



***CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
(SPECIAL)***

***10.00am FRIDAY, 17<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2014***

***COMMITTEE ROOMS 1/2 - PORT TALBOT CIVIC CENTRE***

**PART 1**

1. To receive any declarations of interest from Members.

**To scrutinise decisions, information and monitoring issues reported by:**

**Joint Report of The Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning, Director of Social Services, Health and Housing, Head of Planning and Performance, Head of Support Services and Commissioning Development, Leisure and Contracts Manager and Head of Children and Young People Services**

2. Budget Strategy Proposals 2015/16 (*Pages 1 - 50*)

**S.Phillips**

**Chief Executive**

**Civic Centre  
Port Talbot**

**Friday, 10<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

## **Committee Membership:**

**Chairman:** Councillor A.R.Lockyer

**Vice Chairman:** Councillor Mrs.D.Jones

**Councillors:** P.Greenaway, A.Carter, Mrs.A.Chaves, Mrs.J.Dudley, M.Ellis, R.G.Jones, J.D.Morgan, Mrs.S.Paddison, Mrs.K.Pearson, M.Protheroe, A.L.Thomas, Mrs.L.G.Williams and Mrs.A.Wingrave

**\*Co-opted  
Voting Members** Mrs.H.Stephens

**\*Co-opted Non  
Voting Members** R.De Benedictis, A.Hughes and Mrs.C.Wheldon

### **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.*
- (3) *For pre scrutiny arrangements, the Chair will normally recommend forthcoming executive items for discussion/challenge. It is also open to Committee Members to request items to be raised - though Members are asked to be selective here in regard to important issues.*
- (4) *The relevant Cabinet Board Members will also be invited to be present at the meeting for Scrutiny/ Consultation purposes.*
- (5) *Would the Scrutiny Committee Members please bring the Cabinet Board papers with them to the meeting.*

## **EDUCATION LEISURE AND LIFELONG LEARNING AND SOCIAL SERVICES, HEALTH AND HOUSING**

**Joint Report of the Director Of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning, Director of Social Services, Health and Housing, Head of Planning and Performance, Head of Support Services and Commissioning Development, Leisure and Contracts Manager and Head of Children and Young People Services**

### **SECTION B – MATTER FOR INFORMATION**

**WARDS AFFECTED: All**

### **BUDGET STRATEGY PROPOSALS 2015/16**

#### **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To provide Members of the Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Committee with relevant information concerning the budget strategy proposals for 2015/16 and beyond with a view to aiding the scrutiny of those proposals.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1 The Council has been advised by the Minister for Local Government to plan for a reduction in the settlement from Welsh Government in 2015/16 of up to -4.5% and for similar orders of settlement in the following two years. This change in the amount of funding that local government gets has created an unprecedented funding gap for Neath Port Talbot Council and other councils across Wales. More specifically, for 2015/16 the Council will need to deliver £23 million of savings in 2015/16 to achieve a balanced budget with some £50 million to be cut from expenditure in the next three years. This amounts to 10% of spending in 2015/16 and 25% of spending over the three year period.
- 2.2 All areas of the Council will be required to reduce spending over the three year period. In some areas services will cease altogether, in other areas, services will reduce or be delivered in very different ways.

- 2.3 Over the summer months heads of service and corporate directors have been working up proposals for achieving the required level of savings. The output of that work was set out in a report to the Cabinet on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014 by the Corporate Directors' Group "Budget Strategy for 2015/16 (and beyond)".
- 2.4 Additional scrutiny committee meetings have been arranged at the request of the Chief Executive to ensure that Members of scrutiny committees have a full opportunity to scrutinise the proposals set out in the report of 1<sup>st</sup> October, prior to the Council setting the Council Budget in early 2015.
- 2.5 This report provides each scrutiny committee with a copy of the proposals that have been authorised by the Cabinet for public consultation. Where considered appropriate, officers have also provided supplementary information to inform the scrutiny process. Clearly, Members of the Scrutiny Committees may also request additional information should they consider that necessary.

3. **Papers Included for Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Committee**

- 3.1 The following reports are included for consideration by the Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Committee
  - (a) Cabinet Report 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014 – Report of the Corporate Directors' Group "Budget Strategy for 2015/16 (and beyond);
  - (b) Cabinet Report 25<sup>th</sup> September 2014 – Report of the Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Services "Budget Savings Proposals 2015/16".

4. **Recommended**

- 4.1 That Scrutiny Members consider the information provided with this report and scrutinise the budget proposals for 2015/16 and beyond that fall within the committee's purview.

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**CABINET**  
**1<sup>st</sup> OCTOBER 2014**

**REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTORS GROUP**  
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## **Part 1**

### **Purpose of the Report/Introduction**

1. To explain the scale of the budgetary challenge facing the Council; the component parts; the principal reference points (including the legal duty to secure continuous improvement<sup>1</sup>); the proposed process/timetable and proposals for addressing the situation.
2. **It is important to underline that this report does not invite Members to set next year's budget now**; but subject to their guidance, consultation with citizens, equality impact assessments and other matters, Part 2 and Appendix 1 of this report outline the main savings proposals that officers propose to include in the Budget report to Council on 4 February 2015 (or alternatives of equal monetary value) to ensure that the Council meets its legal duty to produce a balanced budget.
3. The consensus of the Corporate Directors Group is that there are no significant and deliverable areas of savings that have not been explored or are not currently being explored. Accordingly the room for manoeuvre, in our view, is strictly limited.

### **Background**

4. There is little to be gained from outlining at length the history of the current climate of austerity. It has already been well documented over a period of several years. The two essential points are that UK Government's significant cuts to public spending are set to continue for the medium term and the Welsh Government's relative protection of local authority expenditure came to an end in 2014/15.
5. Going forward it is highly likely that, within the constraints of its finite budget, the Welsh Government will prioritise spending on the NHS over local government. This was reflected in a letter from the former Local Government Minister of 24 June when she warned Councils to expect reductions of up to 4.5% in revenue budgets for 2015/16. **The assumptions/estimates in this report are largely based on that figure. It would not be prudent to do otherwise.** Accordingly, we anticipate cuts of this magnitude when the Welsh Government publishes the provisional Local Government Settlement on 8 October. **It is also important to note that even if the totality of these proposals were**

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<sup>1</sup> Under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 – see Part 2 below also



**implemented, the Council would still be some £2.8 million short of a balanced position currently. The position will therefore need to be reviewed again once the provisional settlement is published.**

6. Table 1 below summarises the current position for the Council and how it has evolved since Members set the 2014/15 budget on 30 January. The bottom line is that having taken out some £17 million then, the Council faces more or less the same challenge this year.

*Table 1- £m*

	<b>14/15</b>	<b>15/16</b>	<b>16/17</b>	<b>17/18</b>	<b>Total</b>
Budget Gap Jan 2014	17.3	9.5	5.6	5.9	38.3
Budget Gap Sept 2014	0	22.8	14.9	11.7	49.4
<i>Directorate Savings</i>	n/a	-7.0	-1.9	-1.0	-9.9
<i>Central Savings</i>	n/a	-1.1	-1.1	-1.0	-3.2
<i>Remaining Gap</i>	n/a	14.7	11.9	9.7	36.3

### **How has this position evolved?**

7. Table 1 demonstrates that the estimated budget gap has risen by over £13m for 2015/16 and by over £28m for the three years to 2017/18. There are two reasons for this: a sharp increase in the level of projected cuts and additional pressures which impact negatively on the budget position.
8. First, the projected level of cuts. The original Welsh Government indicative figure for 2015/16 was a 1.5% cut in the Revenue Support Grant (RSG); but it has been clear for some time that this would not represent the reality. Officers therefore updated the assumption to -3% earlier this year and the Minister's letter increased it by half as much again. For subsequent years, previous indications of zero to -1% have been replaced by an estimated 3% cut per annum. Headline figures can also be misleading. Previously, transfers in and out of the RSG and formula changes (largely based on population) worked against the Council and represented approximately a further 1% cut in actuality. We await the details for 2015/16.
9. As each percentage point reduction represents more than a £2 million loss of revenue, the cumulative effect is to increase the deficit by £9m million for 2015/16 and an additional £20m over the three year period.

10. Second, additional pressures. These take a number of forms. The Director of Finance listed them in detail at the Member Seminars in July and, for the current year, in the Budget Monitoring report for the first quarter. The following list is not exhaustive; but highlights the main pressures:

- Pay (2% per annum); general inflation (2% per annum); LGPS and Teachers Pension costs (increasing by 1.5% and 2.3% respectively over the three year period) plus various contracts by either the Consumer Prices Index (CPI), the Retail Prices Index (RPI) or a combination of both. The cumulative effect here is to increase the deficit by another £20m over the three year period;
- Internal budget pressures e.g. Home to School Transport plus increases in out-of-county placements and Care Home Fees. Other factors also have an influence including changes in pupil numbers;
- Previous Forward Financial Plan (FFP) savings not delivered in full e.g. the maintenance of sports fields;
- UK Government changes to national insurance abatement regulations (this alone will cost the Council £1.4m and schools an additional £1.7m in 2016/17);
- In year cuts to Welsh Government specific grants including Sustainable Waste Management plus reductions to a range of education grants expected shortly. Increasingly, it is difficult for the Council to rely on Welsh Government figures as they are subject to change and are published very late in the budget cycle (or not at all in some areas) making service planning difficult. Against this background, it may prove necessary in future to make assumptions that only part of any initial grant award will be available and reduce provision accordingly. The Council cannot commit to a level of service when the resources available to support it are so uncertain; and
- This analysis currently excludes additional initiatives that may increase the pressure because they are uncosted or the full cost remains unclear e.g. the two year extension of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and the implementation of the Social Services and Well-Being Act. Across the full range of Council functions, a common feature is that the level of statutory duties continues to increase whilst the resources to deliver them goes the other way. Moreover, despite the policy emphasis on (largely local government)

preventative services, the national budget priorities are clearly reactive services (e.g. hospitals).

