factors that hinder positive change and examining the reasons behind such resistance.

The key aims are to accomplish the following learning outcomes:

- Understand barriers to change
- Enhanced communication and engagement approaches
- Informed change management approaches
- Support for continuous improvement
- Strengthened organisational culture

A series of recommendations will be developed to support future positive change initiatives.

This session will last around 45mins.

Participating in this 1:2:1 session is completely [voluntary](#) and all responses will be anonymised. The interview will be conducted on my behalf by a member of the Business Support Unit to further protect your anonymity and allow for free and open discussion.

The meeting will be supported by Sarah Harris, Business Support Administrator [who's](#) purpose will be to transcribe notes. These notes will be anonymously incorporated into the work-based research study and then deleted.

Please confirm your availability to attend the 1:2:1 session

Many Thanks,

Cyngor Sir Gâr | Carmarthenshire County Council

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Cyngor Sir Gâr | Carmarthenshire County Council

Appendix 22: One-to-One Transcript 1& 2

Participant A

Research Methods: Interview and Focus Groups

The factors that promote and inhibit staff from suggesting ideas for positive change, and thus innovation, within the Housing division.

Introduction

I am conducting research to better understand innovation within the Housing and Public Protection division. Your insights will help us explore various aspects of how staff interact with their roles, contribute to improvement efforts, and navigate challenges in their work environment.

This interview will cover topics such as your experiences with workplace processes, your involvement in change initiatives, and how ideas are shared within your team. Your responses will be kept confidential and will only be used for research purposes.

This session should take between 40-50 minutes, and it would be really helpful for my research for you to share as many of your thoughts and experiences as you can. If at any point you feel uncomfortable with a question, you are welcome to skip it. Your candid feedback is greatly appreciated.

Participant A: *Although I don't offer any ideas but for someone who has an excellent work ethic, I feel that we need make sure changes are made to support ourselves and the customer. I feel if I had a bit more confidence to offer ideas, that would encourage me to actively participate.*

We are pretty much the last people to hear about any changes and yet we are referred to as the backbone of the division. Any changes massively impact the team I'm in and yet the expectation is that we will just change with no communication to align with the work that we support. Once we hear through the grapevine, there is a knee jerk reaction to scramble to communicate and take us along the journey (after the fact).

Most of the time changes take place without any knowledge or input, which is a shame as I feel the team have a lot to contribute to help refine changes to improve better outcomes.

I find that if you do something wrong, we find out about it but if something is done right, we don't get to hear about it. So, any changes to processes that I effectively implement and follow, I have no way of knowing if there is any improvement within the process as there is no constructive feedback. It seems that the only monitoring that goes on is when mistakes are done. On the flip side, if we also monitor what's working well, then this can help further refine processes to make them even more effective and also share good practices within other teams.

I feel working in a larger team, our thoughts, ideas and perhaps overall our voices get lost and unheard. I think working in a smaller team allows for a more robust relationship where we work harder to maintain morale as we are regularly in each other's company. I feel there is no such thing as a silly question but what may hold me back is my own confidence.

It's the person who shouts the loudest that seems to always gets heard. There are opportunities to attend people management sessions, but these are primarily based on how y rate your division. At the end of the day, its just a number with no context. I did take the opportunity to complete the question for Nic's research work and I feel that she wanted to get the best out of staff especially the limited time we all have. I really do hope that whatever is recognised during this exercise, something meaningful comes out as a result. This opportunity offers more than just a rating number but provides what actually going happening on the ground. I'm pretty sure there are a couple of golden threads that come out of this

Feedback mechanisms would be encouraged by all, with a safe environment in which to share those experiences, feedback, i.e. open to constructive challenge.

Have you ever been involved in any so called 'continuous improvement' or positive change more generally in this division? If so, could you share more about your role in these initiatives?

Participant A: *I have been here long enough and seen so many changes, where as some for the better and some for the worse. Things tend to go full circle and that usually means that what we had worked but we didn't work hard enough to keep on top of the good work as well as join up with other teams, etc. We seem to create our own gaps where things fall into a black hole and that's when there is a complete overhaul when sometimes by targeting the gap and closing would suffice.*

I have been here years and have seen how the division has changed which seems to be on a regular basis. Some change doesn't mean it's for the better and that's why we revert back to old practices. If we had properly monitored previous practices and processes then larger ineffective changes wouldn't have been needed. It's all about refining what's in place not creating new!

Participant B

Research Methods: Interview and Focus Groups

The factors that promote and inhibit staff from suggesting ideas for positive change, and thus innovation, within the Housing division.

