



## Report of the Section 151 Officer

Special Cabinet - 20 February 2020

# The Capital Strategy 2019/20 – 2024/25

<b>Purpose:</b>	To approve the Capital Strategy which informs the four year capital programme.
<b>Consultation:</b>	Legal, Finance and Access to Services.
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	It is recommended that: 1) The Capital Strategy is approved.
<b>Report Author:</b>	Jeff Dong
<b>Finance Officer:</b>	Ben Smith
<b>Legal Officer:</b>	Deb Smith
<b>Access to Services Officer:</b>	Rhian Millar

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Following the publication of the Revised CIPFA Prudential Code in Dec 2017, it is now a requirement for Authorities to produce a Capital Strategy in addition to its other suite of reports which are required by Regulation which outline and support the capital and revenue budgets
- 1.2 The Capital Strategy has been developed to ensure that the Council can take capital expenditure and investment decisions in line with Council priorities and properly take account of stewardship, value for money, prudence, risk, sustainability and affordability. The Strategy, therefore, sets out the longer term context in which capital expenditure and investment decisions are made and gives due consideration to both risk and reward and the impact on the achievement of priority outcomes. The Capital Strategy sets out the underlying principles in support of the capital programme presented to Council for approval on this same agenda. It seeks to ensure that each project is supportive of our corporate objectives, has clearly identified funding and has appropriate governance arrangements in place to support decision making and deliver the scheme.

1.3 The strategy covers capital expenditure, capital financing and asset management and is one of the key strategies alongside the more operational strategies for these and other areas including Treasury Management, Tax, Property Investment and service areas such as housing and other spending areas. It also gives an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability. The Capital Strategy should support the delivery of the corporate objectives of the Authority and must complement and demonstrate clear links with the:

- The Corporate Plan
- The Revenue Budget Report
- The Capital Programme Report
- The Medium Term Financial Plan
- The Treasury Management, Investment Strategy and MRP Policy Statement Report

1.4 The Council's Corporate plan has the following well-being priorities:

1. **Safeguarding** people from harm - so that our citizens are free from harm and exploitation
2. Improving **Education and Skills** - so that every child and young person in Swansea gains the skills and qualifications they need to succeed in life
3. Transforming our **Economy and Infrastructure** - so that Swansea has a thriving mixed use City Centre and a local economy that will support the prosperity of our citizens
4. **Tackling Poverty** - so that every person in Swansea can achieve his or her potential
5. Maintaining and enhancing Swansea's **natural resources and biodiversity** - so that we maintain and enhance biodiversity, reduce our carbon footprint, improve our knowledge and understanding of our natural environment and benefit health and well-being
6. **Transformation and Future Council** development - so that we and the services that we provide are sustainable and fit for the future.

In formulating the detailed schemes within the programme of capital expenditure 2019/20- 2024/25, it can be demonstrated that all projects promote the objectives of at least one or more of the above priorities.

## 2. **The Capital Programme 2019/20 – 2024/25**

2.1 The Capital Budget and Programme 2019/20 – 2024/25 for the general fund and HRA is reported in detail in The Capital Programme & HRA Capital Programme Reports on this agenda.

## 3. **Asset Management Planning**

3.1 The programme includes capital expenditure on the following categories of spend:

- Operational – supporting core business and service delivery

- Investment – to provide a financial return to the Council
  - Regeneration/ Community – enabling strategic place shaping and economic growth / to support specific local community and regional projects
- 3.2 Operational – Within the capital programme, is a comprehensive schedule of programmed routine repairs and maintenance both on the existing property inventory but also on the significant portfolio of highways assets.
- 3.3 Investment – It is recognised that, over the long term property offers a sound total investment opportunity, (including yield in the form of contractually agreed rental/lease income and the potential for capital growth in the form of potential asset appreciating in value). The formation of the Property Investment Board has enabled the Authority to take advantage of investing in property with a view to making a financial return, based on robust business case analysis evaluating not only on financial returns but also considering strategic control of key sites within the City boundaries.
- 3.4 Regeneration/Community