11. The sum total of the cuts and additional pressures (carefully reviewed by officers over the summer) explains how the situation has worsened significantly. Table 2 captures the position below:

*Table 2- £m*

	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>3 years to 2017/18</b>
Welsh Government Cuts	9	20
Inflation and Pay Awards	7	20
School Protection/Pupil Numbers	1	4
National Insurance/Pension	1	5
Legislation/Court	1	1
Social Care Pressures	2	3
Other Services Pressures	2	5
Less savings from prior years		-8
<b>Funding Gap</b>	<b>£23m</b>	<b>£50m</b>

### **How have officers approached the task: Priorities and Values?**

12. As last year, our starting point was the Council's Corporate Plan 2014-17. Not everything can be a priority; but the retention of our six improvement objectives (listed below in Table 3) provides important continuity of purpose. However, the context has changed in certain respects due to the extent of the ongoing cuts.

*Table 3*

1. Improve outcomes for children in need and children looked after by improving the performance of the Council's Children and Young People Services Department.	This remains our joint top priority; but can no longer be exempted from the requirement to produce savings (see Part 2 below).
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2. Raise educational standards and attainment for all young people.	Our other joint top priority. Some protection is retained; but less than previously as large cuts have already been made/or are proposed in the area of Leisure and Lifelong Learning.
3. Maximise the number of adults who are able to live independently with or without support within the home of their choice within their community.	The Western Bay collaborative seeks to improve and integrate services; but local changes to the delivery of services are also essential.
4. Support and invest in our town centres and communities to promote economic growth, regeneration and sustainability to maximise job opportunities and improve access to employment.	Increasingly, the objective will be to continue to lever in resources from elsewhere as the Council does not have the money itself. This is a continuation of an existing approach e.g. Neath Town Centre.
5. Increase the percentage of waste recycled and composted.	The next target is 58% by 2015/16. The roll-out of our Waste Strategy is proceeding (within the constraints of reduced grant funding – see above).
6. Improve customer/citizen access to services and functions provided by the Council, or on behalf of the Council, and to improve the efficiency of those services and functions.	This is increasingly about better services from fewer buildings, transferring more services online and bearing down on the costs of employment (e.g. sickness absence).

13. Certain values, clearly articulated by Members over time, have also guided officer thinking. These include the following:

- The Council's business is to protect the vulnerable and disadvantaged and invest in our young people to the maximum extent possible. This remains a touchstone for our approach;

- However, such has been the impact of cuts in previous years on “visible services” (largely run by Environment Directorate e.g. grass cutting, winter maintenance and school crossing patrols) and the level of public concern, this package of proposals does not contain further disproportionate cuts in these areas. Further savings are necessary; but the focus is equally on the other two front-line Directorates and the corporate centre as they now account for over 80% of the Council’s revenue budget between them;
- The Council provides public services for public benefit. However, it is clear that it will be difficult to sustain some in-house services in the short to medium term. Although invariably high quality, they are also higher cost and, if retained in-house, could well result in greater cuts being made to other services. These include the following (and need to be read against the section of this report at page 16 below entitled “The Impact on Council Staff”):
  - Adult Social Care where the Council is engaged with the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) and NPT CVS to create a not-for-profit Social Enterprise model or Local Authority Trading Company (LATC) for the future delivery of services. This would involve the transfer of Council services to the Social Enterprise and, over time, reclaiming contracts from the independent sector where providers prove unable to meet the increasing complexity of service user needs (thus freeing up resources by eliminating the profit element in these contracts). It would also be predicated upon protecting existing terms and conditions to the maximum extent possible and for as long as possible. Thus, public value is secured from a different model;
  - Some services are increasingly uncompetitive e.g. the Print & Graphics Unit recently lost the last of its major external contracts;
  - The Welsh Government is changing its own service models e.g. consulting on a new arms-length model for the South Wales Trunk Road Agency (SWTRA);
  - An expansion of the remit of Celtic Leisure to include a greater range of Council services; and
  - Delivery of services by third parties (e.g. adult community learning – see Part 2 below).

14. Basically, the longer the status quo prevails, the greater the risk to employment. Not all these changes are deliverable by 1 April 2015; but some will be needed during the course of the next financial year. A further report will be submitted to the Cabinet on more detailed options for future service delivery.

### **How does this process stand up against external assessment?**

15. The basis for this analysis is the Auditor General's report of 28 January 2014. This summarised how Councils in Wales were responding to the budgetary challenge. A summary of the key findings are reproduced in the table at Appendix 2 with the Council's self assessment alongside. Many of these issues will be covered in the Corporate Assessment of the Council conducted by the Wales Audit Office (WAO) earlier this year (that report is imminent); but they are relevant here as context - and several are factors in this report.

### **The Budget process going forward**

16. Against the background described above, there are a number of considerations which need to be taken into account:

- This report assumes that savings identified in the Forward Financial Plan (FFP) 2013-18 will be delivered. The proposals here are, by necessity, on top of existing savings – not instead of them. Appendix 1 lists the new savings; but an updated version of the FFP as a whole will be submitted to Council in due course;
- It is essential that the Director of Finance (and the Corporate Directors Group) is in a position immediately after Christmas to offer Members definitive advice to finalise the 2015/16 Budget, including the level of Council Tax going forward. It is therefore necessary to secure guidance from Members now;
- Some key reports have already been presented to the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet<sup>2</sup> – and further reports are in the pipeline. A further Member Seminar took place on 25 September;

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<sup>2</sup>A range of reports have been/or will shortly be presented to Cabinet and the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee. These have broadly been grouped by Directorate. Those covering the Environment Directorate and Corporate Services on 10 September; Education and Lifelong Learning Directorate on 25 September and Social Services Health & Housing subsequently.

- A new departure this year was the Partnership Event on the Budget which was held on 8 September with more than 100 people in attendance. In addition to Members, a range of key partners were invited including all of the Local Service Board (LSB), other partners, Trade Unions, the regulators and others. The outcomes from the Event have informed this report and will do so equally in subsequent discussions in, for example, Scrutiny Committees;
- Extensive consultation is necessary with service users, partners, staff and trade unions on a range of issues. This dialogue is a two-way street - not just the Council initiating the discussion and there is national guidance to support this in some areas<sup>3</sup>;
- In terms of the workforce, the Staff Council remains a key forum for dialogue; but other meetings have been organised with trade unions and Joint Consultative Committees will also continue;
- The Leader of Council has put in place strengthened Scrutiny and governance arrangements (see the report to Council dated 2 July 2014). These are particularly relevant to the Budget process where Scrutiny Chairs are now developing their own work programmes in response so as to inform final decisions in the New Year;
- The Council must have regard to equality impact assessments in all decisions. Work is ongoing to ensure that budget proposals are assessed against guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). With this in mind, the Council also held a Community Cohesion event on 18 September (involving partners such as Cytun, the BME and LGBT Forums; the Older Persons Council and the Disability Network Advisory Group); and
- Typically, a three month notice period is required for service contracts with third parties. It is only fair and reasonable to allow those who may have reduced funding time to plan for a change of circumstances by notifying them early with the caveat that final decisions may not have been taken. The alternative would be last minute, short notice, remedial action providing no opportunity to properly plan for 1 April 2015. This is not in the interests of service users, partners or the Council and it has previously led to legal challenges to the decision making process elsewhere.

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<sup>3</sup> The Older Person's Commissioner for Wales "Effective Engagement with Local Authorities Toolkit for Older People": July 2014 (distributed in NPT through the Older Persons Council)

## **Part 2**

### **What it means for Council Services**

17. This section of the report explains the detail of the proposed cuts listed in full at Appendix 1 and grouped by Directorate.