Introduction

I am conducting research to better understand innovation within the Housing and Public Protection division. Your insights will help us explore various aspects of how staff interact with their roles, contribute to improvement efforts, and navigate challenges in their work environment.

This interview will cover topics such as your experiences with workplace processes, your involvement in change initiatives, and how ideas are shared within your team. Your responses will be kept confidential and will only be used for research purposes.

This session should take between 40-50 minutes, and it would be really helpful for my research for you to share as many of your thoughts and experiences as you can. If at any point you feel uncomfortable with a question, you are welcome to skip it. Your candid feedback is greatly appreciated.

Can you provide any specific examples of how change is encouraged (or not) in your team?

Participant B: *I will be perfectly honest, I focus mainly on my own role and responsibilities. I trust that everyone else in the division is being heard and good ideas are being implemented but for my role, I focus on what is important to be achieving my objectives.*

It's difficult to explain, I will sit with my line manager to discuss the idea, he will analysis the idea and impact together with me to see how it will impact what we do. At the end of the process, if he feels it is something that is worth implementing then we will. Sometimes when we explore an idea in depth, it turns out it will create more problems than it will resolve. I may think it will work, but the longer reaching impact may not be beneficial to the service or customer. I do feel I am being heard as there is no such thing as a silly question, everything is explored and never automatically dismissed.

Knowing that my manager is always open to my suggestions and ideas no matter what. I am never made to feel uncomfortable. We tend to bounce ideas between us just generally results in something that is workable which we then share within the wider team for feedback to make sure everyone is included and owns the outcome.

My manager is very enthusiastic and is always keen to explore the ideas further with me.

I believe the system we have in place within the team promoting an open-door policy works well.

My manager is keen in supporting continuous improvement and is best placed knowing the team's vision to bring about any change as they are aware over any other strategic movements in the team, division and department.

It's easier to keep abreast of change within my team as it is relatively small and compact. I would imagine it is much easier to effectively communicate and engage within a smaller team than on a wider divisional basis. I can't comment on meaningful improvements at a divisional level other than high-level good news stories that are circulated, but as for the immediate team, changes mean improvement to both staff and customers.

Have you ever been involved in any so called 'continuous improvement' or positive change more generally in this division? If so, could you share more about your role in these initiatives?

Participant B: *Yes, I assume so. We regularly have meetings and appraisals to go through ideas and processes to see where we can improve out existing practices. Sometimes this done on a monthly basis, half yearly and/or when we feel something needs to be reviewed. This can be initiated by both sides, either myself or my manager.*

I think budgets do not reflect the changes and improvements needed. I also feel that there are lots of changes within the workforce and its hard to keep track of who has moved where and who to contact. Yes, definitely in relation to finances and workloads. Yes, culture plays in big part in making change happen. Lots of us have been here a long time and have seen many things go full circle.

I'm in a small team where changes happen on a regular basis because of legislative changes, funding opportunities, so I like to think that the team is constantly adapting and innovating to keep up with the pace of change.

In terms of best practice, if all managers had a similar leadership style as my manager then that would empower staff to come forward. This involves collectively creating and reviewing pros and cons of an idea which leads to the best conclusion where management and staff collectively decide on the outcome.

Appendix 23: Focus Group Invite

Attendee responses: 2 accepted, 0 tentatively accepted, 0 declined.

Green Category

Send Update

Title

Focus Group Session - Participant A-D (Work-based Research 1815692)

Meeting Insights

Required

Participant A; Participant B; Participant C; Participant D

Optional

Start time

Mon 06/01/2025 13:30

☐ All day ☐ Time zones

End time

Mon 06/01/2025 14:30

[Make Recurring](#)

Location

Microsoft Teams Meeting

Room Finder

Good afternoon all (Participant A, B, C and D),

I am sending this email as a request for you to join a focus session to further understand the relationship between promoting and implementing change, and the obstacles preventing change taking place within the Housing division.

The purpose of this session is to gather data in order to:

- Identify potential new practices, ideas, and operational methods emerging from staff across various service areas.
- Highlight the key factors that hinder positive change and examining the reasons behind such resistance.

The key aims are to accomplish the following learning outcomes:

- Understand barriers to change
- Enhanced communication and engagement approaches
- Informed change management approaches
- Support for continuous improvement
- Strengthened organisational culture

A series of recommendations will be developed to support future positive change initiatives.

This session will last around 50 - 60mins.

Participating in this focus session is completely voluntary and all responses will be anonymised. The interview will be conducted on my behalf by a member of the Business Support Unit to further protect your anonymity and allow for free and open discussion.

