



EDUCATION, SKILLS AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2.00 PM THURSDAY, 16 JANUARY 2025

***MULTI-LOCATION MEETING - COUNCIL CHAMBER, PORT TALBOT
& MICROSOFT TEAMS***

All mobile telephones to be switched to silent for the duration of the meeting

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Part A

1. Chair's Announcements
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Budget 2025/2026 (*Pages 3 - 8*)
4. Urgent Items
Any urgent items at the discretion of the Chairperson pursuant to Section 100BA (6) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

F.O'Brien
Chief Executive

**Civic Centre
Port Talbot**

10 January 2025

Committee Membership:

Chairperson: Councillor R.Phillips

Vice Chairperson: Councillor D.Thomas

Councillors: N.Goldup-John, L.Heard, J.Henton, D.Keogh,
C.Lewis, R.Mizen, S.Rahaman, P.A.Rees,
S.H.Reynolds, P.Rogers and B.Woolford

***Co-opted
Voting Members** A. Amor, M.Caddick and L.Newman

***Co-opted Non
Voting Members** R.De Benedictis

Notes:

- (1) *If Committee Members or non-Committee Members wish to have relevant items put on the agenda for future meetings, then please notify the Chief Executive/Chair eight days before the meeting.*
- (2) *If non-Committee Members wish to attend for an item of interest, then prior notification needs to be given (by 12.00 noon on the day before the meeting). Non-Committee Members may speak but not vote, or move or second any motion.*



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL

Education, Skills and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

16th January 2025

MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

Budget 2025/26

Purpose of Report

To consider the savings and income generation proposals relevant to this scrutiny committee as agreed at Cabinet on 10th January 2025.

Background

On 10th January Cabinet agreed to consult on a council tax increase of 7%.

The report also included a number of savings and income generation proposals which, whilst not requiring specific public consultation at this stage, are subject to scrutiny.

Appendix 1 of this report details those proposals relevant to this scrutiny committee.

Financial Impact

Not applicable.

Integrated Impact Assessment

Not applicable.

Valleys Communities Impacts

Not applicable.

Workforce Impacts

Not applicable.

Legal Impacts

Not applicable.

Risk Management Impacts

Not applicable.

Crime and Disorder Impacts

Not applicable.

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Impacts

Not applicable.

Consultation

There is no requirement under the constitution for consultation on this item at this stage.

Recommendations

Member of the committee scrutinise the proposals and if appropriate suggest alternatives for Cabinet to consider.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Savings and income generation proposals

List of Background Papers

Not applicable.

Officer Contract

Andrew Thomas - Corporate Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning

Appendix 1 – Savings and income generation proposals

| Directorate | Chief Officer | Reference | Scrutiny Committee | Service Area | Description of how budget reduction will be delivered | Risks and Impact | £ |
|-------------|--------------------|-----------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|--|--|---------|
| ELLL | Chris Saunders | ELLL-A | ES&W | Margam Country Park | Staff changes and reductions of 1FTE. Driving income through improvements to the car parking arrangements and the programme of events. | Potential redundancy. Weather associated risks associated with achieving increased income. Impact of Eisteddfod and associated fallow/build period. Utility costs remain high. | 150,000 |
| ELLL | Chris Saunders | ELLL-B | ES&W | Pontardawe Arts Centre | New cinema and improved catering arrangements | Potential overrun of the capital project to build the new cinema and cafe. | 40,000 |
| ELLL | Chris Saunders | ELLL-C | ES&W | Indoor leisure | Indoor Leisure - trading improvements & cost reduction | Final contract fee arrangements with Celtic Leisure still to be agreed given the Budget announcements regarding the treatment of National Insurance in particular. | 175,000 |
| ELLL | Chris Saunders | ELLL-D | ES&W | Indoor Leisure | Temporary estimated full year saving from the closure of Pontardawe Swimming Pool on Health and Safety grounds. | Short/medium term saving. This figure should be treated with caution until the full extent of the effect of retained/ defrayed income is known | 233,250 |
| ELLL | Chris Saunders | ELLL-E | ES&W | Aberafan Seafront | Additional/funfair and events | Market appetite established. Risks remain around the need for planning permission and tendering. | 25,000 |
| ELLL | Chris Saunders | ELLL-F | ES&W | Education Learning Resource Service | Increased income target | This requires a reset within the service and requires a focus on commercial activity. | 10,000 |
| ELLL | Chris Saunders | ELLL-G | ES&W | Libraries | Reduce resources budget - stop purchase of DVD's | Minimal | 10,000 |
| ELLL | Rhiannon Crowhurst | ELLL-H | ES&W / ERSS | Home to school transport | Externally led review of all existing arrangements | This work is ongoing with the aim of identifying savings over a number of years. | 500,000 |
| ELLL | Rhiannon Crowhurst | ELLL-I | ES&W | Primary school cleaning | Full cost recovery - Increase cleaning recharge to schools phased over two years | This strategy depends on what is agreed in relation to the delegated schools budget. | 150,000 |