A major portion of the current capital programme is comprised of a number of major regeneration and community construction programmes being undertaken by the Authority:

- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools – A programme of major school refurbishment and new school build
- Swansea Bay City Region Deal - The Swansea City and Waterfront Digital District project ( one of the 11 Swansea Bay City Region Projects) plans include a 3,500-seat digital indoor arena at the current LC car park site in the city centre that will accommodate music concerts, touring shows, exhibitions, conferences, gaming tournaments and other events. A digital square featuring digital artworks and ultrafast internet connection speeds will also be developed outside the arena.
- More Homes and Welsh Housing Quality Standards– A programme of council house refurbishment and new council house building utilising new borrowing powers to invest in new Council housing stock.

#### **4. Commercial Activity & Property Investment**

- 4.1 The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) defines investment property as property held solely to earn rentals or for capital appreciation or both. Returns from property ownership can be both income driven (through the receipt of rent) and by way of appreciation of the underlying asset value (capital growth). The combination of these is a consideration in assessing the attractiveness of a property for acquisition
- 4.2 In the context of the Capital Strategy, the council can use capital to invest in property and or infrastructure assets to provide a positive surplus/financial return. The council may fund the purchase of the property/infrastructure by

borrowing money, normally from the PWLB as part of HM Treasury. The income generated should cover the cost of servicing and repaying the borrowed money each year. If an annual surplus is generated, this can be used to support the council's budget position, and enables the council to continue to provide services for local people

4.3 The reasons for buying and owning property investments are primarily:

- Financial returns to fund services to residents
- Market and economic opportunity.
- Economic development and regeneration activity in the City ( all investment property is within the City & County boundaries)

4.4 Historically, property has provided strong investment returns in terms of capital growth and generation of stable income. Property investment is not without risk as property values can fall as well as rise and changing economic conditions could cause tenants to leave with properties remaining vacant

4.5 The strategy makes it clear that the council will continue to invest prudently on a commercial basis and to take advantage of opportunities as they present themselves, supported by our robust governance process

4.6 The Authority has established an appropriate gateway mechanism through the property investment board to appraise and evaluate all such investment opportunities.

## **5. Governance & Oversight**

5.1 The Council has a well-established corporate governance framework with which to manage, monitor and quality assure the delivery of the capital programme:

- Cabinet
  - Approval of large schemes/programmes
- Capital Budget Monitoring Cycle
  - Quarterly monitoring of progress against budget/programme
- Contract Procedure Rules
  - Identifies most appropriate procurement route for project
- Financial Procedure Rules
  - Identifies appropriate scheme approval limits and budget virements / overspends thresholds
- Regeneration Programme Board
  - Monitors all regeneration programme schemes for progress against time, budget, quality

- Housing Futures Programme Board
  - Monitors all Housing schemes for progress against time, budget, quality
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme Board
  - Monitors all 21st Century Schools schemes for progress against time, budget, quality
- Property Investment Board
  - Identifies, appraises and approves property investment opportunities
- External Funding Panel
  - Approves applications for grant funding where appropriate
- Grants & Capital Manual
  - Outlines the corporate capital & grant protocols, procedures and practices for compliance by practitioners within the organisation

## **6. Capital Financing Strategy**

6.1 The Council's adopted capital financing strategy is to:

- maximise external private investment
- maximise external grant funding
- maximise capital receipt income
- finance self-funding income generative schemes
- minimise external borrowing
- minimise external funding costs