18. The analysis that follows should be prefaced by three comments (which were relevant last year and are equally applicable now):

- It is not possible at this stage to identify the precise impact on an area or electoral ward because final decisions have not been taken. The principle is that services will be sustained to the maximum extent across the County Borough; but ever since the inception of the FFP in 2008/09 the Council has adopted a “use it or lose it” approach to service delivery which is in sharper focus now;
- There is no point in pretending that the impact will not eventually be felt in terms of performance in some areas. In key areas of the Corporate Improvement Plan, performance continues to improve (e.g. children’s services on the 8 priority measures agreed with CSSIW and on recycling); but elsewhere performance is more variable. With much less money and fewer staff, some services will stop (e.g. tourism services and special events last year) and others will take longer to deliver;
- Some commentators predict that as the squeeze continues the ability of Councils to meet statutory duties will be at risk. Some policy makers seem to regard the existence of statutory duties as a guarantee of service delivery. This is wrong; but Council staff have demonstrated their professionalism and commitment time and again in difficult circumstances. This is evidenced by the latest (2013/14) all-Wales performance data. The Council has 18 indicators (out of 44) in the top quartile compared to 10 the previous year whilst the position in the bottom quartile is the exact reverse. At the time of writing, a full report was scheduled for the Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee and Council shortly; and
- What follows is not an exhaustive list. There are further details in the appendices; but additional cuts will be needed if these savings are not delivered and/or the overall position deteriorates further. On the other hand, all of what follows is subject to the on-going



consultation and statutory processes described above and cannot therefore be regarded as definitive.

- 19. Again, whilst not seeking final decisions now, Members are invited to note that this analysis is also based on a Council Tax increase of 4.99% for 2015/16. This is the maximum permissible before the Welsh Government's "cap" would very probably be applied.**

### **Environment**

20. The key issues were reported to Cabinet and Cabinet Scrutiny Committee on 10 September; but are summarised below for completeness.
21. It is proposed to end all local authority bus subsidies (saving £234,000). This proposal is currently out for public consultation; but there are wider, more fundamental, policy issues alluded to in Part 3 of this report below.
22. At Gnoll Country Park, the proposal here is to reduce the subsidy/increase charges to reduce the budget by £142,000 per annum.
23. On Biodiversity and Countryside, there would be an £88,000 cut in funding for this activity. This reduces the services to align more with statutory requirements.
24. It is proposed to remove the subsidy on the two staff canteens in Port Talbot and Neath on the basis that there are alternative outlets nearby for staff to use (saving £100,000). This could involve closure of both if the subsidies cannot be removed in another way. Effectively, these facilities compete with local businesses in both the Aberafan Centre and in Neath Town Centre. The option of also closing the Quays canteen has been discarded as the above considerations do not apply and there is no subsidy involved.
25. As one off (non-recurring) income generation, the Council proposes to dispose of a limited number of paintings and artefacts plus Twyn yr Hydd House. Earlier proposals to find an alternative use for the latter (e.g. a training centre) have not proved commercially viable. Together, these disposals could raise approximately £1 million.

## **Education, Leisure & Lifelong Learning**

26. Budgets here are being squeezed by a number of factors (in addition to those outlined above). The 1%+ commitment – see below – and the requirement to increasingly delegate to schools in recent years (the figure is now at 84%) means that there is much reduced resource available to fund central services which were previously provided to schools free or heavily subsidised. The scope for realising savings on the non-schools proportion of the total budget (approximately 25%) is also very limited and a number of measures have already been introduced in these areas (e.g. the transfer of libraries to the community). These proposals were reported to Cabinet Scrutiny and Cabinet on 25 September, where more detail is to be found.
27. Against this background, the proposal is to reduce funding to schools to a level where the commitment to provide 1% above the settlement received by the Welsh Government from Westminster is met at least over the totality of the current National Assembly term. This produces a saving of £774,000 on the schools delegated budget.
28. Various school-based and central services would be cut. These include outdoor education (field studies); the Physical Activity and Sport Service (PASS); music tuition; the school counselling service; governor training, school cleaning and minor school adaptations. The cost of the Welsh translation service would be recovered from other budgets. These (and other measures) would realise approximately £750,000 of savings. In addition, funding streams including Families First would be reduced to save a further £80,000.
29. Youth Service provision would be cut to save £100,000 with the focus in future on areas of greatest identified need (largely the most deprived areas);
30. A further £190,000 of savings have been identified in the Library Service including the decommissioning of a mobile library.
31. The Summer Play Schemes would cease saving £90,000.
32. Adult Community Learning provision would transfer to NPTC Group (NPT College). Welsh Government funding was cut by circa 25% for the current financial year. This won't save money of itself; but with large cuts expected again for next year and the service, as currently configured, is no longer viable.

33. The Leisure Trust subsidy would be reduced by the closure of Cymmer Swimming Pool and Hengwrt Barn where usage/footfall is very low. At Pontardawe Swimming Pool, the facility is reaching the end of its natural life despite high usage. The cost of repairs – at over £2m – is unaffordable. Any future replacement depends, in part, upon the robustness of the Council's new contract with Celtic Leisure and the ability of the Trust to generate sufficient surpluses to fund future borrowing<sup>4</sup>.
34. Other leisure/arts services would face cuts totalling some £300,000. Those affected include the Gwyn Hall, the Princess Royal Theatre, Pontardawe Arts Centre and grants to various community and voluntary organisations.
35. Community and other facilities would also be closed, scaled back or transferred to third parties during the course of the next financial year. This would save some £400,000.

### **Social Services, Health & Housing**

36. On Children's Services, a year-on-year target reduction of 26 Looked After Children (LAC) per annum is proposed. This is something the Council has delivered during the last year and should continue to aspire to regardless of the budgetary position. The Council has had far too many LACs at double the Welsh average and three times the English average. Hence the emphasis on better working relationships with the courts and improved permanency planning in the intervening period. Whilst the care of LACs has been (and always will be) the guiding priority; a reduction in numbers is now essential for budgetary reasons also as LAC placements are very expensive, particularly the out-of-county variety. A reduction of 26 would yield annual savings of approximately £700,000.
37. The Transforming Adult Social Care (TASC) programme has been at the heart of the Council's change programme for several years. The cost of these services is £44m annually plus managements costs of £5.6m. A number of initiatives are proposed.
38. Strengthened contracting and commissioning arrangements to ensure optimal outcomes and value for money. This is an area of significant

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<sup>4</sup> NB A separate report on the renegotiation of the Council's contract with Celtic Leisure will follow, although the contract will allow for the Council to vary the provision of services provided by the Trust.

weakness in the past where further improvements must be made. It is also linked to the Western Bay programme.

39. The Director of Social Services, Health and Housing is developing restructuring options designed to save an estimated £1.2m per annum on the costs of production.
40. The Council consulted widely on modernising day services and service user assessments are now complete. These changes are now being implemented and the target saving is approximately £500,000 per annum.
41. In other related services, proposals are being put forward to save a further £500,000+. These include Mental Health plus “Pathways To Independence” - including placement budgets and a significant increase in those service users utilising direct payments (currently less than 10%; but needs to be at least 40% by the end of 2015/16).
42. The Integrated Community Care teams (the Western Bay business case was approved in May 2014) are likely to attract further support from the Intermediate Care Fund or its successor.
43. A further £250,000 saving is targeted from the new Supporting People Commissioning arrangements.
44. The decommissioning of the under-occupied and out dated Gelligron residential and respite unit realising savings of £200,000 per annum.
45. Further reports will be submitted to Cabinet/Cabinet Board as required.

### **Corporate or cross-Directorate**

46. *Senior Management/Trade Union facility time*: Continuing the trend of recent years, reductions in senior management posts are proposed. In the ELLL department, 3 Heads of Service would be reduced to 2. In the Environment Directorate, 4 would be reduced to 3. In addition, the newly appointed Head of Human Resources has been advised that one senior management post would be lost as an indirect consequence of her promotion. It is also proposed to achieve a saving in relation to the Council’s trade union facilities time agreement by reducing or discontinuing one full-time Green Book secondment position and by

reducing some time off arrangements for teaching association representatives (funded by the ELL Directorate).

47. **Sickness absence:** It is proposed to introduce tougher improvement targets for areas of the Council<sup>5</sup> where the level of sickness persists above the Council average of 9.19 days. The additional cost of those services with above average sickness rates is £1.2 million per annum and this is a significant factor in why many of these services are increasingly uncompetitive. The Council cannot sustain this position and the target saving is £500,000 per annum.
48. **Procurement:** There are a range of savings proposed across service areas (notably in Social Services) designed to reduce expenditure on goods and services.
49. **Digital/Online services:** What this means is a move towards more on line services with less telephone and face-to-face contact. Public information would be produced in downloadable format not printed and new technology in the call centre to promote this way of working.
50. **Other issues:** It is proposed to reduce opening hours for the cashiers' service in line with a move to more on line services. That would realise a saving of £50,000.
51. There are a range of savings proposals covering ICT, legal services, financial services and others (although the Welfare Rights Team is currently exempt) plus further cuts to CCTV, customer service functions, stationery and other minor budgets. These would realise £300,000 plus.
52. **Reserves:** Officers have conducted a full analysis of reserves (both specific and general). There has been media comment suggesting that at a total of £700 million across Wales, there is considerable scope for Councils to deploy these reserves to alleviate the need for cuts.
53. Whilst a judicious use of reserves has a part to play (they did last year and will continue to be applied to funding the VR scheme), this analysis is flawed for three main reasons:

- First, the Auditor General has said<sup>6</sup>:

<sup>5</sup> ELLL (Schools, Catering & Cleaning and other support services); Community Care & Housing; Engineering & Transport; Property & Regeneration and Street Care.