The meeting will be supported by Sarah Harris, Business Support Administrator whose purpose will be to transcribe notes. These notes will be anonymously incorporated into the work-based research study and then deleted.

Please confirm your availability to attend the focus session

Many Thanks,

~~Cyngor Sir Gâr~~ | Carmarthenshire County Council

Microsoft Teams [Need help?](#)

[Join the meeting now](#)

For organisers: [Meeting options](#)



~~Cyngor Sir Gâr~~ | Carmarthenshire County Council

Appendix 24: Focus Group Transcript

What could make the promotion of change more effective?

Participant A: *Communication is key but only relevant communication as providing too much could be cause for unnecessary worry. I also think that face to face communication should take place to set the scene and provide assurances, this then followed by standard communication methods like emails, etc. I think face to face shows more respect for staff and will help them come on the journey.*

I also feel we need to be involved, as opposed to it happening to us. I am up for change but please just include me, that part of the process is free!

Participant D: *I think for me, it's about following through on an idea. This will show real commitment and if it proves to work then great but if it doesn't, then it's a positive failure – at least we can say we tried even if it's just a pilot. I also think that having the Head of Service party to discussions around ideas and promoting them at SMT level really shows a willingness. At the moment I feel that we engage as on the ground staff but the buck stops at Manager level. The idea just sits there and when the opportunity arises, we are often asked why didn't why suggest it when in actual fact we already did.*

When it comes to sharing ideas wider, my line manager will escalate and always provide feedback. I don't believe there are any other opportunities for me to go wider as there are no avenues to support.

Participant B: *I find that if there was a lot more transparent communication from the top as well as two-ways, then it would be much more effective. I also think that having one system that captures all data would make life easier. All levels of staff including managers (Captains need to steer the ship) need to have the relevant skillset and training to ensure all work is covered and signing from the same hymn sheet.*

How do you think the Housing division could better foster a culture of innovation and positive change?

Participant A: *Some think they are still in the stone age, doing what they have always done. Whilst most of us are keeping pace with change, there are lots that through existing culture are holding us back which can cause rifts within the team. If management would address these festering issues then there will be equality and fairness within the team. This needs to be driven from the top and monitored.*

Participant C: *I feel as an employee of Carmarthenshire County Council, I have a duty to continuously get involved in service improvement, even if its attending meetings to help support actionable outcomes or complete a survey, etc, I like to think that my day-to-day contributions even to our customers are helping positive change.*

Participant B: *Managers need to be inclusive, present and fair and not engage as though it's a tick box exercise.*

Participant C: *Why can't we widen this across other divisions and departments. I am sure everyone is asking the same question so if there was a more strategic platform, could we not use there to support continuous service improvement. Also, we have a TIC team, can't we proactively call on the services of the team to proactively support rather than wait until we are at crisis point where they are instructed by the powers at be to intervene when then all staff emotionally heightened and on the defence.*

Participant D: *I completely agree with Participant C. Also, we need to think in a more digital way, we need the skills to keep up in the world of tech and data.*

Appendix 25: Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental (PESTLE) Analysis

P	Political	• The Housing Division's performance is closely aligned with the community's broader goals, assessed against Well-being Objectives (WBOs) and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), ensuring that its efforts compliment UK and Welsh regulations and priorities. • The division plays an integral role in the community's well-being, providing vital housing and support services to tenants, residents, service users, and businesses across the county. This alignment with government initiatives ensures a shared vision for sustainable community development. • Policy changes and political support at local, regional, and national levels can significantly influence the division's strategies and operational funding, so any political changes must be closely monitored.
E	Economic	• By focusing on continuous service improvement, the division contributes to WBO 4, which strives to modernise and create a more resilient, efficient council. This includes using resources more effectively, improving economic outcomes for the council, and ensuring financial sustainability. • The division's ability to innovate and implement new ideas can be hampered by budget constraints and the allocation of resources, which may limit the scope and impact of initiatives. • Changing economic conditions, such as economic recessions, can affect the availability of funding for new housing projects and improvement initiatives, creating challenges for long-term planning.
S	Social	• The Housing Division's services are essential in improving the lives of diverse groups, including vulnerable populations. This directly impacts community health and well-being. • Engaged, motivated, and skilled staff are critical for driving service improvements, as their input and innovative ideas shape the future of services. Investing in workforce development and addressing challenges such as staff turnover is essential for ongoing success. • Public perception as well as expectations around housing equity, affordable housing, and community development often shape the division's priorities and strategies.

