



***COMMUNITY, FINANCE AND STRATEGIC
LEADERSHIP SCRUTINY COMMITTEE***

2.00 PM MONDAY, 13 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 - 12*)
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**

Committee Membership:

Chairperson: Councillor P.Rogers

**Vice
Chairperson:** Councillor C.Jordan

Councillors: T.Bowen, C.Galsworthy, J.Henton, J.Jones,
R.G.Jones, S.Paddison, R.Phillips, S.Pursey,
S.H.Reynolds, A.J.Richards, A.Dacey, S.Thomas
and A.R.Aubrey

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

Community, Finance and Strategic Leadership Scrutiny Committee

13th 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, 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.

Recommendations

Members of the committee to 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

Noelwyn Daniel – Corporate Director of Strategy and Corporate Services

Huw Jones – Director of Finance

** This report will be published prior to Cabinet on 10th January. Any changes arising from Cabinet will be reported verbally to this scrutiny committee.

Directorate	Chief Officer	Reference	Scrutiny Committee	Service Area	Description of how budget reduction will be delivered	Risks and Impact	£
S&CS	Chris Owen	S&CS-A	CF&SL	Digital Services	Post reduction - 3 x Senior Infrastructure Operations Engineer (Grade 8) Voluntary Redundancy	The reduction of these posts within the team will lead to a redistribution of work across the remaining team, and monitoring will be in place to ensure that workloads remain manageable. Having fewer numbers in the team will also lead to slower response times to resolve issues and on the time taken to deliver on Strategic Initiatives and projects.	156,906
					Post reduction Grade 9 - Voluntary Redundancy	Discussion are on-going to confirm a Voluntary Redundancy however the impact of losing any post will impact our ability to maintain the current level of service delivery as we strive to drive forward the strategic objectives set in our new digital strategy, operational efficiency, and service delivery of the council.	58,204
					Post reduction Grade 5 - Voluntary Redundancy	Discussion are on-going to confirm a Voluntary Redundancy however the impact of losing any post will impact our ability to maintain the current level of service delivery as we strive to drive forward the strategic objectives set in our new digital strategy, operational efficiency, and service delivery of the council.	39,050
					Reduced working hours - 1 x Senior Infrastructure Operations Engineer (Grade 8)	The reduction in working time for this post will lead to a redistribution of work across the remaining team, and monitoring will be in place to ensure that workloads remain manageable. Having fewer numbers in the team will also lead to slower response times to resolve issues and on the time taken to deliver on strategic Initiatives and transformation projects.	9,895

Directorate	Chief Officer	Reference	Scrutiny Committee	Service Area	Description of how budget reduction will be delivered	Risks and Impact	£
S&CS	Chris Owen	S&CS-B	CF&SL	Digital Services	Mobile phone contract changes	No disruption to service, some additional reporting to management to ensure data usage controls	20,000
S&CS	Chris Owen	S&CS-C	CF&SL	Digital Services	Provide Barrier Access and AI Monitoring for SRC	There is potential that the CCTV service could provide a managed barrier access control at the main gate of the SRC. This would provide income to the service. Potentially reducing operating costs within the SRC due to improved access control measures. Reduce potential site thefts of equipment. It should be noted there will be an infrastructure cost to implementation.	10,000
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S&CS	Chris Owen	S&CS-S	CF&SL	Digital Services	Hardware and Software	<p>The reduction in the budget on hardware and software can lead to outdated technology, resulting in slower performance, increased downtime, and reduced productivity. This can hinder the ability of employees to perform their tasks efficiently and meet business objectives.</p> <p>Insufficient funding for new technologies can stifle innovation and prevent the council from adopting cutting-edge solutions that support service transformation and we will need to explore alternative ways of financing these investments via the capital programme.</p> <p>On-going under investment in hardware can affect the quality and speed of customer service, leading to dissatisfaction and increased complaints and increase pressure in other service areas who require hardware / software to undertake their</p>	140,000

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	£
						business function.	
S&CS	Sheenagh Rees	S&CS-F	CF&SL	Emergency Planning Team	Increase COMAH (Control of Major Accident Hazards) SLA (Service Level Agreement) income	We will work on developing plans to increase support available to COMAH sites as we look to increase fees and we will consult. It must also be noted that by 2027 / 2028 we anticipate loss of TATA income.	3,046
S&CS	Sheenagh Rees	S&CS-G	CF&SL	Emergency Planning Team	Temporary change in team structure (flexi retirement / succession planning)	This is for one year only and we will need to review this structure for future years.	11,500
S&CS	Sheenagh Rees	S&CS-I	CF&SL	Policy & Executive Support	Delete vacant hours @ GR 8	Workload will be redistributed and monitored to ensure workloads remain manageable.	10,000
S&CS	Sheenagh Rees	S&CS-J	CF&SL	Human Resources	Service Remodelling of the HR Team. Delete 0.6 FTE Voluntary Redundancy	As a result of this reduction in staffing, coupled with increased demands for services and our proposed longer term strategic approach to the service that the HR team will deliver in future, we will mitigate these risks with increased use of technology, we are piloting Co-pilot to remove work from the team and make our processes as efficient as possible.	32,512
S&CS	Sheenagh Rees	S&CS-T	CF&SL	Corporate Strategy	Software	No significant impact or risk associated with this.	7,000