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|-------------|--------------------|-----------|--------------------|-------------------------------|---|--|--------|
| ELLL | Rhiannon Crowhurst | ELLL-J | ES&W | Education Support Services | Reducing hours and service remodelling | Flexible retirement requests (if granted) can be mitigated for; grant funding used to cover core posts - there is a risk that the grant funding will not be renewed leading to future capacity pressures in key strategic service areas; compulsory redundancy will cause pressure on services which can only partially be mitigated for in the short term through work being picked up by existing staff, and which might lead to future pressures | 80,000 |
| ELLL | Chris Millis | ELLL-K | ES&W | Education Development Service | Reduce staff costs/offset against specific grant | If the grant were to cease or the member of staff were to return from the secondment before the end of the grant's terms of conditions | 25,000 |
| ELLL | Andrew Thomas | ELLL-L | ES&W | Pension & Early Retirement | Core budget requirement has reduced | No impact | 15,000 |
| ELLL | Hayley Lervy | ELLL-M | ES&W | Education Psychology Service | Offset costs against grant | Reducing an educational psychologist's (EP) contract from 80% to 50% significantly impacts the service's ability to support children, families, and schools. It reduces capacity for timely assessments, interventions, and consultations, delaying the identification of needs and early intervention that are critical for addressing learning, behavioural, and emotional challenges. This increases pressure on schools and other staff, and risks fragmented support due to reduced multi-agency collaboration. The strain on remaining EPs may diminish service quality, jeopardizes compliance with statutory requirements, risks legal challenges, | 9,000 |

| Directorate | Chief Officer | Reference | Scrutiny Committee | Service Area | Description of how budget reduction will be delivered | Risks and Impact | £ |
|-------------|---------------|-----------|--------------------|--|---|---|--------|
| | | | | | | and compromises outcomes for vulnerable children, ultimately creating greater long-term costs. | |
| ELLL | Hayley Lervy | ELLL-N | ES&W | Specialist Commissioning for Schools | This saving will be for one year only. Occupational Therapy post commissioned from Health will be funded from reserves instead of core. | This post will be to support secondary schools in building capacity to support pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. This is a rising area of need, this work supports emotional regulation and has been highlighted as good practice by Welsh government. The post holder will be seconded to undertake this work and back-filled. This work will be halted if not funded. | 55,000 |
| ELLL | Hayley Lervy | ELLL-O | ES&W | Learning Difficulty Team | Staff costs offset against grant funding. | Any ceasing or reduction of grant will impact on service delivery, as numbers of pupils with complex needs and demands on the service continue to increase. If we cannot depend on grant money to fund, this would impact on both service delivery and on schools' ability to support pupils needs. | 12,000 |
| ENV | Ceri Morris | ENV-Q | ES&W | Pest Control | Delivered through increased income target. Potential to achieve without increasing fees. | In light of current levels of service demand / performance of the Pest Control team, there is the potential to achieve this increased income target without increasing fees. Impact should therefore be minimal. | 9,000 |
| ENV | Ceri Morris | ENV-R | ES&W | Pollution Control (Including Giants Grave Land Fill) | Delivered through [1] recharging of officer time where appropriate and reduction of the materials budget for Giants Grave | Impact on Development Management service (through planning consultations) will be absorbed – any costs can be clawed back through PPAs. Impact should therefore be minimal. | 11,000 |

| Directorate | Chief Officer | Reference | Scrutiny Committee | Service Area | Description of how budget reduction will be delivered | Risks and Impact | £ |
|--------------------|----------------------|------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|--|-------------------------|------------------|
| Total | | | | | | | 1,509,250 |