<sup>6</sup> Report of 28 January at paragraph 1.6 – see list of Background Papers.

*“A growing concern is that some authorities may be over-relying on balancing their budgets by using reserves, rather than restructuring services to reflect budget reductions”*

The implication is clear. Councils who over-deploy reserves can expect criticism or even intervention in extreme circumstances.

- Second, as Table 2 above illustrates, the projected level of the Council’s budget gap over the next now exceeds the total level of reserves anyway; and
- Third, reserves by their very nature are non-recurring. Accordingly, they do not solve budget problems and, to a large extent, only “kick the can down the road”.

### **The Impact on Council Staff**

54. Appendix 1 contains a column identifying the number of posts at risk, and full-time equivalents, as a consequence of the savings proposed.

55. So far, the Council has largely avoided compulsory redundancies (outside of schools) mainly as a consequence of the 2013 Workforce Agreement; but each passing year and the increasing magnitude of the cuts makes that job harder. However, this remains the objective and the Council will continue to deploy its Voluntary Redundancy scheme (recently modified and re-launched); restrict recruitment to essential exceptions only and continue to apply redeployment policies in an attempt to achieve that goal. **However, it should be noted that whilst the Council’s priority is to protect jobs, the trade unions nationally see the priority as to protect terms and conditions.** Doing both is next to impossible in the circumstances we face as staff costs account for some 60% of the Council’s total budget.

56. In line with a commitment given to the trade unions, officers have reviewed the position on the implementation of the Living Wage (currently £7.65 per hour outside of London); but have concluded that it is not affordable in the current financial climate as a straight additional cost (although an alternative mechanism for achieving it is identified in Part 3 of this report below).

## **Part 3**

### **Savings considered but not included in the proposals**

57. The purpose of this section is to illustrate the full extent of the work done by officers over the summer period by listing some areas which have been explored but, for the reasons explained, **NOT** included in the package of savings proposals:

Reducing Social Services Expenditure to the Standard Spending Assessment (SSA) levels	This would produce major savings; but would represent too blunt an instrument and potentially risk service delivery and the discharge of statutory obligations.
Further cuts to delegated schools budget	The 1%+ commitment described in this report is essentially political not legal; but failure to meet it is likely to result in criticism of the Council.
A reduction in the Council's working week from 37 to 36 hours per week	Possible savings of up to £2m p.a. (part of which could be used to fund the implementation of the Living Wage – see above). This is likely to be strongly opposed by staff and the trade unions as it would involve a reduction in pay of 2.7% at a time when Unison, GMB and Unite members are nationally taking strike action to secure an improvement in this year's national pay offer of circa 1%. Implementation of this measure in NPT would require a collective agreement (through trade union ballots) or unilateral imposition through dismissal and re-engagement.
Declining Welsh Government funding where the cost of delivering the service exceeds the funding to deliver it.	The Concessionary Fares scheme is one example. This costs the Council £300,000 more than we receive to administer. This is unsustainable and, arguably, the cuts in these subsidies (national and local) question the future viability of the scheme.

<p>Redirecting Community Benefit Funds (e.g. wind farms) to sustain front-line public services</p>	<p>This may be an option in future; but the rules around existing funds largely preclude the option. There would strong localised opposition in all probability; but the argument in favour is that there is no point in funding new services if existing ones are being lost.</p>
<p>Collaboration</p>	<p>Some initiatives are important and others will be taken forward for non-financial reasons; but increasingly the cost of participation in most Beecham/Simpson-style activities is greater than any return.</p>
<p>Further closures of community and leisure facilities based upon building conditions and usage</p>	<p>For example, the Vale of Neath Leisure Centre where usage has dropped sharply.</p>
<p>Withdrawal from the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and other subscriptions</p>	<p>Savings could total £100,000+; but subscriptions typically involve a notice period, so many are not deliverable for 1 April 2015 in any event.</p>



## **Part 4**

### **Recommendations**

That Members:

- 1.(a): Note the extent of budget shortfall facing the Council for 2015/16 and the three years to 2017/18, based upon Part 1 of this report;
- 1(b): Note that officers will provide further advice based following the Provisional Local Government Settlement on 8 October 2014 and the Final Local Government Settlement on 10 December 2014 where the proposals in this report may need to be modified;
- 1(c): Comment, as thought fit, on the various assumptions and analysis contained in this report (Parts 1 to 3);
2. Agree that officers prepare a budget proposal to bridge this gap informed by the analysis in Part 2 of this report (or alternatives of equal monetary value);
3. Authorise officers to conduct the various consultation/engagement processes with service users and external partners plus Trade Unions and staff to be completed by Christmas to enable the Council to achieve a balanced budgetary position in the New Year; and
4. Refer this report to the Scrutiny Committee Chairs for further discussion as thought appropriate (including the next meeting of the Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee).

### **Reason for Proposed Decisions**

To achieve a balanced budget position for 2015/16 and discharge the Council's statutory duties in this regard and those of the Section 151 officer.

**Appendices:**

1. List of Proposed Budget Savings 2015/16
2. Council self assessment against the Auditor General's report on factors local authorities should take account of in responding to the budget challenge

**List of Background Papers (in chronological order)**

Modernising Day Services Business Case: Social Care, Health & Housing  
Cabinet Board: 12 December 2013

*Meeting the Financial Challenges Facing Local Government in Wales:*  
Wales Audit Office: 28 January 2014

Social Services Health and Housing Cabinet Board: Western Bay  
Community Services Business Case: 14 May 2014

Strengthening and Modernising Arrangements in Neath Port Talbot  
County Borough Council: Report to Council 2 July 2014

Letter from Lesley Griffiths AM: 24 June 2014

Letter from the Chief Executive to Elected Members: 11 July 2014

Presentation by the Director of Finance & Corporate Services to the  
Member Budget Seminars: 14 & 17 July 2014

Budget Monitoring Report (Quarter 1) – Cabinet & Cabinet Scrutiny: 30  
July 2014

Corporate Improvement Plan: 2014-17

Cabinet/Cabinet Scrutiny Committee Agendas and reports: 10 & 25  
September 2014

**Wards Affected**

All

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## **COMPLIANCE STATEMENT**

### **A Budget Strategy for 2015/16**

#### **(a) Implementation of Decisions**

The decision is proposed for implementation after consultation with the relevant Scrutiny Committee and consideration and approval by Cabinet.

#### **(b) Sustainability Appraisal**

Economic Prosperity	-	Negative
Education & Lifelong Learning	-	Negative
Better Health & Wellbeing	-	Negative
Environment & Transport	-	Negative
Crime & Disorder	-	Negative

#### **Other Impacts**

Welsh Language	-	Probably negative
Sustainable Development	-	Probably negative
Equalities	-	Negative
Social Inclusion	-	Negative

#### **(c) Consultation**

These matters are subject to comprehensive internal and external consultation as discussed in the report.

## Appendix 1

### Budget Saving Strategies for Consultation

Ref	Description		Lead Officer	Main Impacts	2015/16 £000	2016/17 £000	2017/18 £000	est staff no	est staff fte
ELLL1	CYPE	Delegated Schools Funding	AT	Cash limiting the Schools Delegated Budget Quantum to 1% above the Welsh Government Settlement, this would lead to a reduction in Budget Shares for all of our schools.	774.0				
ELLL2	ECR	Review the current stock of 12 community centres or community education/enterprise centres	AE	Where maintenance or transfer is not achieved closure of facilities would result in less educational, community events, sporting, healthy living, family contact and youth and playgroup facilities across the County Borough.	450.0			5	
ELLL3	ECR	Reduce the current Physical Activity and Sports Service core budget.	AT	Reduced activity within the Physical Activity and Sports Service. Reduce or withdraw subsidies to sport associations and governing bodies. Grant funded activities will continue.	150.0			8	
ELLL4	ECR	Withdraw community arts activities	AT	Reduced community arts provision across the County Borough.	35.0			2	
ELLL5	CYPE	Core funding to the Youth Service to be reduced.	AE	Rationalise youth club provision with fewer opportunities for young people to participate in youth provision	100.0				
ELLL6	CYPE	Welsh translation service to recover 100% of costs through increased charges to service users	AT	Service users will incur an increased cost based on charges for this service being revised in line with market rates	70.0				1.25
ELLL7	ECR	Negotiate the transfer of Arts Administration service to Celtic Leisure at a reduced cost	AE	Possible displacement of staff. Transfer of responsibility of marketing to leisure trust which leads to ELLL9 below.	68.0			0	0
ELLL8	ECR	Reduction in subsidies to theatres and arts centres.	AT	Potential Reduction to opening hours of these facilities and/or a reduction of performance programme.	140.0				
ELLL9	ECR	Secure NNDR Savings through transfer of facilities to either community ownership or Celtic Trust	AT		46.0			0	0
ELLL10	ECR	Reduce subsidy to Celtic Leisure.	AE	Celtic Leisure will be required to secure greater efficiency and commercial return on investment.	75.0			0	0
ELLL11	ECR	Range of efficiency measures to library services to include reduction in book fund, decommission of one mobile library and reduction in cleaning costs.	AE	Reduce book lending provision across the County Borough.	190.0			1	
ELLL12	CYPE	Vacancy management - Reduction of one Head of Service	AE	This will result in increased managerial responsibilities for the Senior Management Team.	100.0			1	1
ELLL13	CYPE	Renegotiate union facilities time to realise 50% reduction	AT		25.0			0	0
ELLL14	ECR	Reduce core budget at Margam Park	AT	Potential impact on opening hours and range of services provided.	100.0				
ELLL15	CYPE	Reduce school based counselling and restructure current service	AT	Reduce access to school based counselling service across all Secondary Schools.	25.0				
ELLL16	CYPE	Summer playscheme provision to be withdrawn.	CM	Reduced access to play for children across the borough during the summer holidays	90.0				12.49