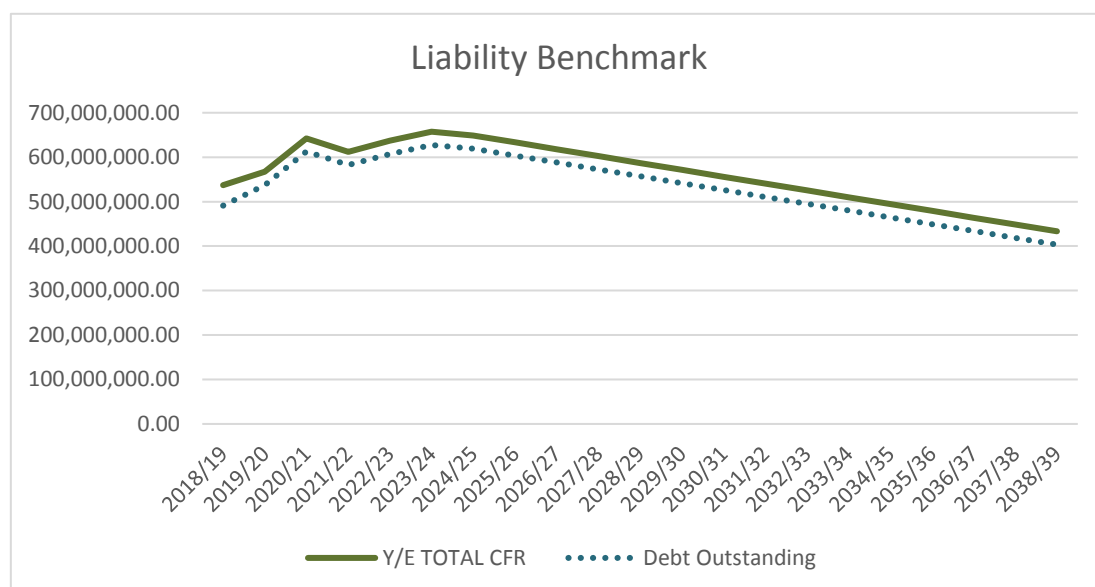
6.2 In the current austere financial climate, capital allocations are constrained and the financing of prioritised schemes need to be carefully considered. In light of the continuing pressures on the revenue budget, unsupported borrowing is only to be utilised if there is a clear business case for expenditure and other sources of finance have been fully explored and ruled out. The corollary of austerity is that PWLB capital financing is still at low levels but following the decision by the PWLB on 9 October 2019 to increase their margin over gilt yields by 100 bps to 180 basis points on loans lent to local authorities, consideration will also need to be given to sourcing funding at cheaper rates from the following:

- Local authorities
- Financial institutions
- Municipal Bonds Agency

The degree which any of these options proves cheaper than PWLB Certainty Rate is still evolving at the time of writing but the Section 151 Officer is delegated to identify the most economically advantageous funding option.

## 7. Treasury Management Strategy

- 7.1 The Capital Strategy and the Capital Programme is intrinsically linked to the Treasury Management Strategy employed to fund the programme. The capital programme determines the borrowing need of the Council, essentially the longer term cash flow planning, to ensure that the Council can meet its capital spending obligations. This management of longer term cash may involve arranging long or short term loans, or using longer term cash flow surpluses. The Council approves its Treasury Management Strategy, Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Policy in a separate report on this agenda.
- 7.2 The Council is required to produce a liability benchmark informed by its underlying need to borrow, otherwise known as the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), mapped against its actual levels of debt entered into. The attached is a projection of the benchmark as informed by the current capital programme. It can be seen that the benchmark enters into net repayment mode from 2024/25 as the current programme ends, but in reality the ongoing programme will be refreshed and ongoing financing shall be required.



## 8. Revenue Impact of The Capital Programme

- 8.1 Unsupported borrowing has a direct impact on the revenue budget, with revenue required to support both interest and principal repayments. The associated capital financing costs of a project are thoroughly considered when appraising a potential capital investment. The revenue impact are considered in light of affordability, prudence and sustainability whilst considering the long term impact and benefits of a considered capital programme. The revenue impact of the capital programme are outlined in the Medium Term Financial Plan, which is also presented on this agenda.

