



**REGENERATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE**

**10.00 am FRIDAY, 7 JUNE 2019**

**COMMITTEE ROOMS A/B - NEATH CIVIC CENTRE**

**Part 1**

1. Declarations of interest
2. Minutes of Previous Meetings held on 3rd December 2018 and 12th April 2019 (*Pages 5 - 12*)
3. Forward Work Programme 2019/20 (*Pages 13 - 16*)

**To scrutinise information and monitoring issues being reported by:  
*Head of Planning and Public Protection***

4. Environmental Health and Trading Standards Charge for Business Advice Update (*Pages 17 - 22*)
5. To select appropriate items from the Cabinet Board Agenda for pre-scrutiny (Cabinet Board reports enclosed for Scrutiny Members).
6. Any urgent items (whether public or exempt) at the discretion of the Chairman pursuant to Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972
7. Access to Meetings to resolve to exclude the public for the following item(s) pursuant to Section 100A(4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972 and the relevant exempt paragraphs of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the above Act.

**PART 2**

8. To select appropriate private items from the Cabinet Board Agenda for pre-scrutiny (Cabinet Board Reports enclosed for Scrutiny Members).

**S.Phillips**  
**Chief Executive**

**Civic Centre**  
**Port Talbot**

**Friday, 31 May 2019**

**Committee Membership:**

**Chairperson: Councillor S.K.Hunt**

**Vice  
Chairperson: Councillor R.L.Taylor**

**Councillors: D.Cawsey, C.J.Jones, H.N.James, S.M.Penry,  
S.Purseley, A.McGrath, S.Rahaman, N.T.Hunt,  
S.Bamsey and J.Evans**

**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.*

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## REGENERATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Committee Rooms A/B - Neath Civic Centre)

**Members Present:**

**3 December 2018**

**Chairperson:** Councillor S.K.Hunt

**Vice Chairperson:** Councillor L.Jones

**Councillors:** C.J.Jones, R.L.Taylor, S.M.Penry, S.Bamsey,  
J.Jones and S.Pursey

**Officers In  
Attendance** S.Brennan, N.Pearce and J.Davies

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### 1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr L. Jones

Report of the Director of Environment re: Consultation On Environment Directorate's Budget And Draft Savings For 2019/20, proposals ENVT910, ENVT913 and ENVT914 as she has a family member who works for Shield Security, and a family member who works in the Environmental Health and Trading Standards Department.

### 2. **CONSULTATION ON ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE'S BUDGET AND DRAFT SAVINGS FOR 2019/20**

The committee received information in relation to the Consultation on Environment Directorate's Budget And Draft Savings For 2019/20 as contained within the circulated report.

### 2.1 ENVT908 (£14k) – Increased rental Income

Officers explained that Swansea University and the Welsh Language Centre were now leasing the former One Stop Shop in Pontardawe,

Members queried the length of the rental agreement. Officers stated that the agreement was for 10 years.

Following scrutiny, the committee noted the proposal.

### ENVT909 (£25k) – Employee Cost Saving

Officers explained that following the departure of the Cleaning Manager the salary for the post had been reduced and the remit widened, resulting in a £25,000 saving.

Following scrutiny, the committee noted the proposal.

### 2.2 ENVT910 (£50k) – Port Talbot Civic Centre

Members queried what security arrangements were in place when there were evening shows in the theatre, as people could access the civic centre from the theatre. Members questioned whether CCTV would be in operation and footage monitored by the control room in the Quays. Officers stated that the cameras in Port Talbot Civic Centre were independent at the moment and did not feed into the control room; however physical barriers were being put in place to prevent unauthorised access between the two buildings. Members queried whether it was cheaper for the Council to use their own staff to cover security arrangements at Port Talbot Civic Centre, as opposed to having a contract in place with a company. Officers explained that it would not be cheaper, unless the member of staff had a number of roles other than solely security.

Following scrutiny, the committee noted the proposal.

### 2.3 ENVT911 (£20k) – Estates Section

Members queried whether there was a risk to safety for one person to visit the sites alone. Officers stated that an officer would be required to visit the sites a few times a week, and that risk assessments were carried out; however this could not eliminate risk. Officers explained that they did not always have the capacity to send two officers to a site, but where possible they would try.

Following scrutiny, the committee noted the proposal.

#### 2.4 ENVT912 (£40k) – Investment Income

Members queried how much of this proposal was in relation to land fees. Officers stated that only a small percentage.

Following scrutiny, the committee noted the proposal.

#### 2.5 ENVT913 (£40k) – Income Generation

Officers informed the committee that the Japanese Knotweed Service had been implemented by the Council and positive feedback had been received to date. Officers reported that the Council would secure finance from April onwards for environmental monitoring at Giants Grave. Officers stated that the charges for Housing Health and Safety Rating System inspections (HHSRS) and for business advice had not begun yet.