## Budget Saving Strategies for Consultation

Ref	Description		Lead Officer	Main Impacts	2015/16 £000	2016/17 £000	2017/18 £000	est staff no	est staff fte
ELLL17	CYPE	Reduce families first base budget	AE	Expectation of increased efficiencies in the allocation and administration of grant funding	80.0				
ELLL18	ECR	Reduced contribution to Blaengwynfi Miners Hall	AE	Potential closure of the facility with current activities displaced to other local community facilities e.g. Penafan Community School.	45.0			0	0
ELLL19	CYPE	Withdraw the adaptations and improvements budget	AT	These cost will have to be met by schools	93.0			0	0
ELLL20	ECR	Reduce contributions to voluntary organisations	CM	Potential decrease in community activity within the borough	20.0			0	0
ELLL21	CYPE	Renegotiate contribution to Field Studies Council	AT	This will lead to increased charges for pupils attending the Outdoor Education Centre.	130.0			0	0
ELLL22	CYPE	Full cost recovery on cleaning service to schools	AT	Increased costs funded from primary and special schools budgets.	130.0			0	0
ELLL23	CYPE	Transfer the costs of School Licence fees to schools	CM	Costs would have to be met by schools	50.0			0	0
ELLL24	ECR	Review residual management post.	AE	Possible displacement of member of staff.	67.0			1	1
ELLL25	CYPE	Review financial support for LLAN Coordinator/Governor Training	CM	Apply full cost recovery principle to governor training via SLA. Increased cost to schools.	30.0			0	0
ELLL26	CYPE	Reduce music tuition base budget.	CM	Reduced access to music provision across the county borough	50.0				
ELLL27	ECR	Potential reduction in budget at Cefn Coed Colliery museum	CM	Potential further reduction in public opening hours	20.0			0	0
ELLL28	CYPE	ERVR trawl	AE	Reduction in capacity and/or expertise	200.0			TBC	TBC
ELLL29	CYPE	Reduced base budget for School Improvement Service	CM	The service will prioritise its support for schools according to identified the need.	70.0			0	0

SSHH1	SCHH	Workforce - Senior management restructure	C Marchant	Review of senior management structures	290.0			6.0	5.8
SSHH2	SCHH	Establish common commissioning unit incorporating community care, supporting people and children's commissioning functions	C Marchant	Review structure and reduction in capacity	90.0			3.0	2.4
SSHH3	SCHH	Social workers/OT's - review of skill mix and intensive OD programme to move social work teams from a focus of care management to well being and community connection	C Marchant	Better use of non-social work qualified workforce	82.5	82.5		10.0	10.0
SSHH4	SCHH	Reduction of number posts per social work team	C Marchant	Need to minimise the impact on quality and timeliness of response	150.0			5.0	5.0
SSHH5	SCHH	Day Opportunities - review of workforce skill mix	C Marchant	Use of Apprentices	75.0	75.0		5.0	5.0
SSHH6	SCHH	Sickness Management cover costs	C Marchant	Target reduction in sickness costs	250.0				

## Budget Saving Strategies for Consultation

Ref	Description		Lead Officer	Main Impacts	2015/16 £000	2016/17 £000	2017/18 £000	est staff no	est staff fte
SSHH7	SCHH	Amalgamate the social work QA function within the adult safeguarding team	C Marchant		35.0			1.0	1.0
SSHH8	SCHH	Restructure within housing options and housing renewals and adaptations	C Marchant		150.0			4.0	4.0
SSHH9	SCHH	Additional Savings from the Pathways to Independence project (PTI), reducing the cost of care packages	C Marchant	Mental Health	122.0				
SSHH10	SCHH	Additional Savings from the Pathways to Independence project (PTI), reducing the cost of care packages	C Marchant	Physical & Sensory Support	45.0				
SSHH11	SCHH	Additional Savings from the Pathways to Independence project (PTI), reducing the cost of care packages	C Marchant	Learning Disabilities	500.0	250.0			
SSHH12	SCHH	Review of contracts with Hafal and Shaw Trust	C Marchant		80.0				
SSHH13	SCHH	Gelligron residential and respite unit for people with mental health problems	C Marchant	The current services are consistently under occupied and the service model is to be modernised.	100.0	100.0		4.0	4.0
SSHH14	SCHH	Supporting people grant, review of specific services	C Marchant	Welsh Government have advised Authorities to prepare for a substantial cut in the SP grant for 2015/16 so there maybe a degree of risk in identifying further savings	250.0				
SSHH15	SCHH	Reduce subsidy from COASTAL Housing for extra care	C Marchant		49.0				
SSHH16	SCHH	Work with providers to minimise the impact through active exploration of alternatives to sleep-ins.	C Marchant	Ensure appropriate service delivery arrangements are in place to reduce costs and eliminate pressure	580.0				
SSHH17	SCHH	Maximise housing rental income	C Marchant		35.0				
SSHH18	SCHH	Increased income from care home residents	C Marchant		100.0				
SSHH19	SCHH	Reduce transport expenditure by 10%	C Marchant		115.0				
SSHH20	SCHH	Assistive Technology	C Marchant	Reduce Costs	14.0				
SSHH21	SCHH	Assistive Technology	C Marchant	Increase charges	23.0				
SSHH22	SCHH	Remove care home quality scheme	C Marchant	Quality scheme implemented will be good practice and supported by a recognition scheme rather than any financial incentive	259.0				
SSHH23	SCHH	Cap fee levels paid to Mental Health and all Disability service providers to current or lower level.	C Marchant	Adverse Service Providers Response	259.0				
SSHH24	SCHH	Implement full cost recovery model for community meals	C Marchant	Transfer staff from Environment	150.0			3.0	3.0
SSHH25	SCHH	Modernise Day Opportunities Disability Services	C Marchant	Generate income via micro enterprises and reduced costs	100.0			3.0	3.0

## Budget Saving Strategies for Consultation

Ref	Description		Lead Officer	Main Impacts	2015/16 £000	2016/17 £000	2017/18 £000	est staff no	est staff fte
SSHH26	SCHH	Reduce placements budgets (including increased uptake of direct payments) and implement Local Area Co-ordination model	C Marchant	This will result in reduce demand on in house services		1,000.0			
SSHH27	CYPE	Children's Services - Reduce placements budget to reflect fewer LAC per annum from 2015	A Jarrett	Reduction of 26 Looked After Children per annum	700.0				
SSHH28	SCHH	Review and restructure of services within the Business Services Division.	A Thomas	Preserve right number and mix of foundation apprentices to experienced staff	60.0			4.0	4.0
SSHH29	SCHH	Remodel the administration of the Complaints Service	A Thomas	Reduction of 1 fte	30.0			1.0	1.0
ENVT1	ECR	Reduce subsidy to Canteens	G.Nutt	Potential closure of 2 Canteens	100			19	7.5
ENVT2	E&H	Reduced subsidies to bus operators	D.Griffiths	Potential reduction in Public Transport, inevitably some residents will have difficulty accessing jobs and services.	234			0	0
ENVT3	E&H	Reduce subsidy for Gnoll Country Park	M.Roberts		142			8	4.9
ENVT4	E&H	Public Lighting	M.Roberts		126			0	0
ENVT5	E&H	Bus Shelter	M Roberts	Reduce maintenance by 10%	5			0	0
ENVT6	E&H	Street Naming	M Roberts	Reduce maintenance by 10%	5			0	0
ENVT7	ECR	Port Talbot Civic Centre NNDR	G Nutt	Saving re Princess Royal Theatre	40			0	0
ENVT8	ECR	Sandfields Young Business centre	G Nutt	Increase to Rental Income	5			0	0
ENVT9	ECR	Biodiversity and Countryside	N. Pearce		88			1	1.6
ENVT10	ECR	Building Control & Planning	N. Pearce	Reduce Costs/Increase Income	50			2	1.5
ENVT11	E&H	Reduction in Senior Management	G.Nutt	Will impact on capacity	100			1	1
ENVT12	E&H	ER/VR	All Env	This is in addition to the existing £150k target	275			13	13
ENVT13	E&H	Feasibility budget	G Nutt	15% budget cut	24			0	0
ENVT14	E&H	Staff training budget	All Env	Further cut to reflect decrease in staff numbers	5			0	0
ENVT15	ECR	Neath Civic Centre	G Nutt	Income from Solar Panels	5			0	0
ENVT16	E&H	Community Transport	D. Griffiths	Fuel efficiency	25			0	0
ENVT17	E&H	Pelenna Mine	G Nutt	Potential transfer of responsibility to Coal Authority	26			0	0
ENVT18	E&H	Corporate Capacity	D Griffiths	Reduce budget by 10%	24			0	0
ENVT19	E&H	Cemeteries	M Roberts	Reduction in casual staff	10			0	0
ENVT20	E&H	Savings to be developed	All Env		225				
CORP 520	P&R	Corp 520 cannot be achieved due to delays by the DWP in implementing their proposed changes to benefits administration	D Rees	Alternative savings have had to be found and are included as part of 2015/16 - see below.	-57.0	-27.0	-27.0	0	0
FS1	P&R	Increased income generation from the Court Deputy service	D Rees	Introduction of new charges and development of a joint adult family placement scheme with Bridgend, which will require the establishment of a new post at grade 5	30.0			0	0