## 9. Risk Appetite

- 9.1 Under CIPFA guidance, a local authority is required to outline its risk appetite in respect of its investment activities.

- 9.2 For the purpose of this statement, the Authority has referenced the Orange Book (UK government publication on the strategic management of risk within government) definition of Risk Appetite, namely:

*“the amount of risk that an organisation is prepared to accept, tolerate, or be exposed to at any point in time.”*

It is important to note that risk will always exist in some measure and cannot be removed in its entirety. Additionally, in order to realise investment and commercial gains, one has to take some measure of risk. Therefore, risks need to be considered both in terms of threats to the Council as well as positive opportunities. It is worth noting that the Public Accounts Committee supports well-managed risk taking across government, recognising that innovation and opportunities to improve public services requires risk taking, providing that the ability, skills, knowledge and training to manage those risks well, exist within the organisation or can be brought to bear from outside.

- 9.3 The risk appetite statement sets out how we balance risk and return in pursuit of achieving our objectives. It is intended to aid careful decision-making, such that the Council takes well thought through risks to aid successful delivery of its services and obligations, while also understanding the adverse aspects of risk undertaken and taking appropriate measures to mitigate these in line with its stated goals. Thereby, the Council’s risk judgements are more explicit, transparent and consistent over time.
- 9.4 The risk appetite statement shall form a key element of the Council’s governance and reporting framework. In addition, the risk appetite will be considered annually and monitored on an ongoing basis by senior management, advisors, Audit Committee and Scrutiny Panel as appropriate.
- 9.5 It is important to note that the risk appetite is a high level view on the key areas of risk and the qualitative quantum therein that the Council is willing to accept in pursuit of its objectives. In this, it is different to other key aspects of risk management, primarily:
- The risk universe – a detailed list of all the potential risks the Council is exposed to.
  - Risk capacity – the maximum level of risk the Council can run given its reserves, revenues, and access to funding, liquidity, regulatory and legal constraints, and any other restrictions.
  - Risk tolerance – the maximum amount and type of risk that the Council is willing to tolerate on a prudent assessment.
- 9.6 The latter two are usually quantified and given as a series of limits and analyses. The risk appetite is also supported by the following:
- The Council’s risk management framework
  - The governance structure and responsibilities
  - Risk reporting
  - Monitoring and escalation procedures

It should be noted that aspects of these will be bespoke to individual areas where risk is undertaken, e.g. the treasury portfolio, GDPR,

- 9.7 In general, the Council's risk appetite is expressed through its tolerance to risk in respect of capital preservation, meaningful liquidity and income certainty and volatility. The Council seeks to minimise its exposure to risks that are unwanted and unrewarded. Capital is managed centrally on an ongoing basis to ensure that there is sufficient liquidity in the short and medium term to meet costs and support front line services, as well as meeting long-term solvency and funding requirements.
- 9.8 The Council is exposed to a broad range of risks:
- **Financial risks** related to the investment of the Council's assets and cash flow, market volatility, currency etc.
  - **Macroeconomic risks** related to the growth or decline of the local economy, interest rates, inflation and to a lesser degree, the wider national and global economy amongst others.
  - **Credit and counterparty risks** related to investments, loans to institutions and individuals and counterparties in business transactions.
  - **Operational risks** related to operational exposures within its organisation, its counterparties, partners and commercial interests
  - **Strategic risks** related to key initiatives undertaken by the Council such as significant purchases, new ventures, commercial interests and other areas of organisational change deemed necessary to help the Council meet its goals.
  - **Reputational risks** related to the Council's dealings and interests, and the impact of adverse outcomes on the Council's reputation and public perception.
  - **Environmental and social risks** related to the environmental and social impact of the Council's strategy and interests.
  - **Governance risks** related to ensuring that prudence and careful consideration sit at the heart of the Council's decision-making, augmented by quality independent advice and appropriate checks and balances that manage oversight and efficiency.
- 9.9 Managing the Council's risks is an area of significant focus for senior management and members, and the Council adopts an integrated view to the management and qualitative assessment of risk .The Council aims to minimise its exposure to unwanted risks – those risks that are not actively sought and which carry no commensurate reward for the Council – through a range of mitigation strategies to the extent that it is cost-effective to do so. Specifically, the Council has no appetite for reputational risk, governance risk and currency risk.