T	Technological	• The division seeks to harness technology to improve service delivery and enhance staff engagement. Overcoming barriers to sharing ideas, good practices, key learning and fostering a culture of continuous innovation is integral to achieving these goals. • The adoption of digital tools and systems can streamline operations, enhance communication between staff and customers, and enable more efficient data management for housing needs. • However, the division must also address key risks and ensure that technological advancements align with the needs of staff and the wider community.
L	Legal	• The Housing Division must comply with complex and ever changing local, national, and international regulations such as maintaining data privacy. Legal challenges may arise when trying to implement new services or initiatives. • Compliance with regulations such as the Housing Act, Health and Safety laws, and Equality Act is critical to maintaining operations and ensuring that services meet legislative standards. • Any new policies or regulations could impact the division's approach to service delivery.
E	Environmental	• The Housing Division's goal in improving service delivery and operational efficiency supports the broader goal of creating a sustainable, resilient community. • Efforts to reduce the environmental impact of housing, such as implementing and maximising the decarbonisation agenda align with both local and national sustainability goals. • Environmental factors such as climate change and extreme weather events may also impact housing infrastructure, requiring adaptive strategies to maintain safety and resilience.

APPENDIX 26 (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis

S trengths	W eaknesses
• The Housing division benefits from a highly dedicated workforce of 159 professionals, spread across five specialised service areas. • This cohesive team plays a vital role in shaping the lives of thousands, delivering essential housing services, and supporting vulnerable populations, including refugees and the elderly. • The division's commitment to continuous service improvement directly supports the achievement of Well-being Objectives (WBOs) and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), aligning its operations with overarching community goals. • Engaged and motivated employees are integral to the division's success, as their innovative ideas empower service improvements and cultivate a culture of continuous service improvement.	• A significant barrier to growth within the division is employees' reluctance to share ideas, often driven by concerns about potential negative consequences, lack of recognition for their contributions and communication. • The division faces challenges due to limited resources, a deeply ingrained culture, bureaucratic processes and budget restraints that hinder innovation. These internal barriers have a detrimental impact of promoting and adopting new ideas and prevent the division from fully exploiting potential opportunities. • Workplace inefficiencies can undermine employee motivation, reducing their dedication to divisional objectives and raising the risk of missed opportunities for improvement.
O pportunities	T hreats
• There is considerable opportunity for the division to encourage and promote an environment that supports ongoing, enabling staff to feel empowered and supported to engage in continuous improvement initiatives. • By developing more effective and robust communication and engagement and ensuring staff are actively involved in decision-making processes, the division can encourage a culture of openness and collaboration. • Reinforcing and actioning strong commitment to continuous improvement can enhance the division's adaptability, ensuring that it remains responsive to emerging challenges and opportunities.	• A failure to foster a culture of idea-sharing could lead to stagnation, inefficiency, and missed opportunities for service enhancement, undermining the division's long-term goals. • Resistance to change, driven by unresolved personal or managerial concerns, fears of job insecurity, and a lack of psychological safety, poses a significant risk to the division's ability to innovate. • Entrenched bureaucratic barriers and rigid divisional structures continue to limit the potential for creative problem-solving, impeding the successful implementation of new ideas and strategies.

APPENDIX 27



[sirgar.llyw.cymru](mailto:sirgar.llyw.cymru@carmarthenshire.gov.wales)
carmarthenshire.gov.wales

Eich cyf / Your ref:
 Fy nghyf / My ref:

Gofynner am / Please ask for: Jonathan Morgan
 Llinell Uniongyrchol / Direct Line:

Yddiad / Date: 05.02.2025

E-bost / E-mail: JMorgan@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

Dear Sir/madam,

RE: Letter in support of work-based project

I am writing to confirm that Carmarthenshire County Council fully supports Nicola Jones' work-based learning project as part of her Masters in Professional Practice qualification. The focus of her research is to:

'Understand the relationship between promoting and implementing change, and the obstacles preventing change taking place within the Housing division.'

If you require any additional information, please feel free to contact me at your convenience.

Kind regards,

Jonathan Morgan

Pennaeth Tai,

3 Heol Spilman, Caerfyrddin SA31 1LE | Llawr cyntaf, Ty Elwyn, Llanelli SA15 3AP |
 Ty Parcyrhyn, Ffordd Y Rhyd, Rhydaman SA18 3FB.

Head of Housing,

3 Spilman Street, Carmarthen SA31 1LE | 1st floor, Ty Elwyn, Llanelli SA15 3AP |
 Ty Parcyrhyn, Ffordd Y Rhyd, Ammanford SA18 3FB

Mae croeso i chi gysylltu â ni yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg | You are welcome to contact us in Welsh or English