## Budget Saving Strategies for Consultation

Ref	Description		Lead Officer	Main Impacts	2015/16 £000	2016/17 £000	2017/18 £000	est staff no	est staff fte
FS2	P&R	Reduce the opening hours of the cash offices at both Neath and Port Talbot Civic Centres, plus efficiency savings in the cashiering service.	D Rees	Reduced hours of service available to the public, and customers having to wait longer to be served. The aim will be to achieve the reduction in hours via the VR scheme; if this is not achievable then reduced hours of work offered to staff and/or redeployment of staff	50.0			3	2
FS3	P&R	Review and re-structure of services within the financial services division to allow a number of staff to leave on VR.	D Rees	This will mean a significant reduction in terms of the staff resources available within the Finance Division. This can only be achieved by thoroughly reviewing the services provided. Whilst these reviews create efficiencies, there will still be an inevitable diminution of the services provided alongside increased workloads and pressure on the staff that remain.	165.0			7	4.5
FS4	P&R	Wales Audit Office (WAO) fees	D Rees	Reviews of working practices to create greater efficiencies which will lead to the reduced requirement for inspection and hence charges from WAO.	30.0			0	0
FS5	P&R	Use of 2014/15 underspend to meet savings target in 2015/16.	D Rees	The 2015/16 shortfall will be met in 2016/17.	32.0	-32.0			
FS6	P&R	savings to be identified	D Rees	Staff ER/VR over 2 years		259.0	227.0	22	16
CORP528	P&R	re modelling of functions/services	K Jones		-61.0	-54.0	-50.0		
CORP531	P&R	de clustering of customer services officer posts	K Jones		-13.0				
CPRP533	P&R	reduce staff as services are placed on line	K Jones		-30.0				
CORP538	P&R	Reduce stationery budget	K Jones		-10.0				
CORP541	P&R	modernise democratic services - reduce staff costs	K Jones		-25.0				
CSDS1	P&R	Performance Audit Fees	K Jones	Reduced cost of WAO performance audit fees	26.0			0	0
CSDS2	P&R	Reduce Elections Team Staffing Resource	K Jones	Less resilience within elections team.	7.0			1	0.5
CSDS3	P&R	Income Target for Division	K Jones	Seek out income opportunities, mainly grant funding, to reduce pressure on council revenue budget	15.0			0	0
CSDS4	P&R	Reduce stationery budget in Democratic Services	K Jones	Streamlined committee administration and greater reliance on electronic methods of working for both officers and elected members	10.0			0	0
CSDS5	P&R	Complete winding up of Change Management and Innovation Unit	K Jones	No dedicated corporate capacity to support the council's change agenda	170.0			5	5
CSDS6	P&R	Reduce capacity in customer services	K Jones	Reduction in service performance	40.0			2	2

## Budget Saving Strategies for Consultation

Ref	Description		Lead Officer	Main Impacts	2015/16 £000	2016/17 £000	2017/18 £000	est staff no	est staff fte
CSDS7	P&R	Introduce revised access to services policy across council	K Jones	Move to a digital by default policy. This will mean minimising the public information printed with people expected to use downloadable information; increasing the number of service available on line and increasing public take up of those services; introducing new technologies in the corporate contact centre to minimise the number of call handling staff required there.		200.0	100.0	10	10
CSDS8	P&R	Further review of CCTV operation to further reduce costs	K Jones	Options could include reducing the availability of the service further, recharging the cost to partners with a view to full cost recovery or transferring the service to another provider at no/minimal cost to the council		80.0	80.0	8	8
CSDS9	P&R	Further streamlining of democratic and corporate support following completion of modernisation programme	K Jones	Efficiency savings from modernisation programme			50.0	1	1
CSDS10	P&R	Use of 2014/15 underspend to meet savings target in 2015/16.	K Jones	The 2015/16 shortfall will be met in 2016/17.	121.0	-121.0			
CSDS11	P&R	Strategies to be identified	K Jones			95.0	20.0		
Page 32 COR525	P&R	HR - rationalisation and remodelling of functions and service	Sheenagh Rees	Staff reductions	-43.0	-38.0	-36.0		
COR526	P&R	HR/Unions	Sheenagh Rees	Staff reductions	-33.0				
HR32	P&R	Increase income from Hillside SLA to reflect level of service demand. Current provision of £8k per annum does not reflect the service required.	Sheenagh Rees	With increased income the HR team will be able to continue to provide the service required by Hillside. Without increased income the service will reduce to match funding provision.	25.0				
HR2	P&R	Reduce Corporate Training & Development Management Development / Leadership Development budget	Sheenagh Rees	Reduced provision of management and leadership development. This will adversely impact upon the Council's ability to deliver the Council's change programme.	20.0				
HR3	P&R	Reduce administrative support staff and professional support staff across HR / Health & Safety / Occupational Health / Training & Development NB: this includes planned FFP reductions of £31k / £38k / £35k over the 3 years (3 FTE)	Sheenagh Rees	Significantly reduced capacity across the 4 teams. Some work will be transferred to managers, a less flexible service will be available, some work will not be done and delayed response times in relation to some parts of the service. There are some significant risks attached to reducing capacity that will impact on supporting Disciplinary Grievance Investigations, supporting Managers in relation to Sickness Management, reducing the ability to support construction design and management projects together with other Health & Safety work and reducing Corporate Training and Development activity.	156.0	131.0	129.0	15	12.72

## Budget Saving Strategies for Consultation

Ref	Description		Lead Officer	Main Impacts	2015/16 £000	2016/17 £000	2017/18 £000	est staff no	est staff fte
HR4	P&R	Reduction in seconded trade union representatives budget	Sheenagh Rees	Reduced capacity within the seconded trade union team to participate in the Council's business - delays in formal processes and restrict TU ability to engage with the Council / work in partnership		7.0	7.0		
LS1	P&R	General Admin Savings	David Michael		20.0				
LS2	P&R	Reduction Coroner budget	David Michael	Joint Service with Swansea Council potential variation caseload	20.0				
LS3	P&R	Staffing Child Care	David Michael	Loss of trainee post	25.0			1	1
LS4	P&R	Legal Services	David Michael	Loss of trainee post	25.0			1	1
LS5	P&R	Increase income target Registrar	David Michael		10.0				
LS6	P&R	Recharge to Licensing/ increased income	David Michael		10.0				
LS7	P&R	Staffing	David Michael	Risk of destabilising teams. Need to reduce workload		115.0		4	4
LS8	P&R	Staffing	David Michael	Risk of destabilising teams. Need to reduce workload			100.0	3	3
LS9	P&R	Use of 2014/15 underspend to meet savings target in 2015/16.	David Michael	The 2015/16 shortfall will be met in 2016/17.	15.0	-15.0			
ICT1	P&R	ERVR - realised in 2014/15	Steve John		64.0			2	2
ICT2	P&R	Reduce supplies & services budget	Steve John	increased risk and reduce the ability to develop systems and undertake training on new software releases. Will impact on service delivery			37.0		
ICT3	P&R	Reduce contribution to IT renewals reserve	Steve John	Reduce ability to replace infrastructure and hardware, to support service delivery and implement new technology. Will place demand on councils capital programme.		77.0			
ICT4	P&R	Efficiencies	Steve John	Recharge costs to projects, bring future year savings forward	60.0	-30.0	-30.0	2	2
ICT5	P&R	Strategies to be identified	Steve John	Realising the further savings identified for each of the following years will require staff reductions and a re-configuration of support contract spend; the exact detail of which is yet to be determined. The remaining budget will be directed at the Council's priority projects with the result that some works will be delayed whilst others will be removed from the programme altogether.	126.0	153.0	193.0	11	11

**TOTAL**

**10,630.5    2,307.5    800.0    209.0    179.2**

**It should be noted that there remains a budget gap of £2.8m even if all of the current potential savings values are delivered.**

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## **CABINET – 25<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2014**

### **REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, LEISURE AND LIFELONG LEARNING**

#### **SECTION A – MATTER FOR DECISION**

#### **WARDS AFFECTED – ALL**

#### **BUDGET SAVINGS PROPOSALS 2015/16**

#### **Purpose of the report**

To consider the budget saving proposals for the Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Directorate for 2015/16 and approve progression to consultation with staff, Trade Unions and stakeholders.