For other risks, the Council's appetite is as follows:

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Appetite</b>
Financial	<p>Moderate appetite for a range of asset classes, property and longer-term investments, subject to careful due diligence and an emphasis on security as well required liquidity profile.</p> <p>Lower appetite for capital growth oriented investments versus income generating investments.</p> <p>No appetite for currency risk, emerging markets and high volatility investments.</p>
Macroeconomic	<p>High appetite for exposure to local economic growth. Moderate appetite for exposure to national and global growth.</p> <p>Low appetite for interest rate risk, and inflation risk.</p> <p>No appetite for geopolitical risks and tail risk events.</p>
Credit & Counterparty	<p>High appetite for investment grade or secured credit risk, as well as exposure to highly rated counterparties and financial institutions with strong balance sheets.</p> <p>Lower appetite for unsecured non-investment grade debt. All subject to careful due diligence and an assessment of the transaction capacity, funding needs, broader goals and cashflow requirements.</p>
Operational	<p>Low appetite for BAU (Business as Usual) operational risks such as pricing errors, errors in administration, IT, cybersecurity etc. The Council maintains Risk Registers for key initiatives and significant investments to assess and mitigate specific risks on a more granular level. Business</p>

	<p>continuity plans have also been established to mitigate external occurrences.</p> <p>No appetite for fraud, regulatory breaches and exceeding risk tolerances.</p>
Strategic	High appetite for strategic initiatives, where there is a direct gain to the Council's revenues or the ability to deliver its statutory duties more effectively and efficiently.
Environmental & Social	<p>No appetite for environmentally negative risks.</p> <p>Low appetite for social risks, especially in the local region and always subject to full due diligence.</p>

9.10 Risk management is not a stand-alone discipline. In order to maximize risk management benefits and opportunities, it is integrated with existing business processes.

## 10. Skills & Knowledge

10.1 It is important that the Authority has the appropriate staff with the right skills, knowledge and expertise with which to deliver the capital strategy and the programme.

10.2 The Director of Place has operational responsibility for the delivery of the capital programme and has management responsibility for :

- Building Services ( including procurement of Education Capital Programme)
- Property Services
- Regeneration & Planning Services
- Highways and Transportation
- Housing

where the staff are appropriately qualified as engineers, quantity surveyors, town planners, housing professionals, electricians, carpenters, subject matter experts and building professionals. Where required, external professionals are engaged and the appropriate framework/procurement route is adopted.

10.3 The financial management and budget monitoring of the capital programme is the responsibility of the S 151 Officer who is a CCAB qualified accountant and is supported by professionally CCAB qualified finance staff and technicians in providing the financial oversight and strategic financial advice for the capital programme.

10.4 The Head of Commercial Services is responsible for ensuring appropriate internal and external procurement and commissioning procedures are adhered to, ensuring that best value is achieved.

10.5 The Chief Legal Officer is responsible for ensuring legal compliance in the execution of contracts and completion of legal agreements in relation to the capital programme.

## **11. Legal Implications**

11.1 The regulations requiring Authorities to have regard to The Prudential Code are issued under part 1 of The Capital Finance Act 2003. The code and subsequent guidance was revised in 2017 and 2018 respectively. The 2017 Code now requires the production of a Capital Strategy.

## **12. Financial Implications**

12.1 The financial implications of this strategy are outlined in the Capital Programme, Medium Term Financial Plan and Treasury Management Strategy and Investment Strategy also on this agenda.