Members queried what were HHSRS inspections. Officers stated they were inspections to ensure that accommodation was fit for citizens to inhabit. Members queried whether Gwalia, Coastal and Tai Tarian were supportive of the Japanese Knotweed service. Officers explained that the pilot was directed at households with large gardens and that Registered Social Landlords (RSL) would probably have their own arrangements for dealing with knotweed. Officers added that they were willing to talk to RSLs regarding the service on offer by the Council; however the pilot had not scaled up yet.

#### 2.6 ENVT914 (£8k) – Income Generation

Members queried whether the Council charged for the first visit. Officers stated that they did not, but under the legislation set by Welsh Government the Council had to charge £150.00 for a second visit.

Following scrutiny, the committee noted the proposal.

#### 2.7 ENVT915 (£4k) – Reduce Subscriptions

Officers informed the committee that following the reduction in subscriptions that officers were gathering intelligence via others

means, such as attending networking forums and liaising more with other local authorities.

Following scrutiny, the committee noted the proposal.

### 2.8 ENVT917 (19/20 - £36k, 20/21 - £37k) – Planning Services

Members asked for a breakdown of the £36,000 and how much was coming from each stream. Officers states that the £50,000 from Planning

Performance Agreements had not been factored into the Forward Financial Plan, and that officers were trying to cross subsidise from other services. Officers explained that £24,000 would come from staff retiring and £12,000-£15,000 would come from vacancy management, depending on the flexibility of staff and the needs of the service.

Members asked for more detail regarding the insourcing of planning and biodiversity consultancy work. Officers stated that a new member of staff could undertake this work at a lower price for the Council.

Following scrutiny, the committee noted the proposal.

## **CHAIRPERSON**



**REGENERATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE**

**(Committee Rooms A/B - Neath Civic Centre)**

**Members Present:**

**12 April, 2019**

**Chairperson:** Councillor S.K.Hunt

**Vice Chairperson:** Councillor R.L.Taylor

**Councillors:** S.Bamsey, D.Cawsey, C.J.Jones, J.Jones,  
A.McGrath, S.M.Penry, S.Pursesey and  
S.Rahaman

**Officers In  
Attendance:** S.Brennan, C.Morris, M.Shaw, N.Headon and  
N. Jones

**Cabinet Invitees:** Councillors A.Wingrave and P.A.Rees

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1. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

That the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 1 March, 2019, be approved.

2. **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19**

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme for 2018/19.

### 3. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Committee scrutinised the following Cabinet Board item:-

#### Cabinet Board Proposals

Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (LDP) – Consideration of: the responses to the comments received following consultation on draft Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG); and the adoption and publication procedures to be implemented

The Committee received information in relation to the Supplementary Planning Guidance document relating to 'The Historic Environment'.

Members questioned why the whale and penguin figures at Aberafan Seafront had been removed from the document. It was explained that these structures had been removed from the list following a comprehensive review of the schedule of buildings/structures, which had concluded that they met just two out of five set criteria and therefore did not warrant inclusion.

Members asked if there was a timeline for bringing forward the Conservation Area Appraisals. It was explained that whilst there was no specific timeframe, the intention was to progress the work over the next twelve months.

Members raised the progress of works along the Canal Network. Officers stated they were unable to give full details but would come back to Members with the additional information if requested. It was explained that parts of the canal network had been safeguarded in the LDP and certain areas had received Welsh Government Active Travel Funding to improve cycle/pedestrian access along the towpaths. These improvements were due to be completed by May 2019.

It was also noted that the canal network was under different ownership in different locations and that maintenance of the canals was expensive. It was noted that the Swansea Canal Projects were carried out with volunteers, and it would be good to set up such a scheme in Neath.

Following Scrutiny, the Committee was supportive of the proposals to be considered by Cabinet Board.

4. **URGENT ITEM**

With the permission of the Chair the following was raised as an urgent item for discussion at today's meeting pursuant to Section 100A(4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972.

Reason for Urgency:

Due to the time element.

5. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

Establishment of the Local Project Board for Neath Port Talbot

Members received information on the establishment of the Local Project Board, to be called 'Local Regeneration Programme Board', for Neath Port Talbot to provide partner's input into the strategic regeneration programmes and projects impacting on the local area.

Following Scrutiny, the Committee was supportive of the proposals to be considered by Cabinet Board.

6. **ACCESS TO MEETINGS**

**RESOLVED:** that pursuant to Section 100A(4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded for the following item of business which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the above Act.

7. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Committee scrutinised the following private matter:-

Neath Town Centre Redevelopment

Officers gave an overview of the private circulated report on Neath Town Centre Development.

Members welcomed the proposals and supported a procurement exercise for the scheme which would assist with the redevelopment of Neath Town Centre.

Following Scrutiny, the Committee was supportive of the proposals to be considered by Cabinet Board.