#### **Background**

The Welsh Government has recently indicated that councils across Wales can expect cuts of up to 4.5% for 2015/16. Together with pay awards, inflation and other pressures this requires Neath Port Talbot CBC to seek budget savings of £23m for next year and £50m over the next 3 years. This report is being presented as part of Neath Port Talbot Council's overall package of proposals which have been developed in response to this unprecedented cut in the Council's budget during 2015/2016 and the anticipated similar cuts over the following two years.

For 2014/15 Council has approved a budget of £103.3m to the Education, Leisure and Lifelong Directorate.

- £77.4m – delegated to schools
- £25.9m – for all other services

This covers the following service areas:

- Delegated budgets to schools
- School Improvement, Inclusion and Lifelong Learning
- Leisure, Libraries, Youth Service, Partnership and Community Development
- Access Managed Services

## **Proposed Budget Savings 2015/16**

For 2015 / 16, targeted savings of **£4.107m** have been sought from the Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Directorate by Corporate Services. This is in addition to the **£1.764m** already identified within the FFP for 2015 / 16.

This totals **£5.871m** for 2015/16.

It is also in addition to other saving targets identified for -

2016 / 17 - **£830k** and

2017 / 18 - **£314k**.

Furthermore, members should note that all these sums are in addition to the **£9.4m** already saved during the 2010 to 2015 period.

The Directorate has sought to adhere to the following key principles and priorities in the process of identifying forward saving strategies.

### **Protect our most vulnerable learners.**

- The consequence of not securing adequate support for vulnerable learners is significant in terms of cost and capacity. While we have identified £360k of savings within SEN, previously reported under the current FFP, to take further savings from this area would destabilise services completely.

### **Protect provision that is subject to external regulation.**

- The Directorate will not place itself in a high risk position regarding the areas to be scrutinised by Estyn, CyMAL, Wales Audit and other regulators. In order that we mitigate such risks, we need to continue to support improvement in standards (including vulnerable learners), attendance and safeguarding.

### **Maintain statutory services at an appropriate level.**

- While the Directorate is not able to cease statutory provision, it will examine all statutory status carefully in order that requirements are met.

Attached at Appendix 1 is a schedule of the proposed savings being developed by the Directorate's Senior Management Team and Service Managers.

In relation to specific proposals, in order that we seek to reach a savings target of over **£4.107 million**, the following budget proposals are offered for Members' consideration:

### **Schools Delegated Budget - £774,000**

Apply a 1% reduction to delegated school funding. The proposal is to reduce funding to schools to a level where the commitment to provide 1% above the settlement received by the Welsh Government from Westminster is met over the totality of the current Assembly term.

### **Community Facilities - £450,000**

Review the current stock of twelve Community Centres or Community Education / Enterprise Centres. This proposal will allow the Directorate, via consultation, to assess the potential future operation of each centre and, where relevant, consider a range of options from maintenance, transfer to closure.

The proposal will also give us an opportunity to redefine the purpose of the service, involving a possible restructuring of managerial roles across the Directorate, securing more strategic programming of community facilities and thereby maximise usage which will serve to maintain subsidy at an agreed level.

The Local Authority will consult with all interested parties to identify and understand options to achieve the savings required from the following sites:

- Croeserw Enterprise Centre
- Baglan Community Centre
- Taibach Community Centre
- Bryn Village Hall
- The Cross, Pontardawe
- Cwmafan Community Centre (to include consultation on the transfer of Cwmafan Library into the Community Centre with no proposed reduction in service).
- Glyncorrwg Community Centre
- Llandarcy (with the subsequent re-location of the Youth Service)
- Mozart Drive Community Centre
- Sandfields Community Education Centre
- Taibach Community Education Centre

It should be noted that the Local Authority has secured a successful transfer agreement of Noddfa Community Centre, Glyncorrwg to a local community group.

This is a non-statutory service.

### **Physical Activity and Sports Service £150,000**

This proposal is to reduce the current core funded budget. This will include consideration of subsidies to various sports' governing bodies and associations such as WRU, FAW and Disability Sports Cymru. Grant funded services will continue. This is a non-statutory service.

### **Community arts - £35,000**

It is proposed that funding for community arts activities is withdrawn allowing the Directorate to explore the possibility of securing alternative funding through agreement with primary and secondary schools and community groups. This is a non-statutory service.

### **Youth Service - £100,000**

Core funding to the youth service will be reduced. Savings will be achieved by reducing support to the voluntary sector, not replacing vacancies, reducing funding for activities and rationalising youth club provision through reducing the:

- annual number of weeks open from 30 to 28 weeks
- staffing levels where clubs are carrying vacancies but are able to adequately maintain provision with a smaller team
- number of nights open in clubs that open more than one night per week; and
- closure of clubs where membership is low and the clubs are not providing value for money.

Changes to youth club provision will be subject to consultation with staff as part of the management of change process, young people and communities.

The local authority has a statutory duty to provide an adequate youth service. The remaining core funding provided to the youth service will enable the retention of some youth clubs, project work in schools and communities, the Rolling Zone mobile provision, the Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme,



management of the RADS sexual health service, management of NEETS provision. External grant funding will focus on vulnerable young people aged 11-25, support for Communities First areas and one to one support for NEETS.

### **Welsh translation service - £70,000**

Current cost of this service is £150k and income is £10k. During 15/16 and through to 16/17, the service will be expected to employ an increased cost recovery principle across all corporate areas at standard national rate, circa £60 - 70 per 1000 words + VAT / circa £30 per hour simultaneous translation. It is proposed to consult on the viability of transferring this service into a social enterprise over the next 2 years.

### **Libraries - £190,000**

Apply a range of efficiency measures to the Library Service; the proposals include a reduction of £50k in the book fund, decommissioning one mobile library and rationalising costs; reducing cleaning costs by 50%.

The local authority has a duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service.

### **Vacancy management - £100,000**

The departure of two heads of service allows us to rationalise portfolios. We will not replace one Head of Service post. This will result in increased managerial responsibilities for existing staff.

### **Union facilities time – £25,000**

Re-negotiate Union Facilities agreement for 15/16 to realise a 50% reduction. Through negotiation, the Directorate will continue to provide trade union colleagues with support to maintain appropriate facilities time.

### **Margam Park - £100,000**

Reduce core budget, encouraging this facility to become more commercially focused.

**School Based Counselling - £25,000**

Reduce budget by 12.5% and re-configure current service provision, maintaining coverage in all secondary schools and year 6 feeder classes as required.

This is a statutory service.

**Summer Play schemes - £90,000**

It is proposed that the summer play scheme programme will not be provided across the County Borough during Summer 2015.

Local authorities have a duty to secure sufficient play opportunities for children in their areas, so far as reasonably practicable, having regard to their assessments. The duty also requires Local Authorities to publish and keep up to date information about play opportunities for children in their areas.

**Families First - £80,000**

Reduce Families First's base budget by securing further efficiencies in the allocation and administration of grant funding.

**Blaengwynfi Miners Hall - £45,000**

Withdraw our contribution to this facility and support the management of Blaengwynfi Miners Hall to seek grant funding from elsewhere and / or to identify other options available in the community to deliver the activities currently provided from the hall, including the local school.

**Adaptations and improvements - £93,000**

It is proposed to remove this budget in its entirety. Current budget covers the cost of tree cutting, security alarms and fire extinguishers for schools. This cost will have to be borne by schools.

**Contributions to voluntary organisations – £20,000**

Reduce by 12.5% current contributions to voluntary organisations e.g. Dove workshops and Glynneath partnerships.

### **Outdoor Education Service - £130,000**

Reduce contribution to Field Studies Council subject to renegotiating current contract agreement. This will result in an increase in the per week cost for pupils accessing residential provision at the Discovery Centre in Margam Park. During the negotiations all attempts to safeguard substantially reduced costs for pupils in receipt of free school meals will be made.

### **School Cleaning - £130,000**

This proposal is predicated on securing a full cost recovery position on this service. This will result in increased costs for primary and special schools.

### **School Licence Fees - £50,000**

The local authority currently covers a small number of licence fees for schools. This proposal is to transfer those costs onto schools.

### **Management restructure - £67,000**

Following the deletion, last financial year, of the Tourism Unit there is a residual management post remaining on the structure. This proposal is to review the remit of this post and rationalise any remaining management responsibilities.

### **LLAN co-ordinator / Governor training – £30,000**

The Directorate currently jointly funds the secondment of a primary headteacher to manage the LLAN headteacher representative forum. The secondee also manages the authority's governor training programme. This proposal seeks to apply a cost recovery principle to governor training via an SLA at a cost range of between £200 - £400 **per school**.

### **Music service - £50,000**

Reduce the Music tuition budget by 15%. This does not preclude schools taking local decisions to sustain the current level of service.

### **Cefn Coed Colliery Museum - £20,000**

Reduce the budget by 25%. This facility currently opens between Easter and September. A reduction in the budget will encourage the facility to revise

opening times within its season. Support will be made available to maximise grant funding streams that could benefit the museum.