## **13. Equality Impact Assessment**

13.1 The Council is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (Wales) and must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Our Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process ensures that we have paid due regard to the above. We have undertaken an EIA screening which demonstrates there are no equality impact implications arising directly from this report (appendix 1)

### **Background Papers:**

None

### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Equality Impact Assessment

Please ensure that you refer to the [‘Screening Form Guidance’](#) while completing this form. If you would like further guidance please contact your support officer in the Access to Services team (see guidance for details).

**Section 1**

What service area and directorate are you from?

Service Area: Financial Services & Service Centre

Directorate: Resources

**Q1(a) WHAT ARE YOU SCREENING FOR RELEVANCE?**

Service/ Function Proposal	Policy/ Procedure	Project	Strategy	Plan
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**(b) Please name and describe below Capital Strategy- Now a requirement of the CIPFA Prudential Code, this sets out the overarching principles guiding the formulation of the capital programme**

**Q2(a) WHAT DOES Q1a RELATE TO?**

Direct front line service delivery	Indirect front line service delivery	Indirect back room service delivery
<input type="checkbox"/> (H)	<input type="checkbox"/> (M)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (L)

**(b) DO YOUR CUSTOMERS/CLIENTS ACCESS THIS SERVICE...?**

Because they internal need to	Because they want to	Because it is automatically provided to everyone in Swansea	On an basis i.e. Staff
<input type="checkbox"/> (H)	<input type="checkbox"/> (M)	<input type="checkbox"/> (M)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (L)

**Q3 WHAT IS THE POTENTIAL IMPACT ON THE FOLLOWING...**

	High Impact (H)	Medium Impact (M)	Low Impact (L)	Don't know (H)
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marriage & civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Religion or (non-)belief	→	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sex	→	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual Orientation	→	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>
Welsh Language	→	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poverty/social exclusion	→	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>
Carers	→	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community cohesion	→	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q4 Have you / will you undertake any public consultation and engagement relating to the initiative?**

Yes      ✓ No (If no, you need to consider whether you should be undertaking consultation and engagement – please see the guidance)

If yes, please provide details below

**Q5(a) HOW VISIBLE IS THIS SERVICE/FUNCTION/POLICY/PROCEDURE/PROJECT/ STRATEGY TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC?**

High visibility to general public  
 (H)

Medium visibility to general public  
 (M)

Low visibility to general public  
✓ (L)

**(b) WHAT IS THE POTENTIAL RISK TO THE COUNCIL'S REPUTATION? (Consider the following impacts – legal, financial, political, media, public perception etc...)**

High risk to reputation  
 (H)

Medium risk to reputation  
✓ (M)

Low risk to reputation  
✓  (L)

**Q6 Will this initiative have an impact (however minor) on any other Council service?**

Yes      ✓ No      If yes, please provide details below

**Q7 HOW DID YOU SCORE? Please tick the relevant box below – NOTE: Q3 counts as a single H, M or L (and one H / M outscores any n° of Ls)**

MOSTLY H and/or M → HIGH PRIORITY →  EIA to be completed  
Please go to Section 2

MOSTLY L → LOW PRIORITY / NOT RELEVANT → ✓ Do not complete EIA  
Please go to Q8 followed by Section 2

**Q8 If after completing the EIA screening process you determine that this service/function/policy/project is not relevant for an EIA you must provide adequate explanation below.**

This is now a code requirement to outline the principles behind the formulation of the capital programme and has no direct impact on the groups identified in Q3

**Section 2**

Please send this completed form to the Access to Services Team for agreement before obtaining email approval from your Head of Service.

<b>Screening form completed by:</b>	
Name: Jeff Dong	
Location: 1.4.1c	
Telephone Number: 07810438119	
Date: 29/1/20	
<b>Approval by Head of Service:</b>	
Name: B Smith	
Position: Section 151 Officer	
Date: 29/1/20	

Please return the completed form to [accesstoservices@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:accesstoservices@swansea.gov.uk)