Directorate	Chief Officer	Reference	Scrutiny Committee	Service Area	Description of how budget reduction will be delivered	Risks and Impact	£
S&CS	Craig Griffiths	S&CS-L	CF&SL	Legal and Democratic Services	Service Remodelling through Voluntary Redundancy	The deletion of the Mailroom Supervisor post (who will be departing in March 2025) will result in increasing supervision responsibilities for the Business Support Manager, who will now supervise the service directly. The officer who will be departing is currently coordinating the majority of FOI requests and this work will be re-distributed amongst the remaining team; we will monitor workloads to ensure that they remain manageable and additional members of staff are being trained to help manage the consideration of Freedom of Information requests to ensure the statutory obligations continue to be met..	39,050
S&CS	Craig Griffiths	S&CS-M	CF&SL	Legal and Democratic Services	Service Remodelling through Voluntary Redundancy of Solicitor	Less of a dedicated resource for a specific area of education law provision from January 2025 onwards but workload will be incorporated amongst other teams/fee earners. This will ensure that resilience can also be included within the service to ensure that more than one officer will have experience of this type of work. This does place additional pressure on officers to meet additional demands for work but this will be monitored through regular supervision to ensure work commitments are not too unmanageable.	63,848

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	£
S&CS	Craig Griffiths	S&CS-N	CF&SL	Legal and Democratic Services	Income Generation	To be achieved through legal work and democratic services support associated with Celtic Freeport and other such projects and offering procurement support work to town and community councils. This does place additional pressure on officers to meet additional demands for work but this will be monitored through regular supervision to ensure work commitments are not to unmanageable.	20,000
Page 9 S&CS	Craig Griffiths	S&CS-O	CF&SL	Legal and Democratic Services	Reprofiling of funding from Corporate Joint Committee	To be achieved through allocating contributions received to specific posts and funding as opposed to generic usage. Funding was being used to support succession planning through recruitment of trainee solicitors but this will have to stop and use to underpin service. The ability to recruit junior staff to plan for the time when postholders retire/leave the Council will have to temporarily cease until new funding streams can be identified. To counteract this, steps will be taken to provide training to officers in other areas to enable service continuity and resilience to be met.	20,000

Directorate	Chief Officer	Reference	Scrutiny Committee	Service Area	Description of how budget reduction will be delivered	Risks and Impact	£
S&CS Page 10	Craig Griffiths	S&CS-P	CF&SL	Legal and Democratic Services	Amendment of Service Delivery in Mail Room	Service Recharges to outside organisations who utilise the mailroom facilities (i.e. trade unions) will be increased to ensure full cost recovery i.e. staff time in processing, stationery costs, full postage costs (however this will continue to remain discounted to direct postage). At present a small percentage of fees are not being recovered as part of overhead costs, this will be reflected in fees and charges. Hire Car costs will be reduced as part of renewal of vehicle and less demand with increased reliance on pool cars as an alternative. All changes will not have a detrimental impact on service delivery. Volume of mail is decreasing but at the same time the service transforming delivery to ensure more digital solutions are offered to negate courier runs.	15,000
S&CS	Craig Griffiths	S&CS-Q	CF&SL	Legal and Democratic Services	Reduction in legal services resources	There will be a reduction to one of our subscriptions which will remove access to precedent documents and specific legal updates. Information will still be readily available from other sources however it will require additional time to research without information be readily available. Consideration of this has been given to legal officers who understand the need to ensure savings can be realised. Training has also been undertaken with other subscriptions to ensure officers know where to locate information which would be relevant to their service area.	10,000

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	£
S&CS	Craig Griffiths	S&CS-U	CF&SL	Legal and Democratic Services	Electoral Services - General Office Expenses	At present, the Elections Registration Team hold budgets for general office expenses such as stationery, printing, posting. An evaluation of budgets have suggested those figures can be reduced without any detrimental impact. 2025/2026 does not currently have an election planned but onward consideration will be given for 2026/2027 and future years as we coordinate Senedd Elections and Local Government Elections and will be included as part of cost recovery from Welsh Government or utilisation of general reserves to fund any gap.	10,000
S&CS	Craig Griffiths	S&CS-V	CF&SL	Legal and Democratic Services	Democratic Services - General Office Expenses	At present, the Democratic Services team hold budgets for general office expenses such as stationery, printing, posting. An evaluation of budgets have suggested those figures can be reduced without any detrimental impact	1,246
Finance	Huw Jones	FINC-A	CF&SL	Finance Division	Contract saving from re-tendered insurance contracts	No risk	158,000
Finance	Huw Jones	FINC-B	CF&SL	Finance Division	Service remodelling of financial services	Minimal risk	73,400
Grand Total							908,657

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