### **Arts administration - £68,000**

This team commissions, programmes and markets the cultural offer promoted by our theatres and art centre. The officers responsible for these activities draw down additional, annual grant funding of over £100k. This proposal seeks to maximise the use of grant funding to support the current staffing structure and allow us to negotiate the transfer of the revised service to Celtic Leisure.

### **Theatres / Art Centres – £140,000**

Apply a reduction to current subsidies to theatres and art centres. This is over and above currently identified FFP targets. It will encourage facilities to become more commercially focused.

Proposal - targeted reduction in current subsidies to:

- Gwyn Hall (£359k)
- Pontardawe Arts Centre (£269k)
- Port Talbot (£114k)

### **NNDR Savings - £46,000**

Subject to consultation, the transfer of current assets to community ownership or as part of the Celtic Leisure contract will allow the Directorate to secure NNDR savings on identified facilities.

### **Leisure**

A £500,000 savings target was previously earmarked from the Leisure portfolio for 2015/18. This is included in the existing FFP.

Of this target, the Celtic Leisure management fee will be reduced by £275,000 over the next 2 financial years (with £75k required in 2015/16), predicated on greater efficiency and commercial return on current investment.

Furthermore, it is proposed to secure £150,000 of this savings target through the closure of:

- Cymmer (CYM) and,
- Hengwrt Sports Hall (HEN)

The Leisure Trust subsidy would be reduced by the closure of Cymmer Swimming Pool and Hengwrt Barn where usage/footfall is very low.

	Trust Expenditure		Mgmt fee <sup>1</sup>	Total Expenditure	Revenue	Net Position
	Staff	Other				
<b>CYM</b>	£ 131,973	£ 65,277	£ 120,270	£ 317,520	£ 71,456	<b>-£ 246,064</b>
<b>HEN</b>	£ 41,722	£ 14,697	£ 34,401	£ 90,820	£ 26,521	<b>-£ 64,299</b>

<sup>1</sup>The value of the management fee has been calculated in proportion with the value of the Trust's total expenditure. For example, a site incurring 10% of the Trust's total expenditure will be allocated 10% of the management fee.

*This treatment has been used through the absence of any mechanism being provided by the Trust.*

Both identified facilities are heavily subsidised and do not represent value for money according to industry standards.

Through consultation, the Directorate will seek to identify alternative provision for the communities affected and continue to facilitate schools' swimming provision. The local authority will consider the transfer of Hengwrt Sports Hall to the community, if a viable contract of use can be secured.

At Pontardawe Swimming Pool, the facility is reaching the end of its natural life despite high usage. The cost of repairs – at over £2m – is unaffordable. Any future replacement depends, in part, upon the robustness of the Council's new contract with Celtic Leisure and the ability of the Trust to generate sufficient surpluses to fund future borrowing.

### **School improvement - £70,000**

Reduce this budget by £70k and require the service to prioritise its support for schools according to identified need.

### **ER/VR trawl - £200,000 (estimated savings)**

Maximise the ER/VR scheme in order that we minimise the number of staff displaced by the saving proposals outlined above.

## **Summary -**

Total identified savings included in this report - £3.423m

The Directorate's savings strategies will be subject to further consideration following receipt of the provisional Welsh Government settlement.

## **Consultation**

Discussions and consultation with staff, Trade Unions and other stakeholders will now commence in order that the above proposals can be progressed and incorporated or amended for inclusion in the final budget proposals for 2015/16.

## **Recommendation**

It is recommended that Members approve the consultation with relevant stakeholders as set out in this report.

## **Reason for Proposed Decision**

To undertake the necessary consultation.

## **List of Background Papers**

Budget and Service Working Files.

## **Officer Contact**

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## **COMPLIANCE STATEMENT**

### **BUDGET SAVINGS PROPOSALS 2015/16 – EDUCATION, LEISURE AND LIFELONG LEARNING DIRECTORATE**

#### **Implementation of Decision**

The decision is proposed for implementation immediately.

#### **Sustainability Appraisal**

##### Community Plan Impacts

Economic Prosperity  
Education & Lifelong Learning  
Better Health & Well Being  
Environment & Transport  
Crime & Disorder

##### Other Impacts

Welsh Language  
Sustainable Development  
Equalities  
Social Inclusion

The report identifies various proposals that the Council will need to consider when setting its budget for 2015/16 later in this financial year. To achieve budget savings of £23m will have a negative impact on the majority of the items mentioned above.

#### **Consultation**

This report seeks approval to consult with Staff, Trade Unions and Stakeholders.





## Appendix 1 - Budget Saving Strategies for Consultation

Ref	Description	Lead Officer	Main Impacts	2015/16 £000	2016/17 £000	2017/18 £000	est staff no	est staff fte
ELLL1	Delegated Schools Funding	AT	Cash limiting the Schools Delegated Budget Quantum to 1% above the Welsh Government Settlement, this would lead to a reduction in Budget Shares for all of our schools.	774.0				
ELLL2	Review the current stock of 12 community centres or community education/enterprise centres	AE	Where maintenance or transfer is not achieved closure of facilities would result in less educational, community events, sporting, healthy living, family contact and youth and playgroup facilities across the County Borough.	450.0			5	
ELLL3	Reduce the current Physical Activity and Sports Service core budget.	AT	Reduced activity within the Physical Activity and Sports Service. Reduce or withdraw subsidies to sport associations and governing bodies. Grant funded activities will continue.	150.0			8	
ELLL4	Withdraw community arts activities	AT	Reduced community arts provision across the County Borough.	35.0			2	
ELLL5	Core funding to the Youth Service to be reduced.	AE	Rationalise youth club provision with fewer opportunities for young people to participate in youth provision	100.0				
ELLL6	Welsh translation service to recover 100% of costs through increased charges to service users	AT	Service users will incur an increased cost based on charges for this service being revised in line with market rates	70.0				1.25

ELLL7	Negotiate the transfer of Arts Administration service to Celtic Leisure at a reduced cost	AE	Possible displacement of staff. Transfer of responsibility of marketing to leisure trust which leads to ELLL9 below.	68.0			0	0
ELLL8	Reduction in subsidies to theatres and arts centres.	AT	Potential Reduction to opening hours of these facilities and/or a reduction of performance programme.	140.0				
ELLL9	Secure NNDR Savings through transfer of facilities to either community ownership or Celtic Trust	AT		46.0			0	0
ELLL10	Reduce subsidy to Celtic Leisure.	AE	Celtic Leisure will be required to secure greater efficiency and commercial return on investment.	75.0			0	0
ELLL11	Range of efficiency measures to library services to include reduction in book fund, decommission of one mobile library and reduction in cleaning costs.	AE	Reduce book lending provision across the County Borough.	190.0			1	
ELLL12	Vacancy management - Reduction of one Head of Service	AE	This will result in increased managerial responsibilities for the Senior Management Team.	100.0			1	1
ELLL13	Renegotiate union facilities time to realise 50% reduction	AT		25.0			0	0
ELLL14	Reduce core budget at Margam Park	AT	Potential impact on opening hours and range of services provided.	100.0				
ELLL15	Reduce school based counselling and restructure current service	AT	Reduce access to school based counselling service across all Secondary Schools.	25.0				
ELLL16	Summer playscheme provision to be withdrawn.	CM	Reduced access to play for children across the borough during the summer holidays	90.0				12.49

ELLL17	Reduce families first base budget	AE	Expectation of increased efficiencies in the allocation and administration of grant funding	80.0				
ELLL18	Reduced contribution to Blaengwynfi Miners Hall	AE	Potential closure of the facility with current activities displaced to other local community facilities e.g. Penafan Community School.	45.0			0	0
ELLL19	Withdraw the adaptations and improvements budget	AT	These cost will have to be met by schools	93.0			0	0
ELLL20	Reduce contributions to voluntary organisations	CM	Potential decrease in community activity within the borough	20.0			0	0
ELLL21	Renegotiate contribution to Field Studies Council	AT	This will lead to increased charges for pupils attending the Outdoor Education Centre.	130.0			0	0
ELLL22	Full cost recovery on cleaning service to schools	AT	Increased costs funded from primary and special schools budgets.	130.0			0	0
ELLL23	Transfer the costs of School Licence fees to schools	CM	Costs would have to be met by schools	50.0			0	0
ELLL24	Review residual management post.	AE	Possible displacement of member of staff.	67.0			1	1
ELLL25	Review financial support for LLAN Coordinator/Governor Training	CM	Apply full cost recovery principle to governor training via SLA. Increased cost to schools.	30.0			0	0
ELLL26	Reduce music tuition base budget.	CM	Reduced access to music provision across the county borough	50.0				
ELLL27	Potential reduction in budget at Cefn Coed Colliery museum	CM	Potential further reduction in public opening hours	20.0			0	0
ELLL28	ERVR trawl	AE	Reduction in capacity and/or expertise	200.0			TBC	TBC
ELLL29	Reduced base budget for School Improvement Service	CM	The service will prioritise its support for schools according to identified the need.	70.0			0	0