## **CHAIRPERSON**

**(DRAFT)**  
**Regeneration and Sustainable Development Scrutiny Committee**  
**Forward Work Programme 2019/20**

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Officer
7 <sup>th</sup> June 2019	Environmental Health and Trading Standards Charge for Business Advice Update	Nicola Pearce/Mark Thomas
12 <sup>th</sup> July 2019	Problematic empty houses (private dwellings)	Nicola Pearce/Mark Thomas
	City Deal Project Monitoring	Gareth Nutt
6 <sup>th</sup> September 2019		
18 <sup>th</sup> October 2019		

29 <sup>th</sup> November 2019		
10 January 2020		
14 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2020		
20 <sup>th</sup> March 2020		
1 <sup>st</sup> May 2020		

To be built in:



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Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
Neath Port Talbot Council

## **NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **Regeneration and Sustainable Development Scrutiny Committee**

*7<sup>th</sup> June 2019*

### **Report of the Head of Planning and Public Protection**

N. Pearce

#### **Matter for Information**

**Wards Affected:** *All Wards*

#### **Update report on the business advice service operated within Environmental Health & Trading Standards**

#### **Purpose of Report**

1. To provide Members with an update of the business advice service operated by Environmental Health & Trading Standards, from April 2018 (1<sup>st</sup> year review).

#### **Executive Summary**

2. This report provides an update regarding the provision of advice to new and existing businesses by the Environmental Health & Trading Standards Department and the operation of the charging system for this service as a means of cost recovery for the department.

## Background

3. Environmental Health & Trading Standards have the statutory duty to enforce a wide range of legislation, from food safety, weights and measures, product safety, health and safety, and private rented properties including housing of multiple occupation.

In April 2018, the Environmental Health & Trading Standards service introduced a charging scheme for bespoke business advice- designed as an added value service to assist new start and existing businesses that wanted advice on complying with the legislation relevant to them.

The confirmed proposal was to charge businesses for bespoke advice on a cost recovery basis, with the exception of the “sign posting” to sources of advice which was to continue free of charge given how little resource this requires.

Fees for the provision of advice were set at £60 per hour or part thereof with a suggested minimum of a 2 hour initial consultation. Fees increase annually by the inflationary rate (currently 2%).

Neath Port Talbot was not the first authority to charge for Environmental Health & Trading Standards advice - the following authorities within Wales were already charging for the provision of business advice:

Shared Regulatory Services (Cardiff, Vale of Glamorgan, Bridgend)

Pembrokeshire County Council (Food Hygiene and Standards)

Monmouthshire County Council (Food Hygiene)

## Powys County Council (Food Hygiene)

Charges ranged from £45-75 per hour. Some authorities also specified a minimum 2 hour initial consultation.

Alternatively, businesses remain at liberty to buy advice commercially from free-lance experts with trading standards or environmental health backgrounds or relevant qualifications, or for the businesses to carry out their own research.

### **First year review: findings and developments**

During the initial phase of introduction, a set of standardised Terms and Conditions were developed, together with an Application form, to formalise the contract and the scope of advice requested. The scheme was publicised and made available online, and promoted by officers during visits and when businesses contacted the Environmental Health & Trading Standards services for initial advice. Initial contact advice and “signposting” to recommended sources of information has continued alongside the offer of the bespoke advice service. This baseline level of support has been refined and is primarily provided by email as a free service, which is still an extremely valuable starting point for businesses.

The bespoke business advice service has been well received by those who have used the service, although uptake numbers have been rather low to date. The service has been used by 6 local businesses who have sought advice on a range of Food Safety and Trading Standards topics, and has resulted in an additional income of £864.00.

The introduction of the business advice service has however further assisted with the need for a change of mindset- for both

officers and business proprietors. It complements other cost recovery and income generation initiatives being delivered within the Environmental Health & Trading Standards services, which also include:

- Japanese Knotweed;
- Drainage CCTV surveys;
- Weights and Measures verifications;
- Private Water Supplies- risk assessments;
- Noise impact consultancy services;
- Food Hygiene Rating re-assessment visits;
- Cost recovery for Housing Act notices;
- Giants Grave environmental management.

Whilst there has been a reduction in the number of sites/ premises visited to provide a free advisory service to, this has in turn freed up resource to concentrate more on existing statutory activities. The amount of saved officer resource is estimated to be in the region of 1.0 FTE.

## **Proposal**

4. To note that the bespoke business advice service has been introduced on a cost recovery basis, and that it complements the existing free “sign posting” to sources for generic business advice.

## **Financial Impact**

5. No significant adverse financial impact.

## **Integrated Impact Assessment**

6. There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment as this report is for monitoring / information purposes.

**Valleys Communities Impacts:**

7. No implications.

**Workforce Impacts:**

8. No implications.

**Legal Impact**

9. No significant legal impacts.

**Risk Management**

10. None

**Consultation**

11. There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

**Recommendation(s)**

12. That the report be noted.

**Reason for Proposed Decision(s)**

13. Matter for monitoring. No decision required.

**Implementation of Decision**

14. Matter for monitoring. No decision required

**Appendices**

15. None

## List of Background Papers

16. None

## Officer Contact

17. Nicola Pearce, Head of Planning and Public Protection.  
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Mark Thomas, Environmental Health and Trading Standards  
Manager. Tel 01639 685612 or email: [m.thomas2@npt.gov.uk](mailto:m.thomas2@npt.gov.uk)